
Howick Township

Economic
Development Strategic
Plan 2016-2020

A plan forward



Howick

TOWNSHIP



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1.0 Executive Summary:

The Township of Howick sits in the north east corner of the County of Huron. Its population is 3,856 as at 2011 (National Household survey). Amidst its gently rolling productive farmland, sits the tri-villages of Wroxeter, Gorrie and Forwich connected by their location along the Maitland River. The hamlet of Lakelet is nestled in the north, abutting a small inland lake and Belmore sits in the northwest corner of Howick and is host to the popular Belmore Maple Syrup Festival.

In the early fall of 2015 Howick participated in a process to update and review its Economic Development strategic plan. As a result 5 areas were selected to be the focus for the upcoming 4 years.

- Support business development and entrepreneurship
- Continuously maintain and improve economic infrastructure
- Stimulate vibrant downtowns
- Encourage residential growth opportunities
- Enable opportunities for small farm acreages

A detailed action plan was developed as a result of the process.

2.0 Introduction:

2.1 What is Community Economic Development (CED)?

Community economic development is a process. A community uses resources to attract capital and increase physical, commercial and business development and job opportunities for its residents. The goal of CED is to improve the economic well-being of a community or region through;

- Business retention
- Business attraction
- Increased tax Base
- Improved quality of life

2.2 What is a Strategic Plan?

An important component of CED is strategic planning. Strategic planning is a process that helps a region work towards a desired future by focusing energy and resources on shared goals. It helps a region to assess and adjust strategic direction in response to changing environments.

An Economic Development Strategic Plan is a formally written document that guides a region's decision making process toward achieving desired goals that align with their mission and vision statements. This plan also helps in allocating resources (volunteer, staff, monetary, infrastructure, etc.) and prioritizing actions. A strategic plan is referred to for operational decisions and is updated regularly.

2.3 Huron County-Wide Train the Trainer Background and Process Overview

One June 17th, 2015 County Council agreed to work as a group of ten municipal partners to learn the skills required for facilitating the strategic planning process leading to the development of Economic Development Strategic Plans. Core teams of 5 individuals from each municipal partner attended 4 training sessions where they participated in a strategic planning process and then guided on facilitating this process.

After each of the 4 sessions the core team returned to their municipality and used their skills. They invited local residents, business people, agriculture and agri-food business people, not-for-profits leaders, cultural groups, environmental champions and other individuals representing the multifaceted municipalities they live in, to participate in the strategic planning initiative they were facilitating. In facilitating this process with their municipal Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee, the Core Teams developed an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

By working together in a joint economic development planning process using the Train the Trainer model a County-wide cooperative environment was created where municipal partners supported each other, networked and built a stronger county-wide effort to support all economic development activities.

Ultimately this project allowed all ten municipal partners to develop ten economic development strategic plans in a consistent and coordinated manner. County-wide planning allowed for conversations to take place which lead to streamlining economic development amongst the ten municipal partners to maximize inputs and minimize duplication.

Moving forward the conversations that started as part of the Train the Trainer project will continue to insure that implementation and measurement of economic development priorities, goals and activities happen in a consistent and coordinated manner.

2.4 Local Process Overview

2.4.1 Background

The Strategic Planning Committee came together by invitation to the community. The Howick residents that assisted in undertaking this process represented small and large businesses, engaged citizens and members of Howick council. Many of contributors had also been

involved in the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) process that was undertaken Howick and completed in 2012.

