The City of Welland

BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

COMMUNITY MODELS STUDY

FINAL REPORT
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SUMMARY

As the City of Welland develops its Community Strategy, 'best practice' models from other communities provide a wealth of experience, information and creative ideas that can enable the City to move forward more expediently by learning from them, avoiding their mistakes and employing those strategies that apply directly to Welland.

Many communities from Canada, the United States and Europe were researched initially and eleven selected for the study. A profile for each community is included in the final report, summarizing the key issues, strategies and outcomes.

Although the communities may differ in size or resources, each 'best practice' model has very similar basic issues and challenges to those facing Welland today. Many communities started their strategic planning process over 10 years ago, so are at an advanced stage of community development, in some cases on a second or third phase of implementation. The process has to be viewed in the long term to be able to measure the outcome. The community models studied confirm that Welland is employing many of the key strategies for successful community development.

INTRODUCTION

This Final Report profiles eleven communities, selected because their traditional economic base was historically similar to Welland, in many cases with a dependency on the steel industry. Following the decline of that industry they have faced the same challenges as those experienced in Welland today and have been left with the same legacy, for example, brownfield sites, decrease in employment and a declining and ageing workforce. Industry downsizing due to global competition and changing technology have prompted their action.

Descriptions of the key strategies that emerged from the community models follow, with some specific examples taken from the profiles and their direct relevance to Welland. This report reviews the economic development strategies created in these communities, describes how the strategies evolved and were implemented, the successes and failures that resulted, as well as the roles of the community stakeholders.

In writing the report, visits were made to three of the communities, Cobourg, Pittsburgh and Sheffield and key representatives interviewed. Their input is invaluable to complement the research carried out. A list of those consulted plus sources of information and reports used in the research is included at the end of the report.

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STRATEGIES

1. Diversification

Traditionally Welland's economy has been based on manufacturing and despite losses in recent years, it still remains an important sector today. The Competitive Analysis study which was undertaken in 2001 by Dr Emanuel Carvalho, University of Waterloo, and updated in 2003, shows that Welland has competitive advantages in transportation equipment manufacturing, machinery manufacturing and fabricated metal product manufacturing.

Manufacturing has historically been the city's largest employment sector with a total of 5,145 jobs (2001). Although major expansions have taken place within companies such as John Deere Welland Works and Bosch Rexroth in recent years, overall the sector has declined by more than 30% since 1996. In addition, further significant losses of 1,000 jobs have been experienced since 2001. To some extent, however, the manufacturing job losses have been offset by gains in the service sector in transportation, call centres and retail.

Welland's manufacturing sector has been dependent on heavy industrial manufacturing. This manufacturing sector, particularly within the steel industry has declined not just in Welland, but globally as can be seen in many of the communities researched for this project e.g Sheffield, Pittsburgh, Corby, Gary and this further decline is non-reversible.

While Welland needs to maintain manufacturing jobs to sustain its income generation and economic growth, it can no longer rely on these traditional manufacturing areas for employment. The industrial base must diversify into other sectors to achieve economic stability and business confidence in the future. Successful diversification is based on existing strengths and competitive advantages. In Welland as well as e.g. Hamilton the focus is on traditional and emerging sectors.

<u>Advanced Manufacturing</u>

As technology becomes more advanced and integrated into manufacturing, there is a move towards knowledge based industries and leaner and more efficient manufacturing, Sheffield, for example, produces as much steel today as it did at the height of its production, but with a rationalized industry, overall reduced by 50,000 jobs. The steel industry today is focused on specialty products for niche markets where it can be competitive.

Pittsburgh started its diversification several decades ago in the 1940s, when its dependency on the steel industry made it unattractive to new business and population growth. In the 1980s, with the collapse of the steel industry as its major employer, Pittsburgh focused on new technology and service sectors. However, these new industries failed to replace manufacturing as the engine of growth and prosperity and the importance of retaining a manufacturing base was recognized. Today the city has over 150,000 workers in advanced manufacturing. Known as the 'computerized factory floor' this emerging field integrates age-old manufacturing with computerization, robotics and automation.

This diversification into advanced manufacturing has only been possible because of the support from Pittsburgh's education institutions. Universities and colleges in the city are providing the education and training necessary to produce highly skilled workers as well as the research capabilities that spawn spin off companies. All of which create the environment necessary to attract investment into the area and ensure existing business remains competitive.

In Hamilton the successful industrial manufacturing remaining today has become specialized and technology/capital intensive. Despite closures and downsizing, the steel and metals industry still remains the largest employer in the city. The City of Hamilton strategy aims to facilitate the transition of its industrial manufacturing to high value-added activities.

Distribution

Welland's location within the Niagara Region, close to the U.S. border and with access to the QEW and the proposed Mid Peninsula Corridor as well as the Niagara Central Airport, the Welland Canal and rail links, positions it ideally as a centre for distribution. Welland would benefit from the increased accessibility resulting from the building of the proposed Mid Peninsula corridor and the extension of Highway 406. In the community model studies both Greater Moncton and the Lehigh Valley identified similar opportunities. Greater Moncton built on its location within easy reach of both U.S. and Canadian markets and developed as a distribution and retail centre. It is at the centre of a good transportation system. Lehigh Valley also has excellent transportation conditions with well developed waterways, railways and air transport. It has diversified into food product transportation which also has grown food production industries as well as packaging and plastics.

The City of Brantford claims the creation of 2,000 jobs as a direct result of Highway 403 being built with an adjoining industrial park attracting new investment. It has also identified food production as a growth sector and been successful in attracting companies. In recent years, for example, Maidstone Bakeries invested $155 million and Western Waffles invested $25 million.

Sports and Cultural Tourism

Communities with a natural environmental asset have recognised tourism, including both cultural and sports tourism, as potential growth areas. Tourism is not only an industry itself but improves the quality of life for residents as well as quality of place for both residents and potential investors. Welland not only has excellent sports facilities and a strong community interest and involvement in sport but also has the unique feature of the recreational Welland Canal flowing through the centre of the city.

Over the years since the commercial canal was diverted and the Council assumed the canal lands, from the Federal Government, many plans have been put forward for its development. None of them have been successfully implemented although there has been development on Merritt Island, the rowing course, introduction of Dragon Boat racing etc. It may be, as other communities have discovered, that it is too ambitious to implement a large scale plan and the way forward is to identify manageable projects e.g. the proposed amphitheatre and work towards other projects individually.

The most notable community examples of diversification into sports tourism have been Sheffield and Indianapolis. No city has focused as extensively on sports and hospitality for redevelopment and economic expansion than Indianapolis. For three decades and the administrations of two mayors, the city has developed and implemented an aggressive program focused on amateur sporting events and organisations plus professional sports teams. To date Indianapolis has hosted more than 400 national and international amateur sporting events, attracted numerous sports organizations to locate in the city and built or renovated $400 million of facilities. Many of the sporting events also have developed an opportunity for cultural tourism which has now become a secondary focus for the city.

Sheffield's regeneration strategy was founded on diversification into sports tourism. The signature event was the hosting of the World Student Games in 1991. This event became the catalyst to stimulate economic development as well as the redevelopment of brownfield sites left by the steel industry into sports arenas and stadiums. The success of this strategy in creating jobs and prosperity for the city is documented in the section on Sheffield. Originally, the strategy was to build a sports infrastructure however, alongside that a sports manufacturing industry has emerged. There are some interesting examples e.g. a traditional wire company that now makes basketball hoops for the NBA and a forge shop that invested in new technology and makes ice hockey skate blades for the NHL.

Welland is hosting the Corporate Dragon Boat races in 2007, as in Sheffield, this event could be a catalyst to invest in the necessary infrastructure leaving the city well placed to attract future events and develop sports opportunities.

Both Sault Ste Marie and Cobourg have built on their natural assets to develop a tourism industry. Ten years from the start of its strategic planning process, Cobourg is a thriving town with an attractive downtown and a growing population. It has become known as a tourist destination. The municipal council invested in a marina, parks, beach and a trailer park. It still retains its manufacturing base but in part due to the quality of life that is offered it has been successful in attracting new industry.

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Sault Ste. Marie had relied on Algoma steel as its principal employer for more than 100 years, however, the company began downsizing in the 1990s reducing a workforce of 12,000 down to 4,000 with the further loss of employment in related businesses. The community declined and the town recognized the need for an economic development strategy. The resulting strategy recognised tourism as an important stimulus to prosperity. Sault Ste. Marie's natural beauty and resources make it an ideal location to base a strong tourism industry. Increase in tourism activity was identified as a strategic goal in the 1992 Strategic Plan. Today this is a growing industry. In 2000 a total of 1.7 million people visited the area, representing 1.5% of the provincial total. Destiny Sault Ste Marie identified "Tourism Development" as one of its six growth engines with ten specific initiatives to increase the length of stay and the number of visitors. This tourism focus is alongside that of diversification in manufacturing but is an important part of the whole strategy.

Gary, Indiana, has diversified its economy away from traditional steel manufacturing industries. It still retains a manufacturing base but one of its fastest growing industries today is tourism. As well as redevelopment of its beaches, parks and golf courses, two gaming boats have been established on the waterfront. Both have contributed significant economic development dollars.

Many communities, like Welland, over the last 20 years have developed a diversification strategy to ensure a more balanced and stable economy by reducing their reliance on one particular sector. Again, like Welland, they have identified their competitive advantages to provide a focus for this strategy and some of these have been given as examples from the community models researched. All, however, have recognised the need to maintain a manufacturing base alongside other sectors, as a necessity for income generation, skills development and municipal revenues.

