

SOUTH MARYSBURGH ACTION AGENDA

TOWARD AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION AGENDA

THE IMPERATIVE

The background materials reviewed in the Appendix to this resource document converges on one conclusion. It is that:

If local job creation and the provision of local livelihood opportunities for residents, and their families, as a choice, are commonly held objectives for the South Marysburgh community, then something needs to be done in terms of local economic development here.

TOWARD AN ACTION AGENDA

The South Marysburgh community will build its economic development action agenda using its many assets, availing of opportunities, addressing the challenges of constraints and other impediments, and clearly identifying what should be done and who should take responsibility for championing and driving the strategic components of the action agenda.

Assets

Rural communities use, build upon and add to their assets - cultural, biophysical, locational, occupational, and others, in systematic approaches to economic development. South Marysburgh has an impressive array of assets to draw upon in designing and implementing a relevant economic development agenda. These include:

- the community's caring, helping ethos, and its commitments to generosity and other principles, are cited as core assets to build a development agenda upon,
- the sense of community here,
- the community rich array of groups covering a great diversity of issues, pursuits, and community services (e.g. 4-H, Friends of Black River, Land Stewardship Council, Woodlot Association, reading groups, toy lending groups, various conservation groups, the South Shore Conservation group),

and the community's ability to form and resource this cadre of groups with dedicated volunteers,

- the people as ambassadors for the community, with their connectedness to friends and associates, both inside and outside the community, and the County,
- the demonstrable success that is the annual Milford Fair,
- the equally impressive and energizing Mount Tabor theatre enterprise,
- the presence of water (boating, swimming, viewing), and the variety of viewpoints and notable sites (e.g. Main Duck Island, False Ducks), the water and other boundaries that give the area an identity, and the access to recreational opportunities,
- access to parks and nature, outside of their tourism potentials,
- fishing opportunities,
- the opportunities for all our human senses,
- quiet, picturesque, and good country roads,
- the presence of non-paved country roads,
- the harbour - Point Traverse, and the Lighthouse,
- the rich local history, and the array of historical artifacts and facilities (e.g. museums, designated homes),
- the village of Milford itself, a gathering place, a community hub, with its shops, auto service, dining and other establishments, and its infrastructure,
- the Milford area, generally unspoiled,
- the scale of life here – small population, immediacy of things, access,
- the Conservational Areas and the cherished bird sanctuaries,
- the Provincial and Federal lands in this part of the County,
- the Black River watershed,
- the diversity of fishing, hunting, and wildlife resources,
- the Post Office, schools and the area's churches,
- the *Bistro*,
- the general store,
- the volunteer Fire Department,
- the presence of a monthly newspaper (the *Mirror*), a local magazine,
- the bootlegger tradition in the area,
- the rich folklore in the area, stories, tales and characters,
- the unique War-related history of the area,
- established tourist markets, including the cyclist market,
- an inventory of vacant buildings, and sites,
- vintage vehicles and associated services and events,
- the long established culture of agriculture and working the land, and today's diversity (e.g. dairy, organic),
- the agri-industries that have developed over the years (e.g. cheese, wineries, organic produce, fishing)
- the marine heritage and infrastructure,
- the Huff investments in the area, and interests,
- evidence of resilient entrepreneurship, and a "can do" attitude here,
- continuing injections of new people into the area,

- the area's rich and diverse human resources - old and new, skills, experience, perspectives, ideas, energies,
- the rich diversity of owner-operated small business (e.g. B&Bs, culinary products), the many home-based enterprises, and the persistence of local provision of basic retail trade and services,
- the clarity and beauty of the night sky here,
- the overall quality of life,
- the long established, diverse, and vibrant artistic community,
- the longevity of family histories here,
- the variety of community groups, across all sectors of activity,
- camps - as a specialized sector,
- market gardens,
- the availability and diversity of locally produced foods,
- landfill sites,
- the availability of reliable wind

Opportunities

Most rural areas have a changing roster of economic opportunities. Strategically exploiting opportunities is an integral part of any well thought-out development agenda. Future development opportunities for South Marysburgh are varied and numerous. They include:

- small, niche light manufacturing enterprises, including specialized high technology enterprises, that require little in terms of water, sewage and related infrastructure,
- small engine supplier, repairs and services,
- lawn mower repairs and services,
- a specialized butcher shop,
- niche market, specialty cheeses,
- niche, boutique and regional brewing,
- yogurt,
- high quality wooden toys,
- high quality eggs,
- specialty breads,
- a Waldorf School,
- leading edge services and materials for home heating (e.g. straw bale construction),
- local produce, especially organic enterprises,
- specialized services for the film sector,
- a locally-based tour operator, linking with Picton-based operators, but specializing in river related (Black River), shoreline, country roads, arts and crafts studios,
- more focused use of the area's rich natural resources (e.g. waterfronts, peninsulas, woodlands, rock outcrops, vistas) - for local use, and tourism,
- eco-tourism development of specific areas (e.g. Black River, Point Petre),

- develop genealogical services for tourists and residents,
- bird watching events,
- strategic use of the next Harvestin' event,
- four-wheeled vehicle recreation,
- a bio-diesel plant using local feedstock,
- innovative, prototypical and demonstration enterprises in sustainable farming,
- wind related enterprises (e.g. wind farms, plant maintenance and servicing),
- other bio-mass production and processing,
- linked enterprises with emergent recycling enterprises in the larger Quinte Region,
- "Green Tours",
- (part of) guided "Wine Tours" (as evident on Pelee Island) - link with the Cheese factory as a destination site,
- motorcycle tourist markets,
- web support and related services,
- taxi-based delivery services - meals, groceries,
- a basic diner restaurant - informal, attractive, friendly, family-oriented, year-round local venue,
- new types of B&B – beyond the basic home-based product, more self-contained, auberge-like, private, better furnished/serviced for the affluent, discerning urban market,
- antiques and custom built furniture and lighting for the new exurban residential market,
- niche tourism and related markets (e.g. the new motorcycle business, Winter cycling),
- an LCBO agency in Milford,
- build on the successful Milford Fair as an annual County-wide event,
- country residence security, cleaning and property maintenance services,
- country property construction, extensions, refurbishing and related services (e.g. carpentry, dry-walling, cisterns, well, septic installations, electrical)
- detail the needs of an expanding and affluent new internal market (new exurban residents) and strategically respond in dining, entertainment, and other services,
- elder care services - house cleaning, personal care, meals,
- a flour mill - providing services for specialized, niche cereals,
- local performances, business retreats, and other events using the array of vacant buildings and facilities,
- Smuggler's Cover - camping,
- re-use of the *Emporium* (e.g. restaurant, café, antiques & crafts, the *County Wine Bar* - vintage presentations from all the County's wineries, tastings, informal wine evenings, link with dinner option at the Bistro),
- re-use of the *McGibbon House* (e.g. up-market B&B),
- *Fred's Sports Store* - kayaks, bikes, outdoor and hiking equipment, etc.
- refurbish and re-use Scott's Mill,
- promote the development of beer and wine gardens,
- a Farmer's Market in Milford,

- identify and designate a cluster of historical buildings in Milford,
- get a Milford “breakfast club” going,
- communicate the assets and attractions of a regenerated Milford village,
- refurbish and use the community’s sports facilities (e.g. tennis courts, basketball areas), re-connect these facilities with local families, and market as part of the area’s social and recreational infrastructure,
- focus on the Milford 200 celebrations and activities as a strategic event,
- reclaim some sunken vessels and install at key locations (e.g. Milford, Black Creek),
- re-use the neighbouring beach on the edge of Milford,
- wilderness camping,
- integration of small high technology services and manufacturing (e.g. assembly) with family household enterprises in the area,
- expand specialized and niche agricultures, including hops production, organic farming,
- an educational project on small scale farming alternatives and organic agriculture, and the opportunities for local food provision,
- investigate and use opportunities associated with climate change - food production, value-added production, canning, cooperatives opportunities,
- use and encourage an expansion and retention of a local labour pool specializing in the primary production sector - a mobile, trained resource with competitive remuneration and benefits for vineyard harvesting, pruning, and other tasks, and for farm labour (e.g. milking, seeding, harvesting), and other primary activities,
- a general contractor business - multiple services, referral services, booking/scheduling, contractor network,
- innovative off-season tourism events, projects and programmes,
- adult education - life-long learning short courses (e.g. Distance Education, area satellite campus), regular University courses (via a satellite campus),
- utilization of the extensive network of artists for elementary and high school courses design and delivery (regular subjects taught *through* the arts),
- a Cycling Centre – tours, guides, equipment, advice, races, other events,
- heritage tours, including historic house tours,
- dinner and mystery theatre,
- skills development adult camps, attracting and harnessing ageing population needs and skill base,
- an SME hub - coaching, financial advice, information, links to County and external resources,
- the premium tourism market(s) - specialty metro-based clientele,
- develop an integrated network approach to identifying, linking and complementing the area’s diverse natural and built tourism resources, activities and facilities - linked activities, connected destination sites, complementary activity packages, cross-marketing,
- an annual celebration - “South Marysburgh Day” - an event to “brand”, celebrate, and publicize this part of Prince Edward County,