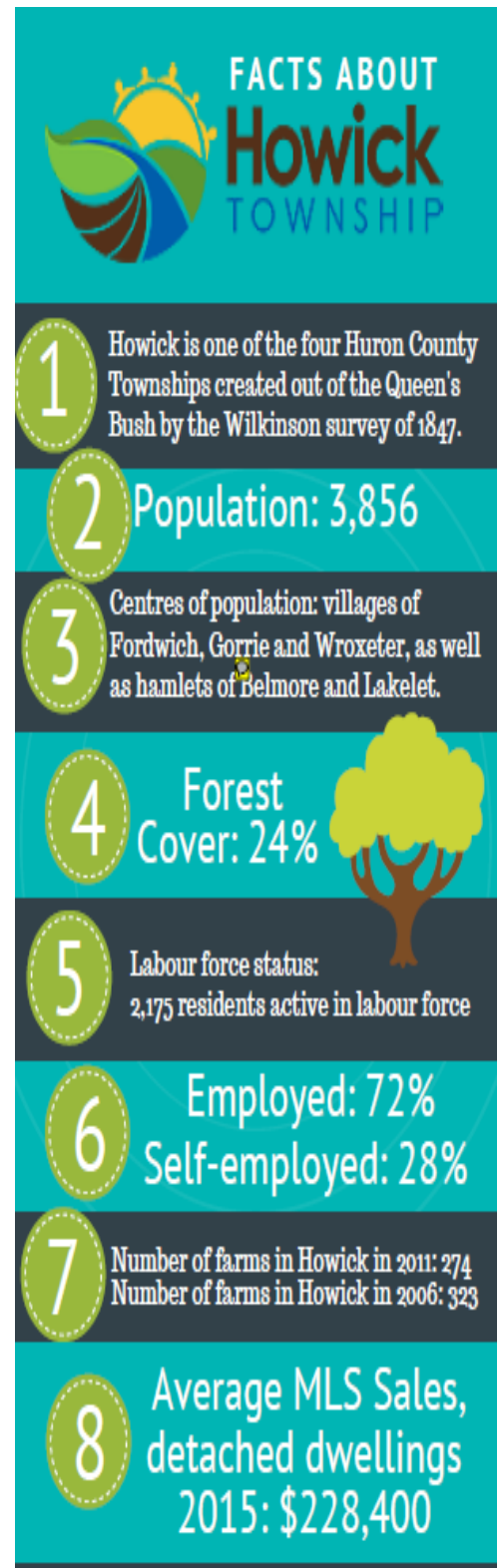
2.4.2 Strategic Planning Committee

Over a period of just 8 weeks, the strategic planning committee met on 4 occasions. Guided by the OMAFRA template, the group undertook the development of a vision for the process and considered the community strengths and challenges in this forward thinking exercise to establish a plan for economic development in Howick.

2.4.3 The Business Retention & Expansion study (2012) and Howick Strategic Plan

The strategy developed builds on actions that are underway.

- Develop community signage identifying the communities and the location of businesses and services
- Form a business association
- Seek opportunities to improve municipal communication to residents



2.7.4 Business Data

Analysts from OMAFRA provided Howick with key economic data and analysis about the township. The data included;

- key sources of economic development data;
- economic specializations;
- identifying economic base industries;
- employment multipliers;
- competitive advantages and
- labour market analysis

The business data provided assisted in guiding the plan development.

The data provided helped to affirm the **leading industry sectors**;

Farming | Agriculture

Truck Transportation

Building Materials | Building Supplies

Construction | Contractors

Insurance

Residents are also working in these areas;

Health Services

Education

Administration

3.0 Vision:

The committee worked over several meetings to identify the vision for the process.

Growing prosperity...creating our future.

4.0 Mission:

To provide leadership and direction for an *achievable* Economic Development strategy for the Township of Howick.

5.0 Values:

The Township of Howick used the following overarching values to guide this process.

5.1 The townships' budget for economic development initiatives is unlikely to change substantially in the upcoming years. As a result many of the goals selected focussed on identifying priorities that could be accommodated within existing operations and/or as part of a regional initiative.

5.2 That the plan developed would be used to guide economic development initiatives over the upcoming years, as opportunities arose (external funding).

5.3 That the tri-villages of Howick are the home to many residents who work both outside and within of the municipality and that the village cores represent an opportunity for focus in the future through multi-year efforts.

5.4 The strategic planning committee appreciates the importance of agriculture at the core of its economy however recognized that the trend toward bigger farmer sizes would impact the landscape of the community. With a significant population of the farming community focussed on market gardening there is also a recognition that Howick is a burgeoning food hub for the surrounding communities and no so distant urban centres.

5.5 Like so many in Huron County, Howick residents have an entrepreneurial spirit, and have chosen Howick to locate their businesses. These small and growing businesses are looking for business services offered in Huron County to connect closer to home on a more frequent basis.

