



THE MONIESON CENTRE

The Impact of Knowledge Mobilization on Rural Economic Development Project
Discovery Workshop Report
New Tecumseth, Ontario
24 October 2012

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of The Monieson Centre's Impact of Knowledge Mobilization in Rural Economic Development project. Funded by the Government of Canada's Rural Secretariat, this two-year project is identifying best practices in connecting academic knowledge with economic development needs in rural Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a 3-hour workshop in New Tecumseth, Ontario. In alignment with community priorities, the focus of this workshop was business retention and expansion. Thirty business leaders in New Tecumseth gave feedback on their community's economic development needs and research questions. This information, along with similar information gathered in 19 other communities in Southern Ontario, will guide the development of future rural economic development policy and research initiatives.

The workshop, opened by the Mayor of New Tecumseth, Mike MacEachern, was hosted by Kim Wingrove, Director, Economic Development and Communications, Town of New Tecumseth in partnership with Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute. Jeff Dixon, Associate Director, The Monieson Centre introduced the project and, with Ms. Wingrove, shared best practices in Small Business Development. Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop. For more information, visit www.economicrevitalization.ca.



Town of New Tecumseth

PRIORITIES AND PROGRESS

Recent Local Action: Business Retention and Expansion Project

Participants were asked to consider a list of issues developed in the recent business retention and expansion project (see Appendix A), add any missing issues, and identify the issues most critical for the community to work on?

Two new issues were added:

1. Thriving underground economy
 - Risk of hurting legitimate businesses
2. Focus of commercial development: Council must be strategic with regards to where they want business located
 - Impact on downtown core, e.g., Alliston development focus to east

Top Ten Ranked Results Derived from the Business Retention and Expansion Survey

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1 (Tie) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derelict and vacant buildings in the downtown • Create solutions-oriented/small business-friendly municipal processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council hindering development, e.g., in regards to permits, legislation, and regulations |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of new businesses, enhancing business mix |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential growth not keeping pace with new commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification: redevelopment of downtown in terms of residential |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to shop local/buy local especially by new residents |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient marketing and promotion of the town/downtown businesses |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More communication about economic development initiatives/opportunities/programs |
| 8 (Tie) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underutilized assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, riverfront, train, conservation area, festivals, and events • Retailers are not working together on marketing, promotion, beautification, store hours |
| 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more foot traffic, entertainment, dining options |

Economic Development Priorities

Advance consultation in New Tecumseth identified the following economic development priorities:

- Downtown Revitalization
- Entrepreneurship
- Business Incubation
- Regional Branding

Thinking of these priorities...

- **Local Action**
What local resources (e.g., reports, partnerships, past work, people, local success stories) do we have that might contribute to addressing these priority areas?
To ensure today's workshop has lasting impact on your community, what actions need to be taken to move forward with these challenges?
- **Impact of Academic Tools and Resources**
Where is more research or assistance needed for local economic development?
What are the best ways academic knowledge and resources could assist your community or business?

Downtown Revitalization

<i>Local Action</i>	<i>Academic Support</i>
1. Brooks report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned by the Town 	
2. Façade improvement grant system (CIP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on CIP one-time program for matched blade signage - this year's budget 	
3. Town website - must be properly functioning (WIP)	
4. Renew New Tecumseth Project	
5. Study by Jean Monteith	
6. Nottawasaga Futures	
7. Existing downtown master plan	
8. Municipality purchase Ace rental, clean site, and build town square	
9. Set up a corporation to purchase buildings and rebuild or renovate them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condo or rent these renovated buildings to users for various purposes • Investment can come from local investors, the Municipality, or from original building owners taking back stock in the new corporation 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of this corporation should be kept as local as possible 	
10. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Continuing education satellite facility	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Zellers location to recruit continuing education satellite facility HVAC courses are few and far between in central Ontario Need to find a retailer for Zellers when they leave, to help the west end and to keep people from leaving town to shop 	
11. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Use vacant storefronts for the “Hodge Podge Trail”	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Crafting-related microbusinesses to attract visitors and increase foot traffic 	
12. Hart Holmstrom, Bob Jackson, and Jerry Moon	
13. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Seniors’ retirement housing really needed in Beeton	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase old county yard for that purpose Walking distance to grocery store, drug store, and downtown 	
14. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Empty or run down buildings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have local artists paint murals on these buildings so that they are not eyesores 	
15. Divert Truck Transportation	
16. Coop support for small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Brown coop in Fashion Marketing
17. Downtown Tottenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – no help

