



Economic Development Strategy Technical Advisory Team Minutes

The Corporation of Norfolk County

Thursday, January 10, 2019

9:00 a.m.

Training Room, Robinson Administration Building, Simcoe

Present: Laura Gibson (Ministry of Economic Development), Nancy Fallis (Ministry of Tourism), Nick Kinkel (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs), Gord Potts (Venture Norfolk), Kim Earls (SCOR Economic Development Corp.), James Johnson (Norfolk County Finance Division), Heather King (Norfolk County Library), Gary Beemer and Chris Gilbert (Haldimand & Norfolk Social Services), Melissa Collver (Norfolk County Heritage & Culture), Matt Terry (Norfolk County Corporate Communications), Stuart Burnett (Norfolk County Paramedic Services), Clark Hoskin and Chris Garwood (Norfolk County Economic Development).

Review of Draft Recommendations

Members were grouped at four tables and given time to review each strategic direction drafted for the interim report to Council, based upon survey feedback and round table participation. Members were also given coloured dots to express an opinion about specific draft recommendations.

- “Do it ASAP” dots expressed a member’s opinion that the recommendation should be given high priority.
- “Do it NEXT” dots expressed a member’s opinion that the recommendation should be given medium priority.
- “DON’T do it” dots expressed a member’s opinion that the recommendation was not supported.
- “WON’T happen” dots expressed a member’s opinion that the recommendation was not likely to be carried out, for whatever reason.

A. Grow and diversify our population

1) Lure new residents

- Comments: “Attract vs Lure”
- a) Broaden tourism marketing tactics as resident attraction tools
 - 2 “Do it ASAP” dots
 - 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
 - 1 “DON’T do it” dot
 - 1 “WON’T HAPPEN” dot
- b) Create New Resident Sponsor Kits to leverage hospitality of existing citizens
 - No Comments
- c) Host trips by newcomers and real estate brokers to area
 - 1 “Won’t Happen” Dot
- d) Explore expansion of hamlets and small business opportunities there
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
 - 1 “Do it Next” Dot
 - 1 “Don’t do it” Dot
 - Comments “Leave Hamlets as they are”, “Support expansion of small businesses opportunities. Not to expansion of hamlets”
- e) Creative incentives to repatriate local youth
 - 2 “ Do it Next” Dot
 - 3 “Won’t Happen” Dot
 - Comments “Strongly Don’t agree with the “Won’t Happen” dot. Many small efforts such as business and co-ops could be offered to attract youth”

2) Develop a local workforce strategy

- 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- 2 “Do it Next” Dot
- Comments “Partnerships with employers, municipality, social enterprises, etc.”
- a) Consult major employers on how best to address labour shortages

- 4 “Do it ASAP” Dots
- 1 “Do it Next” Dot

b) Collaborate with newcomer centres to attract new immigrants

- 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- Comments “Keep using our current resources = libraries – leverage those”

c) Leverage relationships with offshore farm workers to grow full-time labour force

- 1 “Do it Next” Dot
- 2 “Don’t do it” Dots

d) Collaborate to recruit doctors and other health care professionals

- 3 “Don’t do it” Dots
- Comments “Many doctors will be retiring soon. We need to replace them to keep the current patients served.”

e) Collaborate on recruitment drives

- 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- 1 “Do it Next” Dot
- 1 “Won’t Happen” Dot

f) Hosting Job Fairs to connect businesses to labour

- 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- 1 “Do it Next” Dot

3) Connect workers with housing and amenities

- 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- 2 “Do it Next” Dot

a) Collaborate with real estate community to explore housing alternatives

- 2 “Do it ASAP” Dots
- 2 “Do it Next” Dots
- 1 “Don’t do it” Dot
- Comments “Get right players. (MMAH / County)”

b) Collaborate with community groups to welcome new residents

- No Comment

B. Enhance the business / community ecosystem

1) Streamline processes

- 2 “Do it ASAP” dot
- a) Continue the customer service review in all County Divisions
 - No Comment
- b) Review Job-Related Development Tracking Policy and streamline processes
 - 4 “Do it Next” dots
- c) Review how community events are supported / approved
 - No Comment
- d) Explore mentorship programs for small businesses (step-by-step navigation)
 - No Comment
- e) Explore new development plans during business visits to expedite planning and building approvals
 - 3 “Do it ASAP” dots
 - 2 “Do it Next” dots
- f) Explore supports for service clubs and social enterprises to boost volunteerism
 - 1 “Won’t Happen” dot