2. Leadership

Within a community there are many different groups, individuals and issues contributing to the life of the city. In the development of a strategy, all will play a part but for the strategy to be implemented successfully there has to be a leader. This can be an individual or a group.

The Community Development Strategy Committee in Welland is leading the planning process by co-ordinating input from the different project areas. Once the plan has been developed it will go to the Welland Development Commission and ultimately to the City Council and the Mayor for ratification and implementation. The Mayor has become actively involved in the planning process and has agreed to be its leader.

Another way of looking at this is that the community plan needs a 'champion'. Such is the approach that has been taken in Cobourg. Two successive mayors have led the process but the individual elements or projects have had additional champions. It is seen as a strategy for success to identify a champion for each project as it arises. They provide not only the leadership, co-ordination but also the energy and drive necessary to make something happen.

Leadership need not be restricted to the Mayor and Council, in some larger communities it is an economic development organization. In Pittsburgh, the Allegheny Conference's roundtable has continued to provide leadership since 1944. In Greater Moncton, leadership initially came from the Chamber of Commerce before being handed over to other economic development groups. They recognize strong local leadership as a major factor in its success from the Greater Moncton Economic Commission, the business community and municipal leaders.

It was the City Council's strong leadership position that provided the impetus to start the regeneration process in Sheffield. Now 20 years later, the Sheffield City Strategy is divided into projects led by identified 'champions' or leaders. They are incorporated into the strategy document by name and photo as being the leader responsible for that action and alongside each is the name of the delivery agent.

In Corby, the leadership came from a community based partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership, who developed the Community Development Plan and involved representatives from all interests in the town.

In the City of Hamilton it is believed that the success of their strategy requires not only the endorsement of Council but also individual city councillors becoming champions of specific clusters.

As Community Development is a long term process, continued leadership and drive are vital to the successful development and implementation of the strategy.

3. Partnerships

Partnerships are important not only in bringing all the interests in the community together but also in sustaining the development itself. The community development project in Welland has started with partnerships, between three levels of government i.e. municipal, regional (NETC) and federal (HRSDC). The project has also brought together at the steering committee level – the public sector, private sector, voluntary groups, educational institutions, business organisations and the media.

These partnerships strengthen the project by bringing the resources of the groups into the process as well as ensuring their members and associates involvement and commitment to the plan and its implementation. Key ingredients required for the success of partnerships include total trust, co-operation, communication and commitment.

Partnerships were a necessary part of the community planning process in all the communities researched. There were three different forms of partnerships identified.

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Community Partnerships

The Vision Seekers group which came together to start the development process in Cobourg is a good example of a community partnership. This group involved the whole community, including citizens who represented a cross section of the town representing government, business, education, social services, intergenerational and natives.

Financial Partnerships

Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce worked hard to form partnerships and bring people together to start the diversification process. The strategic economic development plan and the marketing and implementation plan development costs were shared by three levels of government and the private sector, a total of $600,000. The partnerships that have evolved since have been diverse, each with its own structure, involving community agencies, federal and provincial departments and the private sector as well as the development of strong links between Anglophone and Francophone communities.

The Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee was a forum of business, private sector and government leaders formed to develop the downtown. The costs were shared one third by the public sector and two thirds by the private sector.

Political Partnerships

Political partnerships bring together all interests in the community and their resources to ensure that there is a commitment to the plans and implementation. Political partnerships are also formed to lobby for funding by presenting a unified community approach.

Sault Ste Marie worked in partnership with the federal and provincial governments as well as industry to undertake a number of initiatives in the early 1990s to create economic stimulus and diversification. This included RAPIDS (Research, Action, Promote, Infrastructure, Delegate, Support) which was a roundtable of representatives from all levels of government to generate the planning process.

In Gary, Indiana three neighbouring communities including Gary partnered together to use the region's strengths to overcome its weaknesses and form The Empowerment Zone to attract new businesses to the area.

To reverse the trend of steel closures, Lehigh Valley economic development department, private enterprise and local planners got together to work out a solution, as described in the profile.

To apply to be one of the UK government's new Urban Regeneration Companies with all the benefits attached, the town of Corby united the private sector with local, regional and national agencies in a partnership to form Catalyst Corby and deliver a new strategy for the area.

Sheffield City Council realised that manufacturing could no longer be relied on as a major source of employment and a diversification and regeneration strategy was essential. It immediately formed partnerships with local businesses and higher education to co-ordinate development of the strategy. Those partnerships were critical in enabling Sheffield to secure both UK and EU funding for projects. Partnerships are still at the centre of the city's strategy today having evolved since the 1990s. The Sheffield First Partnership brings together agencies responsible for employment, environment, equality, investment, inner city development, economic development and health in a forum that is accountable for delivering the city's strategic plan.

Possibly the longest running partnership and the best known, is the Allegheny Conference in Pittsburgh, which was formed in the 1940s. It still survives today with representation from the private and the public sector in a roundtable leadership.

In reality there are overlaps between all three forms of partnerships but the success of the strategic plan depends on their formation in the community. No one group can implement the strategy on its own.

4. Funding

Funding is necessary in community development for work in a number of different areas e.g. downtown revitalisation, attracting new investment, supporting specific initiatives, the development of the strategy itself, brownfield development and capital investment. However, municipalities, like Welland, have little flexibility in raising funds other than through municipal taxes

The communities researched have all found it necessary to access funding outside the community to develop their community plan, to implement it and to compete successfully for new investment.

Some specific strategies have emerged from the Community models research relating to accessing funding and programs.

1. <u>Funding Partnerships</u>

In the UK, funding for economic development is available both from central government and from the European Union. There is strong competition for this money and e.g. Sheffield was only able to successfully start accessing programs when it formed public and private partnerships to present as a community proposal. The various partnerships that have evolved in that city over the last twenty years have become more sophisticated. The latest is the Sheffield First Partnership representing all aspects of the city including inner city development, investment, employment, education, environment and health. One of their key objectives is to present a *"united view to Government (UK and European) in attracting the support and resources to do what needs to be done."*

Also in the UK, the town of Corby, formed a partnership including the public and private sector called 'Catalyst Corby' to access funding from the UK government in particular for infrastructure as part of its development plan. It has a 20 year plan and £4 billion in funding from the UK government.

Another example is Pittsburgh where after the evolution of their partnerships, Strategy 21 was formed which enabled public and private agencies to speak with one voice when requesting state funds.

2. Tax Incentives

Historically, tax incentive areas or Enterprise Zones were first set up in the UK in the 1980s to provide tax based and other incentives to encourage private sector investment to regenerate and re-develop depressed areas with high unemployment. Since then similar programs have been established in other parts of the world including the U.S. In the early 1980s many U.S. states developed Enterprise Zone initiatives to renew economically depressed areas.

These employ a mixture of tax spending and budget measures to encourage economic growth and job creation. Seventy two Empowerment or Enterprise Zones have been established in the U.S.A. offering tax incentives over 10 years to businesses that locate or expand in these areas. One of the researched communities, Gary, Indiana, has an Empowerment Zone offering tax credits for creating jobs, against investment in new markets and environmental clean up of brownfield land. This initiative builds on traditional strengths with a major investment in education and training. The Empowerment Zone involves co-operation between three neighbouring communities. This strategy has proved to be successful in attracting new investment.

Some Canadian provinces e.g. Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec have all established their own tax incentive zones.

There are arguments for and against financial incentives but the lack of them puts the community at a disadvantage in attracting new businesses and when competing for inward investment with other areas.

An Ontario tax incentive pilot project was announced by Premier Ernie Eves in 2002. Among other areas, the Region of Niagara in partnership with the municipalities in the region, including Welland, submitted a joint proposal for a Bi-National Tax Incentive Zone. In 2003, the Provincial government announced that the whole of Northern Ontario would be designated as a Tax Incentive Zone with some zones to be announced in Southern Ontario in the future.

3. Political Support

As Northern Ontario can access Federal money through FedNor and Industry Canada it widens the gap with the Southern part of the Province. In Niagara, despite growing investment in the tourism industry, our manufacturing base is decreasing and our rate of growth is declining. Jobs created in the service sector and in tourism do not provide the level of income that comes from manufacturing jobs. As such our economic growth is declining. Other communities studied have shown that with increased involvement by their political representatives at a federal and provincial level, they have been able to have a more powerful voice in requesting funding.

Cobourg has been particularly effective in raising dollars by bringing its MP and MPPs together to lobby for funding. The town was able to successfully tap into federal funding to develop the downtown area. To access funding from within the community, community fundraisers were identified. They were key people from the established families in the town who had money or had connections with those who did.

Greater Moncton was able to share the costs of its development plan with three levels of government and the private sector to a total of $600,000. Welland has also brought together municipal, regional and federal government in its Community Development Strategy Plan, funded principally by HRSDC and other stakeholders. Greater Moncton, also used the Capital Recovery Program to improve the downtown area.

Sault Ste. Marie benefited significantly from federal funding through FedNor. Destiny Sault Ste Marie has received $500,000 from FedNor to be used to prepare, promote, manage and implement the strategy. The City has earmarked $2.5 million to be used towards identified priorities. This seed fund will enable the community to access additional federal, provincial and private sector contributions.