- young family re-location services - facilitating re-location, job access information, commuting advice/information, housing, services,
- a National Park (south shore),
- strategically located lunch stands, convenience food sites, and informal take-out services (e.g. near the Conservation Areas' picnicking sites, near Black River walks),
- arts and other camps for children,
- arts events - including gallery tours, musical events, demonstrations,
- arts and music events for children and young adults in the community,
- regenerate an attractively designed Milford Ponds complex (e.g. parks, walkways, picnic sites, benches, viewpoints),
- utilize the Black River to its full potential - canoeing down the river, events and dining facilities and services in Black Creek, with the Factory as a major draw, the gallery, well designed and signed walkways, link with informal and formal food services in Milford, and canoe rentals, integrate with the Mill Ponds, the refurbished Scott's Mill site, link with Mount Tabor and market site (parking, snacks, canoe rentals), - an integrated, high quality recreation destination,
- combine a set of major, high profile development opportunity projects with the forthcoming Milford 200 event,
- develop the long established sugar bush and facilities, on the southwestern edge of Milford (George Ackerman's property), as a family recreation site (e.g. maple sugar demonstrations, rides, hot drinks, storytelling),
- a wellness theme in service provision and marketing, integrating healthy foods, physical activities, rest and relaxation, retreats, organic and other personal care opportunities, and related activities and facilities,
- home tours - tours through the homes and properties of local residents, exploring the working farm, heritage sites, folklore, and rural living,
- augment winery and other facilities catering to adult amenities, with family-oriented services and facilities (e.g. food offerings, rides, hands-on interactive opportunities),
- farm-based tourism - educational visits, demonstrations, B&B, renting accommodation,
- heritage as a resource - information dissemination and education on heritage and property values, heritage and tourism opportunities,

Challenges

Most rural areas face challenges relating to their economic development. Some of the challenges are external (e.g. market shifts, competition), others are internal (e.g. local attitudes, infrastructure constraints). South Marysburgh faces a number of important challenges, many of which have to be part of the action agenda for economic development. They include:

- while Milford and the immediate area is only 10 minutes drive from Picton (in good weather), many parts of this lakeside community are relatively remote. This has some advantages, for longer term and newer residents. However, it poses challenges for some enterprises and family households,
- the local market is a “half circle”, backing onto the Lake, inevitably limiting market potentials,
- entrepreneurial resources need to be more formally developed (e.g. through local training, business breakfasts),
- ready capital is needed; there is a sense that the “patient capital” that is available is so from discretionary income. More seedbed capital is needed for locally-based enterprises.
- there is a reported concern that urban-based bylaws (e.g. for parking space quantity and dimensions, “no parking” signs) and their enforcement are insensitive to the small scale and relatively informal conditions of rural South Marysburgh - it is felt that there is a need for a more enabling attitude and practice here,
- limitations in physical infrastructure relate, in part, to the lack of scale in Milford and other small centres. The threshold conditions are not in place for reliable, modern communal systems. The provision of water and sewage infrastructure is a significant challenge. Small business upgrades for filtration can be prohibitive (e.g. \$25,000),
- water availability is a general concern throughout the community; some feel that a proactive policy is required (e.g. mandatory cisterns for all new dwellings and major extensions),
- general price inflation - some lower property costs remain, but retail goods and services, taxes and other household and small business items are of growing concern,
- the high interest rates charged by the Business Development Centre, of PELA,
- the availability of small business start-up and operating loans and credit,
- a perception that the Municipality has supported new businesses to the detriment of locally established businesses,
- a concern that the Municipality is not prepared to provide some preferential treatment for local businesses in the tendering process,
- infrastructure limitations elsewhere include the absence of universal broadband access, inadequate phone lines,
- there is some concern with a perceived over-emphasis on the Municipality’s part on the winery sector, to the potential exclusion of other primary activities, and sectors,
- there is some concern that the Municipality is overly focused on attracting new investment into the County, with too little attention paid to locally, long established (and often owner-operated) businesses,
- young residents are not engaged in discussions and initiatives relating to the area’s economy - this is a significant shortfall,
- young families are marginally engaged in community activities. There are several factors behind this. It leaves the community short on vital resources

(e.g. volunteers), and detracts from a well informed economic development agenda.