Entrepreneurship

<i>Local Action</i>	<i>Academic Support</i>
1. Nottawasaga Futures	
2. Bob Jackson, Pat Ruffalo, Ab Drury, Dennis Moon, and Lou Biffis	
3. Business Employment Resource Network	
4. Green Briar/Briar Hill	
5. Utilizing the younger generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth and diverse departments at Banting High School/Georgian College
6. Probus Club Members	
7. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Use vacant storefront (one each town) for “work from home” professionals to use as a business centre to encourage foot traffic and small	

business synergies	
8. FOCUS	
9. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Academic participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography and lack of transportation challenge academic participation

Business Incubation

<i>Local Action</i>	<i>Academic Support</i>
1. Encourage post-secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgian College Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre • <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Solicit post-secondary educational institute to open a campus here
2. Renew New Tecumseth Program	
3. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Work more with Farmers' Associations	
4. Marketing walking tours and activities for tourists and families	
5. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Pick a town-wide theme, then develop and publicize this theme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to Prince Edward County 	
6. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Work with Landlords to fill problem spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tottenham Mall 	
7. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Need to draw more on the automotive business to draw more people	
8. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Set up a mentoring program with retirees at Green Briar linked to new/micro businesses	
9. Retail/Festivals	
10. Using Chambers of Commerce programs and services to support new and existing businesses	
11. Business Hours of Operation	
12. <i>Potential for Future Action</i> – Talk to landlords to reduce rent for first few months to help draw business owners to empty buildings	
13. Parking	

Regional Branding

<i>Local Action</i>	<i>Academic Support</i>
1. County of Simcoe Economic Development	
2. Headwaters	
3. South Simcoe Railway	
4. Gibson Centre	
5. Potatoes	
6. Brooks Report	
7. Common theme town-wide for broader advertising	
8. Prince Edward County	
9. Banting Homestead	
10. Change New Tecumseth to Hondaville	
11. South Simcoe economic alliance	
12. Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7)	
13. Conservation Areas	

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Action

To ensure that today's workshop has a lasting impact in New Tecumseth, what actions need to be taken to move forward to address these challenges?

Top Twelve Ideas for Future Action

- **Educational Satellite** – Use Zellers, or another location, to recruit a continuing education satellite facility. HVAC courses are few and far between in Central Ontario.
- **Educate residents on why is important for them to shop local**
- **Renew New Tecumseth** – Designed to use vacant spaces and incubate small businesses.
- **Common Town-wide theme** – Enable broader advertising.
- **Use CIP grant/loans program to kick start first priority action plan into action**
- **Improve walking trails**
- **Set up a corporation to purchase buildings and rebuild or renovate them** – Condo or rent these renovated buildings to users for various purposes. Investment can come from local investors, the Municipality, or from original building owners taking back stock in the new corporation. Ownership of this corporation should be kept as local as possible.
- **County Bypass Study** – Divert truck transportation
- **Use vacant storefront for “work from home” professionals** – Use of one vacant storefront per town would encourage foot traffic and small business synergies.
- **Set up a mentoring program with retirees at Green Briar** – Link to new/micro businesses
- **Ensure recreational opportunities in downtown cores** – Council to make certain that constituents have the opportunity to recreate in their home centers without having to drive.
- **Communicate survey findings to businesses** – Create a prioritized action plan as a result of the survey. Use survey results as a call to action for businesses to get onboard.

Need for Academic Partnerships, Tools and Resources

- *What partnerships with, and resources from, universities and colleges are needed to support this work? If you had access to an academic(s) for a year...*
- *Where is more research or academic assistance most needed for local economic development? Pick six.*

Area of Academic Support	Interests and Resources
Communications, Population, and Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways can we convey to the families who work here to come and live here? • How do we sell who we are and all the great things about our Quality of Life? • How do we make New Tecumseth more of a destination? • Since we have become a bedroom community, what communication channels would be effective for marketing downtowns? • What are our current and desired demographics?
Fostering Entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we research recruitment of new businesses to enhance the business mix and tie it in with the town-wide theme? • How can we attract quality entrepreneurs and business that will have long-term success? • How can we market our potatoes as Vodka? • Is there a business package with economic development data to solicit new business to the area?
Business Market Assessment and Planning for Local Business and Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What retail mix are we missing to keep shoppers local? • What is a sustainable mix of businesses for a Downtown core? • How to get outsiders to spend bigger share of their wallets here? • Who is more loyal to local businesses - newcomers to the area or long time residents? • What is the percentage of people who never shop “in town”? • What drives residents to shop outside of town: why do people leave town when they can shop here? • Where are our customers coming from? • What are they buying? • Build a marketing plan • What core theme areas are most likely to show growth over next 20 years? • Help with a business plan to encourage intensification • What businesses work in Downtown areas? • How do we best take advantage of Beeton’s architectural heritage? • How can we get the thousands of people that utilize the Nottawasaga Inn to get downtown?
Help with funding/grant applications	
Sustainable Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to develop a local transportation system that is sustainable? • How do we improve public transit both within the Town and to and

	from nearby centres ? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would transit help New Tecumseth?• How can the Steam Train be made more sustainable?
Educational Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we attract an educational institute to set up a satellite campus?• What courses would appeal to local employers?• What are the steps?

