



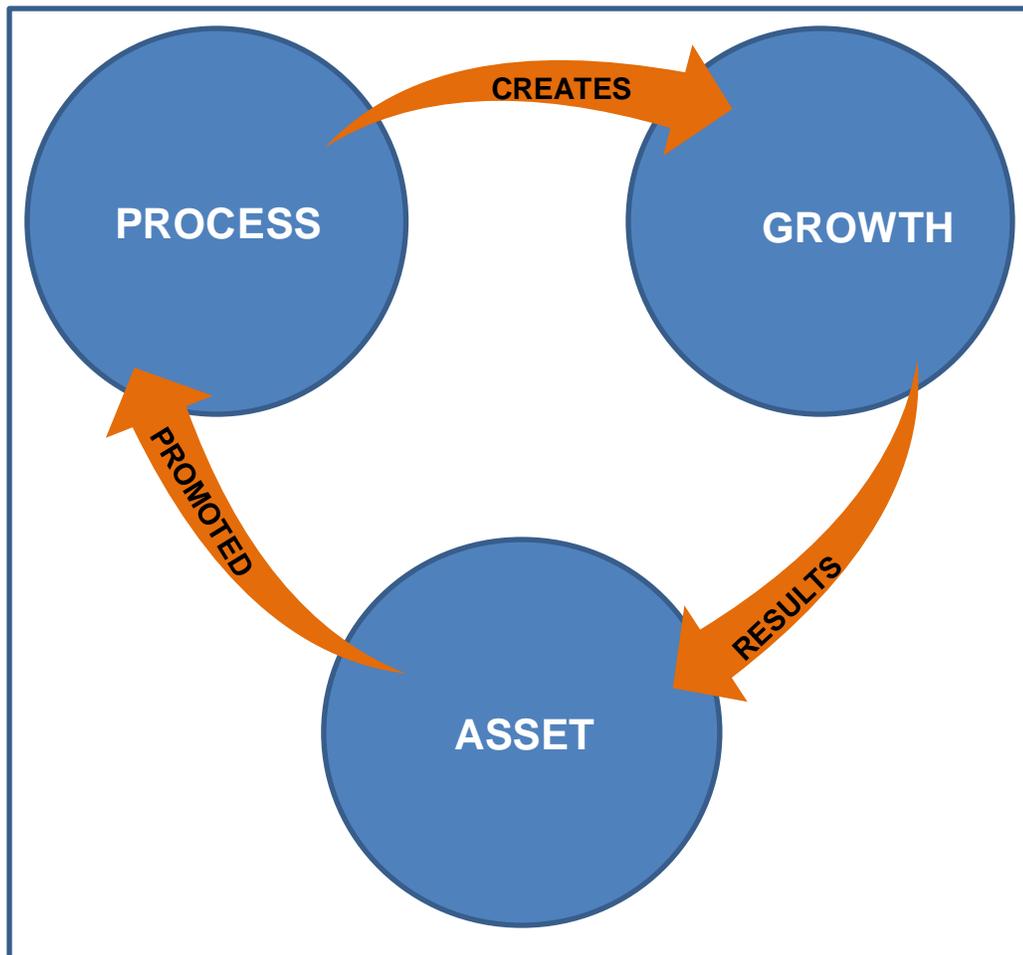
Municipality of Powassan

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Moving Forward – February 2013

MoPED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Newton's Laws of Physics:

A body at rest tends to remain at rest;

A body in motion tends to remain in motion

MUNICIPALITY OF POWASSAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

“Through efficient and effective leadership, Powassan supports a high quality of life for all of its citizens. Its citizens have a strong sense of pride and ownership in the community”.