5.6 Where appropriate and as goals and actions align, Howick will work with their municipal neighbours to achieve goals.

6.0 Goal and Action planning

The goal setting and action planning process was achieved through consideration of a variety of focus areas. Through a priority setting process, the following were identified as the areas in which to focus the goals for Howick Economic development strategic plan.

Action Plan Implementation and Monitoring charts

The following charts have been developed to guide the action plan over the next years. There are designed such that they can be used to provide updates for information purposes to Howick Council.

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

GOAL: *Encourage Business Development and Entrepreneurship DRAFT*

- STRATEGIES:**
1. Consider undertaking a “Win This Space” Competition
 2. Support the needs of small business & entrepreneurs locally

OUTPUTS | TIMEFRAMES

		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
1	a) Identify commercial spaces available for sale/lease/vacant in Wroxeter, Gorrie, Fordwich b) Develop an inventory of identified commercial spaces c) Determine if opportunity and resources are available to deliver a “Win This Space” competition	1a) 1b)	1c)	1c)
2	a) Arrange for one workshop per year to be delivered by the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) b) Small business information materials available and community workshop. c) Determine if there is a space that SBEC coordinator can use periodically d) Base on 2c) SBEC coordinator comes to Howick periodically e) Support regional initiatives that attract and train the local workforce	2a) 2b) 2e)	2a) 2b) 2c) 2e)	2a) 2b) 2e)

#	ACTIONS Actions to advance the strategy.	RESOURCES What resources (human, financial, other) will be needed to accomplished	CHAMPION/OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED Who is taking the lead in this initiative? Other partners or stakeholders?	REPORTING STATUS For updating purposes
1	a) Determine if there are commercial spaces available in village downtowns b) Identify and encourage entrepreneurial opportunities for downtown spaces c) Consider undertaking a “Win This Space” competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer student • Inquiries through the Municipal office • Municipal review of MPAC data • Funding. Consider grant opportunities for program(s) i.e. summer student, other ED funding programs • SBEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality • CofH Planning department • County of Huron EDS • Municipality 	
2	a) SBEC survey of HBA businesses workshop needs b) Small business services materials available (library and/or municipal office) Set workshop date in Howick based on survey input c) Acquire space d) Deliver workshop annually e) Support regional initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBEC • What’s Happening in Howick publication • Library space • Howick Business Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huron County EDS Board • SBEC with HBA • SBEC 	

ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

GOAL: *Stimulate Vibrant Downtowns DRAFT*

- STRATEGIES:**
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Encourage owners to maintain buildings | 2. Explore opportunities to undertake a C.I.P. |
| 3. Enhance signage | 4. Support Village Management committees |

OUTPUTS TIMEFRAMES		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
1	c) Identify buildings/properties that are in severe disrepair d) Encourage repair of buildings identified e) Encourage property maintenance of properties	1a) 1b) 1c)		
2	d) Review process for undertaking a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) e) Determine if undertaking a CIP is something the municipality should embark on		2a)	2b)
3	c) Determine signage needing replacement d) Create signage replacement plan e) Replace & or improve signage identified in plan f) Consider development of vacant downtown property historic photo program	3a)underway	3a) 3b) 3c)	3a) 3b) 3c) 3d)
4	c) Continue to recognize the work of the Village Management committees d) Host annual meeting of boards and committees	4a)	4a) 4b)	4a) 4b)

#	ACTIONS	RESOURCES	CHAMPION/OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED	STATUS
1	c) Identify buildings/properties in tri-village downtowns in disrepair d) Encourage repair of buildings identified e) Encourage cleanup of downtown properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With other initiatives through the municipality • summer student grant • Bylaw officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw officer • Village management 	
2	d) Review process for undertaking a CIP program e) Determine if a CIP should be undertaken – consult other municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff, MMAH, HC Planning • Other Municipalities that have undertaken a CIP • RED funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • County of Huron planning dept. staff • Other municipalities 	
3	c) Determine signage needing replacement d) Create plan to replace signage e) Commence replacing signage f) Consider signage program for vacant fronts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • RED funding County ED funding • Cty. of Huron signage program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • Councillors • Residents 	3a)Underway
4	d) Recognize the work of the Village Management Committees e) Bring together village boards and management committees for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual volunteer appreciation event • WHinH • Community centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward councillors • Village management appointees • Municipality • MVCA 	

