



Appendix A Sustainability Tool-Box

TAKE ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE HURON



Under the Direction of: The Sustainable
Huron Steering Committee
Huron County

December 2011

"Invest a decade to prosper a century."
Dr. Avi Friedman

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Huron County Sustainability Tool-Box

This Sustainability Tool-Box is a guide to help Huron County along its path to sustainability. It is a collection of strategies and actions for a sustainable future that are tailored specifically to the context of Huron County. The actions come from multiple sources, including the Steering Committee and associated partners, existing County plans, and the public through the consultation process. Some actions can be done in a short time frame, while some will take longer to get going. This list is dynamic – it will be revised regularly to match the current contexts and conditions in Huron County, the progress that has been made to date in reaching our sustainability vision and goals, and any revised strategies to better reach those goals. By applying the sustainability decision-making framework, Huron County and partnering organizations can prioritize and select actions to carry out annually to reach the 2030 community vision.

Organizations and partners are invited to select actions that they are already doing or would like to do – once selected partners should contact Sustainable Huron to identify that they will be initiating a sustainability action.

The actions are organized under the 11 Theme Areas. Each theme area includes:

- **Community Goal Statement** – this is where the community would like to be with respect to each theme area by 2030.
- **Strategies** - broad strategies outlining the bigger paths Huron County will use to reach the community vision.
- **Actions** – specific actions to fulfill what is outlined under each strategy.
- **Targets** – a sample of targets Huron County is reaching for in implementing the strategies and actions.
- **Indicators** – possible indicators that could be used to assess how well we are doing at reaching the targets and goals for actions under each strategy.

Environmental Integrity

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Huron County will have a healthy, resilient ecosystem with connected natural areas, clean water, and diverse flora and fauna

NE1. Protect The County's Natural Heritage And Connectivity

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Protected Areas and Connections

- Develop a natural capital/features database which surveys all natural capital in Huron County (e.g. wildlife corridors, wetlands, riparian zones, forests)

Education and Awareness

- Promote the use of the rural landowner stewardship guide and other approaches to increase awareness of protecting ecosystem integrity:
 - the value of buffer strips for both natural area protection and adaptation to climate change impacts
 - protecting shorelines
 - removal of non-native species and replanting with native species
- Support environmental education and nature based education programs for all ages

Shorelines

- Explore potential for protecting the Lake Huron shoreline from erosion through “soft engineering”

TARGETS

- 100% of all locally and provincially significant natural areas in Huron County (e.g. wetlands, riparian zones, Lake Huron shorelines) are protected and connected
- 20-25% forest cover in County
- All Lake Huron shoreline is natural and is protected from erosion
- Awareness among 100% of Huron County population on the importance of protecting natural areas

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Protected Areas and Connections

- Through existing and new natural area protection regulations, protect and enhance natural areas (e.g. wetlands, woodlands, floodplains, the Lake Huron shoreline, etc.)
- Identify and develop connections to Hullett Marsh, Bannockburn, Hay Swamp, Saratoga Swamp, Maitland Valley, and Bayfield River Valley
- Engage in habitat restoration along creeks using native plants and shrubs
- Explore reforestation and sustainable forestry as a Huron County industry

Urban Areas

- Develop and implement urban forest strategies including urban woodlands, heritage trees, and reforestation

Shorelines

- Secure funding for shoreline remedial work where such work is needed
- Attain Blue-flag certification for all beaches

INDICATORS

- Number of significant natural / heritage areas; % native forest cover
- Area / km of connecting habitats (corridors)
- Degree of fragmentation
- Km of riparian and Lake Huron shoreline protected / restored
- % awareness among population as to importance of natural areas
- Number of landowners involved in stewardship practices

NE2. Ensure that the Ecosystems Within Huron County are Healthy and Resilient by Supporting Our Native Biodiversity

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Invasive Species

- Conduct an inventory of native and non-native plant and animal species
- Develop policies to prevent import/ transport of non-native invasive species to / within Huron County

Native Species and Biodiversity

- Promote the planting / replanting of native species (e.g. trees, shrubs, grasses) on private property, marginal agricultural and sensitive lands, and forest regeneration
- Promote naturalized lawns on public lands as a way to reduce lawn maintenance and increase natural habitat (see also LC3)

TARGETS

- Rare and endangered species are protected
- Species moved from rare/endangered to lower COSEWIC status

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Invasive Species

- Design removal/control programs for non-native invasive species (e.g. purple loosestrife, garlic mustard)

Native Species and Biodiversity

- Secure federal/provincial funds for protection, rehabilitation and/or re-introduction of rare, endangered and locally extinct species
- Habitat and corridor protected strategies under NE1
- Research genetic “fingerprints” for rare/endangered species

INDICATORS

- # of rare / endangered species;
- # of non-native invasive species (plants and animals)

NE2. Ensure that the Ecosystems Within Huron County are Healthy and Resilient by Supporting Our Native Biodiversity

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- # non-native species reduced by 25%; area of invasion reduced by 50%
- Native species richness increased by 25%

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- species richness of native species

NE3. Maintain, Protect and Improve the Quality and Quantity of Huron County's Surface and Groundwater Resources

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Develop a foundation for rural storm water management plans across all watersheds in Huron County (see page 9)

Water Quality Protection

- Ensure phosphorus removal at waste water treatment plants is effective, and explore its removal at smaller plants
- Monitor septic systems for *E. coli*
- Support the agricultural industry (farms and feedlots) in developing and implementing sustainable practices (e.g. manure management plans, reduced fertilizer use, and Integrated Pest Management to reduce pesticide use)
- Ensure safe drinking water supplies

Lake Huron Shoreline

- Develop strategies to maintain water quality along Lake Huron shoreline for recreational uses (e.g. swimming, boating)

Education and Awareness

- Develop and implement public education and outreach programs on:
 - the proper maintenance of septic systems;
 - proper disposal of hazardous chemicals; and
 - water conservation measures (combined with water meter installations)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Water Quality Protection

- Establish a permanent Hazardous Household Waste disposal depot
- Assist public with addressing septic systems failure
- Ensure proper storm water management through:
 - soft engineering (reducing hardened surfaces where feasible)
 - disconnecting downspouts from drains
 - constructing surface retention facilities to store excess runoff
- Reduce salt use in de-icing

Groundwater Source Protection

- Develop source water protection plans for all groundwater sources of potable water, ensuring that groundwater is not overexploited

Lake Huron Shoreline

- Expand Huron County Clean Water program
- Support stronger pollution-reduction standards for Lake Huron water

TARGETS

- Provincial standards are met for concentrates of P (PO₄), N (NO₃, NO₂, NH₄), chloride, pesticides, metals (Cd, Pb, Hg, Fe, Zn, etc), *E. coli*, etc.
- All Lake Huron beaches have a blue flag designation
- Hydrographs as close to 'undeveloped' as possible
- Maintain maximum base flow of water throughout the year
- 100 % of septic system owners carry out proper maintenance activities
- 100% of household hazardous chemicals disposed of at a hazardous depot
- Drinking water supplies meet federal/provincial drinking water standards

