

**Dufferin County Economic Development Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Notes,  
Dufferin Oaks Auditorium, Shelburne, April 4, 2017**

**Dufferin County's Economic Development Related Competitive Strengths**

- Proximity to the GTA
- Recreation, walking trails
- Lifestyle; calm compared to the GTA, slow pace, beauty
- Close to Blue Mountain, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach
- Highway access – very accessible for people to drive north
- Bruce Trail, Dufferin forests, Mulmur, cyclists
- Hunting, fishing
- Friendly, family orientated, safe to raise families
- Industry transportation links
- Relatively close to airport
- Abundance of land, affordable and lower cost to develop compared to the GTA
- Rich in arts and culture, studios, music
- Dufferin music festival
- Cheese factory
- Talent pool, new residents, new entrepreneurs, people from all walks of life moving in and some are opening small businesses
- Agriculture

**Dufferin County's Greatest Weaknesses & Challenges related to Economic Development**

- Willingness to develop or not develop land
- Absentee landowners
- Lack of Internet service in some areas, connectivity and cost issues
- Public transportation
- No Uber in area
- Dufferin County needs a stronger voice at senior levels of government
- Lack of healthcare services outside Orangeville
- New residents don't have realistic expectations on municipal services
- Unrealistic salary expectations
- Doctor recruitment
- Lack of labour for unskilled jobs
- Low education levels
- Education – a lot of kids are not going on to higher education – need more trade schools
- Affordability issues as costs increasing
- Lack of affordable housing in some areas
- Lack of Retirement communities and housing
- Lack of infrastructure
- Low tax base – the townships don't have enough of a population base to afford extras
- Water (food processing)
- Retail diversity

- Dilemma – how to grow without changing the status quo

### **Greatest External Threats to Future Economic Growth in Dufferin County**

- No influence with senior government
- Amalgamation
- Global economy (energy etc.)
- Diversity of economy – competition
- Economic development beyond local control (GTA?), no control over their own destiny
- GTA/Brampton almost at Dufferin’s doorstep – urban sprawl from the south will impact the attractiveness of Dufferin
- Sustainability for agriculture (e.g. Honda takes labour, crop mix and conflicts, McShops)
- Carbon tax
- Agriculture is in conflict with urbanization
- Corporate farms
- There are other good trading areas outside Dufferin County
- Toronto still needs aggregate for construction; massive gravel pit development interests which could spoil the area
- Corporate greed – Bay St. needs to make money on farmland they invested in
- ‘Big business is the biggest threat’
- Outside interests – raising rents on agricultural land, doubling the rent prices – no longer viable for growing corn given costs of renting agricultural land
- Interest rates/gas hikes could impact attractiveness of Dufferin for new residents – too expensive to commute

### **Further Opportunities/ Sectors and Sub-sectors that will Drive Growth in Dufferin**

- AgTech
- Ecology, Alternative Energy
- Outdoor Education Programs (Pine River Institute); Centres of Excellence – strength in social services, Youth & Adult treatment
- Dufferin County as an apprenticeship hub for above programs
- Indigenous population?
- Foster innovation for wellness, tourism, green industry, history, arts – leader/hub of excellence
- Better education to attract technology – engineering/technology for agriculture
- Workforce development
- Retail development – special shopping evenings/events; open at 11a.m., close later
- Peer to peer groups; learn from others, go to where the people are
- BIA should run workshops
- Collaboration, festivals etc.
- New entrepreneurs
- Dufferin County as a “boutique” to be discovered
- History, roots, storytelling
- Internal / external partnerships / alliances
- County management of communities

- Access to reliable communications
- Business plans – make sure the numbers make sense – has to be sustainable and profitable
- Learn from other communities – not unique
- Encourage people to invest in the community
- Improving highways (paved shoulders for slow moving vehicles) and infrastructure
- Need succession plans for farms and tradespeople that will be retiring in 6 to 8 years
- ‘Think of people not things’

### **Vision for Dufferin County’s Economic Development**

- A vision of measured, sustainable growth
- Measured growth with a tax base to support infrastructure
- Opportunities in a shared economy, respecting heritage and natural resources
- Healthy competition and collaboration of municipalities
- Vision is just the first step – have to say what it will cost

**Dufferin County Economic Development Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Notes, Session at Monora Park Pavillion, Mono, April 5, 2017**

