

***Take Action***  
***For***  
Sustainable Huron



***Prosperity***

***Fulfillment***

***Health***



Accepted by County Council as a framework document on June 2, 2010.

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*We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.*

-Native American Proverb

# Take Action for Sustainable Huron



Sustainability is about ensuring the long-term well-being of the planet, people, and economy. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

To the residents of Huron, sustainability means making decisions about lifestyle, thinking differently about habits, and determining our roles as individuals. Sustainability involves becoming more aware, innovative, educated and living better - not living without.

To the communities of Huron, sustainability means being connected, self-sufficient, resourceful and resilient. These qualities will enable communities to cope with change.

To the corporation of the County of Huron, sustainability calls for community engagement, informed decision making and evolution. The County of Huron strives to integrate the principles of sustainability into everyday business.



## Residents

Sustainability begins in your home and neighbourhood



## Business

Sustainability creates opportunity for local business

*We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive*

-Albert Einstein

# Introduction



'Sustainable Huron' is a *community-wide* initiative intended to raise awareness and foster action to enhance community capacity in the face of global issues. Local communities will be affected by changes in: climate, energy prices and supply, demographics, international competition and other trends.

The root of sustainability in Huron County is expected to rely on local solutions while understanding connections to global trends.



All decisions and actions in Huron County should consider potential impacts on the environment, economy and greater society.

A strategy for sustainability must be balanced, thoughtful, and planned. It is an intentional approach to understand the three spheres, *Environment*, *Society & Culture* and *Economy*, and identify directions which incorporate all three.

The 'Take Action' Report contains a series of community based actions to move towards a sustainable future.

***Don't blow it - good planets are hard to find***  
-Time

# Community Engagement



In the spring of 2006, the Warden and Council of Huron County invited the community to create a vision for the future of Huron County. This 'Take Action' Report was developed in 2007 and 2008 through the participation of more than 1,300 Huron County residents, including 60 community groups and organizations and more than 550 written submissions. *Achieving the goals for Sustainable Huron will involve all members of the community.*

## 10 Goal areas were identified:

1. Economy
2. Transportation
3. Agriculture
4. Energy
5. Livable Communities
6. Natural Environment
7. Population
8. Downtowns
9. Community Needs
10. Healthy Active Communities



*Through inclusion, foresight, and strong will, Huron can rise to the challenge of securing its future.*

## Principles of Sustainability:

1. Recognizes the interdependence of environmental, economic, and social health;
2. Invokes local responses to broader issues;
3. Emphasizes community awareness, education, and involvement; and
4. Requires the responsible and efficient use of both resources and energy

