



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

CENTRAL HURON  
2016-2019

County-Wide Planning Project





**Municipality of Central Huron**  
Economic Development Strategic Plan 2016-2019  
County-Wide Planning Project

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of Central Huron's Economic Development Strategic Plan (2016-2019) is a four-year plan to implement economic development goals and activities within a collaborative structure between the County of Huron, partner municipalities and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs using a collective impact model.

The Plan was developed by an Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee made up of Central Huron business owners, organizations and stakeholders. The planning process was facilitated by a Core Team who guided the planning process including a SWOT/PESTO analysis; a vision statement; reviewed relevant industry economic data and developed goals and strategies.

The plan addresses four key goals including:

- Working with business owners to encourage active participation in Economic Development.
- Supporting small business retention and expansion in Central Huron.
- Recognizing Central Huron, with its rural quality of life, as a great place to live, work, play and retire.
- Recognizing Central Huron as a leader in agricultural education.

The implementation plan identifies the required tasks, responsible lead, the timeframe and the key indicators for each strategic priority.



Millenium Park

2.0

## INTRODUCTION

2.1

### WHAT IS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

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

- Business Retention
- Business Attraction
- Increased Tax Base
- Improved Quality of Life

2.2

### WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLANNING?

An important component of CED is strategic planning. Strategic Planning is a process that helps a region work towards a desired future by focusing energy and resources on shared goals. It helps a region to assess and adjust strategic priority in response to changing environments. An economic development strategic plan is a formally written document that guides a region's decision making process toward achieving desired goals that align with their mission and vision statements. This plan also helps in allocating resources (volunteer, staff, monetary, infrastructure, etc.) and prioritizing actions.

Actions: A strategic plan is referred to for operational decisions and is updated regularly.





## HURON COUNTY-WIDE TRAIN THE TRAINER BACKGROUND & PROCESS OVERVIEW

On June 17th, 2015 County Council agreed to work as a group of ten municipal partners to learn the skills required for facilitating the strategic planning process leading to the development of economic development strategic plans. Core Teams of 5 individuals, from each municipal partner, attended 4 training sessions as part of a first-ever County wide project initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs. The Core Teams participated in a strategic planning process and then were taught how to facilitate this process. After each of the 4 sessions they returned to their home municipality and practiced their newly acquired skills. They invited local residents, business people, agriculture and agri-food business people, not-for-profits leaders, cultural groups, environmental champions and other individuals representing the multifaceted municipalities they live in, to participate in the strategic planning initiative they were facilitating. In facilitating this process with their municipal Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee, the Core Teams developed an economic development strategic plan.

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

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

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



Central Huron Farm



Central Huron Farm



## PLANNING PROCESS

The CORE team, with Monica Walker-Bolton, County of Huron staff, consisted of:

- Daryl Ball, retired OMAFRA
- Sandy Dearling, Libro
- John Scruton, Realtor
- Peggy Van Merlio-West, CAO
- Alex Westerhout, Councillor.& Farmer

The Strategic Planning team ultimately included:

- Tony Bolla, Businessman
- Steve Doherty, Central Huron CAO
- Jeff Hearn, Businessman
- Matt Lee, Reach Huron
- Alison Lobb, Councillor and County of Huron staff
- Jane Muegge, Retired OMAFRA
- Patrick Nagle, Rural Business Network
- Jenn Pate, Windmill Lake Wake & Eco-Park
- Erin Samuell, Economic Developer
- Maria Spaleta, Farmer

Three meetings were held at the Town Hall, and a SurveyMonkey survey was prepared and distributed both in person and on-line. A list of potential business contacts in the municipality was developed and members of the Strategic Planning committee each took 10 names and personally called the individuals. Unfortunately, only 17 surveys were completed. Two additional meetings were held in December with some of the strategic planning committee to firm up the goal statements and the report.

