

Southampton Community Development Strategy

... WORK IN PROGRESS

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Southampton Community Development Strategy.....work in progress, planning in action

INTRODUCTION

This resource document is the result of the hard work of the Southampton community. After four months of meetings and workshops, discussions, debates and surveys the community development strategy has taken shape, and a life of its own.

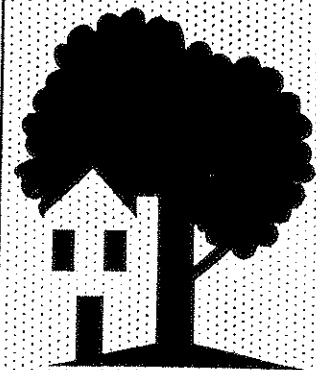
This document is part of the continuing process of community development, and tells you, the reader, where we want Southampton to be in 5, maybe 10 years, and how we intend to get there. This is not a plan that is written in stone. It is an agenda for action that will continually be revisited, re-evaluated, added to, and refined as the process continues and more people get involved. It is flexible and must respond to change in the same way that the community development process must change, and reflect the community's priorities and concerns. It is not a "Final Report" or an academic research report. It is a community resource document and a community development tool, developed in Southampton, for Southampton, by Southampton residents.

It should be reviewed in its entirety at least every 6 months, through a community development forum, to take stock of progress, share lessons, and make any course corrections which are necessary.

SOUTHAMPTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROCESS

The objectives of this project were to (a) prepare a community development strategy for Southampton, (b) undertake the process in a participatory, community-based manner, and (c) contribute to the community's capacity by training a group of volunteers in the fundamentals of strategic planning and management.

The application of strategic planning and management to community development is an important feature of the adopted process. In this process the community asks and attempts to answer the following key questions:



following key questions:

- Where is Southampton today? What condition are we in? How well are we doing as a community?
- Where is our community going? What will Southampton be like in 5 years time, in 10 years, ...?
- Where should we be going? What should Southampton be like in 5 years, in 10 years?
- How do we get from here to there? How do we ensure that Southampton gets to where it should go, becomes what we believe it should be?

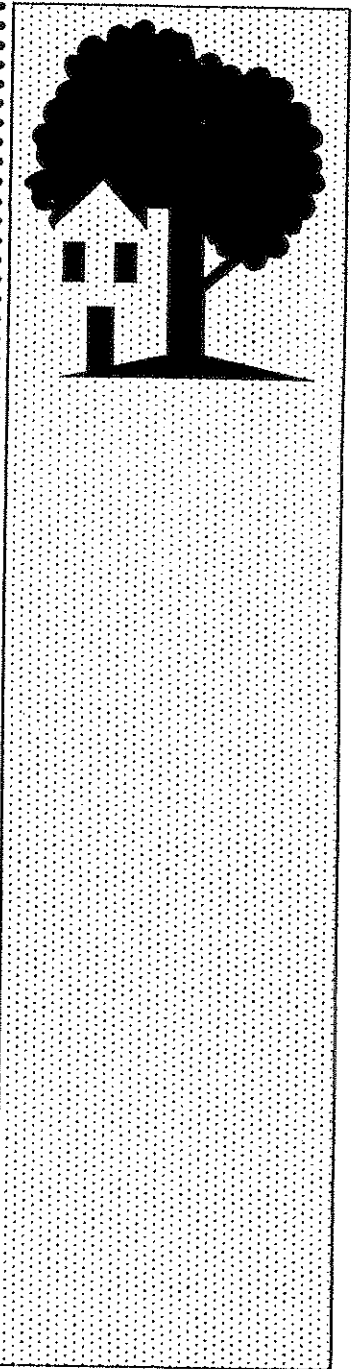
Addressing these four key questions provides the underpinning for the community's development strategy. The essence of the strategy is to design a community "road map"; designed by the community, for the community, which will help it "get from here to there."