**Dufferin County's Economic Development Related Competitive Strengths**

- Location – GTA, transportation, airport, CP rail
- Postsecondary institutions
- Geography: Bruce Trail, other trails, nature, skiing, lots of recreation
- Quality of life
- Rail and water
- Railroad in Orangeville
- Small town – big city access
- Hospital
- Health services
- Physician recruitment – doing well in Shelburne
- Seniors – wealth of knowledge – untapped
- Entrepreneurial culture – supports start-ups – above average entrepreneurial spirit – wants to build something
- Housing affordability vs GTA
- Safety/small town community feel
- Orangeville and Shelburne have economic development committees
- Community volunteer base, service clubs
- Orangeville has a full-fledged French language public elementary school (École élémentaire des Quatre-Rivières), part of the Conseil scolaire Viamonde; French immersion is also available in the English schools.
- Local food system – farmers' market, school food program
- Strong vibrant arts and culture community
- Strong emergency response plan – includes hospital, police, fire fighters

**Dufferin County's Greatest Weaknesses & Challenges related to Economic Development**

- Not near any major highway
- Internet – availability, affordability, connectivity
- Property taxes
- Development charges – too high
- Loss of industrial land – redesignated to residential
- Lack of servicing; lack of industrial grade servicing
- Grand Valley – lack of serviced land

- Amaranth – no sidewalk; no way to get people to businesses
- Can't accommodate major water users - too far from lakes to access water
- Servicing capacity issues – need to expand capacity
- Challenge to get all the municipalities talking to each other
- No cross-boundary cooperation
- Lack of a sense of urgency
- Bureaucracy – layers of red tape
- Need to stop playing politics – Province, Peel Region
- Inconsistency in where Dufferin fits for services – some are aligned with Peel, others with Wellington
- Navigation of services – overlap/duplication
- Perfect storm – multiple layers of government - municipal, provincial such as Environment – development applications have to be approved for various aspects by different departments – inconsistencies – needs to be integrated. Plans of subdivisions – Towns have their own process but Townships have to go through Province.
- Greenbelt and Escarpment restrictions impacts Agri-businesses – can't build secondary residential buildings for staff
- Divergent views/mixed message – 'Places to Grow' vs. Environment – no growth
- Shortage of housing to satisfy demand – example, 15 people camped overnight to buy a home (at opening day for purchase at model home site)
- Need education for trades workers
- Education –need to train people for where they need to be
- Regional public transit void
- 50% of people commute – not using all the brain power – commuters are too tired to contribute locally
- Falling per capita assessment

### **Greatest External Threats to Future Economic Growth in Dufferin County**

- Changes in NAFTA
- Automation – can't compete internationally; will impact industrial base – jobs at risk
- Cost of Hydro
- General political environment
- Payroll tax
- Residential growth will paralyze if you don't have industrial/commercial growth
- Collapse of the housing prices in the GTA – bubble bursting
- People (commuters) give donations where they work and it is spent there, not in Dufferin – United Way can't get donations locally because people are donating in the city where they work

- Lack of leadership at Ontario and Federal levels
- Agricultural uncertainty – commodity prices, TPP
- More pressure on land development – higher cost for farmland
- Province – overall agricultural policy
- Land banking – purchase and hold for 20 years – not even leasing to farmers

### **Workforce and Talent Aligned with Future Requirements of Agriculture & Business?**

- Young people are going elsewhere for education and not coming back
- We want the kids to come back – need ways of communicating we want them back – Dufferin County needs to be seen as an attractive place
- No transportation – no Go Train – No Internet – this is what stops young people from coming back
- Low level of affordable connectivity limits the level of on-line learning
- Less than an hour's drive from Guelph University – Agriculture program – could work with Guelph to bring in agriculture incubator firms
- Ongoing learning – where are the technology hubs?
- Create environment to attract talent and retain people
- Schools and Hospital should be instrumental in getting higher speed internet for Dufferin
- Can't get engineers because we don't have what they need - connectivity

### **Further Opportunities/ Sectors and Sub-sectors that will Drive Growth in Dufferin**

- Land in the northern part of the county – land for agricultural incubators associated with University of Guelph
- Aggregates and gravel pits – the White Elephant in the room
- Agri-business – organic, specialty, breweries, wineries
- Alternative energy – wind, solar, attract and educate
- Equine
- Food processing
- Grow food, animals – only when completed do we ship
- Orangeville – location wonderful for business (given transportation)
- Need to know how to do technology stuff
- Service industry has to be top notch to attract tourism
- Upscale tourism
- Estate development
- Elliot Lake attracts seniors – maybe could do something like that
- Get young people to move back for outdoor lifestyle

- Opportunity for a Food Hub
- Grow clean safe reliable food
- Expand the public's knowledge that safe food is grown here
- Partnerships
- Collaboration at the staff levels between municipalities – doing like things, working together
- High technology – but long way to go
- Investment Ready Ontario – certified sites
- Need offices, not warehouses
- Need white collar workers
- More small businesses
- Mind set change for politicians
- Access to talent
- Dufferin County bank of ideas – incubator of people that come together to develop ideas
- Take advantage of those transportation arteries that go through Dufferin County
- Need to do something to get people to stop here
- Creative class like Prince Edward County – food, restaurants, arts – need to steal ideas from Prince Edward County
- Need to stand the test of time