Welland has six downtown incentive programs in place and is currently in the process of developing Community Improvement Plan Policy to develop brownfield land. This plan utilizes a $60,000 matching grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

In summary, important strategies are to involve political representatives to lobby for funding and put forward the case for Welland by highlighting its specific needs. Secondly, partnerships are crucial to present a united community proposal and strengthen the case for funding. Partnerships not only within levels of government to bring funding together but also to present a stronger community case when applying for funding. Agencies will be working together rather than in competition. Thirdly, tax incentives for attracting industry are widely available in the UK, US, and also other parts of Canada including Northern Ontario. While opinions differ as to the long term success of financial incentives, in the short term at least, Welland remains at a disadvantage if it is unable to offer similar incentives.

5. Community Ownership

For a community development plan to be developed and implemented successfully it has to have the support of the community and all key stakeholders. The community has to approve the objectives and be a part of the process. The plan can not be imposed on the community. It has to be developed from groups within it so that they can contribute to, support and sustain it.

The community models researched all illustrate the importance of community involvement. Cobourg's successful strategic planning was started by a group called the Vision Seekers. This group was formed to collect feedback from the community and it represented all sectors of the town. They gathered information through community forums. As the plan developed, Cobourg appointed 'champions' or individuals within the community to lead a project and ensure that it happens.

Greater Moncton's strategy also was community driven. They consider their greatest resource to be their people and its leaders. They have committed thousands of hours of voluntary work to improve the community, accept change as healthy and work it to advantage.

Hamilton's strategy is the result of significant research including direct input from focus groups and personal interviews with key stakeholders from each industry sector.

Sault Ste Marie's BEC (Building an Extraordinary Community) process was a three year grassroots community strategic planning process to help determine objectives for the community. It was supported by three levels of government funding and hundreds of volunteers. In 2001 this was followed by the formation of a committee of community representatives to develop a Growth Mandate Strategy.

Indianapolis started its community development with the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, which was a forum of business, private sector and government leaders. It established community based task forces to analyze and recommend action on some of the city's most difficult problems.

Pittsburgh has formed a number of community consultation groups over the years as its strategic planning process evolved. If anything, it has been hindered by the number of individuals involved. The White Paper in 1993 had over 5,000 members and was unable to establish a concise vision for the city. Subsequent organizations, like the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance have addressed this.

Sheffield's community development, like Pittsburgh, has evolved over many years. Initially they brought representatives from many different sectors of the community together to form a strategy. Over the years a number of representative forums were unable to fully implement a succession of plans. At the end of the 1990s collective ownership of the city strategy was given to a new group called the Sheffield First

Partnership. They brought together individuals representing various interests in economic development. All had to apply to be part of the board and the individual appointed could not send a substitute. The appointee was at the highest level. If an individual leading an organization was not considered to be able to contribute, they were not included. This strategy has proved successful in putting an end to many disputes and moving forward with the implementation of the city strategy. It has also caused many organizations to look at the calibre of their highest executive which in turn has raised the standard of the group.

The downtown planning process in Brantford is community based. There are 65 volunteers from a cross section of the community who participate in focus groups to provide feedback to the downtown plan.

Similarly, Welland has held a number of consultations with key stakeholders to feed input into the strategy as it was developed. The Community Development Strategy Committee has also formed a Communications sub committee specifically to provide feedback to the community. In addition, the project has been presented to Council and to the people of Welland at the Mayor’s Town Hall meeting, to ensure as much community involvement as possible.

6. Long Term Planning

The community models that have been researched were selected principally for two reasons. Firstly, most have the same industrial background and history with the steel industry as Welland. Secondly, most have already been through several years of diversification, planning and strategy with many now on second or third plans. The success or failure of these strategies can be judged only in the long term and as the models show this process can take many years.

The UK faced collapse of its steel industry at least 20 years ago and the events acted as a catalyst to begin diversification and regeneration. Most of the major industrial centres were affected either directly or indirectly. These centres include Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle and Sheffield. Sheffield was selected as a model because of its similarity to Welland.

Regeneration in Sheffield can be divided into three distinct phases and it is still ongoing. The city strategy is a living document constantly being reviewed. The first phase in the early 1990s was the decision to host the World Student Games with investment in sports facilities by the council and private investors. During this phase a number of major projects were undertaken including the Don Valley Stadium. The second phase was from mid – late 1990s was focused on inner city revitalisation projects and neighbourhood projects and was funded mainly by lottery funds. The third phase, which is post 2000 combined private sector partnerships and/or commercial borrowing to support specific opportunities including the City Hall and Central Library.

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Although employment figures and economic growth statistics support the success of the work that has gone on in Sheffield, initially this was not the case. As the World Student Games incurred a substantial loss, there was strong criticism of the strategy and the Council's investment. However, in the long term i.e. over the next ten years a total of 395 major sporting events were held, over 900 jobs were created, 576,000 additional visitors came to the city and £33 million flowed into the Sheffield economy. All this demonstrates beyond doubt, the success of the initial strategy.

In Canada, Cobourg started its regeneration plans over 10 years ago. Through gathering information from the community it developed a series of 'Vision Themes'. These were categorised into: The Quick Hits – ideas that could be put into place within six months; The Change Ideas – requiring a longer term focus and The Wish List – broader more sweeping ideas. It is important to have smaller achievable goals to sustain the process in the long term. Ten years later Cobourg is still working on its regeneration and can see successes. After 4 or 5 years part of that long term wish list from the "Vision Seekers" was developed as a Tourism Strategy with key community stakeholders.

Greater Moncton has been through a series of Strategic Plans developed in 1991, 1994 and 1998 under the banner of Symposium 2000. The process began in 1989 but aimed at a vision for the year 2000. In early 1998 a new symposium Vision 2020 began updating earlier plans. The latest plans were published in January 2002.

The Strategic Implementation Plan for Sault Ste Marie was developed in 1992 and successes are evident over the next ten years in attracting new industry. Now with the assistance of money from FedNor, the latest strategy "Destiny Sault Ste Marie" was completed in 2003. It is a tool by which progress toward long term goals will be monitored, evaluated and managed.

Like Sheffield, Pittsburgh has been continually reworking its economic development plans over the last decades. A number of organizations were created and strategies implemented to move away from traditional manufacturing and to improve the city's image. The original strategy was to address environmental and transportation problems. In the 1980s the focus moved to diversification following the collapse of the steel industry. In 2003 the Image Gap Initiative was launched as Pittsburgh still strives to find an identity and move away from its steel image. Although Pittsburgh has been successful in diversifying into new growth industries, has a low unemployment rate and low cost of living, some problems remain including the still decreasing population, ageing workforce and a projected shortage of labour in years to come. Current strategy now focuses on these issues.

Starting in the 1970s Indianapolis claims it took three decades and the administrations of two mayors to successfully develop its focus on sports. In 2001, the city began a second strategic focus to develop Cultural Tourism and to date this work has reached the pilot project stage.

All the community models show a development in strategic planning taking place over time and adapting to new influences or circumstances as they arise. Strategies have been revised and changed as necessary and have only been proved successful or otherwise after at least 10 years. While the process is necessarily long term, it has proved important to have short term achievable objectives to mark progress and to sustain the momentum and final vision. One of the issues with this is that Councils tend to plan in three year cycles of office which is not long enough for a strategy to be worked through.

7. Human Resources

A skilled and flexible workforce is increasingly recognized as vital to the economic prosperity of a community, in particular as a result of the impact of information technology, the broadening skills base needed across all occupations and greater competition from global markets. Workforce development and labour market issues are now being placed at the forefront of community economic development.

Among the eleven communities studied here, all have addressed the importance of their labour market but it is only in more recent years that labour market strategies have been developed to support economic development plans. Three communities stand out as being particularly proactive in this area and they are Pittsburgh, Sheffield and Hamilton.

Pittsburgh has benefited from the substantial R&D activity which has been carried out there since the 1950s by large corporations such as U.S. Steel, Westinghouse, Alcoa and Gulf. In addition the city’s universities attract considerable funding for research each year creating a knowledge base within the workforce. The Digital Greenhouse and the Life Sciences Greenhouse initiatives are successfully commercializing emerging technology and creating a critical mass of related expertise.

Two organizations, Catalyst Connection and the Three Rivers Investment Board work with the school boards and students to ensure they have the skills necessary to enter the workforce today. They bring together the needs of industry and the school curriculum. With the Pittsburgh Technology Council they have also successfully created a number of workforce development programs e.g. Manufacturing Pathways Initiative and Adventures in Technology which encourage students to consider a career in manufacturing.

Pittsburgh suffers from a declining and ageing workforce and is using some creative programs to keep its young people and attract natives back to the city. The Boomerang Initiative project in the City has compiled a database of former citizens who receive regular emails on successful achievements in the city and job opportunities to attract them back.

The City of Sheffield recognizes that in order to achieve its objective of becoming a diverse and high growth economy in Europe it is essential to develop a highly skilled workforce. The Sheffield Learning Plan 2002-2004 complements and supports the Sheffield City Strategy 2002-2005. It provides a framework for the development of education, skills, lifelong learning and related regeneration activity in the city. Sheffield has the benefit of two universities, a major teaching hospital and a range of research institutes centred on existing and growing strengths in manufacturing and high growth technology fields.