Public meetings were planned for three areas in the municipality (Holmesville, Clinton and Auburn) to discuss the results of the survey and assist in the development of the final goals. These meetings were re-scheduled for early in the New Year.





3.0  
MISSION

**To provide leadership and  
direction for economic  
development in  
Central Huron.**





4.0  
VISION

**The municipality of  
Central Huron is a  
dynamic, healthy, safe and  
prosperous community for  
people of all ages to live,  
work and play.**





## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Municipality of Central Huron was formed in 2001 with the amalgamation of Goderich Township, Hullett Township and the Town of Clinton. Our population then was listed as 7,806, with a land area of 447.6 square km, which makes us the 3rd largest municipality in Huron County by both population and land area.

Central Huron's economy is largely agriculture based, with the Town of Clinton as our largest urban site. The hamlets of Holmesville, Londesboro and Auburn also include small business operations. There are a variety of resident areas within Central Huron, including the VLA community outside Goderich and numerous trailer parks (Bluewater Golf Course, Pinelake Camp, Shelter Valley & Homestead Campgrounds, Lighthouse Cove, Princess Huron, Northwood Beach, 5 Seasons Estates). Clinton, the commercial hub of Central Huron, with an active business core, is located at the crossroads of Highways 8 and 4.

We are proud of the strength of our agricultural industry, including dairy, cash crop, poultry and beef farms. In 2015, Central Huron was shown to have the second largest number of farms in Huron County – 398 – and Huron County is known as one of the most productive agricultural areas in the province. With an excellent, well-staffed public hospital, a medical clinic, public library, three financial institutions and six schools in the Town of Clinton, we have services for people of all ages. Recreational and entertainment opportunities abound with our arena, ice rink, outdoor pool, numerous walking, hiking and skiing trails, the OLG Slots and Raceway in Clinton, the Sloman School on Wheels museum, two golf courses and several camp and trailer parks. As well as an active retail core in Clinton, we have an industrial park with several sites available for development. Many of our core Central Huron staff have served the community for decades, demonstrating commitment and loyalty to the community.



Kayaking at Blacks Point Beach

# UNIQUE FEATURES OF CENTRAL HURON

## HISTORIC

- Clinton was known as “Canada’s Home of Radar”, and this has been commemorated by the display on the main street of a huge communications radar antenna which was used at the RCAF Station (a training centre) outside Clinton during World War II.
- We are proud the historic architecture of our Town Hall and our Carnegie Library in Clinton.
- A plaque outside the Sloman School on Wheels Museum located in Clinton identifies it as one of seven railway car schools to educate children in remote Northern Ontario communities. Fred Sloman, a Clinton native, and his family staffed the school from 1926 for 39 years, traveling the CNR line from Sudbury north-west.
- Clinton boasts a world renowned author, Alice Munro, as a resident. A Canadian short story writer and 2013 Nobel Prize winner, Munro’s work has been described as having revolutionized the architecture of short stories. Munro’s fiction is most often set in her native Huron County in southwestern Ontario. Her stories explore human complexities in an uncomplicated prose style and Munro’s writing has established her as “one of our greatest contemporary writers of fiction.
- We are also proud of our connection with the world renowned creator of Mickey Mouse – Walt Disney. The Disney family originally emigrated to Holmesville, near Clinton, where they had the first grist mill in the area in 1832. Although Walt Disney himself was born in the USA, he returned in the 1950s to Holmesville to visit his ancestors’ burial site. One of our residents, Tom Penhale, was commissioned by the Disney Corporation in the 1980s to build an 8-horse-hitch wagon which has since been used in Disney parades.