2) Support business

- Comment: “Love the Symposium each year. Please continue with local spot lights”
- a) Continue business visits to listen to needs of employers
 - Comments: “Important” / “These build public awareness. Should be continued.”
- b) Continue workshops to assist entrepreneurs
 - No Comment
- c) Enhance youth entrepreneurship programs, networking groups
 - 1 “Do it Next” dot
- d) Enhance / focus Community Improvement Plan business incentive programs
 - 3 “Do it ASAP” dots

- Comment: “Only had one “Do it ASAP” dot but CIP would have my second “Do it ASAP” dot
- e) Increase parking spaces and enhance traffic flow in communities that need it
 - 1 “Won’t Happen” Dot
- f) Enhance access to high-speed communications in public spaces (parks, beaches, streets, etc.)
 - No Comment
- g) Host tours of site selectors, real estate contacts from target markets
 - 1 “ Do it ASAP” Dot
- h) Collaborate with financial institutions to address needs of local entrepreneurs
 - 4 “Won’t Happen” Dot
 - Comments: “Decision makers are not local.”
- i) Showcase new professionals arriving in area
 - No Comment

3) Support agriculture

- Comment: “Connect and promote other agencies that do this OMAF, SCOR, etc.”
- a) Continue to promote culinary tourism and agri-tourism
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
 - 2 “Do it Next” Dots
- b) Support value-added niche food processing and technology-related agricultural manufacturing
 - 1 “Do it Next Dot”
- c) Connect agriculture businesses to funding programs related to workforce, technology, and other supports
 - No Comment
- d) Support on-farm diversified uses as-of-right, including wineries, breweries, distilleries, events, tours, experiences, farm stays and accommodations
 - 2 “Do it ASAP” Dots
 - 1 “Do it Next” Dot
- e) Explore worker housing alternatives

- 1 “Do it Next” Dot
- 1 “Won’t Happen” Dot

C. Become an “idea-friendly” community

1) Create a nexus between government and business that is mutually beneficial

- 2 “Do it ASAP” dots
 - 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
 - Comments: “Maybe use the word ‘link’ here.” / “Consider Business Registration In order to Target Communication. Educate which businesses exist and resources available”
- a) Coordinate a network of business associations to advance collaboration on projects and ideas
- 2 “Do it ASAP” dots
 - 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
- b) Encourage business-to-business collaboration and frequent networking opportunities
- 2 “Do it NEXT” dots
- c) Encourage a higher profile for all industries in Norfolk County through better communication and sharing of information
- No Comment

2) Increase participation by citizens in community projects

- 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
 - 2 “DON’T do it” dots
 - Comment: “Effective?”
- a) Provide training in collaborative leadership
- 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
- b) Engage service clubs to explore more effective ways to serve the community
- 2 “DON’T do it” dot
- c) Engage citizens in idea-friendly events that boost involvement in community
- No Comment

d) Mobilize the Team Norfolk database to solve community problems

- No Comment

e) Build amenities for youth and expand youth programs

- 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
- Comment “ Continue the SSUP [Student Start Up] Program”
- Comment “Many organizations are struggling with the same mandate. Find a way to work together (i.e. Fusion Centre in Ingersoll), Multi service centre for youth”

f) Explore community solutions to addiction and mental health challenges

- 3 “WON’T HAPPEN” dot
- 1 “Do it ASAP” dots
- 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
- Comment: “Community needs to be in a supportive position”

g) Explore establishing a Youth Council of teenagers

- No Comment

3) Turn downtowns into attractive places to visit and invest

- 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
- 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
- Comments: “ Congrats on the ‘Win the Space’ program”

a) Continue CIP incentives

- No Comment

b) Reconsider the Downtown Revitalization Master Plan

- 1 “Do it ASAP” dots

c) Encourage property owners to develop their buildings

- 2 “Do it NEXT” dots

d) Create a vacant building registry

- 1 “Do it ASAP” dots
- 1 “Do it NEXT” dot

e) Organize an Empty Storefront Open House Day

- 2 “Do it NEXT” dot
- 1 “Do it ASAP” dots
- f) Encourage home-based businesses to move into downtown storefronts
 - 1 “WON’T HAPPEN” dot
- g) Increase compatible nightlife in downtowns
 - No Comment
- h) Develop turnkey event solutions to encourage visitors and residents to rediscover downtowns (e.g. Friday Night Popup fundraisers, food trucks, music, eco events, social inclusion)
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” dots
- i) Organize events more regularly, such as weekly street parties and concerts
 - No Comment
- j) Develop and promote tourism experiences
 - No Comment