INDICATORS

- Concentration of P (PO₄) , N (NO₃, NO₂, NH₄), chloride, pesticides, metals
- *E. Coli* levels in water
- Number of blue flag beaches
- Stream flow (annual and seasonal)
- % awareness and compliance with septic system maintenance activities and hazardous waste disposal guidelines
- amount of material deposited at hazardous waste depots
- # of wells / supplies with low stress (<10% use)
- # boil water orders; # wells in compliance; # public water supplies in compliance

NE4. Reduce the Amount of Toxins and Waste Entering Huron County's Environment

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Air Quality

- Develop and implement anti-idling campaigns to reduce vehicle emissions
- Develop a strategy to reduce or eliminate open burning of garbage
- Support urban planning initiatives that integrate residences / businesses / schools / recreation (see LC2)

Waste Reduction

- Set County and municipal waste diversion targets (e.g. 60%, 70%, 80%)
- Develop and implement public education and outreach campaigns to promote the reduction and reuse of waste (e.g. through backyard composting, recycling, organic practices, green bins, etc.)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Air Quality

- Explore the use of alternative fuel transit vehicles
- Improve public transit system to reduce reliance on one-person vehicle occupancy (see LC4 and TR1)

Zero Waste Community

- Support waste reduction programs in the industrial sector
- Develop programs and policies that maximize waste diversion (recycling, hazardous waste disposal, backyard composting) and minimize the need for landfill or other solutions

TARGETS

- Reduce Huron County's contribution to poor air quality parameters by 75%
- Air Quality Health Index of 1-3 (low health risk) in urban areas
- County and municipal waste diversion targets are met
- Huron County achieves Zero Waste community status

INDICATORS

- Trends in ground level ozone (O₃); Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)
- Air Quality Health Index
- Total waste generated per capita (kg / person /year)
- Waste diversion rate (%)

NE5. Increase Huron County's Contribution to Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change by Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Conduct baseline research of emissions by sector (agriculture, businesses etc.), by energy source (coal, oil, natural gas, gasoline, diesel, electricity) and in County services (e.g. streetlights, vehicles, municipal buildings)

Education and Awareness

- Implement public education and outreach campaigns around reducing emissions (include contests and challenges such as Turn Out the Lights)
- Establish demonstration projects that illustrate best practices for emission reductions (e.g. demonstration farms, sustainable forestry)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Carbon Neutral Community

- Develop strategies to reduce the County's cumulative GHG emissions and move Huron County towards a carbon neutral community
- Develop a strategy for reducing dependence upon fossil fuels in an integrated manner for each of the major sectors: agriculture, tourism and forestry
- Develop and expand on the use of alternative energy sources and carbon efficient fuels in Huron County (see EG1)

See also actions under LC4 and TR1

TARGETS

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Huron County by 50%
- Reduce methane from agricultural sources by 50%

INDICATORS

- Community eCO₂ Emissions by Sector and Energy source
- Corporate greenhouse gas emissions (as eCO₂) by fuel type and use

Environmental Integrity

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Huron County will maximize energy conservation

ENCO1. Foster an Energy Conscious Culture Throughout Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Create a County-wide energy conservation working group
- **Education and Awareness**
- Implement a community-based social marketing program to foster energy conservation behavioural change and increase participation in existing programs (e.g. Hydro One’s saveONenergy and Power Save Plus Program; Ontario Power Authority’s Power Pledge)
- Conduct a door-to-door energy and water conservation program combined with the installation of water meters in residential/ commercial/industrial properties
- Implement community wide competitions such as “Turn off the Lights” days, “Walk to work” days, and “Work from home” days

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Create a local utility energy conservation program with incentives for businesses, schools, government buildings, and residents
- Provide financial incentives for energy conservation

TARGETS

- Reduce energy consumption in Huron County by 25% overall and per capita by 30%

INDICATORS

- Per capita energy consumption (residential)
- Trends in energy use

ENCO2. Exhibit Municipal Leadership in Energy Awareness and Use

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Priority Project:** Municipal energy plans (see page 12)
- Develop a corporate energy policy and implement a corporate energy conservation strategy
 - Require higher energy efficiency standards for new public buildings, such as LEED certification requirements
 - Source building materials locally for municipal projects
 - Conduct an inventory of present municipal purchasing practices and develop a sustainable purchasing handbook for municipal purchasing to show where / how to buy sustainably

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Replace old, energy inefficient equipment
- Locate municipal facilities in populated areas, accessible by means of active transportation and transit
- Adopt best practice recommendations for municipal buildings identified through the Audit++ Program, including retrofits to improve energy efficiency of older municipal buildings

TARGETS

- Reduce energy consumption in Huron County by 25%
- All municipal purchases will be “green” and sustainable

INDICATORS

- Municipal energy consumption
- Degree of sustainable government purchasing

ENCO3. Maximize Energy Conservation Within the Development and Building Industry

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Capacity for Green Building and Retrofit Projects

- Create educational materials, including toolkits, that outline best practices and available resources to developers and builders
- Facilitate workshops for local builders on best practices for energy efficiency
- Provide incentives, such as tax relief programs
- Maintain a database of government programs, incentives and resources for best construction and energy efficiency practices

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Sustainable Community Design and Land Use Practices

- Research Sustainable Residential Development in the rural context (see Moving Kingston Forward: Towards Sustainable Residential Development as a starting point)
- Amend Official Plan policies and zoning regulations to reflect sustainable neighbourhood development guidelines (e.g. LEED for Neighbourhood Development Canadian pilot projects)
- Provide flexibility in the application of planning regulations for conservation and efficiency achievements

TARGETS

- Reduce energy consumption in Huron County by 25% overall

INDICATORS

- Total energy consumption in commercial and industrial sectors

Environmental Integrity

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Huron County will retain its rural character through appropriate rural development and planned growth of its settlement areas. Communities will be compact, pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and provide a range of services and facilities

LC1. Preserve Huron County's History and Rural Character

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: The schoolyard planting project (see page 22)

Preservation of Heritage Buildings

- Increase participation in annual Doors Open events
- Continue to support and promote the Huron Heritage Fund and the implementation of Heritage Grant Programs in local municipalities
- Commemorate designated heritage buildings and promoting heritage walking tours
- Investigate the use of Heritage Property Tax Relief Programs (ss.365.2 of the Municipal Act, 2001)
- Investigate the amendment of Property Standards By-Laws to prescribe minimum standards for the maintenance of heritage buildings (ss. 35.3 and 45.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act)

Streetscapes

- Encourage the planting of indigenous tree and plant species in front yards, boulevards, commercial and institutional parking lots, green spaces, and roadsides by:
 - Collaborating with local horticultural businesses who specialize in indigenous species
 - Requiring the use of indigenous species through Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act)
 - Establishing municipal policies for the use of indigenous species on public properties

Shorelines

- Closely monitor development along Lake Huron shorelines and ensure it is in line with sustainability principles and protects existing natural features and character of local communities

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Preservation of Heritage Buildings