Alongside Hamilton's strategy development in 2002 the Economic Development Department commissioned a major study into the community's human resource needs, HR Matters I in 2002 is a report on the labour force. HR Matters II in 2003 is a business plan which identifies the strategies and contains the actions to counteract the impact of Hamilton's changing demographics. The City understands that a supply of skilled workers is essential to implement its Economic Development Strategy.

Greater Moncton, Sault Ste Marie and Lehigh Valley have all been supported in their diversification strategies by their universities. The Lehigh Valley has some competitive advantages through the research facilities available in optometrics and biotechnology at Lehigh University as well as the engineering and technology specializations that were in place to support the steel industry which are also favourable to the development of bioengineering.

A profile of Welland's labour market has been developed separately as part of the Community Development Strategy. A plan for its development is important to support the strategic plan. As in other communities this has to be achieved by ensuring that industry works with the local educational institutions, in this case, Niagara College and Brock University, to ensure that the skills necessary to support Welland companies are being taught locally. This is critical not only to attract new industry and jobs but also to support the industry already here and keep it competitive.

8. Land Availability/Brownfield Development

The availability of land is crucial to attract new industry and provide the opportunity for existing industry to expand. Brownfield sites are a legacy of traditional manufacturing and in many cases need to be cleaned up to improve the community image and also to provide a source of available industrial land. All eleven communities developed a brownfield strategy.

In Cobourg, the clean up and redevelopment of four adjacent pieces of brownfield land was a $162 million project including residential construction, a new marina and waterfront that now brings in thousands of tourists each year. Success is attributed to the common objectives established by the three parties involved i.e. landowners, the public and the municipality. As well as enhancing tourism opportunities, downtown revitalization the project also creates revenue and jobs. The annual waterfront festival generates $3.6 million, the marina brings in $3.1 million annually and the construction of the new waterfront itself provided 100-200 jobs.

The Gateway project on a brownfield site in Sault Ste Marie brought together four separately owned properties for clean up. The northern half of the site has been developed as a casino and the southern half is currently vacant but there is a major tourism project under consideration. The site has created a new gateway to the community on the waterfront, the casino has created 550 jobs and approximately $700,000 in municipal taxes as well as the clean up of a community eyesore.

One of the largest brownfield redevelopment plans in Atlantic Canada is in Greater Moncton. The site has now been developed as CN Sportsplex, Emmerson Business and Technology Park and a residential neighbourhood called Franklin Yard. Success is attributed in part to extensive community consultation particularly at the beginning of the project. Among many benefits, it has resulted in job creation, tax revenues for the city, increased residential and recreational facilities.

The Lower Don Valley was the sight of the steel industry in Sheffield and the brownfield land was the legacy that was left. This area has now been redeveloped as the Meadowhall shopping centre, the Don Valley Stadium and Don Valley Arena as well as residential property. The Don Valley has been transformed and is now a source of both pride and revenue for the city.

The Bethlehem Steel Mill in Lehigh Valley was turned into a multi use facility including the American National Industry Museum. It incorporates a steel smelting production line, a 250 customer hotel and conference centre, an ice rink, a theatre with 10 screens, a large financial centre and a family entertainment centre. The steel mill also has land for an industrial park. When completed it will create 10,000 jobs and provide $70 million in income a year from taxes.

The site of LTV Steel's Pittsburgh Works has been reclaimed and reused as a technology park. The 40 acre site includes the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Biotechnology and Bioengineering, the Carnegie Mellon Research Institute and Aristech Chemical Corporation and the Pittsburgh Technology Council offices. Other sites in the city include Washington's Landing, Nine Mile Run and South Side Works and have been developed for residential use, recreational and manufacturing use. Most developments have involved public/private partnerships.

In August 2001 the City of Hamilton prepared a Community Improvement Plan known as Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement Plan or ERASE Plan. The City provides financial and other incentives to promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Welland is already undergoing a process to address the problem of its brownfields. As the community models show, it is essential to do this not only to improve the environment for residents and help to attract prospective investors but also to have land available for inward investment opportunities or existing business expansion.

9. Quality of Life and Place

Downtown revitalisation, clean up of brownfield sites and improvement of amenities all provide the best environment to attract workers and companies as well as creating confidence and pride within a community that is a desirable place to live and work. All eleven communities have recognized the importance of their natural assets whether that is a canal, as in Welland, or a waterfront or an attractive location. The community profiles describe their developments in more detail, but the following give some examples. The majority have identified downtown revitalization and brownfield clean up as priorities.

Even back in 1944, the Allegheny Conference was set up specifically to improve the Pittsburgh's air quality, recognizing the importance of quality of life to workers and residents as well as to attract inward investment. Projects that have been undertaken by communities range from large scale waterfront development e.g. in Gary and Pittsburgh to much simpler steps e.g. in Cobourg where train whistles were stopped, parking metres have been eliminated and smoking in the town centre has also been banned to improve the downtown area. Large scale photos were used to decorate empty store windows while shops were being marketed.

Downtown development or revitalization has been at the forefront of most of the community strategies. As in Welland many have introduced financial incentives in order to attract private investment. In Cobourg, regenerating the downtown was their first priority and almost ten years on it is an attractive, thriving area at the heart of the town. They have turned around from the situation 5 years ago where most of the shops were vacant. The town has waived development charges, frozen property assessments at the pre-improvement rate and introduced heritage loans offered at below prime rate.

Brantford downtown has been voted the worst in Ontario in the past. Recognizing the importance of correcting this, they have recently initiated a community-based downtown planning process as well as approving a Downtown Business Performance Grants program to encourage investment in the area.

Greater Moncton attributes much of its success over the years to the quality of life it can offer its residents, as well as good amenities, good educational and recreational facilities.

Sheffield has regenerated the brownfield areas of the Lower Don Valley left by the steel industry into sports stadiums and Europe's largest retail park, Meadowhall. The sports events and facilities showcase the city and bring a sense of identity and pride to the residents there as well as renewed business confidence.

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Pittsburgh has developed both the waterfront and the downtown area. The new PNC Park and Heinz Field stadium on the waterfront have been financed by private foundations and other plans are underway. As in other communities, Pittsburgh aims to have both residential and commercial buildings in the downtown area. The city has also developed the Station Square area with a hotel, shops and restaurants by the river. Artefacts from the steel industry have been placed along the river front providing an attractive and interesting reminder of Pittsburgh's heritage.

The Gateway Project in Sault Ste Marie has brought together four separately owned brownfield properties for clean up, creating a new 'gateway' to the community on the waterfront. A casino has been built on the northern half creating 550 jobs and $700,000 in municipal taxes as well as the clean up of a community eyesore.

The town of Gary has exploited its proximity to Chicago and invested in its beaches, parks, golf courses and waterfront to attract weekend visitors as well as improving its downtown area.

When the steel industry collapsed in Lehigh Valley they were left with the legacy of the Bethlehem Steel Mill. It is being developed as a hotel and conference centre with recreational facilities in a project that will cost $1.5 billion, create 10,000 jobs and provide $70 million in income a year.

These examples range in size and scope but all emphasize the recognition that quality of life or place in a community is important. The City of Welland is already addressing the development of the recreational canal which provides a natural focus for the community as well as the development of the downtown and many of these communities provide interesting and creative examples discussed in more detail in the community profiles that could be considered as these plans move forward.

CONCLUSION

The strategies that have been identified from the communities studied apply equally to Welland as the Community Development Strategy is written and implemented. In many of the communities there is over 10 or 20 years experience of this process to learn from as well as many creative ideas and solutions that are described in more detail in the individual profiles that follow.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PROFILES

CANADIAN COMMUNITIES

BRANTFORD, ONTARIO

Background

Located along Highway 403, Brantford has a population of 120,000. It has a large industrial base, including automotive, plastics, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals and food processing. Brantford claims to be attractive to families, visitors and businesses because of its quality of life, favourable business climate and potential for growth.

The City has an unemployment rate of 6.8% (2002 average). However, during the 1990s it was persistently above 10% when Brantford was particularly hard hit by the economic recession during that decade. While many nearby urban communities such as Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and the Hamilton area have had strong population growth rates, Brantford's population grew by only 1.9% between 1996 and 2001.

Strategy

Traditionally, manufacturing in Brantford had been dominated by the production of agricultural machinery. The large agricultural machinery producing industries are no longer in the city and have been replaced by a variety of smaller industrial operations. Food production and related industries have been targeted as an emerging industrial sector. Brantford has been successful in attracting several food producing industries including Maidstone Bakeries, which produces baked goods for the Tim Horton's chain and Western Waffle. They have been able to attract these food production industries to Brantford because of the high quality transportation links, availability of raw materials, the availability of serviced and affordable lots, proximity to markets, particularly to the large US market. The availability of an industrial labour force has also been a factor.

Downtown Revitalization

Brantford's downtown has been described in the past, by the regional media as the worst downtown in Ontario. In the summer of 1970 there were 70 vacant buildings or vacant ground level storefronts in the downtown core. The state of the downtown reflected poorly on the community and made it difficult to attract new businesses and professionals, such as doctors, to the community.

Brantford City Council is committed to downtown revitalization. Between 2002 and 2005 it will provide $1.5 million a year from the city's share of Brantford Charity Casino revenues. The Council also initiated a community-based downtown planning process.