To this end, Powassan:

- *Provides responsible stewardship of community resources*
- *Is progressive in its approach to new economic growth that will support and enhance existing business.*
- *Will work towards the creation of strong internal and external partners that will allow for maximizing of all community resources.*
- *Will continually work towards community growth and revitalization.*
- *Will strive to ensure a progressive quality of life for all residents*

MUNICIPALITY OF POWASSAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VISION STATEMENT

“Powassan is a community that embraces change while respecting the rich heritage of the area. It is a municipality based on strong fiscal government with a durable economy that recognizes the rights of all citizens, respects the environment and the amenities that it affords and offers to citizens a healthy, active lifestyle”.

MUNICIPALITY OF POWASSAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VALUE STATEMENTS

1. *Values community growth.*
2. *Values being recognized as a safe community.*
3. *Values progressive development.*
4. *Values responsible governing.*
5. *Values strong relationships with community partners as well as other communities.*

Background to the 2006 Municipal Strategic Plan

The original strategic plan was developed in response to signals from federal and provincial funding agencies that requests for future grants would receive stronger consideration if the municipality had a formal strategic plan. It was also good business practice.

The consultants were guided by a steering committee which later became the strategic plan implementation committee, which in turn, was subsequently merged with the economic development committee, MoPED. To date there has been a continuity of MoPED and Council representatives that have an historical perspective on the rationale for the original concepts laid down in 2006.

The basic concept of the original Strategic Plan was centered on the “**quality of life**” that our residents enjoy. The 2006 plan established five areas of economic development to focus on:

- Economic Growth
- Image, Identity & Community Attitude
- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Recreation & Leisure

Many of the recommendations have been accomplished, often with necessary revisions that reflect current conditions. Some ideas were discarded. Others are still works in progress. It is a tribute to elected councillors and municipal staff, past and present, and to countless volunteers and residents that so much of the 2006 plan has come to fruition.

Details of the economic development process and accomplishments as a result of the 2006 Strategic Plan can be found in the Municipality of Powassan Economic Development, (MoPED), 2012 report. A copy of this report is appended.

So much more is in the works. The passage of time and the evolution of its Strategic Plan have presented Powassan with new glittering opportunities to develop. The municipality is on the cusp of further renewal. Opportunities such as a healthcare, several new housing initiatives, new business park and highway redevelopment concepts, recreational and cultural events, not to mention the dreams of individual investors, are waiting in the wings. These will be possible in large part due to building blocks laid, and the progress made, over the last decade.

Municipality of Powassan Community Strategic Plan

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
2013 and BEYOND**

Goal - maximize opportunities and work with key partners/stakeholders to develop and diversify the Economy of the Powassan Area resulting in a better “Quality of Life” embracing the Municipal slogan “The Heart of Good Living”.

Throughout this plan it is assumed Council/MoPED will take the responsibility to fulfill the economic development objectives outlined in the following pages.

Going forward from January 2013 this Economic Development Strategic Plan identifies the following areas as requiring the attention of the economic development process.

- A. Housing and Residential Growth**
- B. Fairview Industrial Park**
- C. Support Local Business and Community Events**
- D. The “ROAD AHEAD BUSINESS PARK”**
- E. Pursue/Promote New Business Opportunity**
- F. Communicate Opportunity and Success**
- G. Recreation and Leisure**

A. HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Over the past several years many new homes have been built in Powassan. It is apparent that it is an attractive community to live in for many who work in North Bay and the surrounding areas. Additionally, retirees have discovered the benefits of living here and many are arriving from Southern Ontario as well as from nearer locales. Available affordable housing and senior housing were both identified to have a significant impact on the area in the initial plan. The abundance of land for development combined with the quality of life opportunities for families, seniors and retirees makes for an attractive economic generator for the area. Over the next five to ten years, Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

A.1

Assist and support the finalization of the Bolton Subdivision plan and servicing located off Chiswick Line.

A 2

Continue to market the fact that housing prices are affordable compared to other municipalities such as North Bay or Huntsville.

A 3

Support and promote the realization of the new Family Health Team which will provide doctors and medical resources for residents.

A 4

Update the demographics of the Powassan community to show what kind of housing is most needed and will most likely attract those residents that prefer its quality of life.

