

Liveable Communities

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

Strategy: Preserve Huron County’s History and Rural Character

PRIORITY PROJECT: The School Yard Planting Project

Description

This project will be the expansion of the early win that created naturalized outdoor classrooms at three of Huron’s elementary schools. This project will improve the quality of existing natural areas, provide shade and wind protection, foster natural environment and ecological awareness, provide erosion control, and engage youth to create meaningful change. This project helps to showcase sustainability in action by engaging youth in the plan. The results of this action will support strategies under the following themes:

- Natural Environment (Environmental Integrity Pillar)
- Community Needs (Community and Social Well Being Pillar)
- Economy (Economic Pillar)

Activities will include

- Expanding the pilot project to all schools in the County

Lead

- Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron Perth Catholic District School Board
- Foundation For Education

Resources

- Maitland Valley and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authorities

Collaborators

- School Boards
- Foundation for Education
- Huron County Health Department
- Huron County Planning and Development Department

Measures of Success

- Number of schoolyard planting projects

Timeline

This action will be completed when all Huron Schools have a naturalized outdoor classroom / garden.



Huron County is one of the most agriculturally productive areas in Canada. Even with the great momentum in the County for local food, the Sustainable Huron Steering Committee identified the opportunity to continue to help strengthen and build capacity for the local food movement in areas such as distribution, processing, and product development.

Sustainability in Action

Food Enterprise Opportunities Project

Huron County is one of the most agriculturally rich areas in Canada – with an output second to none in Ontario (except Essex County when greenhouse produce is included). Even with the great momentum in the County for local food, the Sustainable Huron Steering Committee identified the opportunity to continue to help strengthen and build capacity for the local food movement in areas such as distribution, processing, and product development. In order to help work towards solutions to these issues, Sustainable Huron embarked on a partnership with Huron Perth Farm to Table to help develop and support initiatives pertaining to local food, through the Food Opportunities Project.

Huron Perth Farm to Table is a network of community organizations who share concerns about access to local, healthy food. The goals of the group include educating consumers about food, nutrition and agricultural issues, creating new markets for local farmers, enhancing food security and increasing public access to nutritious food.

The Food Opportunities Project helps to support niche farming groups by funding and supporting events such as *producer study clubs*. This initiative began in April 2011. The study clubs help producers identify and understand new markets, and help them with market entry preparation and strategy. Moving forward, this project will continue to look into how to create new marketing vehicles for existing farm products, develop producer/small business capacity to launch new food ventures, and implement marketing campaigns helping to promote the local food movement for Huron and Perth Counties.

Sustainable Huron also supports the Bruce-Huron (B-H) Wholesale Produce Auction. The B-H Produce Auction runs from May – October featuring a variety of products based on the season. Sellers at the auction reside within a 75 kilometre radius from Lucknow. Registered buyers are welcome to bid on the array of products which range from plants to fresh fruits and vegetables.

It is evident that the momentum for “buying local” is continuing to be a priority in Huron County as producers and consumers alike recognize the importance of healthy eating, the unbeatable freshness that comes just just-picked food, as well as the desire to support their neighbour.