Appendix A – Business Retention and Expansion Survey Voting Results

The previous Business Retention and Expansion survey results identified twenty-three issues:

1. Derelict and vacant buildings in the downtown
2. Recruitment of new businesses, enhancing business mix
3. Vacant grocery space in Tottenham Mall
4. Pending vacancy of Zellers in Alliston
5. Difficulty finding local products and services
6. Commitment to shop local/buy local especially by new residents
7. Enforcement of parking bylaw and two hour limit
8. Poor cell service in Beeton and Tottenham
9. Commercial recycling pickup
10. Create solutions-oriented/small business-friendly municipal processes
 - Council hindering development, e.g., in regards to permits, legislation, and regulations
11. More communication about economic development initiatives/opportunities/programs
12. Need more foot traffic, entertainment, dining options
13. Beautify
 - For example, sidewalks, flowers, vacant stores, and lots
14. Insufficient marketing and promotion of the town/downtown businesses
15. Underutilized assets
 - For example, riverfront, train, conservation area, festivals, and events
16. Retailers are not working together on marketing, promotion, beautification, store hours
17. Special events aren't generating increased sales/Outside vendors at community events
18. Downtown landlord issues
19. Residential growth not keeping pace with new commercial
 - Intensification: redevelopment of downtown in terms of residential
20. Outstanding recommendations in previous plans and reports
 - i.e., downtown master plan, Brooks report, strategic plan
21. Awareness and Availability of Parking
22. Snow removal between the sidewalk and the street and in alleyways
23. Better parking lot lighting

When asked to identify other issues that are missing from the preceding list, workshop participants added two issues:

1. Thriving underground economy
 - Risk of hurting legitimate businesses
2. Focus of commercial development: Council must be strategic with regards to where they want business located
 - Impact on downtown core, e.g., Alliston development focus to east

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 7) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 26

Total number of voters (N): 24

Rank	Number of Votes	Survey Issue Number
1	15	1. Derelict and vacant buildings in the downtown
1	15	10. Create solutions-oriented/small business-friendly municipal processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council hindering development, e.g., in regards to permits, legislation, and regulations
3	14	2. Recruitment of new businesses, enhancing business mix
4	13	19. Residential growth not keeping pace with new commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification: redevelopment of downtown in terms of residential
5	11	6. Commitment to shop local/buy local especially by new residents
6	10	14. Insufficient marketing and promotion of the town/downtown businesses
7	9	11. More communication about economic development initiatives/opportunities/programs
8	8	15. Underutilized assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, riverfront, train, conservation area, festivals, and events
8	8	16. Retailers are not working together on marketing, promotion, beautification, store hours
10	7	12. Need more foot traffic, entertainment, dining options
11	6	3. Vacant grocery space in Tottenham Mall
11	6	13. Beautify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, sidewalks, flowers, vacant stores, and lots
13	5	8. Poor cell service in Beeton and Tottenham
13	5	18. Downtown landlord issues
15	4	20. Outstanding recommendations in previous plans and reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e., downtown master plan, Brooks report, strategic plan
15	4	Additional Issue – Focus of commercial development: Council must be strategic with regards to where they want business located <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on downtown core, e.g., Alliston development focus to east
17	3	7. Enforcement of parking bylaw and two hour limit

17	3	21. Awareness and Availability of Parking
19	2	4. Pending vacancy of Zellers in Alliston
19	2	5. Difficulty finding local products and services
19	2	17. Special events aren't generating increased sales/Outside vendors at community events
22	1	Additional Issue – Thriving underground economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of hurting legitimate businesses
23	0	9. Commercial recycling pickup
23	0	22. Snow removal between the sidewalk and the street and in alleyways
23	0	23. Better parking lot lighting

Appendix B – Future Directions Voting Results

Actions Needed

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 21

Total number of voters (N): 22

Rank	Number of Votes	Idea
1	12	<p>Educational satellite</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use Zellers location to recruit continuing Education satellite facility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC courses are few and far between in central Ontario EDAC already working on educational satellite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be another location, i.e., Alliston Union
2	11	Educate residents on why is important for them to shop local
2	11	<p>Renew New Tecumseth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to use vacant spaces and incubate small businesses
4	10	Common theme town-wide for broader advertising
4	10	Use CIP grant/loans program to kick start first priority action plan into action
6	9	Improve walking trails
7	6	<p>Set up a corporation to purchase buildings and rebuild or renovate them</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Condo or rent these renovated buildings to users for various purposes Investment can come from local investors, the Municipality, or from original building owners taking back stock in the new corporation Ownership of this corporation should be kept as local as possible
8	5	<p>County Bypass Study</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Divert Truck Transportation
8	5	<p>Use vacant storefront (one each town) for "work from home" professionals to use as a business centre</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage foot traffic and small business synergies
8	5	Set up a mentoring program with retirees at Green Briar linked to new/micro businesses
8	5	<p>The Council needs to ensure that recreational opportunities are in place in the downtown cores</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make certain that constituents have the opportunity to recreate in their home centers without having to drive
8	5	<p>Communicate survey findings to businesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a prioritized action plan as a result of the survey