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In 2001, 65 volunteers from a cross section of the community participated in focus groups. These sessions provided a guideline to preparing a general downtown plan and ultimately by 2002 a multi-faceted implementation plan. The plan is based on the principle that downtown revitalization must be the result of private sector initiatives working with public initiatives. The city believes that economic development incentives, combined with proper planning, partnerships and support will result in a renewed downtown. The City Council has recently approved a Downtown Business Performance Grants program and a property tax grant rebate program is under development. The Downtown Business Performance Grants program grants a portion of the capital costs associated with a building rehabilitation project based upon a pre-designated level of performance. Grant money is allocated as performance indicators are achieved. The grant is normally between 10% and 25% of the project total.

Brantford's Brownfields

Brantford's industrial heritage has left a large number of brownfield properties in the city. Sixteen brownfield sites were identified for further investigation and consideration in municipal action plans to encourage their redevelopment as part of the Official Plan Review Program that was completed in 2000. While some of the sites can be dealt with through private initiatives, a number of large sites require direct public involvement to initiate their cleanup and redevelopment to productive uses.

Brantford has been dealing with its brownfield sites in a proactive manner. These initiatives include:

- Environmental site investigations
- Revision of the Official Plan policies to encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Establishment of a fund to finance brownfield initiatives
- Working with the Public Trustee to clean up a brownfield site with limited redevelopment potential
- Acting as the agent for the Medical Officer of Health to remove buildings from a brownfield property that posed a health risk to the community
- Initiating a site remediation strategy study for a large 50 acres brownfield complex.

The city also has an overall Brownfield's strategy for the community as well as a community improvement plan to deal with these sites. Brantford claims that national research has shown that funds invested in brownfield redevelopment have a large multiplier impact on the economy of 3.8 times the amount of the original investment. Experience has also shown that public incentives can leverage a significant amount of private investment.

Highway 403

The completion of the Highway 403 has literally put the City of Brantford and Brant

County on the trucking and commuter map. Increased ease of access, reduced travel times and the economy of the area all are factors that increase the attractiveness of the city and county as a location for trucking, warehousing, and manufacturing industries and the resulting people and commerce to serve those industries.

Since the highway was opened in 1997, industrial land sales increased reaching a peak in 2001 with a subsequent decline in the figures for 2002 and 2003 but not going back to pre 1997 figures. The City also attributes the creation of 2,000 new jobs between 1999 and 2001 as a direct result of the opening of the highway.

Results

Today twelve of Brantford's thirty largest employers are in the automotive sector, employing around 3,500 people. With the concentration of employment in these industries, Brantford is still vulnerable to the recessionary cycles that have plagued the local economy over the years. While Brantford has attracted considerable inward investment in e.g. food processing, successfully diversifying into new industries, the City recognises that further diversification is necessary. The following industrial sectors continue to be targeted; machinery, plastics and rubber products, primary and fabricated metal products, chemical products and food.

The building of Highway 403 has had considerable impact on development in Brantford as well as Brantford's commitment to developing its downtown and the clean up of brownfield sites.

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COBOURG, ONTARIO

Background

Cobourg is situated one hour's drive east of Toronto on the shores of Lake Ontario. The town has a population of 18,000. The wider area including Port Hope has a population of 50,000. They have a two tier government system with 7 municipalities. In 1994 after the closure of two companies in Cobourg and the subsequent job losses, Cobourg Municipal Council determined the need to develop a strategic plan to enable the town to deal with the challenges it now faced. These challenges were multi-faceted and were the result of global trends, federal and provincial changes to government structure and funding, all of which had an impact at the local level.

Strategy

The development of the strategic plan involved numerous community consultations, with individuals, groups and the community at large. The issues that emerged were incorporated into 'Vision Themes' with varying time scales. As the plan has evolved over subsequent years the current Mayor, now in his second term of office, has introduced a visioning session with his new council at the start of each term to provide focus to their activities.

Downtown

Revitalising the Downtown was the first priority. The Council agreed to waive development charges and freeze property assessments at the pre-improvement rate. Heritage loans were offered below prime rate, up to $15,000. This encouraged entrepreneurs to take advantage of the incentives e.g. the old library building was turned into condos bringing residents back into the heart of the downtown. Northern Publishers moved their offices into the downtown. Niche market shops were encouraged to move into the downtown to offer something different to the shops in the mall, as an attraction.

In parallel with these incentives, a 'Shop Local' campaign was started including not only the downtown but also all three shopping malls. A good example of public/private sector partnership, Wal-Mart bought into the idea and supported it. This marketing campaign is now in its third year and has been very successful.

The Council also took the decision to spend $3.5 million on the downtown area. This investment was used to eliminate parking metres, beautify parking lots, open niche market stores and restaurants. The main street was narrowed to slow down traffic and widen the pavements. The widened pavements are used as pavement cafes.

Interlocking bricks have been laid to make the street more pedestrian friendly. A smoking ban was instigated in the downtown area too to improve the environment.

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The plan took 5-7 years to complete. One measure of the success of the strategy is that there are now no vacant downtown properties whereas 5 years ago you could have had your pick of empty properties.

Waterfront

The waterfront benefited from both public and private investment. The provincial and federal governments provided funding to develop an abandoned brownfield site and make improvements to the marina and Victoria Park. This initial public investment encouraged private investment. Private developers started to build condos and are now in their third phase of building. The local Rotary group celebrating its 100th anniversary gave $0.25 million for general improvements to the waterfront area.

Tourism

About five years ago the Economic Advisory Committee developed a new image for the town around the concept of ‘Wellness’. ‘Wellness’ practitioners are located together in the town and packages with a local hotel and B&Bs have been developed and marketed. This marketing strategy has helped to encourage visitors to Cobourg all year round and led to a growth in B&Bs. Other focuses for tourism are the marina and hockey tournaments. The Waterfront Festival held every summer attracts 50,000 visitors. Gateway kiosks have been set up at the entrance to the town and in the downtown to provide tourist information. The kiosk design is based on an original gazebo structure on the waterfront. Train whistles have been stopped in Cobourg to improve the quality of life feel in the town.

Industry

An Economic Advisory Committee has been set up to meet as a ‘think tank’. It includes representatives from industry, commerce, professions and the retail sector to discuss the strategy and create the environment necessary to retain, expand and attract industry.

Cobourg recognized that it had a lack of industrial space and needed to build and market a building. The Council owns two industrial parks, one by Lake Ontario with some negative features; it takes 10-15 minutes to get there. The other park they bought for $16 million. They took a risk with this investment although it was recognized that the site had potential for growth and this has been realised over the past few years. Weetabix and Weston Plastics are tenants. Horizon Plastics has also expanded on the site. NuComm were interested in the Old School Board office and the council were able to turn the building around for them in 7 weeks. They created 320 jobs.

The Council aims to keep the infrastructure ahead of industry needs e.g. broadband and fibre optic links which have been essential for companies like Kraft and General Electric.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

Business retention is also an important strategy and there is a company visitation program in place for early detection of problems. 1023 businesses are visited each year by the Economic Development Officer and the Mayor with manufacturers being visited twice a year. This enables them to identify emerging trends e.g. whether hiring or not.

A Centre of Excellence has been developed from an embryonic idea at General Electric. The company was able to secure federal funding for the project and in collaboration with Oshawa University they have set up a centre for plastics and safety glass. They chose products that others were not interested in and were successful in securing the backing of the federal government.

The Town Council and the Mayor have introduced many innovative schemes and ideas to improve the town. They recognize that the involvement of the citizens is important and have set up a 24 hours ‘City Hall hot line’. This telephone line allows residents to contact the Town Hall with comments, suggestions, complaints to a dedicated line and they are guaranteed a response within 24 hours. This enables people to voice opinions and vent rather than have destructive criticism.

Results

Cobourg began its restructuring activities around 15 years ago with activity gearing up in the last 10 years. They have achieved considerable success in attracting and retaining industry and securing a stable, diversified employment base. With the improvements to the downtown and waterfront, tourism has also become an important part of the town’s economy as well as enhancing quality of life for residents. Plans for the community are in three year terms which the Mayor recognizes as a constraint and so some areas have been identified for longer term planning or “secondary plans”.

All these achievements have only been possible because the whole community came together and became involved in the original strategy and two successive Mayors and their councils championed the effort. In addition, they were successful in their lobbying efforts to get access to funding which was a major challenge. To do this they worked with their political representatives at all levels, in partnership.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

GREATER MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

Background

Greater Moncton encompasses the City of Moncton (with a population similar to Welland), the towns of Dieppe and Riverview and an extensive fringe area. Moncton is also a meeting place between English and French cultures with 46% of the population knowing both languages. Greater Moncton has been noted not only in Atlantic Canada but also across Canada for the nature and speed of its economic resurgence during the 1990s. This was a community devastated when the T. Eaton Catalogue Centre and the CN Shops, two principal employers, closed in the 1970s and 1980s with the loss of thousands of jobs.

Strategy

The major changes of the 1970s and 1980s prompted the community as a whole to begin to plan together. The Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce worked to bring people together. Moncton Industrial Developments Ltd began a new promotional program in the mid 1980s that emphasised Greater Moncton both as a good place to work and do business. Symposium 2000 in 1989 led directly to the replacement of the old Greater Moncton Economic Development Agency with the new Greater Moncton Economic Commission and a new direction, staff and board.

Beginning with Symposium 2000, a series of Strategic development plans were devised in 1991, 1994 and 1998, with the one adopted in 1994 being particularly effective. It involved a one year innovative community-driven strategic planning process which identified the key segments of the economy and community integral to the future of Greater Moncton. This included: human resource development, knowledge based industry, environmental industries, teleservice cluster, quality of life, tourism, retail and wholesale, transportation and distribution, service and government, manufacturing, processing and construction.