- Implement Registers for Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (ss. 27 and 39.2 of the Ontario Heritage Act)
- Investigate the designation of heritage properties and districts (Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act)
- Develop Urban Design Guidelines for designated heritage conservation districts and identified cultural heritage landscapes
- Conduct a county-wide Cultural Heritage Mapping study
- Present workshops and lectures for interested citizens on preserving and restoring heritage properties and privately held heritage collections that includes information on accessing grant programs for this type of private restoration work

Focusing Commercial Development in Downtown Areas

- Establish Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) in identified areas (ss. 28, Planning Act)
- Investigate the use of a Development Permit System (DPS) to streamline the development process (ss. 70 2(5) Ontario Regulation 608/06)
- Ensure that Official Plan and Zoning By-Law policies allow for mixed land use in downtown areas to promote residential density to support commercial development
- Establish and promote the use of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) for downtown redevelopment (s. 204 of the Municipal Act)

Landscapes

- Preserve agricultural land – protecting it from new development – through the use of appropriate land use designations in Official Plans
- Foster closer working relationships between heritage organizations, conservation authorities and environmental action groups focusing on common goals of preserving the quality of life in Huron County

TARGETS

- All Huron County schools have undertaken the schoolyard planting project

INDICATORS

- # of schools who have undertaken the schoolyard planting project

LC2. Foster Compact Liveable Communities That Address Community Needs

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Promote resident participation in creating liveable communities by establishing a Steering Committee to advise and oversee liveable community initiatives
- Use land and infrastructure efficiently with an emphasis on environmental protection, intensification, redevelopment and infill opportunities, by way of:
 - Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act)
 - Subdivision Approval Criteria (ss. 51(24) and (25) of the Planning Act)
 - Allowing for secondary units
 - Official Plan policies and Zoning By-Laws

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Promote and encourage communities that are walkable by way of:
 - Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act)
 - Establishing minimum and maximum heights/density of development in by-laws (ss. 34(3) Planning Act)
 - Subdivision Approval Criteria (ss. 51(24) and (25) of the Planning Act)
- Develop communities that have a mix of uses, housing types and prices, and accommodate anticipated growth through appropriate Official Plan policies and Zoning By-Laws
- Build capacity for and promote the planning of age-friendly environments
- Connect land use planning with injury prevention measures
- Calculate and track Huron County's ecological footprint. Identify areas where it can be reduced significantly and institute programs to achieve these reductions.

TARGETS

- Growth in Huron County will be accommodated within existing urban boundaries
- Huron County's Ecological Footprint is reduced from the Canadian average (7.6 ha / person) by 25%

INDICATORS

- Pattern of population growth
- Ecological Footprint

LC3. Create Long-Term Infrastructure Plans that Support Appropriate Services, Facilities and Amenities for Liveable Communities

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Ensure safe drinking water supplies
- Work with MOE to ensure that water withdrawals are within permitted levels
- Promote naturalized landscaping with minimal turf grass (reduces water and energy consumption) through:
 - Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act)
 - Subdivision Approval Criteria (ss. 51(24) and (25) of the Planning Act)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Cultivate an integrated approach to land use, infrastructure and transportation planning
- Educate, promote, encourage, and permit best management practices for stormwater management (SWM) by:
 - Investigating the use of a Green Roof By-Law
 - Providing subsidies and other financial incentives to encourage the use of grey water collection systems
 - Requiring best practices in SWM through Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act) and Subdivision Approval Criteria (. 51(24) and (25) of the Planning Act)
- Update infrastructure as needed, emphasizing the use of sustainable design options and material when feasible

TARGETS

- Infrastructure meets community needs in a sustainable manner

INDICATORS

- Water quality indicators as listed in NE3

LC4 Create a Multi-Modal Transportation Network Which Strongly Supports Active Transportation

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Enhance opportunities for active transportation in Huron County (see page 18)

- Review current sidewalk policies at the local municipal level and update the current sidewalk inventory database
- Reduce parking requirements and require bike racks in commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities through Official Plan policies and Zoning By-Laws

See also actions under TR1

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Undertake, in partnership with local municipalities, an Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan that could include:
 - Developing cycling routes along major roads and routes between settlements
 - Developing a comprehensive trail network, focusing on connectivity and accessibility (e.g. for walking, cycling, cross-country skiing)
 - Enhancing the accessibility and walkability of communities through wide barrier-free sidewalks on both sides of the street
 - Providing secure bicycle facilities at all municipal and institutional destinations
 - Introducing bike racks on transit vehicles to enhance intermodal connectivity
 - Ensuring that alternative transportation links between communities are accessible to all residents

TARGETS

- Improved access to and use of active transportation alternatives (walking, biking, etc)

INDICATORS

- % of residents within 1 km of a dedicated biking facility
- % of children within walking distance to school (1.6 km for primary, 4.8 km for High School)
- Average commuter distance (km) per year

LC5. Mitigate the Impacts of Big Box Development

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Require a high standard of building site design for future big box development addressing the needs of community

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Through Site Plan Control (ss. 41(4) Planning Act), Zoning By-Laws and Official Plan policies:
 - Require big box development to be integrated and connected to existing communities by active transportation paths
 - Require big box development to utilize naturalized landscaping and greenspace

TARGETS

-

INDICATORS

-

Community and Social Well-Being

POPULATION

Huron County will sustain a moderate population growth with increased ethnic diversity by retaining current residents, welcoming new residents, and developing opportunities for youth, families and seniors.

POP1. Support a Moderate and Sustainable Population Growth with Increased Ethnic Diversity

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Distribute the Huron County Population Strategy/Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) across the County
- Produce a brief analysis overview of Huron County demographics (including future trends) from the LIP
- Promote Huron County as a destination for new immigrants
- Identify patterns of growth in Huron County (where people are moving to)
- Implement the recommendations of the LIP
- Create a welcoming service for new residents

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Provide assistance for new immigrants to establish businesses. Encourage businesses that are oriented towards the culture of new immigrants (e.g. art, food, clothing, literature)
- Ensure municipal planning accommodates population growth within existing urban areas and mminimizes sprawl

TARGETS

- Huron County is a culturally, ethnically, socially, and religiously diverse community
- Growth in Huron County will be accommodated within existing settlement areas

INDICATORS

- Social, religious, cultural, ethnic diversity measured through census data
- # of new immigrants & new comers to Huron County
- Pattern of population growth (including birthrate within Huron)

POP2. Market and Promote Huron County as a Great Place To Live and Vacation

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Priority Project:** Make Huron Home (see page 14)
- Develop a strategy to communicate the quality of life in Huron (relaxed, safe, affordable, little traffic, friendly people, small communities) and actively promote the positive attributes of living and working in Huron
 - Create a strong, inclusive community identity based on what we are - "this is Huron"
 - Promote rural and small town lifestyle and employment opportunities to seasonal residents and visitors – entice people to move here
 - Creatively market all entertainment options (e.g. live music, trails, parks, fishing, theatre, camping, etc.)
 - Partner with Huron Tourism Association to Make Huron County a destination of choice for visitors
 - Foster a welcoming and culturally sensitive community (e.g. increase opportunities for children to experience ethnic diversity through school projects, curricula, and field trips)
 - Continue to celebrate local First Nations history, culture, and communities
 - Encourage inclusion of cultural and ethnic diversity in all aspects of cultural programming. Recognize that audiences and consumers are interested in experiencing and learning about cultures and traditions outside their own

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Ensure that a variety of housing options exist, including affordable housing options suitable for youth, young families, and singles
- Continue to develop a complete network of broadband/IT infrastructure across the County

See also actions under CN1

POP2. Market and Promote Huron County as a Great Place To Live and Vacation

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Education and Awareness

- Increase awareness about the principles and actions within the Local Immigration Partnership strategy to Huron County residents through social media/ad campaign
- Encourage, promote, and celebrate diversity through public education and outreach programs (e.g. TV, newspaper, radio) and community events (e.g. Cultural Festivals, Food from around the world weeks, etc.)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

TARGETS

- Huron County is a culturally, ethnically, socially, and religiously diverse community
- Target message to the market – identify specific markets (i.e. new immigrants, young Huron residents to return, etc.)
- Increase retention and return rate.