## Community Partners

Local municipalities

Service clubs

Industry associations

Government agencies

County departments

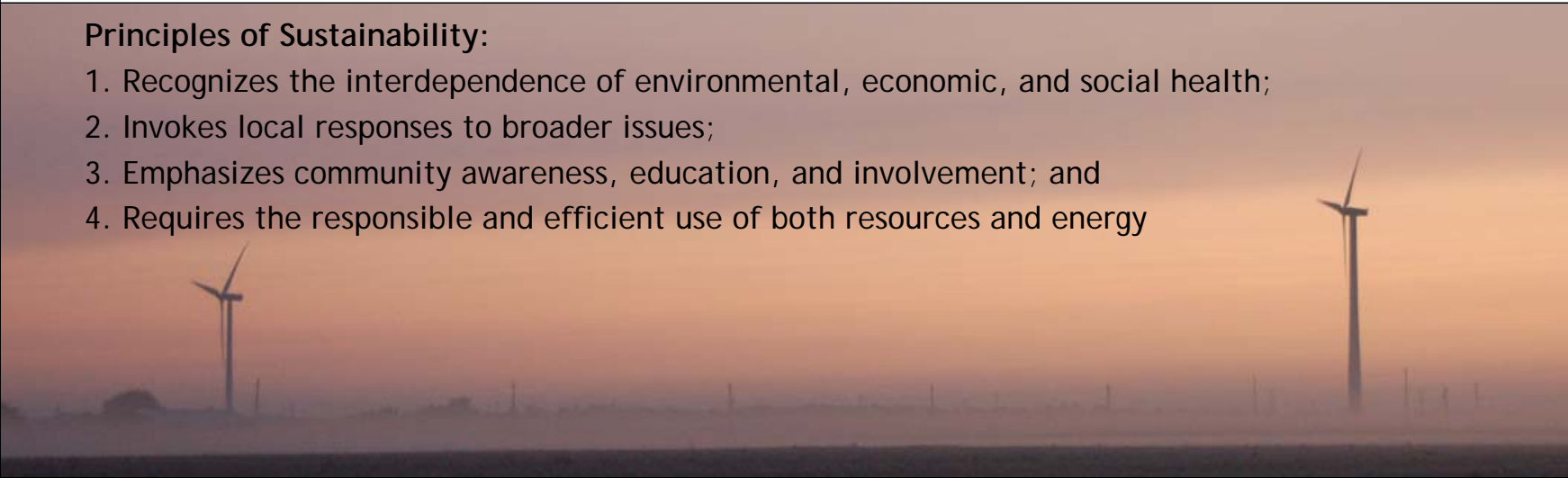
Business associations

Social organizations

Volunteers

Environmental groups

Schools & universities



# How to Read this Plan



**Common Vision for the Future**  
Collective community goal statement

**Theme**  
Area of focus

GOAL 1: Diverse and Prosperous Economy		Performance Indicators
<p><b>Community Vision</b></p> <p>Huron County economy will continue to provide economic opportunity for its residents achieved through a combination of economic diversification, and retention, tourism growth, education and training opportunities</p>	<p><b>Economic Advance is to be the same thing as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Human Progress</li> <li>- More Choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enterprise Growth</li> <li>- Unemployment Rate</li> <li>- Educational Attainment</li> <li>- Average Family Income</li> <li>- Total Wages</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a Huron County Economic Development Strategy including the development of a long-term marketing, promotion and public campaign</li> <li>- Economic Diversification</li> <li>- Explore viable development opportunities within the four pillars of economic development: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and culture</li> <li>- Workforce Development</li> <li>- Provide workforce development training, market local employment opportunities and knowledge of opportunities for workers</li> <li>- Make Huron County employment opportunities directly accessible</li> <li>- Tourism Promotion and Development</li> <li>- Promote tourism in Huron County (Lake Huron, lakes, natural space, etc.) and, in coordination with other jurisdictions, create tourism opportunities</li> <li>- Education and Training</li> <li>- Expand the course offerings of the Lake Huron Learning Collaborative</li> <li>- Consider the possibility of utilizing a public school as a learning opportunities centre</li> <li>- Business Attraction</li> <li>- Encourage non-local businesses to locate in Huron County (land/capable space)</li> <li>- Provide quality, reliable high speed internet access to the entire County</li> <li>- Environmental Responsibility</li> <li>- Create and distribute an eco-label for businesses that produce and create a recognition program for competing businesses</li> <li>- Encourage and make businesses of appropriate scale more green and encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Business Retention and Expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a "Skip Local First" campaign</li> <li>- Support and promote new business startups and expansion through increased visibility of the Huron Small Business Centre and the Huron Business Development Corporation</li> <li>- Develop a Huron County Marketplace online to link local businesses and visitors</li> <li>- Encourage Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) programs and implement effective strategies</li> <li>- Explore how to promote some occupations/occupations by policy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Did you know?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One in five workers in Huron are self-employed</li> <li>- The five economic pillars in Huron County include Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism, and Culture</li> <li>- The agricultural industry is a target industry in Huron County</li> <li>- In 2006 there were 14,175 jobs in Huron County</li> <li>- 9,750 people commute into Huron County for employment while 10,750 people commute out of Huron County for employment. A difference of 900 more people commuting out than in.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Some Current Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Huron County Economic Development Services</li> <li>- Huron Manufacturing Association</li> <li>- Huron Business Development Corporation</li> <li>- Huron Agricultural Broadband Project (high speed internet)</li> <li>- Huron County Economic Development Alliance</li> </ul>	<p><b>What You Can Do...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shop locally</li> <li>- Understand why local goods cost a little more</li> <li>- Support new business startups</li> <li>- Look at the label - choose Canada</li> <li>- Contact local business associations</li> <li>- Packaged local items that products</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quick Facts</b> Facts about Huron County</p>

**Indicators**  
Measure of progress and improvement



All goals listed in this plan are of equal importance; no priority was given to any one issue, goal area or community action.



The order of the goal areas and the related community actions are listed in no particular order of importance or priority.