Strategic planning and management is an ongoing, cyclical process through which the community identifies its longer term vision, its idealized state, and from there identifies goals, objectives and specific targets which will help it move toward its desired condition. Unlike older style "static master" plans, strategic planning is a dynamic process which tries to manage and direct change, in a logical systematic manner, while at the same time bringing about desired change through practical initiatives and priority projects

Once adopted by the community, strategic planning, and especially strategic management, becomes a way of conducting the community's 'business'. It is never ending. It is a systematic way of looking to the future, carefully examining the community's strengths and weaknesses, and crafting a step-by-step way to get action which will lead toward desired ends.

Strategic plans are managed through ongoing monitoring of progress ('how well are we doing?') and prudent evaluation of projects and policies over time. Adjustments, refinements and course corrections are common and part of the practical, flexible processes of managing the plan.

Strategic planning and management in the community development process does not address every single item of importance in the community's economic, social, cultural, environmental or political life. It selects strategic issues and opportunities which will have the greatest impact on the community's



PARTICIPATION TO DATE

Thus far, the Southampton Community Development Strategy Project has quite successfully reached out to the community. We have had nearly 300 people at our workshops, and through the use of on-site surveys we spoke with an additional 150 people on the beach and downtown. Our mail-out survey also had a good response, with 40 people responding to the survey. A critical element in the on-going strategy is community communications and an expanded base of participants.

SOUTHAMPTON'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

Early on in the community development strategy process, the community identified what they felt are Southampton's most significant strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities, and threats. These are:

STRENGTHS:

physical environment

beach

sun / sunsets

Chantry Island

clean town

Fairy Lake

small town atmosphere

people are friendly and open

distinction between the things in Southampton and the attitudes and people here

spirit of volunteerism

family-oriented cottage life

Southampton market

tree-lined ways behind buildings

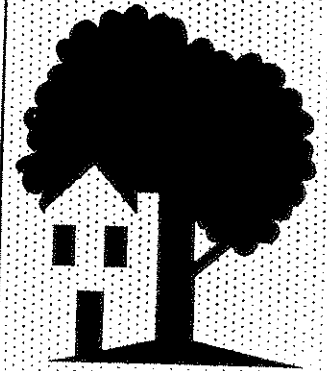
housing quality- high percentage of older, well maintained homes

old factory

cultural

library & museum

artistic community



quality of life

low crime

stress free

community services such as hospital, visible and effective police force

safe environment for children and all citizens

religious diversity

view of the lake

location

close to many markets (Kitchener Waterloo, Detroit)

far enough to be a getaway from these communities, but not a suburb

residents

seasonal residents are largely professionals and thus are beneficial to the town

large, active senior's population

These are some of the many assets that Southampton can draw upon, and build upon in its on going development.

WEAKNESSES:

"best kept secret": residents do not want others to compromise what they have gained by locating in the Town

not an overall vision for the community's development

lack of a definite tourism program resulting in loss of markets

4 season resort- not being addressed

abandoned factories- entrance to town looks depressed

past deterioration of beach and long dock

aesthetic shortfalls

lack of public washrooms/ picnic area/ change rooms at South St. and other

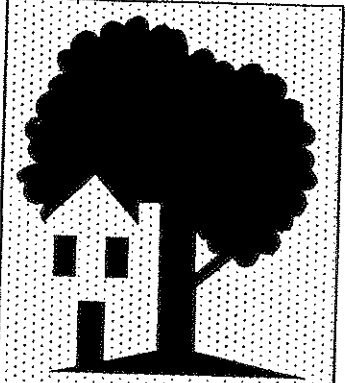
access points

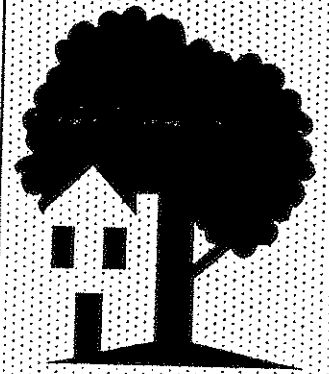
in tourist season garbage is everywhere

different opening and closing hours of operation in the downtown

poverty and illiteracy

accommodation- what is the situation for poorer families?