INDICATORS

- # of new residents in Huron County (and previous geographical location)
- # of visitors/tourists to Huron County per year
- birthrate within Huron County
- # of new residents in Huron County (and previous geographical location)
- Retention of new residents to Huron County

POP3. Foster And Enhance Opportunities for all Demographics (Youth, Families, and Seniors)

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Youth

- Conduct research on the number of youth leaving Huron County and their primary reasons for doing so
- Develop a Youth Retention and Return Strategy which could include:
 - Demonstrating the opportunities that exist in Huron (agriculture, manufacturing, and cultural industries) to youth;
 - Networking with universities and potential employers to establish career related co-op internships, apprenticeship, mentoring programs, and jobs for youth and graduates (**see EC2 and CN3**)
 - Marketing employment opportunities directly to Huron's youth (message to youth needs to ensure that “Retention” includes “leaving and returning”)

Seniors

- Plan for the needs of seniors, including accessibility, affordable housing, aging at home, and health care

Youth

- Hold an annual Youth Summit on pressing issues (e.g. climate change) with local experts. Ask youth to develop responses and integrate them in the municipal planning processes (
- Provide safe places in each community for youth to hang out
- Increase number of free community events in Huron County (e.g. free skating, community picnics, concerts on the beach, etc.)

TARGETS

- Asset/immigration increase by 50%
- Maximize local employment in high end jobs
- All ages & incomes visible in Core areas of settlement areas
- Huron County is an age friendly communities

INDICATORS

- Net out-migration of youth (<24 years)
- # of youth employed locally
- Median income of in Huron County compared to other rural counties
- # of age friendly communities (all demographics)

Community and Social Well-Being

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Huron County residents value and support community organizations and services which promote culture, diversity, recreation, education, entertainment, affordable housing and health

CN1. Support and Build Arts, Culture, and Heritage Programs to Inspire and Foster Creative Energy in Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Develop an arts and culture resource hub to support the development of arts, culture, and heritage efforts in Huron County (see page 16).

- Market all arts, cultural and heritage opportunities (e.g. County festivals, events, businesses, and activities) widely (e.g. to GTA media, U.S. border state media, online), and showcase them as "uniquely Huron"
- Create one central website that contains information and links to all arts, culture, and heritage resources in the County (all social media)
- Explore the feasibility of having the Huron County Museum act as an administrative umbrella organization for some of the smaller heritage assets and museums in the County
- Cultural mapping/time mapping of cultural events
- Prepare a municipal cultural plan that identifies upper and lower tier responsibilities i.e. include cultural and heritage assets in Official Plan, zoning, and other bylaws as necessary
- Explore ways to ensure that arts, culture, and heritage and their local creators and contributors are appreciated and supported as cornerstones of the community's health, vitality and economic prosperity
- Encourage and enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for arts stakeholders i.e. establish business start-up and support for artists
- Ensure that youth have ample opportunity to participate in affordable artistic expression and cultural heritage activities (drama, visual arts, dance)
- Conduct a survey with visitors to Huron County to identify why they are attending arts, culture and heritage events and programs, and what more they would like to see

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Continue to support and expand on immediate actions

TARGETS

- Huron County has a vibrant and accessible arts community
- Increased number of visitors to art, culture and heritage programs
- Increase opportunities for cultural and creative industries

INDICATORS

- Number of private and public art spaces (galleries, open air exhibits), culture and heritage programs
- Number of visitors to art, culture and heritage programs
- # of diverse arts programs in Huron County
- Quality & quantity of media coverage

CN2. Ensure Huron County is Affordable and Accessible for All Residents

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Priority Project:** Develop a lens of sustainability (see page 31)
- Expand upon free or low-cost Huron County community events and activities (e.g. cultural events, skating, etc.)
 - Create accessibility awards for the most accessible business or best retrofit. Encourage public and private community facilities to carry out accessibility upgrades (ramps, electrically operated doors, lifts, etc.).
 - Increase awareness of hidden homelessness across Huron County
 - Continue expanding the Bridges out of Poverty program in Huron County
 - Inventory of free/low cost events

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Increase the range of affordable and attainable housing types and a mix of rental ownership options in accessible locations and ensure that Huron County addresses and plans for the housing needs of its community
- Link transportation provision with organization of events and activities
- Promote mixed use live-work environments with affordable housing
- Maintain and increase capacity of current housing supports for youth
- Develop transitional housing supports for men and families in Huron County

TARGETS

- Reduce the number of individuals and families living with low-income
- Number of housing units/ beds meets the demand of Huron County Community
- Decreased use of emergency shelters through transition to affordable housing
- All new public buildings will be compliant with the OCD Act

INDICATORS

- Diversity of housing options in Huron County
- Number of public facilities that are accessible
- Statistics around poverty in Huron County

CN3. Encourage, Support and Ensure that Opportunities for Meaningful Higher Learning Experiences Exist in Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Assess current job markets and skill needs of Huron County residents to add/modify/adapt training and education programs as needed
- Increase co-ordination, communication and alignment among the educational opportunities in Huron County so that all groups are aware of, supporting, and promoting each other's initiatives
- Promote and encourage the provision of post-secondary educational courses locally that meet community needs and increase job opportunities (e.g. green jobs, new businesses, skills for 21st century opportunities)
- Support and invest in local schools
- Capitalize on the rich intellectual capital in Huron County by connecting community leaders with high schools to profile diverse pathways through education and employment

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Increase availability of high speed internet in major population centres including libraries for on-line learning
- Hold an annual 'Education Fair' to advertise available jobs in Huron County and to celebrate success
- Foster the partnerships between school boards on some initiatives (i.e. youth summit)
- Establish permanent, post-secondary and specialized educational programs with full diploma or degree (e.g. explore satellite campuses for colleges and universities located within Huron County)
- Explore innovative ways to avoid school closures
- Develop educational opportunities that foster life-long learning (i.e. ongoing learning for farmer, new strategies for changing markets or niche agriculture groups)

TARGETS

- All Huron County residents are appropriately trained for 21st century jobs
- High school graduation rate at 100% (currently below 90%)

INDICATORS

- Education completion/ graduation rates: high school, post-secondary diploma and degree programs, post-secondary education courses, apprenticeship programs
- Diversity of educational opportunities in Huron County (# of high schools, post-secondary diploma and degree programs, adult education courses,

CN3. Encourage, Support and Ensure that Opportunities for Meaningful Higher Learning Experiences Exist in Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

apprenticeship programs, environmental education programs etc.)