D. Ready ourselves for the future

1) Educate our citizens to be prepared

- 2 “Do it Next” dots
- a) Create better education linkages with school boards
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
 - 1” Do it Next” dot
- b) Create tech programs for youth
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
 - Comment: “ Programs that teach heritage restoration, craftsmanship”
- c) Lure a university program to Norfolk County
 - 2 “Don’t do it” dots
 - Comments: “Change word “lure” to attract” , “Concentrate on college”

2) Develop Infrastructure

- a) Explore new sources of revenue for the municipality
 - i) Re-engineer agriculture property taxes

- ii) Enact a Municipal Accommodation Tax
- iii) Explore public private partnerships
 - No Comment
- b) Centralize amenities e.g. the Hub / Norplex and build beside tourist accommodation / conference facilities
 - No Comment
- c) Centralize Water & Sewage Treatment
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
- d) Expand public transit and other local government amenities using technology e.g. Uber, Lyft, Rover, etc.
 - No Comment
- e) Link public transit to major cities
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
 - 1 “WON’T HAPPEN” dot
- f) Explore water-based public transportation alternatives
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” Dot
 - 1 “Do it NEXT” Dot
 - 1 “DON’T do it” Dot
 - 2 “WON’T HAPPEN” dots
 - Comment: “Lake Erie ferry (connect to US) would open Norfolk County up to whole new audience and opportunities. Public/Private enterprise.”

3) Attract Business

- a) Lure technology companies that value work-life balance and quality of place
 - No Comment
- b) Lure food processors that value our terroir and the food we grow
 - No Comment
- c) Support new business development that brings high-paying progressive jobs to Norfolk County and a labour force that chooses to reside here
 - 2 “Do It ASAP” dots
- d) Open a business incubator aimed at emerging industries

- 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
- 1 “WON’T HAPPEN” Dot

4) Develop Affordable Housing Options

- 2 “Do It ASAP” dots
 - 1 “Do It NEXT” dot
- a) First-time buyers
- No Comment
- b) Retirees wanting to downsize
- No Comment
- c) Student accommodation
- 2 “WON’T HAPPEN” dots
- d) Newcomers
- No Comment

5) Focus on Emerging Industries

- a) Build a “tech think tank” incubator focusing on our strengths
- No Comment
- b) Explore microbanking and emerging funding platforms for locals
- No Comment
- c) Expand film / TV production
- 1 “Do it NEXT” Dot
- d) Create spaces in downtowns for creatives to network and collaborate
- No Comment
- e) Add streaming web cams across Norfolk for people to experience nature
- 3 “DON’T do it” Dots
- f) Explore anaerobic digestion for creation of energy and soil conditioner
- 1 “DON’T do it” Dots
- g) Explore emerging transportation solutions to the benefit of residents and tourists
- No Comment

6) Focus on Sustainable Tourism

- Comment: “ Great job ... stay doing what you are doing”
- a) Increase the inventory of overnight accommodation for tourists
 - No Comment
- b) Increased promotion with shoulder season and winter programs attracting more value-added tourists
 - 1 “Do it NEXT” dot
- c) Encourage overnight and monetized sustainable tourism experiences by businesses through maximizing potential of trails, waterways, abandoned rail lines, conservation areas
 - No Comment
- d) Support tourism businesses that monetize experiences in ways that draw wealth to the local economy
 - 1 “Do it ASAP” dot
 - 1 “ Do it NEXT” Dot
- e) Support parking solutions in high-traffic areas through pay-to-park technologies, local-friendly parking policies, added parking spaces and lots, and shuttles
 - No Comment
- f) Support public amenities for tourism e.g. public washrooms in all towns, Blue Flag beach status for beaches, expanded dockage for pleasure craft
 - No Comment
- g) Encourage legal cannabis-themed tourism experiences connected with existing tourism businesses, places, food, drink and culture
 - 1 “DON’T do it” dot
- h) Develop an agrifood showcase and culinary tourism centre connected to an outdoor concert venue that could host major bands – perhaps as part of a hub
 - 2 “Do it ASAP” dots

Next Steps & Adjournment

Members were advised that the draft Interim Report would be presented to Council on February 19, 2019. Mr. Hoskin thanked everyone for their input.

The meeting terminated at approximately 10:45 a.m.

More Information at norfolkbusiness.ca/strategy.