A 5

Market Powassan's strengths that include a vibrant downtown core, proximity to Hwy 11 and other major centers to potential residents. Promote the recently developed "IT'S WORTH THE COMMUTE" campaign to market Powassan and attract more residents from the surrounding areas.

A 6

Apply for available funding through appropriate ministries for resources to develop and service residential initiatives.

A 7

Work with governments to align laws, bylaws and regulations to support growth in our community.

B. FAIRVIEW INDUSTRIAL PARK

The area west of Highway 11 off Fairview Drive has been set aside as an industrial park. Services including water, commercial electric power and natural gas front the park on Fairview Drive. Over the next several years, Powassan Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

B 1

Promote this resource to attract industry in order to provide employment opportunities and a significant tax base.

B 2

Investigate, pursue and secure funding as available from other levels of government to assist with the total opening and servicing of this industrial park.

C SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The community supports the importance of Main Street in Powassan and in Trout Creek as a key promotional tool. Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

C 1

Continue to focus redevelopment in both core areas.

C 2

Strike a balance between seeking long-term business investments and keeping the main streets attractive and vibrant.

Options:

- Community Input
- Community Improvement Plan
- Improved Signage
- “Flowers in Bloom”

C 3

Take a leading role in developing sustainable long-term investments in the downtown cores.

C 4

Promote downtown business cores through signage in the outlying areas - promoting Powassan as a hub for ‘goods and services’.

C 5

Community Events are valuable economic development assets. Council/MoPED will communicate with, support and promote themes and initiatives examples such as:

- the Maple Syrup Festival
- the Farmers Market
- the Fall Fair and Rodeo
- the Kennel Club Dog Show
- Trout Creek Winter Carnival
- Sports Tournaments
- Service Club Initiatives
- Knowlton Ridge Equestrian Events
- Other Cultural Events

D “ROAD AHEAD” BUSINESS PARK

A potential opportunity has developed due to the rebuilding of Highway 11 by the provincial ministry to Expressway Standards. Level highway crossings are to be eliminated and interchanges and service roads constructed at the far south and north approaches to the built up area of Powassan. A consequence of this will be the availability of a sizeable tract of property which the town can acquire at a reasonable cost and that can be developed into a commercial business park. This will make attractive visible properties available to businesses such as hotels, service stations etc. which can effectively replace the businesses lost due to property acquisition for the new construction. Additional potential exists for other usages. In the immediate future Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

D 1

Continue the study of this potential and the determination of the cost for servicing such a development, the nature of the desired businesses to be attracted and the impacts of such on the existing business community. New employment generation and tax revenue considerations should also be considered.

D 2

Undertake the necessary actions to acquire and secure the property.

E PURSUE/PROMOTE NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESS GROWTH

Powassan Council/MoPED will seek to support the following objectives:

Objectives:

E 1

Promote the potential of the Powassan area for film making by remaining a member of the FILM Portal. Continue to promote the success the community has had providing a diversity of locales available to the industry.

E 2

Continue through MoPED to find, provide and support government funded training courses and workshops for individuals interested in starting or enhancing their own businesses.

E 3

Communicate and liaise with existing businesses to support their initiatives and growth opportunities.

F COMMUNICATE OPPORTUNITY & SUCCESS

Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

F 1

At the appropriate time based on the economy and events, prepare and present an Economic Development Day similar to the 2010 initiative.

F 2

Promote maintenance of the municipal website keeping it current with technology and format.

F 3

Promote the use of marketing ideas realized from “Worth the Commute” presentation.

G RECREATION AND LEISURE

Setting the objectives for this sector will be carried out by the Recreation Committee.

Council/MoPED will:

Objectives:

G 1

Continue to promote this valuable asset via the economic development processes outlined in this document.

APPENDIX

Municipality of Powassan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2012

The original strategic plan (SP) was developed in response to signals from federal and provincial funding agencies that requests for future grants would receive stronger consideration if the municipality had a formal strategic plan. It was also good business practice.