		2. Use results as a call to action for businesses to get onboard
13	4	Use vacant storefronts for the “Hodge Podge Trail” 1. Arts and Crafting-related microbusinesses to attract visitors and increase foot traffic
13	4	Talk to landlords to reduce rent for first few months to help draw business owners to empty buildings
15	3	Seniors’ retirement housing really needed in Beeton 1. Purchase old county yard for that purpose • Walking distance to grocery store, drug store, and downtown
16	2	Downtown gateway signs 1. Town attempting to adopt universal signage • Encourage use of blade signs
16	2	Go ahead with the plan to put an Equine Center at the JOC property 1. Then work with the Beeton businesses to go forward with a western theme • Encourage horse people to bring their business on horseback, board-bed and breakfast in area farms, tie in the railroad, etc.
18	0	24 hour visitor information
18	0	Improving Tottenham Retirement Housing

Academic Support Needed

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 18

Total number of voters (N): 21

Rank	Number of Votes	Idea
1	17	Communications • In what ways can we convey to the families who work here to come and live here? • How do we sell who we are and all the great things about our Quality of Life? • How do we make New Tecumseth more of a destination? • Since we have become a bedroom community, what communication channels would be effective for marketing downtowns?
2	13	Can we research recruitment of new businesses to enhance the business mix

		and tie it in with the town-wide theme?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we attract quality entrepreneurs and business that will have long-term success?
3	12	What retail mix are we missing to keep shoppers local? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a sustainable mix of businesses for a Downtown core?
4	11	Customer loyalty for our local businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to get outsiders to spend bigger share of their wallets here? • Who is more loyal to local businesses - newcomers to the area or long time residents? • What is the percentage of people who never shop “in town”? • What drives residents to shop outside of town: why do people leave town when they can shop here?
5	9	Business market assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are our customers coming from? • What are they buying? • Build a marketing plan
5	9	Help with funding/grant applications
7	8	How to develop a local transportation system that is sustainable? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we improve public transit both within the Town and to and from nearby centres ? • How would transit help New Tecumseth?
8	7	How do we attract an educational institute to set up a satellite campus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What courses would appeal to local employers? • What are the steps?
9	6	How can the Steam Train be made more sustainable?
10	5	What core theme areas are most likely to show growth over next 20 years?
10	5	Help with a business plan to encourage intensification
12	4	What businesses work in Downtown areas?
13	2	How can we market our potatoes as Vodka?
13	2	Is there a business package with economic development data to solicit new business to the area?
13	2	What are our current and desired demographics?
13	2	How do we best take advantage of Beeton’s architectural heritage?
17	1	How can we get the thousands of people that utilize the Nottawasaga Inn to go downtown?

Appendix C – Sessional Overview

- 1:45 – 2:00** **Registration & Refreshments**
- 2:00 – 2:05** **Welcome from the Mayor of New Tecumseth, Mike MacEachern**
- 2:05 – 2:45** **Small Business Development in New Tecumseth – Tools & Resources**
Jeff Dixon, Associate Director, The Monieson Centre, Queen’s School of Business
Kim Wingrove, Director, Economic Development and Communications, Town of New Tecumseth
- 2:45 – 4:55** **Facilitated Brainstorming and Discussion**
Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen’s Executive Decision Centre
- *Burning Issues*
 - *Local Capacity*
 - *Future Directions*
- 4:55 – 5:00** **Closing Remarks**
Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute
Jeff Dixon, Associate Director, The Monieson Centre, Queen’s School of Business
Kim Wingrove, Director, Economic Development and Communications, Town of New Tecumseth
Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen’s Executive Decision Centre

Appendix D – Methodology

Information Gathering and Community Consultation Process

The community consultation process included an information gathering component composed of a series of interactive workshops using facilitators from the Queen's Executive Decision Centre. The purpose of this component was to get input from a broad cross section of community stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted using a group decision support system also known as an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen's School of Business. The Queen's EMS, called "the Decision Centre", combines expert facilitation with a state of the art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 500 organizations around North America use the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the consultations, participants were asked, for example, "Where is more research or assistance needed for local economic development?" Participants typed in ideas on the laptops all of which appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. The group was then asked "if we could only address seven of these in the next year, which ones are most critical?" Individuals selected his/her top seven and the overall results were then displayed to the group and further discussed.