These strategic plans set objectives and established structures to achieve them. Throughout recent times Greater Moncton’s chief resource has been its people and leaders. They committed to thousands of hours in volunteer work to improve their community, accepted change as healthy and worked it to turn it to their advantage. In early 1998 a new symposium Vision 2020 began updating earlier plans.

In 2001 Grant Thornton undertook to develop A Strategic Economic Development Plan and a complementary Marketing and Implementation Plan. Both were published in January 2002. Their objectives were to increase the wealth and employment in the region, keep and attract foreign and local investment, increase the tax base and focus marketing activities. The costs of creating this plan were shared by three levels of government and the private sector – a total of $600,000.

Finally in 2002, the Halifax-Moncton Growth Corridor was launched as a formal economic link between the two cities and the communities in between them. The objective being to form a partnership to market their collective assets more effectively as part of a regional growth strategy.

Results

When both Eaton's and the CN Shops closed Greater Moncton faced immense challenges. By and large the community has worked successfully to meet these challenges, especially during the 1990s, when it introduced new industries and created new jobs by promoting technology-based manufacturing and services. Most economic indicators (labour market, incomes, construction) confirm that Greater Moncton is one of the most dynamic places of its size in Canada.

This success has been accomplished in part by organization, by hard work within the community, and by a series of successful partnerships. They have built on Greater Moncton's natural advantages; a favourable location within Maritime Canada, within easy reach of bigger markets in Canada and the US. Its location has allowed it to develop as a retailing centre and as a distribution centre. The real resource however has been the community itself. The strategic plans have been put in place and then put into action by the community. The plans have been devised at the community level not imposed by other levels of government. Funding from outside the community such as the federal Capital Recovery Program for the improvement of the downtown, provided important support for these strategic initiatives.

Greater Moncton itself recognizes a number of factors as contributing to its success in economic recovery.

- Strong local leadership – notably from the GMEC, the business community and municipal political leaders
- Perseverance and resilience – positive attitudes and facing up to reality
- Co-operation – among key players and major organizations
- Dynamic entrepreneurial spirit – good business attitude
- People – friendly, open-minded, willing to co-operate, strongly committed and relatively well educated
- High Quality Workforce – reliable with strong work ethics, loyal, good pool of educated and skilled people
- Good education infrastructure – UdeM, Mount Allison University close by, two Community College campuses and a number of private technical and vocational schools
- Good R&D Facilities – at UdeM, available for the public and private sector
- Bilingualism – ability of both communities to work together in mutual respect, especially attractive to firms marketing in Quebec and Europe

- UdeM and the Acadian Factor – producing an competent group of business people who have contributed to the revival of the entrepreneurial spirit in Greater Moncton
- Quality of life – good amenities including two hospitals, good educational facilities, good recreational facilities, good services centre, and reasonable cost of living compared to the other urban centre of similar size.
- Location – geographical natural advantage, good transportation network, easy access to Canadian and American markets, relatively easy to attract qualified and skilled people from the rest of the Maritimes.
- Diversifying Economy – no dominant employer and the emergence of a high technology sector

The feeling in the community is that this success is sustainable because the factors that made it happen are still there. In particular, leadership is broadly based and still committed. Co-operation is still strong. There are still high-quality volunteers. The community still meets regularly to prepare new strategic plans; It is an ongoing process and success breeds success.

Moncton now has a more diversified economic base and any failures would no longer create major disruptions on the local economy. Some clustering has occurred and many firms feed on each other ensuring long term stability.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Background

Hamilton's economic prosperity has historically been based on its manufacturing base, going back to the mid-nineteenth century and reaching its peak in the post World War II era. Starting as a centre for textiles, it became the steel and metals manufacturing capital of Canada. Its success was based on its geographical location which gives easy access to markets as well as cheap power and transportation. Two of the country's largest integrated steel producers were based in Hamilton as well as the headquarters of a number of U.S. multinationals.

Over the last 20 years global market changes have had a major impact on these companies and on the manufacturing base in Hamilton. The large U.S. companies have either closed their operations completely or rationalised production to other locations. Mid-sized companies have taken over from the large multinationals but it is questionable if they are sufficient to replace them.

Strategy

In the late 1980's a group of Hamilton's business leaders recognized the need to examine the global competitiveness of the region's prime industries. The five sectors targeted were Advanced Materials, Automotive Parts, Telecommunications, Health Care and Food Processing. Representatives from the business community, government and educational institutions banded together and the resulting plan, "Restructuring for the Global Market" formed the basis for an expanded "Renaissance" program carried out throughout the 1990's.

The amalgamation of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek into the new City of Hamilton in 2001 provided the foundation from which to develop a new strategy for the city. It started the development of a 20 year Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS). GRIDS brought together four of the city's departments: Transportation Operations, Environment, Planning and Development, Finance and Corporate Services and Economic Development combining the resources and actions of these departments into a single focus. The Economic Development Strategy was completed in May 2002.

The Economic Development Strategy is a 20 year plan based on cluster development. It recommends that Hamilton focus on six industry clusters. The traditional clusters are Industrial manufacturing and Agri-business and the emerging clusters are Aerotropolis (development surrounding the airport), Health and Biotechnology, Information and Communications Technology and Film. The clusters were chosen because Hamilton had strengths in these areas.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

The strategy is the result of significant research, including direct input from focus groups and personal interviews with the major stakeholders in each cluster. It is believed that the success of the strategy requires not only the endorsement of Council but also individual city councillors becoming champions of specific clusters. The strategy document also recognises the importance of community ownership.

Recently the strategy was amended. Both the airport and the port were recognized as important tools for economic development. ICT is now viewed as an 'enabler' for all industries as opposed to a development target as an industry cluster.

Alongside the strategy development the Economic Development Department commissioned a major study into the community's human resource needs. It was understood that a supply of skilled workers was essential to implement the Economic Development Strategy. HR Matters I and II were completed in May 2002 and June 2003. The first is a report on the labour force and the second a business plan which identifies the strategies and contains the actions for HR Matters to counteract the impact of Hamilton's changing demographics.

A series of background studies were commissioned to support policy development. The 'City of Hamilton Agricultural Economic Impact and Development Study' was produced in August 2003 as one of these.

Hamilton has also addressed the question of its brownfields. In 1997 the City established an Industrial Redevelopment Task Force, composed of 20 senior private and public sector stakeholders. In August 2001 the city prepared a Community Improvement Plan known as the Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement Plan or ERASE Plan. The City provides financial and other incentives to promote the redevelopment of brownfield properties.

Results

It is early days to judge the success or otherwise of these strategies and Hamilton's economic growth depends significantly on its diversification. Steel still remains an important part of the advanced manufacturing sector with over 40% of the country's steel making capacity based in the city. However, the advanced manufacturing sector now also ranges from food production to power generation. The City continues to face major challenges. In the early part of 2004, Hamilton faced plant closures by Camco and Levis involving several hundred jobs. Also, Stelco remains in credit protection while it restructures. It is hoped and expected that the strength of the new strategies will compensate for such economic downsides.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

Background

For the past 100 years Sault Ste. Marie has relied on Algoma Steel (ASI) as its primary industry. At its peak in 1981, Algoma employed almost 12,000 people. By 2002 that number had decreased to less than 4,000. Algoma had begun downsizing in the early 1990's. Further, the population of the Sault in 1991 was 82,000 and now it is at 74,000.

The downsizing and restructuring of ASI combined with the loss of employment opportunities in related businesses resulted in reduced community growth, loss of talent, loss of young people and subsequent increases in municipal taxes.

Strategy

Working with the Federal and Provincial governments as well as with industry, the city undertook a number of initiatives in the early 1990's to create economic stimulus and diversification. The strategies developed were varied and included:

- RAPIDS - Research, Action, Promote, Infrastructure, Delegate, Support. A roundtable consisting of representatives from all levels of government generated the RAPIDS planning process. The resulting "Strategic Implementation Plan" of March 1992 identified projects and initiatives to help diversify the local economy, many of which were successfully implemented.

- Focus 2020 - Community Development Strategy of 1994 was built upon information emanating from the RAPIDS process and developed a land use strategy, which resulted in a new official plan in 1996.

- Building an Extraordinary Community (BEC) was a 3 year grassroots community planning process involving all levels of government plus hundreds of volunteers focusing on community development and tourism.

- Sault Ste. Marie Industrial Marketing Strategy helped the City to build on its economic strengths and focus on selective investment marketing to attract and retain certain businesses and industries. With implementation beginning in January 2002, the strategy targeted value added steel, value added forestry, aircraft maintenance, repair, overhaul and bio-forest related industries.

- Industrial Land Study reviewed sites for industrial development in 2000 and estimated preliminary costs for adding municipal services to three sites. It also identified Federal and Provincial funding that could be available to cover a significant part of the servicing.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

- Growth Mandate Strategy is a strategy developed by a group of community representatives to frame, organize and prioritize initiatives and projects to contribute to the City's economic growth.

- Support for Economic Development is a strategy to strengthen infrastructure for economic delivery.

Results

The community fully recognizes that it must assume responsibility and leadership for the development, implementation and success of its programs for economic change. Their strategies and efforts have resulted in a number of successes.