The consultants were guided by a steering committee which later became the strategic plan implementation committee, which in turn, was subsequently merged with the economic development committee, MoPED. To date there has been a continuity of MoPED and Council reps that have an historical perspective on the rationale for the original concepts laid down in 2006.

The decision by Council to update the SP is also sound business sense and the passage of time requires that the original concepts be reviewed, revised or relinquished and new priorities be documented. This brief overview also stands as a testament to the progress made by successive councils in meeting goals, or explains why priorities have changed.

The basic concept of the original SP was centered on the “**quality of life**” that our residents enjoy. Through public consultation and steering committee review, the specific SP emphasis focused on :

- Economic Growth & Development
- Image, Identity & Community Attitude
- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Recreation & Leisure

A. Economic Growth & Development

- I. **Housing**, in all its many forms, was centered out as critical to growth and sustainability.
 - a) A Housing Study was called for by the SP and was delivered in 2008
 - b) That housing study identified water issues and sewage capacity as major obstacles to housing growth within the urban area of Powassan.
 - c) The study also presented a demonstrable need for various types of housing across demographic lines. It serves as a bankable business plan for investors.
 - d) Successive councils have invested heavily in new water storage, delivery and metering as well as greatly increased sewage capacity that will enable system expansion and over 200 new housing units with the municipally serviced area.

- e) Several new housing developments, including a new sub-division are in the planning stages.
- f) As noted in the 2006 Powassan continues to promote its lower tax rates and quality of life as incentives for housing investors.

II. Proposed Public Observatory in Trout Creek

- a. Here was example of what appeared to be a great idea to help the local economy did not stand the test of a feasibility study which ultimately showed that the investment would not be sound.
- b. While abandoning the observatory concept was a disappointment, Powassan also learned many good lessons from a modest investment in examining all aspects of what was expected to be part of its economic future.

III. Support Industry for the Main Street

- a. A variety of strategies spoke to the vitality of the commercial districts in Powassan and Trout Creek. At the end of the day individual business will respond to economic conditions, and the municipality can only create a business friendly environment.
- b. The SP suggestion of a “Community Improvement Plan” that might offer incentives to private owners to “beautify” their facades was discussed and shelved in the past, but still remains an option.
- c. MoPED engaged in a “First Impressions” exchange with a northern municipality and we have a report on the visitors’ impression of our municipality.
- d. Our Festivals and Events continue to grow are important cultural and economic drivers.
- e. Large investments in our recreation facilities and the growth of private facilities leave room for a more integrated economic benefit from major events.

IV Support for private entrepreneurs

- a. The SP focused on two specific businesses. Both have grown and expanded and attract many outsiders to the municipality. However there are many other businesses that are equally important in giving Powassan a well-rounded economic base.

- b. Since the 2006 SP both MoPED and Council have worked to attract new businesses. This includes several Investment Readiness initiatives, an Economic Development Forum in Trout Creek, and the creation of a new business park.

B) Image, Identity & Community Attitude

This section of the SP spoke to the need to develop marketing and growth strategies.

- a. Based on the “quality of life” anchor, the municipality re-branded itself as “The Heart of Good Living” and adopted a stylized logo and new corporate colours.
- b. New municipal signage was placed on all municipally owned properties.
- c. Initial steps were taken to deal with directional signage and street signs..
- d. The SP identified possible sectoral partnerships pertaining to tourism and marketing. Several strategic partnerships were undertaken, notably a membership in North Bays Film (movie production) Portal.
- e. Results from tourism marketing through regional associations have been less quantifiable. It has been recognized by MoPED that Powassan is a tourism hub and not a readily marketable destination.
- f. Nonetheless, festivals, sports events, fairs, rodeos, concerts and equine events have been refined by volunteer groups or private individuals and are important economic drivers drawing thousands of non-residents to our community.
- g. Communicating with residents has been an ongoing challenge. Council has initiated regular newsletters, makes video recordings of council meetings available to residents and holds one in three council meetings in Trout Creek.
- h. The municipal website has been partially revised and still needs work. MoPED has plans for a linked website dedicated to economic matters as recommended by the Investment Readiness study.
- i. A 2012-2013 partnership with the media & marketing faculty at Canadore College in North Bay will produce specific ideas for promoting and marketing the advantages of living and investing in the municipality.