**Community Actions**  
How we get there.  
Actions identified by the community to work towards a Sustainable Huron

**Some Current Initiatives**  
A sample of what is happening across Huron

**What Can You Do?**  
Everyone has a role to play

*Take care of the earth and it will take care of you.*  
-Author Unknown

# 1. Economy



## Community Vision: In 2030...

*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.*

*Economic advance is not the same thing as human progress.*  
- John Clapham

## Performance Indicators

- Enterprise growth
- Unemployment rate
- Education attainment
- Average household income
- Total number of jobs

## Community Actions

- Further develop the Huron County Economic Development Strategy, including the development of a long-term marketing, promotion and retention campaign recognizing local and global economic factors

### Economic Diversification

- Explore niche development opportunities within the four pillars of Huron's economies: agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and culture

### Workforce

- Provide workforce development training, market local employment opportunities, and encourage an entrepreneurial spirit for youth
- Market Huron County employment opportunities directly to area youth

### Tourism

- Market Huron's tourism strengths (Lake Huron, rivers, natural space, quiet and tranquil, removed from the city) and promote tourism development opportunities

### Education and Training

- Expand and tailor the course offerings of the Lake Huron Learning Collaborative
- Study the possibility of establishing a trade school and e-learning course opportunities

### Business Attraction

- Encourage new business to start or locate in Huron (e.g. web based, creative class, local production)
- Provide quality, reliable, high speed internet across the entire County

### Environmental Responsibility

- Create and distribute a sustainable business best practices guide and create a recognition program for innovative businesses
- Educate and inform businesses of appropriate waste disposal methods and encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling

## Local Business Retention and Expansion

- Source goods and services locally when possible
- Create a 'Shop Local' campaign
- Support and promote new business start-ups and expansions through increased visibility of the Huron Small Business Centre and the Huron Business Development Corporation
- Develop an online 'Huron County Marketplace' to link local businesses and residents
- Encourage Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) programs and implement effective strategies
- Explore more permissive home occupation and home industry policies
- Explore marketing opportunities to attract manufacturers of renewable energy generation equipment (e.g. wind turbines and solar panels)

## Some Current Initiatives

- Huron County Economic Development Services
- Huron Manufacturing Association - *School/Industry tours*
- Huron Business Development Corporation - *Small business loans*
- Rural Connections Broadband Project - *high speed internet*
- Huron County Economic Development Matters - *Project funding*
- Huron County Community Signage Program

## What You Can Do...

- Shop locally
- Learn why local goods may cost a little more
- Support new business
- Look at the labels – choose Canadian made goods and products
- Contract local builders and trades
- Purchase local farm fresh products

## Did you know?

One in five workers in Huron is self-employed

The four economic pillars in Huron County are agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and cultural industries

The agricultural industry is the largest industry in Huron County

In 2006 there were 31,775 jobs in Huron County

9,770 people commute into Huron County for employment while 10,755 people commute out of Huron County for employment. A difference of 985 more people commuting out than in

# 2. Transportation



## Community Vision: In 2030...

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

## Community Actions

- Formalize the Huron Transportation Taskforce and develop a Huron County Transportation Strategy

### Public Transportation

- Study the feasibility of an accessible, multi-modal public transit network including connections to Stratford, London, and Toronto

### Walking and Cycling

- Establish a walking and cycling campaign
- Locate bike racks conveniently at all institutional, commercial, industrial locations, including downtowns
- Establish bike lanes and related signage along major streets and highways (*connect the towns*) and consider cyclist safety when constructing and upgrading intersections
- Implement a 'walking school bus' for children in the towns and villages

### Harbours, Airports and Rail

- Explore new opportunities associated with established airports, harbours and railway

### Carpooling

- Promote the economic and environmental benefits of carpooling and establish a carpooling/ride share program

### Infrastructure

- Consider the triple bottom line for major infrastructure projects (economic costs, environmental costs, social costs)
- Increase use of recycled paving material
- Minimize environmental impact by optimizing use of road salt and calcium chloride



*Lightening our impact on the planet costs us little effort, money or time, but the cumulative effects can be enormous*  
- David Suzuki

## Some Current Initiatives

- Transportation Task Force - Assessing transportation needs
- Huron County Cycling Guide
- Mid Western Adult Day Centre Senior's Transportation Bus
- Local Airports (Goderich, Wingham, Huron Park), Port of Goderich, and the Goderich-Exeter Railway

## What You Can Do...

- Walk or bike to work
- Carpool
- Drive less
- Drive at slower speeds
- Maintain proper tire pressure
- Be considerate of cyclists
- Properly maintain your vehicle
- Walk together with your children to school
- Consider fuel economy when purchasing a vehicle
- Don't idle your engine for longer than 20 seconds
- Advocate for more paths and trails

## Performance Indicators

- Commute mode
- Commute distance
- No. of vehicles registered
- Metres of new sidewalk
- Bike lanes - km
- Marked trails - km
- Transportation infrastructure gap

## Did you know?

Huron County has over 3000 km of roads, 110 km of railway, and the only seaway depth port on the east side of Lake Huron.