- overtaxation perception by some seasonal residents
- no local industry
 - many retail needs cannot be met in Southampton, must shop elsewhere
 - lack of jobs for young people
- lack of activities for young people to do (i.e. a rollerblade centre)
- lack of retail opportunities
- distant from bigger municipalities to the south and east
 - makes market size smaller than other markets
 - people buy elsewhere (i.e. Owen Sound)
- for independent operators there are cost/price pressures associated with the smaller market size, this problem is less pronounced in franchise operations.
- open economy and leakage associated with retail approx. 60% of income lost to Pt. Elgin, Owen Sound, and other external communities
- loss of labor force
- lack of job opportunities
 - especially for spouses and youth

Southampton will have to address many of these issues, as challenges, to foster a successful community development strategy

OPPORTUNITIES:

- business
 - telemarketing, mail order
 - computer- manufacturing
 - opportunities around marine heritage
- training centres
 - we have facilities (physical)
 - skill-oriented colleges
 - knowledgeable people here
 - agriculture
- cultural
 - growing market for folk festivals

In a rapidly changing world there are many external opportunities to further enhance the quality of life in Southampton.

EXTERNAL THREATS:

no ability to create manufacturing jobs

economy influences consumer- we are vulnerable if tourist market collapses

outside government inaction

island

fishing rights dispute

Native concerns

government inaction

hangs over us until resolved

affects real estate values in North end

fishing

threats to tourism industry

air pollution

ozone

weather

environmental

deterioration of island

spills at Hydro plant

sand erosion

Provincial cutbacks

threat to educational services

threat to hospital

cultural competition from other towns

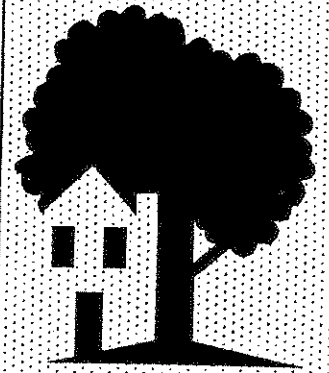
i.e. Kincardine has music/drama market

Paisley- history/ retail opportunities

lack of activities for young people from early age here as opposed to Sauble

Beach, etc.

market value assessment re: taxes



aspirations of residents change, as new opportunities emerge, as more residents become engaged in the process. For the short term this chart is a starting point which logically illustrates how the community would like their Southampton to be in the future....as it could be... as it should be.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This question is one which we must ask ourselves. We must ask ourselves "What is important enough to me, as a resident, that I will take the responsibility for making it happen?"

The Community Development Strategy should be refined and completed through continuing community consultations. The emerging strategy should be implemented by all sorts of groups and individuals networking together, revisiting old or starting up new partnerships (e.g. Public/Private sector, Volunteer/Private Business, Township/Town). There is no one, and there should not be one, overarching management or directing organization. The process should be open, participatory, informal and positive.

A small group of volunteers (e.g. Town, service organizations, youth, Chamber of Commerce, interested residents) should provide an ongoing overview as the components of the strategy emerge and are implemented. This facilitating group should help groups co-ordinate their activities, and with the various residents monitor progress and undertake formal evaluations of major projects.

This group will champion 'community development' - take the broad view, and maintain longer term perspectives. Their primary tasks are to:

- maintain momentum;
- facilitate the collaborative participatory process;
- promote some early concrete 'wins';
- monitor and evaluate progress in an ongoing basis.

This initial design represents a "work in progress". It provides a draft road map for Southampton. It collects in one community resource document the emerging strategy which reflects the community's values, priorities, and a cross-section of goals, objectives, targets and specific projects. It frames an action agenda for Southampton.