- the two-way adjustments between longer term residents and new residents involves somewhat different attitudes to property and rural space; proprietary exclusion can contend with a more informal culture of reciprocity, access and sharing,
- not unrelated to the last mentioned challenge, there is some divergence in economic development priorities between a number of longer term residents and some newer exurban residents, with the former more commonly anxious to see more commercial enterprises, new (appropriate) industries, and more investment and related activities, and the latter more commonly concerned to ensure that economic development not in any way prejudice the benefits of the relatively remote, small scale and rural environment that they have themselves invested in - prudent, transparent, well communicated and respectful process is called for, on all counts,
- at times contentious issues around the harnessing of wind power, through windmills, need a clear Municipal policy on this, need to be amicably, respectfully and constructively resolved,
- external organizations can pose bureaucratic and energy sapping challenges for local businesses. These can include the Ontario Power Agency, occasionally the County itself, and others,
- it is felt by some that the County should adopt a more innovative, bolder approach to ecologically appropriate economic development, using longer term horizons for strategies, and pursuing prototypical and leading edge technological enterprises,
- the media poses some challenges relating to a more even-handed and informed reporting of development proposals and initiatives,
- while identified as an opportunity, the length of time associated with a transparent resolution of the LCBO agency application, is cited as a divisive challenge requiring immediate attention,
- relating to the profile of the local economy, there is a general challenge to generate and attract small businesses to the area to provide reliable and well paying jobs to regenerate a viable middle income component to the local economy, and expand local markets,
- the seasonality of the local economy (e.g. tourism, agriculture, Summer residence related activities) is a significant structural challenge,
- not unrelated to this is a widespread concern that a high proportion of the area's business are operating very close to the margin, and are precariously fragile,
- the challenge of including many community members in the development agenda for South Marysburgh was voiced; effective access and participation will be challenges for many people. The development agenda must respond to this,
- while cherished, the community's key resources in the schools, Post Office and other central resources have to be effectively used to ensure their viability,

- there is a sense that South Marysburgh is not on the “political map”, and does not receive the time and attention as do other parts of the County,
- not unrelated to the above is a sense expressed that “Marysburgh needs to gain control of its agenda”,
- related to the above challenges is a perception, both inside and outside the community, that South Marysburgh is something of a “backwater”,
- there is a challenge to ensure that a number of potentially divisive issues, the already over-extended nature of much volunteering, and the scale of development needs in the community, do not cumulatively serve to sap the energy from area residents and the many active and committed community groups here,
- an over-arching challenge before the community in this time of significant transition is to ensure that its foundational assets (e.g. rural landscape, community solidarity) are not compromised as a result of individual projects, or the overall development agenda,
- while entrepreneurialism is strong in the community, there remains a challenge relating to a “can’t do” attitude,
- being at “then end of the road” and with a small resident market exacerbates the costs of providing retail trade and services - inventory costs and turnover rates are problematic, transportation is a significant business input, and output cost here,
- the development agenda for South Marysburgh will have to address a systemic conservatism here that militates against change and the investments needed for active development,
- the length of time and the debilitating visibility of “dead spaces” (e.g. derelict farm buildings, closed commercial premises) poses a challenge,
- shortfalls in convenience services (e.g. retail trade, personal services),
- attitudes and behaviours which serve to bypass local services (e.g. retail stores) pose a challenge,
- deficiencies in aptitude and attitude characterize much of the services sector here,
- there is need for more complete and reliable way-finding signage and other infrastructure for the area’s roads,
- Provincial policies and regulations relating to the alternative use of prime agricultural lands, where there are no viable farming opportunities,
- over-reaction on the part of the County to neighbour and other resident complaints and objections o development initiatives.
- the Municipality’s Economic Development Officer is not known to many of the community’s business operators and investors,
- the Business Development Centre (in PELA) is not known to many of the community’s business operators and investors,
- the Municipality’s regulations relating to B&B restrict the businesses to three rooms, for clients. This contrasts with other Ontario locations which permit six rooms,
- there is ongoing concern that the NAFTA and the processes of globalization (e.g. cheap imports) will continue the erosion of viable farming in the area,

The Action Agenda - What, Who and When?

Who? - General

There is some consensus that the community must expect to continue its practice of locally-generated, locally-based, and locally supported economic development initiatives, whatever they may be. Complementing this, the social and economic support for local businesses (e.g. through informal help, local purchasing) is evidently part of the community ethos here, and part of the economic development solution.