More than 150 lake freighters visit the Port of Goderich every year, transporting over 200,000,000 tonnes of grain and salt annually

In 2006, 80% of Huron residents drove to work without a passenger

71% of Ontario children are driven or bussed to school



# 3. Agriculture



## Community Vision: In 2030...

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

## Community Actions

### Agricultural Leadership

- Identify an organization (e.g. the Regional Equine and Agricultural Centre of Huron - REACH) to create and lead a sustainable agricultural strategy in partnership with other agricultural organizations

### Diversified Agricultural Sector

- Explore the production of various niche crops, such as multi-cultural foods and crops for urban populations
- Support the development, operation and expansion of agricultural co-operatives and community-based economies

### Land Stewardship

- Promote, enhance and recognize the role of farmers in environmental stewardship
- Encourage all Huron farms to complete an Environmental Farm Plan
- Promote opportunities for funding and partnerships (e.g. WPSC)
- Encourage reforestation of marginal and sensitive agricultural lands

### Energy and Agriculture

- Promote and encourage on-farm energy production such as wind, solar, and biogas; and, encourage the role of farmers as leaders in energy conservation

### Land Preservation

- Protect prime agricultural land from non-farm uses
- Promote innovative practices such as land sharing and land leasing

### Local Food

- Develop a 'Grown in Huron' program which includes a logo, and signage, promotes the range of products available from Huron producers, and involves an 'Eat Local Huron' campaign in local grocery stores and restaurants
- Promote local food processing activities such as an abattoir, winery and cannery
- Establish a Huron County produce auction (similar to Elmira's)



*We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*  
- Aldo Leopold

## Agriculture and Youth

- Promote and provide resources for farm succession planning
- Engage and embrace the role youth in the future of Huron County. (e.g. local agricultural leadership program, promotion of careers in agriculture, opportunities for youth to express their own needs)

## Some Current Initiatives

- Regional Equine and Agricultural Centre of Huron (REACH)
- Water Protection Steering Committee (WPSC)
- Buy Local, Buy Fresh: Huron-Perth Guide to Local Food
- Huron Agriculture and Water Festival
- Huron Good Food Box

## What You Can Do...

- Prepare locally sourced meals
- Support local growers
- Complete an environmental farm plan
- Avoid imported and non-seasonal food choices
- Appreciate agricultural lands
- Talk to a farmer
- Conserve agricultural soils
- Buy at a farmers' market
- Demand local food choices

## Performance Indicators

- Hectares of prime farmland converted to non-farm uses
- Number of food processors

## Trends in Agriculture

- Median age of farmers
- Average farm value
- Average farm size
- Total number of farms
- Annual value of farm gate sales

## Did you know?

Huron County leads all counties and regions in Ontario in the total value of agricultural production; it also exceeds the production totals of each of the 4 maritime Provinces

In 2006 Huron County gross farm receipts totaled \$719,000,000

Only 2% of Canada's surface area is classified as prime agricultural land - 90% of soils in Huron County are classified as Class 1,2,3, or prime land, highly productive

# 4. Energy



## Community Vision: In 2030...

*Huron County will utilize local renewable energy sources and continue to maximize energy conservation.*



*The purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time*  
- Gifford Pinchot

## Community Actions

- Establish a County-wide Energy Working Group to develop a renewable energy generation and energy conservation strategy

### Energy Conservation

- Develop a County corporate sustainability plan (including items such as energy and material conservation, green buildings and procurement)
- Establish a local utility energy conservation incentive program
- Implement a door-to-door energy and water conservation program
- Install water meters on residential/commercial/industrial properties
- Produce a comprehensive green building strategy and guide with local municipalities, builders and residents which incorporates Energy Star, LEED standards and alternative construction methods
- Initiate a low energy replacement program for street and traffic lights (LED or other technology)
- Produce a farm, enterprise and business energy efficiency guide and resource book

- Promote the use of clotheslines
- Conduct energy efficiency community workshops and seminars
- Develop an 'Efficient Huron' campaign directed at business and industry to educate and encourage efficiency improvements, and publish a newsletter of energy conservation tips
- Participate in programs and incentives offered by the Ontario Power Authority and other agencies
- Minimize outdoor lighting by use of motion sensors, and encourage designs and technologies which limit excess light pollution

- Require installation of smart meters for new developments

### Energy Generation

- Develop local solutions to transmission capacity restrictions
- Continue to develop and promote small-scale renewable energy generation options where appropriate
- Establish a County owned wind turbine