ACTION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

GOAL: *Enable Opportunities for Small Farm Acreages DRAFT*

- STRATEGIES:**
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Assess demand for smaller farm sizes | 4. Investigate non-fee simple options |
| 2. Promote natural severances | 5. Determine policy change requirements for small farm severances |
| 3. Explore other municipalities' response to market gardening demands | |

OUTPUTS TIMEFRAMES		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
1	a) Survey completed and report prepared summarizing results and providing recommendations.	1a)		
2	a) Summary document of what a natural severance is and how to obtain one. b) List and map of properties with natural severance potential. c) Education materials developed and meeting held with property owners with natural severance potential.	2a)	2b) 2c)	
3	a) Municipality list, survey, survey responses. b) Options report from survey results. c) Educational materials and community workshop.	3a)	3b) 3c)	
4	a) Options report. b) Educational materials and community workshop		4a) 4b)	
5	a) Severance policy change information requirements report. b) Presentation of report to Council and circulation to interested groups. c) Councillors meet with OMAFRA Minister.	5a) 5c)	5b) 5c)	5c)

#	ACTIONS	RESOURCES	CHAMPION/OTHERS INVOLVED	REPORTING STATUS
1	a) Survey Howick farmers looking at size and type of farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student for survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howick Township Council "LandUse Committee" 	
2	a) Learn more about natural severances. b) Identify properties with natural severance possibilities. c) Educate property owners of natural severance possibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Guelph School of Rural Planning & Environmental Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howick Township Council 	
3	a) Survey municipalities with small farm opportunities, market gardens. b) Identify options from survey. c) Educate community on options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWOT Municipal staff or student County planning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howick Township Council 	
4	a) Research options (such as long term leases, agricultural vacant land condominiums, farmland conservation easements, co-ops, corporations, etc.). b) Educate community on options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Alternatives and Innovation on Small Acreage in Huron County" by Sharpe et al U of G 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howick Township Council 	
5	b) Research severance policy change information requirements. c) Council consideration for lobbying of Province for PPS change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County planning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howick Township Council County planning staff 	

GOAL: *Encourage Residential Growth Opportunities DRAFT*

- STRATEGIES:** 1. Identify building lots 2. Encourage development of residential roads
 3. Continue to offer no development fees 4. Promote Amenities 5. Expedite the building and planning process
 6. Offer information for home business considerations 7. Increase housing options

OUTPUTS TIMEFRAMES		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
1	a) Identify vacant building lots in Wroxeter, Gorrie and Fordwich b) Create a map of all residential building lots c) Make maps available to local realtors	1a) 1b) 1c)		
2	a) Explore opportunities for development of residential roads b) Identify unopened road allowances that could be opened to encourage residential growth c) Prioritize openings of road allowances	2a)	2b) 2c)	
3	a) Continue to offer and promote no development fees	3a)	3a)	3a)
4	a) Promote Howick’s amenities on the municipal website, Howick brochure b) Offer Howick brochure to businesses making deliveries outside of Howick for distribution	underway	4a) 4b)	4a) 4b)
5	a) encourage developers and potential developers to connect with staff municipal staff before development plans commence	5a)	5a)	5a)
6	a) offer information about home business considerations on the municipal website b) develop short checklist, in plain language, for those considering opening a home business		5a) 5b)	
7	a) where opportunities exist encourage exploration of a variety of housing options i.e. single detached, row housing/townhouses	7a)	7a)	7a)

#	ACTIONS Actions to advance the strategy.	RESOURCES What resources (human, financial, other) will you need to have in place to ensure this can be accomplished	CHAMPION/OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED Who is taking the lead in this initiative? Other partners or stakeholders?	REPORTING STATUS Choose Complete, In Progress or Incomplete
1	a) Identify vacant building lots through review of maps, official plan, ground-truthing b) Create colour coded map of development residential lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • County of Huron GIS • Summer Student program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • CofH planning staff 	
2	a) Identify road allowances that could be opened in tri-villages b) Require developers to develop roads when undertaking residential developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal budget • Municipal staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howick Council • Roads Building Official • County of Huron planner 	