The Sault has attracted a number of new employers including the GP Flakeboard Mill with 100 jobs, three new call centres with about 2,000 jobs, a charity casino employing 500, the Domtar Mill creating 60 new jobs, and a Walmart Store that opened in January 2003 with 220 full and part time staff.

Existing industries also have contributed to the Sault's success. ASI, St. Mary's Paper and the Algoma Central Railway have undergone transformations and undertaken new initiatives. Additionally, the Tenaris Group, one of the world's leading seamless steel manufacturers, resurrected the former ASI tube mills (Algoma Tubes Inc.) and is now producing quality seamless tubing for the global market.

Other examples of moving forward includes a new company, Filtrec, established in 1997 to serve the Canadian, U.S.A and Mexican market needs for filters as well as the community's, EDC and CDC rallying around the Searchmont winter ski resort and keeping it operating until a buyer could save it from receivership.

The Sault also has a distinct advantage in having access to FedNor programs. In December 2001 FedNor announced a three part strategy to address the challenges facing the Sault, which included:

- A loan to Algoma Steel to implement a restructuring plan;
- Sixteen projects totalling over $1.7 million designed to diversify the City's economic base and;
- $3 million to support projects, initiatives and programs for the Sault plus $500,000 to facilitate the establishment of a community economic development and diversification strategy.

Following the FedNor announcement, a Destiny Sault Ste. Marie (SSM) steering committee was formed with the resulting strategies of “Getting on with it” and a ”Growth Mandate Framework Strategy” put in place. The Destiny Sault Ste Marie strategy underwent a public review process, was revised and completed in March 2003. Destiny

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

Sault Ste Marie is a tool by which progress toward long term goals will be monitored, evaluated and managed.

Destiny Sault Ste Marie is a dynamic process able to adapt to changing opportunities and initiatives. Key elements of this strategy are Leadership by the community and all levels of government; Teamwork with the recognition that all elements of the community must work together; Partnership with both public and private involvement and; Communications being effective among all.

The Destiny Sault Ste Marie committee have identified approximately 100 initiatives under “Growth Engine” headings including:

- Traditional and New Industry Development
- Tourism Development
- Knowledge-based Development
- Health, Social and Public Sector Development
- Small Business Development
- Trade and Export Development

Of the 100 initiatives identified, 31 have been recommended for immediate action. When completed, it is estimated that these initiatives will have created 1,500 direct jobs with another 1,500 jobs added to related businesses. The investment associated with 19 of the 31 initiatives totals $102 million and the overall strategy is expected to result in 8,000 jobs and $2 million additional municipal tax base within 10 years. The costs are shared by the Municipal, Federal and Provincial governments as well as by the private sector.

The Gateway project brought together four separately owned brownfield properties for clean up. The northern half of the site has been developed as a casino and the southern half is currently vacant but there is a major tourism project under consideration. The site has created a new gateway to the community on the waterfront, the casino has created 550 jobs and approximately $700,000 in municipal taxes as well as the clean up of a community eyesore.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

US COMMUNITIES

GARY, INDIANA

Background

Gary is at the Southern end of Lake Michigan, 28 miles from Chicago. Manufacturing has been at the heart of Gary, Indiana since 1906 when the United States Steel Corporation chose the city as home for its new plant. Over the years Gary's fortunes have risen and fallen with US steel. Downsizing and layoffs started in the 1960s. During the 1960s and 1970s Gary underwent a series of economic, social and political changes. The city's steel industry began a rapid decline soon afterward which continued for the next few decades, leading to large-scale plant closings and high unemployment. Although there was a short lived revival in the 1980s steel production no longer dominates the scene today. The workforce in Gary dropped from more than 20,000 in the 1970s to 6,000 in the 1990s and the population declined by 40%. Gary's economy was hard hit by this decreasing employment in the steel industry but although jobs decreased, total steel production actually increased as the industry became more efficient.

Strategy

Several economic development projects were started in Gary to try and diversify the economy, beginning with the Gary Urban Enterprise Association in 1985. In the early 1990s city leaders and citizen groups proposed plans to replace the vacant mills and to revitalize the economy.

In 1985 the Gary Urban Enterprise Association was formed to manage the Gary Enterprise Zone, designated by the State of Indiana. The purpose of an enterprise zone is to be an economic development tool to promote business development to be a catalyst for community development. The GUEA is a non profit organization that was developed to aid in the economic revitalization of the City. The zone itself stretches over a three square mile area and includes residential, industrial and commercial sites. The GUEA offers several tax and financial incentives in order to impact the cash flow of businesses and improve their access to capital. Through Enterprise Zone incentives businesses receive opportunities to increase profit margins by expanding inventory lines, purchase of efficient equipment and trained workforce. There is also a loan program to aid manufacturers with infrastructure and projects that will promote economic base and employment within the enterprise zone. GUEA's strategy is now based on a vision developed within a five year plan.

Another important initiative is The Empowerment Zone. This initiative involves three neighbouring communities including Gary, working together to use the region's strengths to overcome its weaknesses. This is a comprehensive redevelopment program to revitalize ageing infrastructure, strengthen communities, attract new industries and create jobs. Businesses within the Zone can take advantage of tax credits for creating jobs, for investment in new markets and environmental cleanup of brownfield land. The initiative builds on traditional strengths with a major investment in education and training. The Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan involves two job creation strategies. The first is the retention and expansion of existing employers to create more jobs and secondly the attraction of new industry to sites developed under the Empowerment Zone land development and brownfield projects. Over the next ten years this plan calls for the redevelopment of existing sites to create 400 acres of quality industrial land which can accommodate up to 1,600 new jobs.

Other economic development projects within Gary include Lakefront Development, downtown development, The Miss USA Pageant, Hope VI housing development and Gary Chicago Airport expansion. All of which are creating exciting business opportunities.

Results

As a result of the enterprise zone, empowerment zone and downtown development, Gary is working towards a diversified economic base which offers a mix of good paying jobs. Goods manufactured in Gary still include steel and steel finished products (sheet metals, tinplate, tubing and hardware, springs) but also include windshield wipers, light fixtures, apparel and bed linens and processed foods. Some of the city's major employers are now Georgia Pacific, The Post-Tribune, Marblehead Lime, Methodist Hospital and the Trump Casino. In 1998 the unemployment rate was 7.1% more than twice that of the rest of Indiana. The unemployment rate is currently 3.8%

In recent years tourism has also become one of Gary's fastest growing industries. Gary and Lake County have become increasingly popular for people from Chicago and other urban areas who want to escape the big cities. As well as its beaches, parks and golf course, the establishment of two gaming boats on Gary's Lakefront – the Majestic Star and the Trump Casino have generated significant economic development dollars.

In 2000 Gary completed its Downtown Redevelopment Plan integrating high tech and business services, public gathering places, housing and mixed retail, cultural venues and pedestrian, transportation and telecommunications corridors. To implement this plan the city has also partnered with private investors in development projects.

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Background

Indianapolis is the largest city in Indiana. Over the years Indianapolis fortunes as a city have risen and fallen as a manufacturing centre. The decline of Indianapolis in the 1960s was reversed by the administrations of several successive mayors relying on the strategies of "enlightened conservatism", growth-orientated public investment and public/private partnerships. All drew on the community's inherent pride in itself and its city. The Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee formed in the 1960s is a forum of business, private and government leaders. It continues to establish community-based task forces to analyze and recommend action on some of the city's most difficult problems.

Since the 1960's no city in the U.S. has focused as extensively on sports and hospitality for redevelopment and economic expansion as Indianapolis. For three decades and the administrations of two mayors, Indianapolis has developed and implemented an aggressive program that focused on amateur sporting events and organizations, professional sports teams, conventions, the hospitality industry and retail consumption.

Strategy

Indianapolis sporting success demonstrates how events can create an impact. In the mid 1970s the city embarked on a strategic plan to develop its economy and improve its image through investment in amateur sports. The Indianapolis city leaders chose to use sports as an economic and community development tool and backed the construction of sports facilities and marketing strategies to attract top sporting events.

This strategy proved successful and to date Indianapolis has hosted more than 400 national and international amateur sporting events. It has also attracted numerous sports organisations to locate in the city and has built or renovated an estimated $400 million worth of facilities. These sports organizations have brought in more than $213 million to the area. In 1991 alone they brought in $29 million and provided 526 jobs. Between 1982 and 1991 nine facilities in Indianapolis were utilized for amateur sporting events. The facilities brought in more than $51 million and created more than 2,700 fulltime jobs.

Indianapolis devoted some public money to downtown development but nearly two thirds of the costs were covered by the private sector. From 1977 to 1998 the direct economic impact of amateur sports in Indianapolis was $1.8 billion. Indianapolis' $124 million investment in sports has yielded a return of $683 million in personal income to the residents of Indianapolis. The events have provided an opportunity to showcase the city not only as a sports centre but also a tourist destination, a business centre and a good place in which to live, work and invest.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

In the same way that Indianapolis set out to be an amateur sports capital, by setting the goal for itself, investing and believing in it and then making it happen, the city now aims to become a top destination for cultural tourism.

Many of the sporting events are superb opportunities to explore linked cultural tourism opportunities. Under the leadership of the Mayor, various organizations began working together in 1998, to develop a shared vision and plan for cultural tourism. The Arts Council of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association, Indianapolis Downtown Inc and the City of Indianapolis together with other partners representative of the cultural and hospitality industries worked co-operatively to increase cultural tourism's economic and quality of life impact on the community.