However, there is a clear sense that the community needs help. It is not self-evident that it can actually do much more on its own stretched human and other resources. All of this suggests the desirability of a more formalized County/South Marysburgh partnership approach to local economic development here. This fits a predominant expectation that the County play a significant role in addressing some of the challenges noted, but more to the point, that it engage fully in working *with* the community to address a prioritized set of development opportunities.

What? - Organizing

Prior to any specific programme or project activities, there is a need to organize. The County should collaborate with interested residents of South Marysburgh, including those who contributed to the present assignment, to set up a *South Marysburgh Economic Development Action Group*. This group would be charged with:

1. finalizing its mission and mandate,
2. finalizing the make-up of the *Development Action Group*,
3. reviewing the findings and conclusions from the present assignment,
4. identifying criteria for the prioritizing of development projects,
5. selection of a short-list of development projects for immediate attention,
6. development of the Terms of Reference for each of the short-listed priority project, and the Project Team,
7. identification of the resource requirements (e.g. personnel, time, budget) required for each priority project,
8. collaborating with other partners, as required, to bring forward the proposals for the priority projects, secure the required commitments, and expedite the initiation of the short-listed priority projects.

What? - Setting Priorities for Action

In terms of concrete project-related tasks the first order of business is then (a) the development of a set of criteria (e.g. probability of early success, projects that directly build upon key assets, least cost initiatives, projects that have to some degree already started) to assist in the setting of development priorities, and (b) the application of these

criteria to identify a short-list of immediate development projects, then a short-list of probable medium-term projects, and a short-list of possible longer term projects.

What? - Grouping Priorities

Once a basic prioritization has been undertaken, the short-list for immediate development should be carefully examined for common themes, complementarities, the possibilities of common input requirements (e.g. buildings refurbishment, Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw examination). Most will have overarching commonalities (e.g. local volunteer recruitment, development and management). But there will be distinguishing characteristics that should allow a clustering of (say) 6-8 themes. Identifying these will assist in the development of the specifications for the individual constituent projects, and will help make the overall process a little more manageable.

Some themes will be area and even location specific, such as those projects which are clearly Milford-specific. They might involve the physical refurbishing of Milford, the identification of historical buildings, the identification of a historical cluster, establishment of an LCBO agency, the resolution of parking and related issues, the provision of high quality thematic signage, the re-opening of the *Emporium*, the location of a convenience food and take-out counter, and various other initiatives that centre on Milford.

Another theme to group the short-listed projects might relate to the encouragement and support of the area's vibrant home-based business sector. Yet another might relate to the tourism sector and the many challenges and opportunities identified for this. Another theme might relate to niche foods, organic agriculture, local food provision and related matters. Another location specific theme might be the Black River, and the opportunities and challenges associated with a truly integrated approach to this ecological resource (e.g. an integrated physical plan, the "anchor" destinations in Milford and Black Creek itself, canoeing and walking connections, services and facilities requirements to make the package experience).

Synergies and economies of effort will be found across the projects in these packages or clusters of projects. The same energies and investments that enhance Milford as a community centre and tourism attraction will contribute to the "anchor" function this community will serve in the integrated Black River project. The enhancements of Black River will contribute not only to Milford, but also to the effective upgrading and use of the abutting Conservation Area. It is imperative that (a) the maximum synergies be realized, and (b) the maximum effect from volunteer spare time and energy, and other investments in the projects be fully realized.

What and Who? - Leadership Identification

While a start on the identification for project leadership has been made through the two Community Workshops and the key informant interviews for this assignment, it is only a start. It will require further concerted attention from the *South Marysburgh Economic*

Development Action Group. After the project short-list has been completed this should be high on the Group's agenda.

What and Who? - Project Possibilities and Responsibilities

Notwithstanding the above first-steps toward a coherent *Action Agenda*, this assignment has itself identified a number of project possibilities that might be high on the list of priorities. A first-cut identification of the loci of responsibility for championing and for providing leadership for these projects has also been undertaken.