## Community Based Energy

- Promote community energy education – newspapers, radio, etc.
- Incorporate energy efficiency topics into school curriculum
- Encourage community and individual solutions to reduce energy demands, and support the development of alternative energy systems

## Some Current Initiatives

- Public Utilities: Conservation and Energy Efficiency Programs
- Centre for Applied and Renewable Energy (CfARE)
- Highschool Green Teams
- Household Energy Audit
- Commercial scale wind turbines

## What You Can Do...

- Draft proof your house
- Turn down the A/C
- Install motion sensor lighting
- Wash clothes in cold water
- Dry clothes on clothes line
- Replace furnace filters regularly
- Switch to CFL lights
- Replace old basement fridge
- Purchase energy star rated appliances
- Upgrade your old furnace
- Install low-flow shower & toilet

## Performance Indicators

- Total energy consumed by county buildings/year
- Annual average residential electricity usage
- MW of renewable energy generated by commercial operators
- Household participation in energy conservation programs
- Number of street and traffic lights upgraded to energy efficient technology

## Did you know?

Huron County has 23 commercial wind turbines which produce approximately 109,000 Megawatt hours of electricity each year, equivalent to power 12,500 households

One refrigerator accounts for 10% of a household's annual energy consumption

Canada uses more energy and more water per person than any other country in the world

# 5. Livable Communities



## Community Vision: In 2030...

*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.*



*We must learn to save, before we run out of everything*  
- Andy Rooney

## Community Actions

### Character

- Encourage preservation of heritage buildings and heritage homes through incentives and awareness programs
- Require native tree species on front yards, boulevards, commercial parking lots, green space and roadsides
- Downtowns will be the primary focus of new commercial development
- Where 'big box' development is permitted, ensure it is integrated and connected to existing communities with bike and walking access, landscaping and green space
- Develop a high standard of building and site design, including naturalized landscaping and accessibility features for new developments

### Planned Growth

- Promote and encourage communities that are: walkable, include a mix of uses and housing types and prices, and accommodate anticipated growth
- Land and infrastructure will be used efficiently with an emphasis on environmental protection, intensification, redevelopment and infill opportunities
- Promote naturalized landscaping with minimal turf grass (reduces water and energy consumption)

### Sidewalks, Trails and Bike Paths

- Develop cycling routes along all major roads and routes between settlements
- Reduce parking requirements and require bike racks in commercial, industrial and institutional facilities
- Develop a comprehensive trail network strategy, focusing on creating connections
- Enhance the accessibility and walkability of communities through wide, barrier-free sidewalks on both sides of the street

### Infrastructure

- Create long-term, sustainable, municipal capital plans incorporating infrastructure and servicing requirements
- Educate, promote, encourage, and permit best management practices for storm water management (SWM), including green roofs, rain collection systems, and naturalized SWM facilities
- Integrate land use planning with infrastructure and transportation planning
- Establish alternative transportation links between communities which are accessible to all residents

### Some Current Initiatives

- Heritage Conservation Districts
- Trail Development - Maitland and Bayfield Trail Associations
- Community Improvement Plans (CIP)
- Huron County Official Plan 5 Year Review and Update

### What You Can Do...

- Walk to the downtown
- Bike or walk to work or school
- Give pedestrians the right-of-way
- Live close to your job
- Support more bike and pedestrian friendly developments
- Explore local trails
- Share the road with cyclists
- Use ecologically friendly building materials
- Plant a backyard vegetable garden
- Have a picnic at the park

## Performance Indicators

- Town population density
- Area of newly designated urban lands
- Number of designated heritage buildings/districts
- Recreational trails - km
- Bike lanes - km
- Sidewalk - metres

## Did you know?

Huron County has 45 settlement areas and more than 2000 acres of vacant lands available for urban development

There are 22,900 private dwellings in Huron, 85% are single detached, 78% of homes are owned

60% of Huron residents reside in a town, village or hamlet

The bicycle is the most efficient form of transportation known. It uses five times less energy than walking

# 6. Natural Environment



## Community Vision: In 2030...

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

## Community Actions

- Develop a Huron County Natural Heritage Plan including:
  - a County wide forestry plan incorporating wildlife corridors and opportunities for connecting isolated forest areas
  - increase the area of interior forest habitat County wide

### Economic

- Promote sustained harvest forestry as a part of the agricultural economy

### Stewardship

- Re-vegetate marginal agricultural and sensitive lands
- Promote landowner stewardship through education, engagement and incentives
- Protect and enhance Lake Huron ecology – dunes, bluffs, habitat and the Huron Fringe Eco-Region