## RECREATIONAL

- The REACH Centre, featuring an equine barn that can match the size and quality of the Royal Winter Fair facility, also serves as an agricultural education centre.
- Our recreation complex in Clinton includes a community centre with a YMCA arena and, close by, is the Clinton Raceway offering harness racing, year round OLG slots, a cafe and a picnic area and pool.
- We have two 18-hole golf courses, with Woodlands Links classified as an Audubon and championship Links course.
- With miles of Huron County lakefront, we have some public access areas, along with several camp and trailer sites, both seasonal and year round.
- The Hullett Provincial Wildlife Area is a major wetland habitat consisting of 2,200 hectares of mixed terrain, of which almost 40% is open water, marsh or swamp which provides a habitat for resident and migrant birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and plants.
- Numerous trails are available for walking, hiking and many are groomed for cross country skiing. Of particular note are the Hullett Wildlife area, the Naftel’s Creek Conservation Area south of Goderich and the Lobb Loop, near Clinton.
- The Windmill Lake Wake & Eco Park is a relatively new recreational addition, featuring able wakeboarding as well as stand up paddleboarding, hiking, swimming, kayaking, canoeing and much more!



## GOALS

The Core Team has identified four (4) priority Economic Goals for the Municipality of Central Huron. This plan outlines the strategic priorities for implementation, the action required, who will take responsibility for the action as well as the outcome and performance measure for each action.

**Working with business owners to encourage active participation in Economic Development.**

**Supporting small business retention and expansion in Central Huron.**

**Recognizing Central Huron as a great place to live, work, play and retire due to its rural quality of life.**

**Recognizing Central Huron as a leader in agricultural education.**



Winter in Central Huron

7.1

## GOAL 1

Working with business owners to encourage active participation in Economic Development

Strategic Priority (What)	Action (How)	Lead (Who)	Timeline & Resources	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Provide a self-sustaining forum for business ideas	Establish a monthly Breakfast Club for sharing of business building ideas	BIA EDO Staff	Short Term Staff Time	Business owners participate and share ideas/concerns	# of people attending
Business owners outside the core join the BIA as Associate Members	Personal invitations to business owners outside the core to become active in Economic Development initiatives	BIA EDO Staff	Mid Term Staff Time	10 Associate members become active in Economic Development	# associate members # owners actively involved in the BIA
Establish a software mechanism for business owners to share ideas	Better Utilize the BIA's "Pulse" online news system	EDO Staff	Mid Term Staff Time Budget	System is set-up and used by business people	# people using the system
Encourage active participation in community events	An annual schedule of events is prepared in Jan and BIA members volunteer to act on specific organizing committees	BIA EDO Staff	Ongoing Staff Time	A minimum of 4 community-wide events are organized successfully (Amazing Race, Walk, Awards)	# events planned by business owners & volunteers # in attendance



**GOAL 2**

Supporting small business retention and expansion in Central Huron

<b>Strategic Priority (What)</b>	<b>Action (How)</b>	<b>Lead (Who)</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Hire a CIC (Community Improvement Coordinator) or Economic Development Office (EDO)	CIC or EDO working full time; 2 days/week with the BIA	Council BIA	Short Budget	Council, CIC, BIA & business owners work together	EDO is hired on 2 year contract
List of available properties and business needs is kept updated	Develop a detailed list of properties and businesses in Central Huron, with photos, and assign a staff person to maintain it	Staff BIA	Mid Term Staff Time	Available properties are promoted promptly	List is available & up-to-date # times used
Face to Face meetings with public & business owners	Short survey (6 questions) developed and delivered person-to-person	EDO BIA Council	Short Term Staff Time	Surveys completed and results summarized – current needs identified	50 surveys completed
Develop a marketing package to give to potential investors	Create various marketing materials and web content to promote quality of life in Central Huron	EDO Council	Short Term Staff Time Budget	New Businesses are attracted through the municipalities websites	# of hits on sites Assessment figures
Consider various programs such as Explore the Core, Win This Space, & a waste container contest	Develop a budget and time lines for each of these potential programs	SBEC EDO Staff Council	Mid Term Staff Time Budget	Each program is evaluated and potential timelines are put in place	Budgets are available & considered
BIA awards banquet to recognize business owners	BIA plans a fall awards banquet for 2016 with only 5 awards – sponsors are located	EDO BIA	Mid Term Staff Time	Business owners enjoy networking opportunity and develop pride in Central Huron	# in attendance
Develop a succession planning workshop for delivery in Nov 2016	Various speakers present, plus a panel of business owners	SBEC	Mid Term Budget	Business owners participate in the training and are more knowledgeable about their needs	# business owners who attend the workshop

