

# Township of Mapleton

## Economic Development Strategy



**June 25, 2013**

**Prepared by Township of Mapleton  
Economic Development Committee**

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## PART I INTRODUCTION

The Township of Mapleton first adopted an Economic Development Strategic Plan in 2005. The Township's Economic Development Committee undertook a review of that plan to determine whether the status of the various action items are relevant today.

### Roles of the Economic Development Committee

The primary function of the Economic Development Committee is to assist Council with improving the quality of life for both residents and to ensure sustainability for our local businesses. The following sets out the Committee's primary responsibilities:

- ❖ Assume the lead role in promoting Mapleton as a desirable place to live, work and enjoy a satisfying community lifestyle.
- ❖ Assume the lead role in attracting and promoting industry and commercial businesses.
- ❖ Explore and ensure that opportunities exist for local commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational and residential development within appropriate areas of Mapleton.
- ❖ Recognize and promote recreational and tourism opportunities such as Drayton Festival Theatre and Conestogo Lake.
- ❖ Promote activities that bring forth a sense of community.
- ❖ Actively work to sustain and enhance our rural economy.

The Economic Development Committee recognizes that the Township of Mapleton is a unique and diverse community, with distinct neighbourhoods and characteristics. These distinctions should be woven together into a well-defined rural community image.

The Township of Mapleton's Strategic Plan for Economic Development has been prepared to set the framework to sustain, strengthen and enhance economic growth throughout the municipality, with a view to maintaining its rural community image.

### Role of the Economic Development Officer

The EDO main function is to promote the Township of Mapleton through the actions adopted in the Economic Development Strategy.

Facilitates community and economic development planning in order to identify and establish economic development opportunities.

Maintains and provides appropriate information and marketing material to interested investors and business persons. Explores investment opportunities where appropriate.

Fosters community capacity building by Supporting local businesses in retention and expansion initiatives and supports local service groups in projects and events that benefit the Township.

Maintains contacts with provincial ministries in marketing industrial and commercial opportunities.

Maintains a proper working relationship with the media, represents the interests of the corporation, providing factual information about corporate affairs.

Assists Council in daily contacts with residents and ratepayers, providing information and addressing issues and concerns as they arise.

## PART II SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- ❖ The Township of Mapleton is predominantly agricultural community situated in Wellington County.
- ❖ Geographic location of Mapleton Township – within an hour to larger centres
- ❖ Entrepreneurial people reside in the Township – many small manufacturing businesses to support economy (manufacturing, creative)
- ❖ Affordable cost of housing
- ❖ Excellent Health care services (Family Health Team, Mapleton Medical Clinic. Seniors' Centre for Excellence) – less than one half hour to four hospitals (Groves, Palmerston, Mount Forest, Listowel)
- ❖ Strong community
- ❖ Active service clubs (Kinsmen, Optimist, Rotary)
- ❖ Low crime rate (Maclean's magazine named Wellington County as the safest community in the country in 2012)
- ❖ Strong partnerships with municipal neighbours and County of Wellington
- ❖ Natural features – Conestogo Lake

### Weaknesses

- ❖ Getting residents involved
- ❖ Lack of "municipal branding" – how do we promote ourselves if can't identify
- ❖ Increasing collaboration
- ❖ Need to increase awareness of what businesses exist here – where possible, promote buying local
- ❖ Lack of jobs locally to retain young people

- ❖ Understanding regulations (municipal awareness – more needs to be done to educate public on policies and procedures while at the same time making process as seamless and time-efficient as possible)
- ❖ Communication -
- ❖ Encouraging business success
- ❖ No Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Lack of retail in downtown cores

### Opportunities

- ❖ Value-added agriculture – local food initiatives, green energy, small on farm industries
- ❖ Tourism development – Conestogo Lake, Drayton Entertainment, Rural Romp – explore tourism packages
- ❖ Positive location with access to markets and fewer geographic barriers
- ❖ Connections with Universities & Colleges
- ❖ Range in types of jobs
- ❖ Positive structures for new technology available
- ❖ Good location as gateway to the north
- ❖ Social media
- ❖ Support for business expansion and attraction
- ❖ Global attraction through County initiatives -

### Threats

- ❖ Global economy – economic downturn affects local manufacturing businesses
- ❖ technology access – becoming a serious concern for farms and local industry
- ❖ limited resources (municipal budgets are a challenge)
- ❖ government procedures and processes
- ❖ Infrastructure – reduced funding from province – ability to sustain municipally owned infrastructure – could affect service levels and conditions of infrastructure

### PART III VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

#### Vision Statement:

Where tradition meets innovation!

#### Mission Statement:

The policies, guidelines and practices of the Township of Mapleton will reflect the pride of our quality of life, natural environment and protect our agricultural land and cultural diversity.