### **Vision for Dufferin County's Economic Development**

- Tourism – share what we have, package it, but don't have them living here
- Want tourists to visit and then have them go home
- Quality of life – better not bigger – not growth for the sake of growth
- Keep local people here
- Dufferin County – collectively working together

**Dufferin County Economic Development Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Notes, Session at Grand Valley Community Centre, Grand Valley, April 5, 2017**

**Dufferin County's Economic Development Related Competitive Strengths**

- Rural area
- Very close to the GTA – lots of customers close by
- Good at Agriculture – niche area
- Land availability
- Cost of land – relatively cheap for those coming from the south
- A lot of different types of people coming in – blend of talent
- Lifestyle – recreation, trails – people are interested in the community and would work here if they could
- Retiring people
- Kids like the community – want to stay and want their kids to experience it
- People move here for the slower pace of life – lots to do if you like the outdoors
- Attractive place to raise a family
- Close commute to airport
- Administration staff of the municipalities work together – sharing information

**Dufferin County's Greatest Weaknesses & Challenges related to Economic Development**

- Rural area (challenge as well as strength)
- Only three municipalities have services
- Land is expensive compared to the north
- Lack of affordable internet; not enough being done – need affordable high speed internet for everyone
- Need alternative source of energy – natural gas for rural areas
- Workforce is a challenge – in professional services, expectation is Toronto wages
- Struggle to find labour
- Retail positions declining – hard to compete (against Amazon)
- People with higher education (such as Master's degree) are overqualified for jobs in Dufferin – can't find work in area
- Hard to find low skilled jobs
- People who don't have skills will have a hard time finding jobs (digitization took jobs away)
- Lack of affordable housing – people leaving because of that
- Need more professional jobs for people



- Traffic and trucks – safety and trying to get somewhere is a challenge (maybe design specific routes for trucks)
- Marketing and communication
- Nothing connecting newcomers to the community
- Capacity issues in water filtration
- Lack of shovel ready serviced industrial land in Grand Valley
- No media covers the whole county
- Resistance to change
- Rural slow life mentality – if it was okay in the 80's, okay now

### **Greatest External Threats to Future Economic Growth in Dufferin County**

- US Trade deals
- Dairy and poultry farmers will be affected by trade deals
- Agriculture – succession issue (children of farmers want to away to school and jobs elsewhere– not manage farm); affordability issue for new people that want to farm – land is too expensive.
- Province is pushing Agriculture into 'mega farms', away from the family farm
- Farming used to be considered a way of life; now considered an Industry
- Farmers can't afford the legislated changes and upgrades
- Competition from everyone elsewhere

### **Further Opportunities/ Sectors and Sub-sectors that will Drive Growth in Dufferin**

- Agriculture – niche markets – honey, cider; people want to know where food is grown – willing to take the drive
- Agriculture Hub market; all year farmers market
- Farmers markets for farmers with all of the produce going to one location (similar to St. Jacobs Market)
- Ethnic farmers – growing veggies, crops, and spices aimed at the ethnic market
- Opportunities to talk to corporations and open satellite offices in Dufferin
- A centre north shared office facility supported by several corporations; example - attract Royal Bank and another company has space for staff on another floor
- Filming – great hub for the Toronto film industry for rural scenes
- Niche area: Athlete Institute Basketball Academy in Mono - the Athlete Institute is young but it has already produced top NBA picks
- Headwaters Farm Fresh web site/newsletter coming out soon
- Better communication
- Distillery
- Agriculture or other start-ups that need a place to grow

- Educational institutions – something that could be done to increase the presence of Humber
- Talent, incubation, research
- Warehousing in rural areas

### **Dufferin County as a Location for New Investment in Business & Agriculture**

- Will try to work with new businesses so we can be competitive – question is whether we can afford it
- Labour access is a big deal
- Problem is that the work force is not visible (e.g. Target saw no work force in Dufferin and went to Milton)
- Talk to Agricultural universities and link with farming jobs in Dufferin
- Woolwich Cheese and Sheldon Creek farms are good examples
- Cheaper land needed for Agriculture

### **Vision for Dufferin County's Economic Development**

- All 8 municipalities have different visions
- If the south wants to grow and the north doesn't, there is nothing wrong with that but the municipalities need to support what the others want to do – need to get on the same page
- All the different areas are in different stages of evolution; need to support and not compete
- Can't just be a County in isolation – needs to consider adjacent municipalities
- Need to make sure we are open to new development and ideas