GOAL: *Encourage Residential Growth Opportunities DRAFT*

#	ACTIONS Actions to advance the strategy.	RESOURCES What resources (human, financial, other) will you need to have in place to ensure this can be accomplished	CHAMPION/OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED Who is taking the lead in this initiative? Other partners or stakeholders?	REPORTING STATUS Choose Complete, In Progress or Incomplete
3	a) Assess opportunities to promote ‘no development fees’ b) Publish where opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • Municipal website • Real estate publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local builders, real estate • Municipal staff 	
4	a) Widely distribute Howick brochure ask businesses to give to customers outside of Howick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • Businesses • Tax bills/mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Council, staff • Local business 	
5	a) encourage one-stop-shop review of building requirements adopt “Ask First” motto b) offer information to building/contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Staff • HC Planning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • County of Huron planner 	
6	a) update Municipal website with information about home business considerations b) produce a generic checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Official • County of Huron planner 	
7	a) encourage development of a variety of housing options b) consider change to Wroxeter zoning ‘Future Development’ to ‘Vacant residential’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Council • CofH Planning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers/Builders • Building official • CofH Planning staff 	

7.0 Reporting Mechanism:

Howick Council will determine a mechanism for determining reporting plan updates. Currently there is an Economic development committee. It will be determined in early 2016 if that approach will continue or an alternative process will be selected.

8.0 Communication Plan

Each action plan will have an appropriate plan for communication dependent upon the audience. The following approaches will generally be the medium used.

Reaching the residents served by a monthly communication newsletter called “What’s Happening in Howick”. Municipal staff make efforts to communicate information to the residents through this comprehensive publication. This private communication business, is just one example of the entrepreneurial spirit in filling a need in the community. Communication to residents throughout this process have been published here and this will continue as components of the plan unfold.

Local News outlets radio and paper advised of Howick media releases.

Those who are inquiring will find the Howick website is a great source for information about the township. It is kept current by staff.

Tax time Semi-annual tax bill communication is yet another opportunity to collect and provide information to property owners, including those who do not reside in the township.

Volunteer Celebration held annually is opportunity to update on both Howick and regional initiatives.

Appendix A

Committee participants

Tillman Bauman
Issac Brubacher
Jennifer Burns
Bob Clarkson
Gayl Cruetzberg
Marion Feldskov
Jennifer Foster
Art Gibson
Coreen Harding
Doug Harding
Linda Henhoeffter
Peter Keil
Elam Martin
Shelley Miller-Cameron
Rosemary Rognvaldson
Dale Scheffter
Don Watson

Core Team members

Art Versteeg – Reeve
Randy Scott – Councillor
Phil Beard – Maitland Valley Conservation Auth.
Carol Watson – Clerk
Craig Metzger – Planner, County of Huron
Rebecca Rathwell – Huron County EDS

Appendix B

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Before endeavoring to develop the plan, a SWOT was undertaken.

Strengths

FARMLAND | NATURAL RESOURCES | RECREATION |
BEAUTY | VOLUNTEERS | ROADS | ENTREPRENEURS |
PRIVATE SCHOOLS | PEOPLE | MUNICIPAL
GOVERNMENT | THE MAITLAND RIVER

Weaknesses

LACKING GAS STATIONS, STORES, RESTAURANTS |
RESIDENT APATHY | LACKING NATURAL GAS, SEWERS,
WATER IN THE VILLAGES | LOW TAX BASE

Opportunities

NATURAL SEVERANCES | GROWING | RESIDENTIAL
LOTS | SERVICE CLUBS | DAY TRIPPERS

Threats

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS & FUNDING CUTS |
GROWING FARM SIZES & NON-RESIDENT
OWNERS/RENTERS | INCREASING LAND PRICES

Developing a Vision for the future.....



Appendix C

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS, SHORT FORMS etc.

Where possible we have tried to include any abbreviations used throughout the document.

Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA)	What's Happening in Howick (WHinH)
Economic Development Services (EDS)	County of Huron (CofH)
Howick Business Alliance (HBA)	Community Improvement Plan (CIP)
Huron Business Centre (HBC)	