### PART IV KEY OBJECTIVES

#### **1. To retain existing businesses and help them grow.**

##### Actions:

- ❖ Maintain business directory (web-based) and create Community Guide (print piece) that will be a resource for our residents to community services, organizations. This can also be used as a “lure piece” for potential new residents and investors alike.
- ❖ Create, maintain and encourage a culture that supports good customer service where residents and businesses seek out the Township and see the municipality as part of the solution to problems they may be facing
- ❖ Connect with and support local businesses – profile business on township web site
- ❖ Host Business Showcase – very successful in past
- ❖ Create business incubators for small start-up businesses
- ❖ Create simplified and positive approach to business development and expansion

- ❖ Maintain inventory of employment lands
- ❖ Celebrate businesses that excel in areas such as innovation and community involvement
- ❖ Encourage Promotion of Product – Shop Locally!
- ❖ Educate the public on guidelines and processes for home based businesses – when should they seek Township approvals.
- ❖ Encourage businesses to use the Township web site to streamline processes – include staff email contacts for better service
- ❖ Township aims to welcome new businesses (ie. plant presentation by Mayor and CAO/EDO
- ❖ Township needs to review development policies (ie. zoning, development standards – the protection of agricultural land needs to be a priority

## **2. Ensure that the Township has the IT capabilities for businesses to operate now and in the future**

### **Actions:**

- ❖ Identify IT connectivity gaps – develop strategy to close gaps
- ❖ Provide training opportunities for small businesses in the area of IT technology
- ❖ Explore how IT might reduce costs for businesses and the Township in terms of how we operate
- ❖ Support initiatives of Western Ontario Warden’s Caucus Broadband Study – municipality needs to become the launching pad for improved IT connectivity



### 3. Develop a Marketing and Communication Plan

#### Actions:

- ❖ Develop our brand - this is key to move forward - to be used on all promotional material, township signage
- ❖ Identify our audience – local, provincial, federal, global
- ❖ Provide residents with annual report on progress – could include operational progress not just capital projects – how are our tax dollars spent
- ❖ Promote municipality as “service-oriented business”
- ❖ Create marketing tools – can be print, social media
- ❖ Include seasonal population in communication plan
- ❖ More information resources on website to support business – (ie. Wellington Waterloo Community Futures, Guelph Business Enterprise Centre)
- ❖ Provide additional venues for local businesses to advertise – ie. links on business profile
- ❖ Economic Development Committee to lobby local, provincial and federal government for better IT connectivity as part of communication strategy

### 4. To promote the artistic and cultural diversity within the Township

#### Actions:

- ❖ Connect with and encourage local groups to establish:
  - Street fairs
  - Folk festivals or other special events
  - Support community groups in event endeavours
- ❖ Promotion of cultural activities (i.e. Music festivals) – use of LED Community Sign
- ❖ Make use of community information page and web site for community events

- ❖ Create an awareness of artistic and cultural opportunities – this can be done through cultural mapping – consider applying for Provincial funding
- ❖ Create awareness of “creative economy”
- ❖

## **5. Develop a Youth Strategy to Retain Youth in Mapleton**

### **Actions:**

- ❖ Emphasis on providing employment now and in the future. Promote government programs geared to hiring and training youth
- ❖ Work with agencies (Workforce training board) to create opportunities to attract young people. This may include workshops on developing a resume, participate in job fairs, etc.
- ❖ Township can be an example by providing opportunities for co-op students
- ❖ Work with local businesses and agencies to encourage apprenticeships and/or co-op opportunities for students
- ❖ Cultivate entrepreneurial opportunities for youth

## **6. Develop an Agriculture and Local Food Strategy**

### **Actions:**

- ❖ Complete agriculture specific business retention and expansion project
- ❖ Continue to support the Taste Real program and other Local Food initiatives
- ❖ Engage local growers in discussion on food strategy

## **PART V MONITORING OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN**

The Economic Development Committee will review the Plan annually, with a view to monitoring the objectives and action plans set out therein.

It may be beneficial to include various community stakeholders and/or members of the public in the monitoring process.

Annual Progress reports should become part of the Township's Communication Plan.

## **PART VI IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINES**

The Township of Mapleton Economic Development Committee will provide advice and feedback to the Township's Economic Development Officer on the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy

The following information provides a timeline and activities necessary to achieve the objectives set out in Section IV.

### **2013**

- ❖ Branding Exercise – RFP's to go out during summer – Branding to be completed by year end
- ❖ Business Directory/Community Guide – Committee to discuss format (ie. web based and/or paper copy) – can be completed in 2013
- ❖ Business Profiles on web site – to begin in September, 2013
- ❖ Create “development” information for residents/developers
- ❖ Communication Plan
- ❖ Business Retention and Expansion program – to be completed in 2014
  - 4 Sectors – Agricultural
  - Tourism
  - Health Care

- Creative Economy
- ❖ Working Rural Wellington – Mapleton hosting 2011/13
- ❖ Harvest Festival – September, 2013
- ❖ Rural Broadband – Drayton and Alma – 2013 Municipal Office 2013
- ❖ Continue to support WOWC – Rural Broadband initiative
- ❖ Continue to support County of Wellington in Regional Ec. Dev. Initiatives and County Strategy
- ❖ “New Business” recognition – start immediately – web site introduction/profile

## 2014

- ❖ Host Business Showcase (May, 2014) – include business recognition
- ❖ Continue County BR&E initiative
- ❖ New signage with Municipal Brand
- ❖ Spring Rural Romp
- ❖ Cultural Mapping
- ❖ Flavours of the Farm – fall, 2014
- ❖ Host Workshops for businesses