Strategic Priority (What)	Action (How)	Lead (Who)	Timeline & Resources	Outcomes	Performance Measures
Options for tax revision for small business	Review the Municipal Act for possible options to encourage new businesses (without antagonizing existing businesses)	Council Staff	Mid - Long Term Budget	A program is developed which encourages new businesses in Central Huron	Program is available and used
Recognize new businesses within the first month	Council & BIA visit a new business and bring greetings Reported at a Council meeting - free advertising on the digital sign for 30 days	BIA EDO Council	Short Term Staff Time Budget	Council & staff are kept aware of new businesses in the area	# business using the sign offer
Promote existing business support & training programs offered locally	Small Business Enterprise Centre, BIA, Chambers, Huron Manufacturing Association, Huron Tourism Association, REACH, Contact North	Staff Huron County	Short Term Staff Time	3 business workshops offered in Clinton – training programs are promoted locally	List of programs is available & promoted # of people participating in classes/programs
Attract creative economy, knowledge based economy and “virtual” business	Facilitate an entrepreneur network program to increase collaboration, innovation and business extension	EDO Staff Council Huron County	Short to Mid Term Staff Time	People who can work anywhere will chose to live in Central Huron	# of attendees # of sessions
EcDev staff & volunteer attend conferences and continuing education	EcDev staff & one volunteer attend a related conference in 2016	EDO	Short Term Budget	Report and new ideas brought back from the conference	Report presented to Council



**GOAL 3**

Recognizing Central Huron's quality of life as a great place to live, work, play and retire.

<b>Strategic Priority (What)</b>	<b>Action (How)</b>	<b>Lead (Who)</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Educate relevant personnel including local realtor's, tourism providers, HR personnel and municipal staff, on all of Central Huron's community assets	Provide tours of area attractions to local staff	EDO Council BIA	Short to Mid Term Budget	Better informed staff are able to accurately inform potential home buyers and businesses	# of people on tours
	Participate in Annual Huron County Brochure Swap & FAM tour	Huron County Staff	Short Term	Better informed staff are able to accurately inform potential home buyers and businesses	# of Central Huron businesses at Brochure Swap Event and FAM Tour
Create physical and digital marketing materials focusing on our superior "Quality of Life" and distribute to relevant personnel	Create an on-line inventory of all tourism assets in (and near) Central Huron	Staff EDO	Short Term	Visitors are attracted through the municipalities websites	# of hits on website
	Promote agri-tourism and Sport & Eco-Tourism and Arts & Heritage Tourism on-line through "Explore Beyond the Shore"	EDO Staff	Short Term	Increased visits to participating businesses	# of hits on website
	Create a digital and physical "Lifestyle" magazine featuring the quality of life in Central Huron. Distribute magazines to Tourism Providers, Realtor's, and HR personnel	EDO Council	Short Term Budget	Effectively communicate the high quality of life found in Central Huron to visitors, potential residents, and potential businesses	# of hit on website # of magazines distributed
	Create a website and marketing material for the Sloman School Rail Car	Sloman Committee EDO	Short Term Budget	Transform under-utilized museum into an attraction tool for Central Huron	# of visitors to Sloman Car
	Utilize paid On-line Advertising on social media Central Huron	EDO BIA Staff	Short Term Budget	Increased awareness of community assets	# of hits through paid advertising