C. Tourism

- a. It has already been noted that Powassan is more of a hub and a staging point for visitors to the area. During the cottage season and hunting season visitors descend on the super market, liquor outlets and building supply businesses to stock up for their activities than may be outside the municipality.
- b. After much debate and soul searching MoPED’s efforts have moved away from direct tourism attraction. Instead the municipality has been supporting the many individual events that are driven by volunteers, groups and individuals, all of

which combine to attract thousands of visitors for short visits. The challenge remains for established businesses to market to these visitors and entice them back.

- c. The Maple Syrup Festival has been an ongoing early spring attraction since 1998 and relies on a small dedicated group of volunteers. The same can be said of many annual or seasonal events throughout the community. Sustaining that energy and evolving new marketing ideas is a challenge faced by all rural areas. The Powassan Fall Fair & Rodeo has undergone a rebirth in the hands in individuals and the municipality has done what it can to lend support and help in kind wherever possible.
- d. In the final analysis, and without a destination attraction such as the Public Observatory, the economic emphasis has switched to attracting long term investors, be they residential or commercial, rather than casual tourists.

D. Agriculture

- a. Compared to thirty years ago agriculture is not the driving force it was in the area. There has been a massive paradigm shift that is by no means unique to Powassan. Scores of commercial dairy and livestock farms have given way to hobby farms, estate lot equine facilities, even purely residential development. Some once productive land lies vacant.
- b. While a number of viable commercial farming operations continue, they are doing business in different ways, and in some cases attracting a regular clientele that buys local product right at the source.
- c. The 2006 SP had a number of agricultural recommendations. Meetings with local farm leaders quickly led the municipality to realize that agriculture was well served by the farmers' own organizations and marketing groups and they had additional support and guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture and other government agencies.
- d. As such, the idea of a municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee was dropped and any issues with agricultural implications, such as environmental, source water protection, minimum distance planning issues and the like, are being dealt with as they occur with direct consultations with farmers and landowners.

E. RECREATION & LEISURE

- a. This final component of the 2006 SP does not fall directly under MoPED's review and update of the strategic plan. It will be, quite correctly, dealt with by the Recreation Committee.

- b. What is of economic interest is the investment of several million dollars that has been made in the two municipal arenas and community centres. Other sports and leisure facilities could also be referenced.
- c. The many upgrades have left the Municipality of Powassan well positioned to hold significant events and tournaments, and the challenge is to co-ordinate those events to bring maximum economic impact to local merchants and service providers.

Conclusion

The preceding synopsis serves to present the rationale behind the thinking of the authors of the 2006 Municipal Strategic Plan. It is important that those who suggest revisions in 2012 and 2013 understand the historical and political context behind the first attempt at a landmark living document.

Many of the recommendations have been accomplished, often with necessary revisions that reflect current conditions. Some ideas were discarded for the reasons given. Others are still works in progress. It is a tribute to elected councilors and municipal staff, past and present, and to countless volunteers and residents that so much of the 2006 plan has come to fruition.

So much more is in the works. The passage of time and the evolution of its Strategic Plan has presented Powassan with new glittering opportunities to develop. The municipality is on the cusp of further renewal. Opportunities such as a healthcare, several new housing initiatives, new business park and highway redevelopment concepts, recreational and cultural events, not to mention the dreams of individual investors, are waiting in the wings. These will be possible in large part due to building blocks laid, and the progress made, over the last decade.

Roger George
Co-Chair

Gord Cardwell
Co-Chair