They are as follows:

1. The **SME Hub** project should be addressed immediately by the Prince Edward Lennox Addington Community Futures Corporation (via its Business Development Centre), the County and South Marysburgh residents.
2. The **Premium Tourism** market development opportunity project should be the focus of collaboration between the Economic Development Office, of the County, Taste the County, and area residents, as a development priority.
3. The **Specialized Agriculture** project (e.g. hops, niche products, organic production) should be a priority collaboration between the Economic Development Office, of the County, the OFA, and area residents.
4. The **National Park** project should be led by the Municipal Councilor representing this ward in the County, with the participation of area residents.
5. The **LCBO Agency** project should be the prime responsibility of the Municipal Councilor representing this ward in the County, with the support of area residents.
6. The large, structural project addressing "**Off season**" **Tourism** development should be undertaken by the County and its Economic Development Office, with area residents.
7. The project addressing **Heritage Tours** should be taken up by the Cultural Roundtable and the County, with area residents.
8. The **Dinner and Mystery Theatre** project should be led by the Municipal Councilor representing this ward in the County, with active engagement of area residents.
9. The project to inventory, assess and address the adaptive refurbishing and re-use of South Marysburgh's many **Unused Buildings and Sites** (e.g. for performance venues) should be led by the County, with the active participation of area residents.

10. The **Smuggler's Cove Campground** project should be led by the County, with area input and participation.
11. The **Emporium regeneration** project should be led by the County, in partnership with area residents.
12. The **McGibbon House Regeneration** project should be led by the County, in partnership with area residents.
13. The **Wilderness Camping** project should be led by the Municipal Councilor for this ward in the County, with participation by area residents.
14. The **Family Households & Technology** project should be led by the County, and appropriate partners, including area residents.
15. The expansion of **Local and Tourist Use of the Area's Natural Resources** should be led by a community-based group.
16. The **Milford Buildings and Physical Resources Revitalization** project should be undertaken by the Municipality's Economic Development Office, with local historical interests and other participants, including the Milford 200 group.
17. The **Local Sports and Recreation Facilities** project should be led by the Recreation Committee, and local participants.
18. The **Milford 200** project, a potentially catalytic event, will be led by the group undertaking this, together with broad participation across the South Marysburgh community.
19. The **Tourism Network** project should be led by a community group, with the Economic Development Office of the County, with participation and support by the Province.
20. The "**South Marysburgh Day**" project, a new celebratory annual event, should be led by the Fair Board.
21. The **Local Homes and Property Tours** project should be led by a locally organized group.
22. The project to **Expand Current Winery and Other Facilities for Family-Oriented Amenities** should be pursued by the Wine Growers Association, Taste the County and complementary organizations.
23. The **Farming Tourism** project should be led by Taste the County, the TDA, and local OFA participants.

24. The **Heritage Property Values and Information** initiative should be undertaken by the Heritage Advisory Committee.
25. The **Arts and Musical Events** project should be led by the Cultural Roundtable and the Prince Edward Arts Council.
26. **Arts and Musical Events for Younger People** should be actively pursued by the School Board.
27. The **Black River Project** - involving a great variety of initiatives, from bird watching, canoeing, walking trails, and other activities and events - should include the County, the Conservation Authority, the Friends of the Black River Watershed, and others in a leadership group, with a broad base of participation throughout the community.
28. The successful **Milford Fair** project should be continued through the Fair Board, and other local participants.
29. The **Harvestin'** event, as a promotional project, should be pursued with the County's Economic Development Office.
30. The **Educational Project on Small Scale Farming and Organic Agriculture** should be led by the School Board with the OFA, and other local interests.
31. The **Development of Services for the New Local (Affluent) Markets** should be led by the Prince Edward and Lennox Addington Community Future Corporation (PELA) and the Real Estate Board.
32. The **Genealogical** project should be lead by the Museum Board and the Library, with selective resident participation.
33. The **Beer and Wine Gardens** project should be led by the owner/operators of the Bistro, in Milford.
34. The **Climate Change Opportunities** project should be under the leadership of the Economic Development Office of the County, the local OFA, and Taste the County.
35. The **Primary Sector Labour Pool** project should be pursued under the leadership of the Municipal Councilor, representing this Ward, with additional local participants.

This is no more than a starting assignation of expected leadership roles. As noted, the recommended Group should re-visit this and then complete a similar assignation for the prioritized short-listed projects for immediate action.

Not all identified projects will require County, local group, PELA or other leadership. Many can be left to the private sector. The **Wellness Theme** is one example, of several, that might entail collaborative initiatives best be left to the market, the interests and initiatives of businesses already active in this field, and potential future investors.