CN4. Foster Pride, Sense of Community, and Support in Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Build community spirit and neighbourhood connections through annual picnics and community and school gardens
- Promote neighbourhood watch programs in Huron County communities

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Maintain a unique sense of place in the smaller villages and towns of Huron County, but recognize common interests moving towards a sustainable future
- Build stronger connections between police and the community to ensure Huron County communities are safe places to live and grow
- Support and recognize community volunteers by offering leadership and volunteer opportunities within our community and donating time and money to support community organizations

TARGETS

- All Huron County residents are proud to call Huron County home

INDICATORS

- Number of volunteers
- Attendance at community and neighbourhood events

Community and Social Well-Being

HEALTHY ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

**Huron County residents live active, healthy lifestyles
with access to wellness services for mind and body**

HAC1. Promote Active and Healthy Lifestyles to Huron County Residents

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Healthy Eating

- Develop a Food Charter considering production, processing, distribution, increasing access to healthy foods and consumption
- Expand Community Food Advisors and Community Kitchen Program
- Support programs that increase awareness around acquiring and preparing healthy foods (see AG3)

Recreation

- Use Community Mapping to inventory existing physical activity programs and resources

Education and Awareness

- Explore current behaviour and demand in recreational activities, and promote behaviour change to adopt more physical activity practices in all age groups (e.g. walking to school, walking and cycling clubs)
- Increase awareness and understanding of how community design and lifestyle are connected to rural health issues (e.g. obesity, cardiovascular disease)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Recreation

- Maintain a full range of playing fields, parks, arenas, and recreation complexes (e.g. for high level training in track, cycling, gymnastics, martial arts, etc.)
- Ensure accessible trails with linkages between communities and public access points (e.g. to rivers and shorelines) maintained throughout the year
- Foster community engagement of all ages in planning initiatives, including cultural, social, recreational and business initiatives
- Foster sustainable community design (see LC2)
- Support the development of workplace recreation policies

Healthy Eating

- Expand model of community gardens through building partnerships and examining land-use bylaws
- Explore best practices for improving access to local foods (e.g. Local Food Hubs)
- Conduct community mapping to identify priority areas for improved food access
- Encourage organizations and businesses to adopt healthy food policies and buy local food
- Advocate for stronger legislation around accessibility of unhealthy foods

TARGETS

- Huron County has recreational opportunities and facilities that meet the needs of the community, as defined by the community
- People in Huron County are eating healthier foods

INDICATORS

- # of people / 1000 population participating in recreational activities
- # of people participating in healthy food classes, courses, and program
- Cost of healthy eating

HAC2. Strongly Support Active Transportation in Our Communities

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Establish a walking/cycling education and outreach campaign that may include:
 - Developing Pedestrian and Cycling Charters for the County of Huron in partnership with local municipalities
 - Coordinating a walking school bus for children in the towns and villages
 - Adopting an Active and Safe Routes to School program
 - Implementing a Bicycle Friendly Community designation program

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Foster a community-based bike cooperative to refurbish donated bikes for families in need and for private sale
- Undertake, in partnership with local municipalities, an Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan (see LC4)
- Prepare and hold an Active Transportation and Health Promotion Workshop

TARGETS

- Increased participation of Huron County residents in non-fossil fuelled modes of transport (bike, walk)

INDICATORS

- Kms of bike paths, recreation trails, bike lanes per capita

HAC3. Ensure Huron County Residents Have Access to Excellent Health and Wellness Services to Support Healthy Bodies, Minds, and Communities

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Continue community support to maintain and enhance local hospitals and clinics
- Assess the needs for additional in-school breakfast programs
- Establish and promote LGBTQ support services for youth and adults
- Support no-smoking zone policies and by-laws in workplaces, recreational fields, and Huron County buildings
- Build partnerships among agencies delivering community mental health supports and programs to identify strategies to address current challenges

Recreation

- Develop a Community Physical Activity Advisor Program
- Ensure public access to Lake Huron, the network of walking trails, rivers etc.

Education and Awareness

- Design and implement a public education and outreach campaign to increase community awareness of existing support services in Huron County (e.g. recreation, healthy cooking classes, etc.)
- Continue to develop and implement public education and outreach campaigns regarding preventable injuries in various age groups

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Connect community health groups and service providers in specific areas to discuss overlap and partnership opportunities to achieve common goals (e.g. a community approach to alcohol and substance abuse, tobacco use and exposure, mental health, etc.)
- Identify and implement strategies to reduce alcohol and substance misuse in youth (including policies around alcohol and sporting events, education and awareness, etc.)
- Support a comprehensive strategy to address the orphan patient list including:
 - Attracting and retaining health care professionals
 - Marketing health care professions to youth
 - Providing local health care training

Recreation

- Build capacity and partnerships with existing facilities, organizations and programs to increase access to and participation in recreation opportunities (e.g. after hours)
- Create a County-wide system of access to and promotion of recreation subsidies

TARGETS

- Medical services are on a par with similar jurisdictions regarding access to doctors, wait times for medical procedures, long term care beds etc
- All Huron County residents have access to the health and recreation services and programs that they need

INDICATORS

- # of people using support programs (collected by individual programs)
- Injury and mortality rates (e.g. emergency room visits)
- Total # of physicians (new and existing) per 1000 people
- # of hospital beds, long-term care beds,
- Emergency response time, # of EMS providers per 1000 people
- Available recreation opportunities (community centres, acres of parkland per person, recreation trail miles)
- Public access sites on lakes and rivers

Community and Social Well-Being

TRANSPORTATION

Huron County will have a transportation network, emphasizing active transportation and providing multi-modal options, such as walking, cycling, roads, rail, water, and air transit that meet the needs of the entire community.

