



## Saugeen Shores Update 2013



Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Rural Affairs



### **BR+E Goal - Foster Growth and Job Creation**

- Identify the needs of our business community.
- Determine if there are ways to help local businesses maintain existing jobs and create new ones
- Improve lines of communication between the Municipality and the business community

## Advantages of Doing Business in Saugeen Shores - top 3

1. Quality of Life
  - Small town charm
  - High degree of community involvement
  - Recreation, amenities, outdoor activities
2. Average Household Income - +33% above national average
3. Geographic Setting (beach, natural surroundings)

*Business Owners choose Saugeen Shore because they want to live here!*

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## Issue 1 – Municipality to be more involved with Economic Development

- Appoint a Staff Member as Point of Contact for ED
  - ✓ CAO internally designated as first point of contact.
  - ✓ Manager of Development Services/CBO hired combining the departments of Building, By-law and Development Review Coordination.
- Create an Economic Development Standing Advisory Committee
  - ✓ Spruce the Bruce Committee formed in response to County downtown revitalization initiative (STB) – revised TOR in order to consolidate other related activities, reduce duplication, enhance communication and better coordinate the efforts of multiple parties are under review – no action from Council required yet.

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## Issue 1 – Municipality to be more involved with Economic Development

- Create an Economic Development Plan
  - Not pursued- waiting for objective 1 and 2 –efforts to consolidate multiple points of contact underway as part of consolidation of the development services functions earlier in 2013.
- Investigate the need for an Economic Development Position
  - Determination of need for full time resources will await further analysis and future council budget deliberations in tandem with the county finalizing their role.

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## Issue 2 - Improve Customer Service to Business Owners

- Assign staff to start documenting Permit Approval processes, including when process leads to other levels of government agencies.
  - ✓ New Manager of Development Services intends to implement permit tracking mechanism prior to year end.
  - ✓ Manager will appoint staff to work with customers to explain steps in the process.
- Create a Process Checklist for enquiring businesses/ streamline processes.
  - ✓ Under consideration by new CBO/Manager of Development Services/ work to document and identify earlier has begun.
- Town to engage other levels of government to find ways to share information so business do not repeat themselves
  - ✓ On-going via the Business Enterprise Centre and the Chamber

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### Issue 3 - Improve the Downtown Vitality

- Improve Street Scope - Promote the façade guidelines
  - Spruce the Bruce Program – Successful granting program for to businesses in South and Port in addition to signage for the municipality.
    - ✓ Port Elgin – have shared the streetscape vision, work has started on the Goderich & Green area
    - ✓ PE BIA (Business Improvement Area) is continuing to work on a unified streetscape including a vision for Coulter Parkette
    - ✓ Southampton – STB (Spruce the Bruce) committee has completed the CIP (Community Improvement Plan)– approved in June – STB (Spruce the Bruce) committee now considering next steps after dialog with newly forming merchants group.
- Develop grant/loan assistance program
  - No Action Completed however STB group has now asked staff to start formulating policies to implement the CIP's in both communities for future Council consideration.

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### Issue 3 - Improve the Downtown Vitality

- Improve Communication & Coordination among all stakeholders
  - Communication
    - ✓ Created quarterly Chamber newsletters – open rate was about 40% which is an improvement
    - ✓ Have converted mass emails to “rapid email updates” and this has been successful
    - ✓ Continue to attend any BIA (Business Improvement Association) /SBG (Southampton Business Group) meetings and share info.
    - ✓ BIA (Business Improvement Association) and SGB (Southampton Business Group) are working together on numerous projects
  - Coordination
    - ✓ BIA (Business Improvement Association) staff person
    - ✓ PEG (Port Elgin (brand) Group and SBG (Southampton Business Group) working in tandem
  - Landlord/Tenant Relations
    - Research best practices
  - Revisit policies governing the downtown to ensure they work with business and not against
    - Opportunity exists to revisit zoning standards through upcoming general review of comprehensive zoning by-law that will occur after County consideration of the Town's new official plan later in 2013.

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#### Issue #4 - Improve Communication between Government Agencies and Business

- Inform relevant agencies of current levels of contact with Saugeen Shores Businesses
  - ✓ BEC keeps current on government programs and services that support business growth.
  - ✓ BEC collaborates with other government programs and offices on information sessions and workshops.
  - ✓ BEC promotes other organizations to entrepreneurs regularly through our client and contact database including SM sites.
  - ✓ Research programs available to businesses
  - ✓ Promote programs to businesses, where applicable

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#### Issue #5 – Address Workforce Development Concerns

- Facilitate Employee Retention Education
  - Host workshops on resources and strategies
    - ✓ Bridges 2013- “Attracting and Retaining quality Employees”
    - ✓ On-going initiatives through the Chamber, BEC and Labour Market Planning Board
- Skills Training
  - Mimic “First Time/Full Time for High School students”
    - ✓ Chamber researching
- Cost Sharing and pool resources and opportunities
  - ✓ Vpi- offers training at a reasonable cost
  - ✓ Lake Huron Collaborative in Kincardine -
  - ✓ Chamber is considering First Aid training at a reduced rate for Chamber members - ongoing

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### Issue #6 - Affordable Housing

- Promote the Rent-Geared-to-Income Program to landlords
- Increase housing options at more affordable pricing
- Create a Housing Committee (ad hoc or standing)
  - ✓ Council adopted official plan amendment 12 dealing with suites – approved by the County in June 2013.

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### Issue #7 - Improve Communications with Farmers of Saugeen Shore

- Create a Farmers' Point of Contact to address enquiries
- Inform OMAFRA personnel about the creation of Point of Contact
- Ensure newly appointed Point of Contact is subscribing to OMAFRA Connects
  - No specific action

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## Land for Warehousing and Lite Industry

- Businesses say they are experiencing difficulties in acquiring land
  - Town currently has land for sale
- Hold a focus group to investigate:
  - reasons why small businesses say they are having difficulties
  - possible resolutions to identified issues
- Inform business community the results
  - **No specific action**

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## Recommendations

- Use Town Website to Publicize Municipal Government Plans and Achievements - **On-going**
- The Town should investigate new Parking and Washrooms Signage – **New signs in some areas**
- By-Law Officer Outreach
  - ✓ **Hired – working on fostering relationships with business owners**
- Investigate methods for addressing recurring issues with local Utility Providers – **no action**
- Town review of the SMART trial period could incorporate a broader review of public transportation
  - ✓ **Town became smart partner in 2013**
  - ✓ **Transportation policies reviewed and updated as part of the town's official plan review.**

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## Further Considerations

- Top Four Community assets to develop
  - Farmers Market – developed in Port Elgin
  - Waterfront – public survey completed
  - Walking and Bike Trails – on going and petition to make crossing at 21 safer
  - Parks and Green Space
- Chamber of Commerce and Business Enterprise Centre
  - to implement seminar and workshop for general business skill development
    - ✓ On-going – always looking for input
  - To improve their communication strategies with businesses
    - ✓ Better use of SM (social media), e-newsletter and blasts

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## Next Steps

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