Other contributors not singled out as partners on a project-specific basis might include the Trillium Foundation, the McConnell family Foundation and several other similar organizations. The Province, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and other ministries and agencies, should also be seen as potential project partners. Likewise, selected departments and agencies of the Federal government may have important resourcing and partnership roles to play here. In addition, the Real Estate sector in the County which has benefited so much from the changes in the local economy and is an active contributor to a variety of arts and other initiatives might be expected to provide resources and some leadership to selected projects. The banks operating in the County might also be expected to contribute directly to these business development and related projects.

However, the dominant signal from the current assignment is that the County is expected to be a more active, visible, accessible, and informed partner in the community's ongoing economic development.

APPENDIX

- **CONTEXT**
- **ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES**
- **THE PROCESS**
- **THE COMMUNITY**
- **THE COMMUNITY'S FOUNDATIONAL VALUES**
- **THE ECONOMY**

CONTEXT

SOUTH MARYSBURG

South Marysburgh is one of ten wards in the single-tier Municipality of Prince Edward County. Of the County's total population of approximately 25,000 residents, less than 900 live in this relatively remote southeastern part of the county. Unlike the County Town of Picton (4,000), or other smaller centres (e.g. Bloomfield, Wellington), South Marysburg is predominantly rural with a small number of small crossroad centres and hamlets (e.g. Milford, Black River). The area shares a rich history with the County and has seen a series of overlapping waves in its economic transformation, from the earliest First Nations, through United Empire Loyalists (from 1780), into lumber exports and shipbuilding, a local fishery, a family-based mixed farming economy, a period of extensive barley cultivation and exports, the into an agro-industrial economy of canning, to be followed by a gradual thinning out of the agricultural population in the mid-20th century. Nowadays the transformation continues with continuing declines in agricultural activity, a buoyant viniculture sector, tourism, second home development, in-migrating retirees, cottages, arts and crafts activities, and a great diversity of other small scale enterprises.

The County is active in economic development and is currently implementing an *Economic Development Strategy*, a *Tourism Development Strategy*, a *Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Picton*, and a number of other initiatives.

While the County economy is growing and while this part of Ontario has recently achieved considerable profile because of the new viniculture sector, the relatively unspoiled rural landscape, a significant flow of new exurban migrants, the emergence of a culinary tourism, and other developments, the South Marysburgh economy has languished. Retail and other business closures, the persistence of these closures and the lack of take-up through new investment (e.g. for the McGibbon House, the Emporium), the highly seasonal nature of the small local tourism sector, some stagnation in opportunities in agriculture, and other issues have contributed to a prevailing sense of concern and urgency regarding the prospects of the area economy. Action is needed.

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this undertaking, sponsored by the Economic Development Office of the County of Prince Edward and the Prince Edward Lennox Addington Community Futures Corporation (PELA), is to initiate a community-based process to design an *action agenda* for the ongoing development of the Milford/South Marysburgh economy. It is not in itself a complete and integrated economic development strategy. It is, however, designed to

help set development priorities and the basics of an *action agenda* for residents and the County to address, to refine, and take forward for specific projects.

THE PROCESS

The *Action Agenda* was developed through two facilitated *Community Workshops* (November 17 and December 1, 2007), held in Milford, involving 42 community participants, an examination of relevant documents from the County, and 14 key informant interviews conducted in and outside of the area with residents and former residents. Consulting services for the process were provided by David J.A. Douglas & Associates, Ltd.

THE COMMUNITY

The community is described by residents as rural, a small, friendly, caring, quiet, close-knit community, with its roots firmly set in agriculture and other primary activities. While it may be a surprise to many non-residents, including other residents in the County, the community often describes itself as “remote”, a considerable distance from, and somewhat distanced from Picton, the main thoroughfares in the County and the associated tourist and other traffic, and from some decision-making and priorities setting forums in the County. There is a very strong sense of County and local history here. Longer term family names are well known and still in the area. It is a conservative rural community, easy going and valuing a modest lifestyle and personal demeanor. There is considerable pride of place, and of community and lifestyle. The local schools are highly regarded, and increasingly seen and used as “community schools”. Other central assets in the community such the Post Office, the Library, Mount Tabor theatre, and local retail and other businesses are prized. There is a community ethos of “buying local”, as there is a significant ethos of mutual aid and “looking out for each other”. This sense of the collective is balanced with a sense of plenty of space, and room for individual lifestyle choices.

South Marysburgh is changing, with many new retiring and second home in-migrants and longer term residents going through the processes of mutual adaptation and adjustments. The community is attempting a dynamic balance between those advocating and cherishing an ongoing working landscape and an active small rural economy, with a highly family focused lifestyle, and those seeking a landscape of recreation and leisure, with relief and a secured stability from the pressures of big city life.