### Land Use

- Protect and enhance Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, wetlands, woodlands, streams and rivers, floodplains, the Lake Huron shoreline, wildlife corridors, the Maitland and Bayfield Rivers, and sinkholes
- Develop urban forest strategies including urban woodlands, heritage trees and reforestation

### Water Quality

- Protect and improve surface and ground water quality and quantity

### Ecosystem Health

- Recognize and protect the recreational value of natural heritage features (public access to Lake Huron, network of walking trails, river access, and develop connections to Hullett Marsh, Bannockburn, Hay Swamp, Saratoga Swamp, Maitland River Valley, and Bayfield River Valley)
- Reduce toxins in the environment including pesticides, pollutants, car emissions, burn barrels, brush burning, etc.

### Wildlife

- Increase bio-diversity of native species through education and habitat protection



*When one tugs at a single thing in nature, they finds it attached to the rest of the world*  
- John Muir

## Pollution, Waste and Toxins

- Establish a permanent Hazardous Household Waste disposal depot
- Promote composting (e.g. backyard composting, municipal programs for garden waste)
- Increase diversion of waste from landfills (e.g. recycling, composting)
- Establish an anti-idling campaign
- Promote naturalized lawns through reduced lawn maintenance and increase natural areas on publicly owned lands

## Some Current Initiatives

- Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide
- Lake Huron Centre for Costal Conservation
- Huron County Health Unit Septic Re-inspection Program
- Huron County Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Program
- Blue Flag Beach Program

## What You Can Do...

- Plant a native tree species
- Protect wildlife habitat
- Reduce pesticide use
- Learn about your land
- Dispose of waste properly
- Eliminate or reduce lawn watering
- Swim at the beach
- Hike a trail
- Visit Conservation Areas
- Canoe a river
- Foster children's appreciation of nature

## Performance Indicators

- % forest cover
- % interior forest
- Hectares of land naturalized
- Total surface water phosphorus levels
- E. Coli concentrations
- Number of benthic invertebrate population
- Number of poor air quality days
- Groundwater monitoring program results

## Did you know?

The Lower Maitland and Bayfield River Valleys are among the last remaining areas of significantly intact natural habitat in Southern Ontario

Huron County is home to 6 endangered, 10 threatened, and 8 species of special concern

Hullett Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area contains 2,193 ha and is within the path of 2 major waterfowl flyways

The Saratoga swamp extends over 2,000 ha and is important for water recharge and filtration

# 7. Population



## Performance Indicators

- Total county population
- Tracking population by age category
- Number of foreign born residents
- Number of women in municipal government
- Municipal populations

## Did you know?

Huron County is home to 7 ethnic groups

In 2006, the population of Huron County was 59,325

In 1885, the population of Huron County was 80,000

The cost of living in Huron County is less than the Ontario average



*We have to shift our emphasis from economic efficiency and materialism towards a sustainable quality of life and to healing of our society, of our people and our ecological systems*  
- Janet Holmes à Court

## Community Vision: In 2030...

*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.*

## Community Actions

- Develop a Huron County Population Strategy which includes a complete analysis and assessment of Huron demographics, including future trends

### Population Growth

- Market Huron's towns and villages as an alternative to big city living to young families and retirees
- Promote Huron County as a great place to live and vacation: relaxed, safe, affordable, little traffic, friendly people, small communities
- Create a strong, inclusive community identity based on what we are - 'This is Huron'
- Identify and address the barriers that keep people from moving to, or back to, Huron

### Youth and Families

- Enhance opportunities for employers to hire youth and post secondary students for career-related summer jobs, co-op placements, internships, apprenticeship and mentoring programs
- Network with universities to establish student co-op and internship placements within the County
- Develop affordable housing options for youth, young families, singles
- Demonstrate to youth the opportunities that exist in Huron (agriculture, manufacturing, and cultural industries)
- Promote rural and small town lifestyle and employment opportunities to seasonal residents and visitors – entice people to move here

### Immigration

- Create a welcoming service for newcomers
- Promote Huron County as an immigrant destination
- Foster a welcoming and culturally sensitive community
- Encourage, promote and celebrate diversity
- Increase opportunities for children to experience ethnic diversity (e.g. school projects and field trips)

### Seniors

- Plan for the needs of seniors: such as accessibility, aging at home, and health care
- Provide affordable housing for seniors

### Some Current Initiatives

- Immigration Partnership
- Huron County Tourism Association
- Municipal Economic Development Officers
- Huron Community Matters
- Huron County Housing Study