TR1. Develop an Accessible, Efficient, Integrated, Multi-Modal Transportation Network

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Use the Transportation Demand Management study recommendations to pursue alternative opportunities for getting people around in Huron (see page 20)

- Establish a Transportation Committee to take the lead on addressing Huron County’s transportation challenges in a comprehensive manner. Could include an exploration of:
 - Best practices in other rural communities
 - Potential funding sources to enhance the existing bus services provided by privately operated companies (between urban centres in County)
 - Potential partnerships to create a shuttle service for schools to provide transportation to and from after school activities

Public Transportation

- Build partnerships among existing transportation providers to maximize facility/vehicle use and to explore opportunities to expand public transportation services throughout Huron County

TARGETS

- Increase non-fossil fuelled modes of transport (bike, walk)
- Increase public transit ridership by 30%
- Special need transport services (e.g. for medical needs, disabled, seniors and youth/low income families) are available on demand at all times

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Public Transportation

- Expand and refine the Abouttown service schedule
- Explore the use of school buses outside of school hours as additional public transportation vehicles
- Pilot a Summer Shuttle Service that provides hop-on-hop-off service linking key destinations throughout Huron County (i.e. downtown centres, local community health services, grocery stores, etc)

Transportation Network

- Explore new opportunities associated with established airports, harbours and railways in Huron County

Active Transportation

- Undertake, in partnership with local municipalities, an Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan (**see LC4**)

INDICATORS

- Modal split (cars, bikes, buses)
- Kms of roads/bike paths/transit routes/sidewalks per capita
- Total public transit ridership
- Availability and use of special transport for medical needs, disabled, seniors and youth/low income families

TR2. Ensure Huron County’s Municipal Transportation System is Environmentally and Economically Responsible

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Education and Awareness

- Establish and implement an anti-idling campaign to reduce vehicle idling

Carpooling

- Develop a “carpool to work day” twice a year at Municipal and County Offices
- Identify major employers and members of the community to work with to invest in and implement potential vanpool and carpooling opportunities
- Implement carpool and vanpool parking lots at key locations throughout the County (e.g. offices, educational facilities) using additional signage or pavement markings

TARGETS

-

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Road Infrastructure

- Consider the triple bottom line for major infrastructure projects and infrastructure maintenance
- Consider the economic benefits and environmental goals when determining support and enhancement of regional airports, rail and roads
- Minimize the environmental impact of road maintenance by optimizing the use of road salt and calcium chloride
- Establish policies for the use of recycled paving material and other sustainable infrastructure practices
- Explore the use of windbreaks along roads to reduce snow drifting and contribute natural habitat

INDICATORS

- Average commuter distance (km) per year

Economic Security

ECONOMY

The Huron County economy will continue to provide economic security and opportunity for its residents through diversification, business retention, local provision, education and training opportunities.

EC1. Ensure a Diversity of Economic Opportunities Within Huron County to Enhance Economic Security

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Support the initiatives outlined in the Economic Blueprint 2011
- Continue to market Huron's tourism strengths and promote tourism development opportunities (see POP2)
- Support the development of a long-term marketing, promotion, and retention campaign recognizing local and global economic factors
- Support market development for local business using other businesses in Huron
- To attract new business, the perception that Huron is NOT open for business must change through mentorship, customer service training, etc.
- Develop industries that youth express interest in to aid in youth retention.

Green Business

- Develop policies and programs to attract Green Business and advertise Huron county as a place for Green Business
- Celebrate Green Business through media (newspaper inserts, trade publications)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Encourage an entrepreneurial spirit in youth
- Explore niche development opportunities within the five pillars of Huron's economy: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, culture/creative economy, and retail
- Target new investors to take advantage of infrastructure capacity (e.g. Food processing)
- Promote diversification of agriculture towards more value added products (see AG2)
- Explore potential for conference facilities (using green technology) within Huron County
- Investigate hiring a project manager for new business attraction

TARGETS

- Increased diversity of businesses and employment, especially in sustainable economic activities
- Revenue from new jobs created represent an XX% increase from 2010 levels

INDICATORS

- Number and type of new businesses started each year
- Number of new green businesses
- Number of jobs created (and net revenue generated) in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and culture
- Number of businesses that adopt sustainable business practices
- Percentage of diversification of agriculture (based on benchmark)

EC2. Provide Local Education and Training Opportunities Which Will Support the Diverse Huron County Economy

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Local Education and Training Opportunities

- Develop a workforce development strategy to support workforce development training (part of the 4 County Labour Board)
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a trade school, industrial college, and e-learning course opportunities (Network Huron)
- Continue partnering with local school boards to offer training programs that increase awareness of local opportunities and equip youth to work in businesses Huron County is attracting (pre and post high school) (High Skills Major) i.e. sponsorship of science fairs in Huron or in the eco-schools program

- Expand and tailor the course offerings of Lake Huron Learning Collaborative
- Find ways to connect with the rich intellectual capital in the area, through developing a platform for an exchange with our highly-trained residents (e.g. professors living in the region)

See also actions under CN3

TARGETS

- All Huron County residents are appropriately trained for 21st Century jobs (including green business, etc.)
- Increased youth retention rate and decrease in out-migration of youth

INDICATORS

- Diversity of education and training opportunities in Huron County (trade schools, adult courses, apprenticeship programs, diploma and degree programs, etc.)
- Level of education in population (number of high school grads; trade school grads).

EC2. Provide Local Education and Training Opportunities Which Will Support the Diverse Huron County Economy

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Number of schools in the eco-school program
- Youth retention rates; out-migration rates

EC3. Strive to Create a Huron County Economy That Supports the Triple Bottom Line and Ensures the Best Use of Financial, Social, and Natural Resources

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and distribute a sustainable business best practice guide (based on the HMA sustainable business toolkit) • Promote the adoption of sustainability principles by local businesses • Develop an annual “Best Environmental Practices Award” recognition program for innovative businesses (across sectors & groups) • Promote cooperative ventures where single investors have not acted on opportunities alone • Educate and inform businesses of appropriate waste disposal methods and encourage waste reduction, reuse, and recycling • Develop criteria (found from other sources) for a “Sustainable Huron” business, if a business meets the criteria, they can use the logo • Create jobs that offer a safe, secure, and pleasant work environment that pay well enough to afford the cost of living in Huron County. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote sustained harvest forestry as part of the agricultural economy • Proactively support natural heritage features in the market economy (carbon market, real estate values) • Become a “dark-night skies” community (e.g. reduce light pollution at night) |
|---|---|

TARGETS

- At least three “Best Environmental Practice Awards” will be given out each year

INDICATORS

- Number of “Best Environmental Practice Awards” given out each year
- Number of companies that are certified under the “Sustainable Huron” program
- Average wage in Huron County relative to the cost of living in Huron

EC4. Assist with the Retention and Expansion of Local Businesses

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Priority Project: Encourage BR&E programs and implement effective strategies (including succession planning) (see page 25)

- Develop an online "Huron County Marketplace" to link local businesses and residents
- Explore the feasibility of creating an economic development division within the County’s Planning and Development Department
 - Conduct a scan at other similar municipalities to see how they are organized and what might work in Huron County
- Showcase Huron County at trade fairs
- Increase the visibility of the Huron Small Business Centre and the Huron Business Development Corporation
- Support and promote shop local campaigns and source goods and services

- Investigate and promote new economic opportunities
- Explore more permissive home business and industry policies
- Ensure technical support is available for new businesses to adapt to new regulations and opportunities

See also actions under DT1

EC4. Assist with the Retention and Expansion of Local Businesses

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- locally
- Establish high speed internet access throughout Huron County

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenues from new and existing businesses represent an XX% increase from 2010 levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue of existing and local businesses Number and type of businesses retained/Number and type of businesses that have closed down Number of homes accessible to high speed internet

EC5. Promote Tourism and Enhance Sustainable Tourism Practices In Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Continue to promote Huron County as a great place to live and vacation (**POP2**)