Some speak of the community requiring regeneration, as young people leave for educational and job opportunities, as the age profile changes with an ageing resident cohort combining with a post-50s and older in-migrating exurban population. Others speak of the erosion of a middle class, as the longer term resident population, which includes a significant number of farmers and other self-employed with modest incomes, increasingly contrasts with a growing and relatively wealthy in-migrant cohort. This polarization is all the more evident because the young, household forming cohort which

might have brought expanding incomes, families and parallel local expenditures, is largely absent because of longer term out-migration and a lack of job opportunities.

THE COMMUNITY'S FOUNDATIONAL VALUES

THE ECONOMY

As noted, the local economy here is small, still with a visible agricultural sector (e.g. dairy farming, corn, wheat, horses), and a small but notably vigorous organic agricultural sub-sector, and some viticulture. There are now less than ten conventionally operated farms in South Marysburgh. Recently 200 acres were purchased for organic agricultural production. There are two or three residents specializing in the fishery (e.g. white fish, perch, pickeral). Other activities include horticulture.

There is a small amount of local convenience retail (e.g. groceries, a service station, automotive repair), and some personal services. The real estate industry is very active, with the continuing volumes of exurban in-migrants. Associated with this the construction, contracting and building and landscaping trades sector appears to be thriving. Tourism related businesses are diverse and significant (e.g. B&B operations, those servicing cycling tourism, those associated with an active bird watching and naturalist sub-sector), but appear to have leveled off in the last few years.

Besides many of the home-based small businesses, valued added production is confined to a small number of important enterprises. Among these are Vicki's Veggies, the Black River Cheese Factory cooperative, and the Long Dog Winery. The first of these, an organic producer, has expanded its clientele base from 15 to some 80 CSA members (Community Assisted Agriculture) in the last five years. There is a small amount of community services employment in the area (e.g. two schools, Library). The Ability Camp provides employment in the health and related sectors, together with opportunities for jobs in food services and facilities maintenance.

Self-employment predominates throughout this rural economy, most of which consists of small home-based businesses. These small enterprises include a great variety of businesses in the arts (e.g. painting, stained glass, sculpture), crafts (e.g. pottery, wood carving), communications, artisan foods (e.g. specialty cheeses, preserves, jams, dried herbs, honey, baked goods), personal care products, personal care services, planters, gift packages, antiques, machinery repair and servicing, child care, casual labour, music teaching, and others. Many are seasonal. Many might require the availability of personal up-front resources, or similar backing, the availability of "patient capital", and/or financial supplementing through other jobs in the area, in Picton, or further afield.

Besides the B&Bs the tourism sector includes some camps, rental cottages and chalets, trailer park facilities, and other accommodations. This area does not share in the volumes of tourists that most other parts of Prince Edward County see. It is not a through-route, and beyond the Mount Tabor theatre productions, occasional high profile events (e.g.

Milford Fair), and the Cheese Factory in Black Creek, it is not a destination. Cycling tourism, some motorbikes are important sub-markets for this area.

This plethora of small, usually home-based businesses, together with other enterprises in South Marysburgh endows the community with a number of particularly important characteristics. The community's labour force is characterized by a great diversity of skills, individuals more often than not are multi-skilled. There are extensive entrepreneurial talents, high degrees of inventiveness, self-reliance, opportunism and energy, abilities to adopt and adapt, abilities to run two or more "jobs" at the same time, and a considerable degree of internal networking, sub-contracting, skills exchange, referrals and other practices. Many home-based businesses operate on very tight margins, and outside of those that are to varying degrees a blend of hobby and enterprise and therefore a lifestyle choice, a significant number of young family households in this community rely on their courage, solidarity and resilience to stay afloat. They want to be here, to raise their children here, and to contribute to the community's economy and general wellbeing.

The economy may not record a relatively high unemployment rate; however, out-migration, especially by young people masks this issue. It is likely that there is a high rate of under-employment in sectors of the economy. For some, this it is a lifestyle choice; for others it reflects the lack of economic opportunities. There is definitely a low rate of physical capacity utilization, as evidenced by empty buildings, closed portions of many commercial premises, and empty lots with commercial and industrial potentials Other than in the residential sector, and a small number of other businesses, it is also likely that there is a relatively low rate of business investment in the area economy.

If *local* job creation and the provision of *local* livelihood opportunities for residents, and their families, as a choice, are commonly held objectives for the South Marysburgh community, then something needs to be done in terms of local economic development here.