### What You Can Do...

- Welcome a new resident to town
- Host a neighbourhood BBQ party
- Be sensitive of other cultures and ethnicities
- Experience the cuisine of other cultures
- Tell others about living in Huron

# 8. Downtowns



## Community Vision: In 2030...

*Downtowns in Huron County will be active and healthy centers of commerce, government and culture, capitalizing on historic character, locally-owned businesses, and people friendly spaces.*

## Community Actions

- Develop a County wide Downtown Strategy building on current initiatives

### Aesthetic Streetscapes

- Enhance the aesthetics of downtown streetscapes (e.g. native shade tree species, street furniture, sidewalk materials, pedestrian-scale lighting, flowerboxes, banners, and public art)
- Enhance public spaces in the downtown for events, gatherings, markets, etc.
- Develop a coordinated signage program
- Ensure new development complements heritage character (e.g. minimum 2 storeys in heights)

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly

- Promote bike friendly downtowns through installation of convenient bike racks and safe bike lanes
- Design sidewalks to accommodate strollers and wheelchairs
- Encourage events and activities in the downtown that attract people

### Historic Character

- Preserve and restore historic buildings and spaces
- Create downtown design guidelines
- Create façade improvement and redevelopment grant programs for downtowns

### Enhancement Opportunities

- Encourage, promote, support and expand downtown farmers' and flea markets
- Encourage residential opportunities downtown (e.g. second-floor commercial uses, new development)
- Focus commercial and public service development downtown
- Create an index and map of all business and services located downtown



*In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.*  
- Baba Dioum

## Local Business

- Foster and support local business
- Maximize the benefits of business associations
- Develop and promote a brand/logo which identifies business and products as local or 'Made in Huron'
- Implement a customer service downtown program

## Some Current Initiatives

- County-wide downtown coordinator
- Community Improvement grant and tax relief programs
- Local municipal economic development services
- Local BIA's/Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development Officers

## What You Can Do...

- Shop downtown
- Attend a downtown event, activity or festival
- Leave your car at home and walk or bike downtown
- Tell your friends, family and municipal council about the importance of the downtown

## Performance Indicators

- Downtown building occupancy rate (residential & commercial)
- Number of festivals and events held downtown
- Number of farmers' market days per year
- Number of downtowns with improved signage
- Number of new residential units created in downtown
- Total area of new commercial floor space created
- Value of new investment

## Did you know?

Huron County has 4 heritage conservation districts: The Square and West St. in Goderich, Downtown Seaforth, and Bayfield Main Street

# 9. Community Needs



## Community Vision: In 2030...

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

## Community Actions

### Housing

- Develop a community response to homelessness, inadequate housing and poverty
- Provide a range of affordable housing types and a mix of rental and ownership options in accessible locations
- Eliminate the need for a Huron County housing waiting list by identifying and addressing the root causes

### Services

- Develop a greater variety of retail and professional services
- Provide access to affordable childcare
- Coordinate public health and social services and ensure they are accessible throughout County
- Support community organizations by donating your time and money
- Value and celebrate the role of volunteers in the community

### Recreation

- Provide access to fitness programs and team sports

### Culture and Entertainment

- Promote all County festivals, events, businesses and activities which encourage community participation and tourism, and showcase 'uniquely Huron'
- Creatively market all entertainment options (e.g. live music, clubs, trails, parks, fishing, beaches, theatre, camping, etc.)

### Education

- Support and invest in local schools
- Establish permanent, post secondary and specialized educational programs, including programs with full diploma or degree potential

### Policing

- Create greater connections between police and the community



*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
Nothing is going to get better. It's not.  
- Dr. Seuss*

### Youth

- Establish and support a Huron Youth Council to discuss and address youth issues
- Provide safe places in each community for youth to 'hang-out'

### Other

- Foster community spirit and neighbourhood connections through activities such as annual picnics and community and school gardens

### Some Current Initiatives

- Habitat for Humanity
- Huron United Way / Community Matters
- Huron Women in Networking
- Communities in Bloom
- Huron County Housing Corporation
- Huron County Youth Coordinator

### What You Can Do...

- Be involved in your community
- Talk with your neighbours
- Volunteer for a community organization, event, activity, or community project
- Plant a front yard garden
- Pick up litter
- Experience local theatre
- Say 'hi' to strangers
- Respect youth and seniors
- Learn something new everyday

## Performance Indicators

- Number of child care spaces
- Number of people on the Huron County housing waiting list
- Vehicle deaths and injuries
- Crimes reported
- School enrollment