Sustainable Tourism

- Establish locally developed standards for tourist facilities, with local inspection to maintain standards and a 'seal of approval' that can be displayed on local tourist facilities
- Encourage golf courses to become Audubon certified
- Establish a Green Festivals and Meetings Standard
- Encourage the Regional Tourism Organization to develop a sustainable tourism strategy
- Develop eco-tourism and agri-tourism products in Huron (product development)
- Economic Ambassadors – getting schools to visit the area (education/awareness)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Build capacity for sustainable tourism by:
 - Exploring best practices in sustainable tourism
 - Implementing sector based initiatives
 - Promoting partnerships with other destinations
 - Identifying and supporting organizations that are able to design and implement a sustainable tourism strategy
 - Promoting sustainable tourism practices to operators and providing them with the necessary tools to implement sustainable practices
- Investigate potential for a visitor eco-tax, i.e. for beach or trail users, that could be used to generate revenues for natural areas protection and beach preservation (**see NE1 and NE2**)
- Develop "experiential" packages that demonstrate the wide variety of tourism offerings in Huron County that are sustainable and support local livelihoods

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of tourists and tourism revenue XX number of sustainable tourism strategies developed and implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visitors to locally designated tourist sites Number of B&B / hotel rooms let per year # of sustainable tourism strategies # of partnerships across tourism destinations in sustainable tourism

Economic Security

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Huron County will have a strong and diversified agricultural industry, providing food to the local community and beyond using environmental best practices

AG1. Strengthen Huron County's Agriculture Industry

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Engage and embrace the role of youth in entrepreneurship, starting with agriculture (see page 29).

Inventory of our Agricultural Context

- Conduct an inventory of the existing agricultural context in Huron County (# farms, hectares, average farm size, Greenhouses, farm income by commodity, etc.)

Capacity Building

- Hold a strategic planning session with local agricultural organizations (e.g. Farm to Table Opportunities Project) to identify and address issues that are relevant to the region and overlap between organizations
- Create an Agricultural Coordinator position at the County level to connect and work with all municipalities, organizations, and stakeholders – this person should act as a field rep that would cover on-farm, stewardship, tourism, etc. issues (based on the former OMAF position).
- Explore the creation of an Agriculture Committee in the County, working with the Huron County Federation of Agriculture, National Farmers' Union, Huron County Christian Farmers and commodity-based groups (i.e. Dairy farmers), to ensure agricultural groups continue to provide strong leadership for the industry and County

Education and Awareness

- Create a web-based list of agricultural opportunities (2010 Huron Farm Guide) – and promote to local community as well as tourists

TARGETS

- Agriculture as an economic activity in Huron County is maintained and enhanced
- High value added products represent XX% of total agricultural product in County
- Increase in % of income from high value products
- Maintain 100% of agricultural land in Huron County

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Create partnerships and introduce a successful internship program with Canada's agriculturally focused universities, including University of Guelph and Queens
- Enhance the agricultural community's involvement in planning – e.g. through an information mechanism which provides information about regulatory programs, policies or programs of interest
- Ensure that all policies and land use plans are strictly adhered to regarding protection of prime agricultural lands from non-farm uses
- Promote innovative practices such as land sharing and land leasing

Farm Succession Planning

- Promote and provide resources for farm succession planning
- Engage and embrace the role of youth in Huron County's agriculture
- Develop a local agricultural leadership program which will promote careers in agriculture, and allow youth to identify their own entrepreneurial endeavours

INDICATORS

- Total # of and average hectares of farms
- Farm income by commodity
- Rate of conversion of farmland to other uses

AG2. Support a Diversified Agriculture Sector

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Support the development, operation, and expansion of agricultural co-operatives and community based economies
- Explore the production of various niche markets to tap into new opportunities and existing markets (not limited to the religious or production type - crops, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, etc.)
- Continue explorations into potential for a viticulture industry
- Encourage ongoing learning and continuing education amongst Huron County Farmers

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Ensure technical support is available for agricultural businesses in adapting to new regulations and acting on opportunities
- Create a targeted marketing plan to attract various markets to Huron specifically for agriculture

AG2. Support a Diversified Agriculture Sector

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Agri-business incubator (Green Jobs Strategy) has a document on developing a sustainable business incubator (3 year process from incubation – starting businesses)
- Investigate partnering and collaborating on ventures (HMA, culinary tourism, etc.)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High value added products represent XX% of total agricultural product in County by 2030 • Increase in % of income from high value products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm income by commodity • Total Greenhouse Area (square metres) • Number of commodities produced and the percentage of total based on a benchmark

AG3. Continue to Build Support and Momentum for Local Food in Huron County Communities and Neighbouring Regions

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Priority Project: Increase the profile of local food as a means to diversify and enhance the local farm economy, tourism and promote healthy eating (see page 27).

Building Support

- Explore institutional buying from local sources
- Explore value-added production to increase restaurant and institutional buyers
- Work with Huron-Perth Farm to Table to investigate and develop new partnerships that will support the development of a regional food distribution system (e.g. Bruce, Perth, Grey Counties)
- Support local food processing
- Product development for agri-tourism i.e. market-ready farm-gates (see EC5)

Education and Awareness

- Implement a public education and outreach campaign that 1) promotes the importance and benefits of local food; 2) raises awareness of the range of products available in Huron County; and 3) markets Huron County as a Food Basket to other communities. Initiatives could include
 - “Grown in Huron” logos and brand promoted in local stores and beyond
 - Internet-based resources and social media to promote local food
 - Marketing of agriculture to tourists/agri-tourism through the Ontario’s West Coast Initiative
 - Meetings and events with Huron County businesses and organizations

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

Access to Healthy Food

- Build capacity and partnerships to link producers and consumers
- Develop a community marketing and leadership program to encourage healthy, local food consumption
 - Three Stage (perhaps following further market ready product development)
 - media tour – OFAC & GFO
 - buyer tour (showcase)
 - farm open house (tourism – consumer) – “Breakfast on the Farm”

Education and Awareness

- Training for farmer to become more market ready (program or networking group to share best practices)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Huron County residents have access to affordable local healthy food options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of direct-market sales • Volume of local processing • Number of farmers supplying food distribution

AG3. Continue to Build Support and Momentum for Local Food in Huron County Communities and Neighbouring Regions

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- % of local food used in municipal institutions and restaurant

AG4. Promote and Market the Use of Environmental Best Practices in the Agricultural Industry

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and profile of Environmental Management Farm Plans (EMFP) and Nutrient Management Plans (NMP)s • Support sustainable agricultural practices on Huron County farms • Promote land preservation and stewardship best practices, (e.g. use of white sheets, no irrigation, no tilling, use of companion plants, drainage ponds to filter runoff, hedgerows etc.) • Celebrate successes achieved through the Environmental Farm Plans program and Huron Clean Water project • Use the Agricultural Coordinator position to investigate and report back current research implementation opportunities (partnering universities/colleges for the development and other groups that are doing research, such as AAC and OFA’s bio-mass research project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an agricultural strategy that looks at the changes in trends for farming – including climate change and the rising cost of oil • Investigate and pursue appropriate opportunities for on-farm energy generation and alternative energy programs and policies that are applicable to agriculture • Develop viticulture with sustainable best practices • Promote the use/need of ecological goods and services payments for farmers (i.e. PEGS program) • Reducing the carbon and water footprint of agriculture in Huron County |
|---|---|