Strategic Priority (What)	Action (How)	Lead (Who)	Timeline & Resources	Outcomes	Performance Measures
	Cross Market attractions. i.e. information regarding various local attractions can be found at all other local attractions	Staff EDO	Mid Term Staff Time Budget	Utilize one attract to promote another	# of participating attractions
	Create a "Better Dollar Program" that compares the cost of family living in Toronto with that of Central Huron. Compare quality of life including; traffic, employment, education, recreation and "Free Living" assets	EDO Staff	Mid Term Staff Time	Effectively communicate the affordable quality of life found in Central Huron to visitors, potential residents, and potential businesses	# of hits on website
Promote Central Huron as an affordable "bedroom community" for lake seekers	Work with area realtor's to create marketing materials for attracting new home buyers	EDO Staff	Mid Term	Potential residents who find the lake shore too expensive may consider home ownership in Central Huron	# of hits on website
Better utilize Clinton's Visitors Booth and add a Digital Kiosk	Better informed staff at booth Digital information always current and up to date	EDO Staff	Mid Term Staff Time Budget	Current and useful information found at visitors Centre	# of visitors at Booth using kiosk
Increase Community Self Esteem	Increase # of community events and participation at each event	EDO BIA Staff	Short to Mid Term Staff Time Budget	Create community pride	# of events # of people at events
	Create a platform to connect various service & community groups and encourage them to collaborate on projects and events	EDO Staff	Short Term Staff Time	Larger more robust events People working together for a common goal	# of events # of people at events
	Invest in community beautification projects including the BIA and Communities in Bloom Central Huron Short to Mid	BIA CIB EDO	Short to Mid Staff Time Budget	Vibrant Downtown Create community pride	# Increase beautification projects
Celebrate Central Huron's rich heritage	Better utilize Central Huron's Town Hall Upper Room. Make more readily available to public for rentals, host community events and display photos, history, records etc.	EDO Staff	Mid to Long Term	Create a community hub Create community pride	# of bookings at the Town Hall # of visitors



**GOAL 4**

Recognizing Central Huron as a leader in agricultural education

<b>Strategic Priority (What)</b>	<b>Action (How)</b>	<b>Lead (Who)</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
Identify courses relevant to agri-businesses in the area	Creation of survey(s) Create a process to distribute the survey(s) to Huron County businesses and organizations Create a database to store the results and organize the information gained from the survey(s)	Huron County REACH	Mid to Long Term Staff Time	A list of relevant courses is developed	
Identify existing educational institutions that can deliver the courses	Designated staff time to research educational institution and services currently available	Huron County REACH	Mid to Long Term Staff Time	Contact is made with institutions offering relevant courses and they agree to deliver in Central Huron	# of training courses available locally or on-line
Identify existing Agri-businesses in Huron County that require off-site training	Designated staff to contact businesses in Huron County that fall under the agriculture education grouping	Huron County REACH	Mid Term Staff Time	Agri-businesses in the area are aware of Central Huron's interest in providing training locally	# of courses run successfully
Survey high school students (Grade 10) regarding plans for post-secondary education needs	Communicate with the school boards interest in gaining information about grade 10 and 11 student needs and choices as it relates to agriculture business and education Create a survey	Huron County REACH	Mid Term Staff Time	Civics classes in both secondary schools deliver survey	# of surveys completed
Agri-business speakers present to high school students	Create an inventory of available space and times this space is available Determine how much REACH can expand services without a build (if build is required for significant expansion of services - develop plan) Central Huron to look at possibility of developing a new library/learning centre to support REACH as proposed in the Strategic Plan to Central Huron	Huron County REACH	Mid Term Staff Time	Civics classes in both secondary schools schedule speakers relating to agriculture	# of speakers utilized each year

## REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

Quarterly report included in a Council package

Media release update prior to the Mayor's Mingle

Annual written report available at the Mayor's Mingle in summer and opportunity for discussion

Annual report posted on the CH website following the Mayor's Mingle discussions

Annual report to the County as requested



Clinton Raceway



Maitland River



Central Huron Town Hall



Laithwaite Apple Park