## Did you know?

Huron County has 110 km of shoreline, over 200 km of rivers, 16 public beaches, more than 70 festivals and events, 1 drag racing track, 10 golf courses and 1 professional motocross circuit

Each year more than 25,000 people visit the TransCan Grand National Championship Motocross in Walton

8% of Huron County residents speak a language other than English and French

# 10. Healthy Active Communities



## Community Vision: In 2030...

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

## Community Actions

### Health Care

- Continue community support to maintain and enhance local hospitals and clinics
- Provide accessible health care supports to all residents at all stages of life (prenatal to aging at home)
- Support a comprehensive strategy to: address the orphan patient list, attract and retain health care professionals, and encourage youth to enter health care professions
- Provide access to local training to develop and enhance the health care workforce

### Fitness

- Encourage walking and cycling clubs in each community
- Provide recreation subsidies to lower income families
- Promote and support fitness/sport/local events programming for all age groups including in the local school system
- Maintain a full range of playing fields, parks, arenas and recreation complexes
- Create accessible trails with linkages between communities
- Understand how community design and lifestyle are connected to rural health issues such as obesity, respiratory and cardiovascular disease

### Mental and Physical Health

- Promote, educate and increase community awareness of support services for addictions and mental health (e.g. depression and anxiety)
- Encourage healthy lifestyles through education, activities and promotion of programs (e.g. walking to school, smoking awareness, healthy foods, and physical activity)
- Continue promotion and expansion of the Good Food Box program
- Enhance regular programming for seniors to encourage interaction and good health
- Assess the need for additional in-school breakfast programs



*When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves.*  
- David Orr

### Accessibility

- Enhance mobility and access to all places, goods and services in the County by addressing all ranges of mobility, income and age
- Create accessibility awards for the most accessible business or best retrofit in the County

### Some Current Initiatives

- Family Physician Recruitment Campaign
- Family Health Care Teams
- Rural Response for Healthy Children
- Early Years Centre Programming
- Healthy Hearts Program
- Gateway Rural Health Research Institute (Seaforth)

### What You Can Do...

- Be active every day
- Volunteer in your community
- Eat less pre-packaged processed foods
- Join a club or team
- Make time for family
- Quit smoking
- Take swimming lessons
- Learn a new activity
- Try out the 'Good Food Box'
- Consider all age groups

## Performance Indicators

- Life expectancy
- Self rated health
- Body mass index (BMI)
- Infant mortality rate
- % of population that is overweight
- % of residents living an inactive lifestyle
- Number of doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses

## Did you know?

Obesity is more prevalent in Huron than in most other counties in Ontario

Heart disease is the primary cause of death of Huron County residents

15% of people in Huron County have a disability

Two out of three Canadian children do not meet average physical activity guidelines to achieve optimum growth and development

Huron County has 150 km of marked hiking trails



# Implementation and Coordination: Moving Towards Sustainability



1. All Huron County residents, community groups, organizations, and agencies will have a role in the implementation of the 'Take Action' report. Under Council's direction and where determined appropriate, the County will facilitate implementation.
2. The County will seek external funding to assist with the implementation of the 'Take Action' report. Existing County staff will work to ensure that the 'Take Action' report is implemented over time. Council approval of special projects, and partnerships with community agencies and organizations, are essential elements of implementation. (Appendix 1 provides examples of community partners for a sampling of projects).
3. Regular reporting will be provided to *Committee of the Whole* for project progress on the 'Take Action' report.
4. A coordinating committee will partner with relevant agencies and organizations to help guide community and County led actions. Existing committees that could fulfill this role with an altered mandate include the Huron Community Matters Steering Committee or the Huron Water Protection Steering Committee. Specific community based task forces may be desirable for specific initiatives.
5. Implementing the 'Take Action' report is an ongoing process (e.g. timelines, indicators, responsibilities, and budget). Individual implementation strategies will be developed as priorities are set and actions are contemplated.
6. The 'Take Action' report is a living document that will evolve as the community's goals and aspirations change over time. An annual event will be held to review the report, monitor its progress, and update it. (The annual event could be coupled with the annual Huron Community Matters conference).





*The Take Action Plan is available on the Huron County website*

***[www.huroncounty.ca/sustainability/](http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainability/)***

***[comments: takeaction@huroncounty.ca](mailto:takeaction@huroncounty.ca)***

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Planning and Development Department  
57 Napier Street, Goderich, Ontario, N7A 1W2

# Sustainability Strategy Action Implementation Worksheet



**GOAL:**

**ACTION:** WHAT

**RESPONSIBILITY:** WHO

**COMMENTS:** HOW

**TIMELINE:** WHEN