TARGETS

- All Huron County farms will have developed Environmental Farm Plans
- X% of Huron County farms are engaged in sustainable agricultural practices by 2030

INDICATORS

- Number of Environmental Farm Plans in Huron County; % increase in Plans over time
- # of farms participating in organic farming, manure management, wildlife habitat management etc.
- # of environmental farm plans and nutrient management plans in Huron County; % increase in plans over time
- # of farms participating in water, manure, pesticide, wildlife and habitat management
- Compare carbon and water footprints to previous benchmark

Economic Security

DOWNTOWNS

The five downtowns in Huron County will be active and healthy centres of commerce, government and culture, capitalizing on historic character, locally-owned businesses, and people-friendly spaces

DT1. Develop a County-Wide Downtown Strategy that Builds on Current Initiatives and Can be Adopted and Implemented by all Municipalities In Towns and Villages

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Priority Project:** Continue to encourage Business Retention and Expansion programs and implement effective strategies; and share best practices among towns and villages to ensure progress and development (see page 25)
- Establish a Downtown Coordinator position to facilitate County-wide strategic initiatives
 - Establish Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) in identified areas and make use of incentive programs (e.g. Facade Improvement Grant Program, Fee Grant Equivalent Program, Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program, Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program)
 - Investigate the use of a Development Permit System (DPS) to streamline the development process
 - Reduce progressive municipal taxes for unused buildings – this could aid in re-development

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Establish and promote the use of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) for downtown redevelopment
- Develop Urban Design Guidelines for downtown districts, especially Heritage Conservation Districts
- Ensure that Official Plan and Zoning By-Law policies allow for mixed land use in downtown areas to promote residential density to support commercial development where suitable
- Investigate the designation of heritage properties and districts (Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act) - **see LC1**

See also actions under EC4

TARGETS

- Huron County attracts and retains high end businesses, including sustainable businesses

INDICATORS

- Number of businesses (including sustainable businesses)
- # of people employed
- Vacancy rates for downtowns relative to a benchmark

DT2. Create Accessible, Aesthetically Pleasing, People-Friendly Spaces Within Our Downtowns

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Institute a public art fund from development taxes or in lieu of dedicated parkland to enhance public spaces in the downtown for events, gatherings, markets, etc
- Design sidewalks to accommodate strollers and wheelchairs
- Conduct a County-wide Wayfinding and Signage Study (e.g. business identification) and implement a coordinated signage system and associated maps for visitors and residents
- Create an index and map of all businesses and services located in downtown areas
- Develop Urban Design Guidelines for downtown districts that ensure new development complements adjacent heritage properties (and promote the benefits of the Urban Design Guidelines to owners and potential buyers)
- Create opportunities for local artists to showcase their art (feature a changing art space to illustrate the talents of Huron's artists)

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Provide pedestrian amenities and visually interesting streetscapes, including street furniture, sidewalk materials, native shade tree species, pedestrian-scale lighting, flowerboxes, banners and public art
- Promote adaptive reuse of heritage buildings by developing Official Plan policies and zoning regulations that maintain the historic character of the older buildings and make use of the second floors (**see LC1**)
- Site Plan Control
- Install bike racks and provide bike lanes, infrastructure and amenities (**see LC4**)
- Develop and apply policies to augment downtown green space where feasible
- Turn derelict, non-historical building and vacant lands into green space
- Develop Streetscape Plans for main streets and commercial districts

DT2. Create Accessible, Aesthetically Pleasing, People-Friendly Spaces Within Our Downtowns

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

TARGETS

- Green space will occupy **XX%** of downtown areas
- Heritage buildings are conserved and are used as part of the business community

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

INDICATORS

- % green space in the downtown

DT3. Foster the Development of Downtowns as Healthy Centres of Commerce, Government, and Culture, Where People Will Want to Live, Shop and Work

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

- Encourage, promote, support, and expand downtown farmers and flea markets by:
 - conducting a SWOT analysis of existing markets;
 - coordinating with local partners, such as Buy Local, Buy Fresh, Taste of Huron, and Savour Stratford Perth County, to add reach and build capacity
- Develop and promote a brand/logo which identifies businesses and products as local or “Made in Huron”
- Promote the benefits of shopping locally and the provision and sale of locally produced goods
- Conduct a gap analysis to identify the retail and service needs of the community and ensure they are met (i.e. day care, drycleaners, grocery stores, post office)
- Promote the importance of civic engagement for business owners through BIAs, Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Officers
- Implement downtown customer service programs
- Conduct a survey to understand the demographic profiling of downtown visitors

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Focus commercial and public service development in downtown areas
- Support succession planning initiatives for local businesses and retention and expansion policies
- Encourage events and activities in the downtown that attract people (i.e. balance of daytime and night time events and
- Explore residential opportunities downtown by:
 - allowing for mixed-use development;
 - allowing for secondary suites; and
 - encouraging infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings **(see LC1)**

TARGETS

- Huron County attracts and retains high end businesses in downtowns

INDICATORS

- Number of businesses
- # of people employed
- # of heritage buildings
- # of existing buildings re-used
- Volume of foot traffic relative to a benchmark
- % of local versus visitor

Economic Security

GREEN ENERGY

Huron County will utilize local renewable energy sources.

GE1. Maximize Local Energy Generation in Huron County

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (< 5 YRS)

Capacity Building

- Build organizational and citizen capacity to initiate small-scale energy projects (e.g. solar, biomass, geothermal, anaerobic, hydro, wind; and alternative ownership including cooperatives)
- Foster capacity within the industry for green building/retrofit projects
- Foster discussion on how to enhance community benefit from large scale green energy projects (i.e. municipal and/or energy co-op)
- Promote the use of a mix of energy sources in Huron County municipal buildings, and employ local renewable energy sources when appropriate
- Education and awareness on the facts and reasons why green energy is beneficial

FUTURE ACTIONS (>5 YRS)

- Embark on a Regional Community Energy Plan
- Explore marketing opportunities to attract manufacturers of renewable energy generation equipment
- Investigate opportunities for co-generation with neighbouring municipalities (e.g. wood chips for biofuels, residual hot water output for district heating)
- Explore the use of landfill gas capture
- Improve the approval process for new energy production (e.g. mitigate obstacles for selling power back to the grid)
- Explore the potential of gas capture from manure or sewage as an energy source
- Develop policies for the appropriate siting of wind power generation that conforms with the goals of the Huron County community
- Explore energy storage opportunities (e.g. holding ponds for hydro generators)
- Explore the potential of the use of lake water for geo-thermal applications for community energy generation.

TARGETS

- 50% of energy in Huron County is from renewable sources by 2030

INDICATORS

- Total Energy (kWh or MWh) from renewable energy sources
- % of energy consumed in Huron from those renewable energy sources
- % or # of locally owned renewable energy sources