As a result in June 2001, the City of Indianapolis developed the Indianapolis Cultural Development Initiative: Building Partnership Through Cultural Tourism as a first strategy. It identified four goals and related strategies and determined that this was a long term commitment to Indianapolis cultural development.

Following this initiative, the Indianapolis Cultural Development Commission was formed with a mission to strengthen Indianapolis as a cultural destination. The Commission is comprised of nine members and three advisors who work together to help guide the city's overall cultural direction. One strategy they have undertaken is the Cultural Tourism Initiative.

As part of the Cultural Tourism Initiative, in late 2002 the Cultural Districts program was created. Distinct pockets of cultural opportunity are already thriving in neighbourhoods throughout the city. To fully exploit these assets the program was created to support development efforts in five pilot areas. These pilot efforts are expected to serve as a model for other areas. A Cultural Trail currently being studied by the city would link these neighbourhoods together. The five district plans were completed in October 2003. Common needs have been identified in four areas: product development, programming, marketing and sustainability.

The Indianapolis Cultural Development Commission and the City of Indianapolis believe that economic development will result from strengthening their cultural assets and developing cultural tourism.

<u>Results</u>

As a result of its belief in itself, a number of successful strategies, partnerships between sectors of the community and considerable investment the city of Indianapolis has successfully established itself as a major sporting centre and is now aiming to achieve the same through cultural activities. This successful sports strategy has enabled the city to provide economic growth, create employment and improve its self image. This is a process that has taken several decades.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

LEHIGH VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Background

The Lehigh Valley in the state of Pennsylvania was once America's second largest iron and steel manufacturing centre. However, in the 1980s Bethlehem Steel Mill began to fall into financial difficulties due to low priced foreign steel. It was realised that a new diverse economy was necessary to protect against high unemployment. In 1995 the Mill announced its gradual closure. At the height of production the Mill employed 40,000 workers. By the end of the 1990s the steel plant was completely closed. This was the end of the iron and steel industry in Lehigh Valley. Since then the area has been looking for a way to revive its economy and is now undertaking regeneration and revitalisation projects as well as diversification into other areas, including the service sector.

Since 1970 manufacturing has declined by 43% due principally to the end of the steel producing sector, fabrication and apparel industries. However, since 1970 the non manufacturing sector has grown by 122%, with the biggest growth taking place in the health sector.

Strategy

From the time the closures at the Bethlehem Mill were announced, the economic development department, private enterprises and local companies began planning how to reverse the trend of economic decline. One of the most important decisions they made was the two dimensional development of the steel mill ruins.

The Bethlehem Steel Mill divided up the property and sold the land. America's Enterprise Real Estate Service Company became responsible for developing and using the land. They completed the sale in 2001. The steel smelting production line that took up 1/3 of the land of the iron and steel mill will be retained and the developers will use this as a foundation for building the American National Industry Museum. The former steel mill headquarters building will be rebuilt into a 250 customer hotel and conference centre, a hockey rink, a theatre covering over 10 screens, a large financial centre and a family entertainment centre covering 10,000 square metres of land that will include an indoor golf course, 32 lane bowling alley, a virtual game room and children's world. The steel mill has also allocated some land for the development of an industrial park. When the project is completed at an investment of $1.5 billion it will create 10,000 jobs and provide $70 million in income a year from taxes.

This is just one of the revitalisation projects in the Valley. The Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation has also adopted measures for a Lehigh Valley Land Recycling Initiative to encourage and assist private companies in cleaning up old industrial areas, brownfield sites and rationally utilising empty industrial plant buildings.

Over the past several years Lehigh Valley has converted many derelict areas into office and residential buildings.

Starting 30 years ago, when the decline of the steel industry began, workers and graduates had to leave the area to find jobs elsewhere, it was realised that to keep people in the Valley, new employment opportunities had to be created. When it was founded in 1995, The Lehigh Valley Development Corporation first did research into using food processing and food product transportation as the key industries for the area. As a steel town, the transportation conditions are excellent and its waterways, railways and air transport are all well developed. It is located near the large consumer markets of New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore and is an ideal location for food production and fresh food transportation. Development of the food industry has promoted the emergence of the packaging materials and plastics industry too.

The Lehigh Valley also has some competitive advantages in the optometrics and biotechnology fields through the base of companies that are already established and the research facilities available at Lehigh University. The good engineering and technology specialisations that were in place to support the iron and steel industry are also favourable to the development of bioengineering.

Results

Today Lehigh Valley has successfully diversified its economic base away from its heavy dependence on the iron and steel industry bringing stability to its economy. It has invested in its educational institutions producing a highly skilled workforce in biotechnology and optometrics. It has taken advantage of its natural geographical location to attract food industries and associated packaging industries. It has worked towards making land available for industrial development with brownfield incentives as well as the ambitious investment and creative plans for the former Bethlehem Steel Mill.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Background

Pittsburgh's strategic planning to attract new industry began in the 1930s and 40s when there was a realisation that the dependency on the steel industry and heavy manufacturing was making the city and the region unattractive to new businesses and population growth. Initially the focus was on environmental and transportation issues but over the years and particularly in the 1980s with the decline of the steel industry the focus has moved to the diversification of the economy and workforce development.

Strategy

Throughout the years many organizations have been involved in the strategic process and many initiatives and strategies put into place. Starting in 1944, The Allegheny Conference on Community Development grew principally out of efforts to unify and co-ordinate regional transportation and environmental improvement efforts. The Conference continues today to be the main focus of economic development. It is a private, non-profit organization with the unique ability to convene corporate, government and community leaders to frame, discuss and implement civic initiatives. It has built a leadership program that is cross sector including representatives from business, education, politics, the financial sector and the church. Through this organization, the city is working together in partnership affecting a leadership role.

One example of their work during the 1970s and 1980s was the diversification into cultural industries with the revitalization of a 14 block core Penn-Liberty corridor into the Pittsburgh Cultural District. Another related effort was Strategy 21 that brought together in partnership, public and private agencies in Allegheny County enabling them to speak with one voice and greater strength when requesting state funds.

A two year planning initiative, 'A Strategy for Growth' was started in 1984 with nine committees of leaders. It proposed a comprehensive plan of action. Among its many recommendations were ideas such as taking better advantage of the rivers to improve lifestyle amenities. It concluded with the recognition of Pittsburgh's image problem. Although moving away from steel as a major economic driver, the city retained its 'steel image' and had not been able to identify a new one.

The 'White Paper' published in 1993 reported some grim statistics that showed that for Pittsburgh to abandon manufacturing in favour of information technology had been short-sighted. These new sectors had failed to replace manufacturing as the engine of growth and prosperity for the region. The importance of manufacturing to the regional economy was recognized at this point and strategy developed to focus on advanced manufacturing. Pittsburgh now has over 150,000 workers in advanced manufacturing. Otherwise known as the 'computerized factory floor' this emerging field integrates age-old manufacturing with computerization, automation and robotics. The city has promoted its traditional hard working image and work ethic as a foundation for the new knowledge based industries to build upon.

The 'White Paper' called for a new shared vision for the future. The following year in 1994 more than 5,000 members of the community came together with the Working Together Consortium. WTC was a broad based public/private partnership committed to mobilising the region's resources and capitalising on its core economic competencies. It built a broad consensus of the region's assets and objectives but again did not deliver a concise vision.

Pittsburgh has been hindered by the number of organizations involved in economic development. At one time there were over 400. The Pittsburgh Regional Alliance was formed in 1995 to consolidate this effort. It recognizes that economic development is a regional effort and that focused partnerships between the public and private sectors as well as government and economic development organizations are essential for its success.

Results

In the last two decades in particular, Pittsburgh has been successful in diversifying its economy away from a dependency on one industry i.e. steel, to developing expertise in a number of growth sectors including advanced manufacturing, financial services, information technology, robotics and life sciences. However, the problems of an ageing workforce and declining population remain and are being addressed through a number of creative initiatives e.g. Boomerang Initiative and the Manufacturing Pathway Initiative to mention two. The Boomerang Initiative is a way of keeping in contact with natives from Pittsburgh who have moved away but may consider moving back if the opportunities were there. The Manufacturing Pathway Initiative encourages students to consider a career in manufacturing by involving them with companies on projects in Grades 10,11 and 12.

It is now recognized that growth in the economy will come about principally through ensuring that existing companies are competitive and encouraging product innovation. A thorough analysis of the supply chain is being conducted to ensure that 'local' companies are benefiting from these business opportunities. Technology transfer from universities and colleges resulting in spin off companies is also an important area of growth. Digital Greenhouse and Life Sciences Greenhouse initiatives have been set up specifically to develop and commercialise emerging technologies.

Workforce development is also critical to ensure that Pittsburgh can offer the skills and expertise necessary for these growth industries. Both the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board and Catalyst Connection work with the school boards and students from kindergarten to Grade 12 to ensure that they have the skills necessary to enter the workforce. They bring together the needs of industry with the school curriculum. Many students do not consider a career in manufacturing at all and projects such as the

Manufacturing Pathways Initiative and Adventures in Technology have been successfully developed to begin to address this issue.

Finally external marketing efforts are based on Pittsburgh's competitive strengths to attract new companies and population. The Pittsburgh Regional Alliance promotes the city as one that has reinvented itself economically and re-energized its lifestyle. The PRA also believes in partnerships and works very closely with the City of Sheffield in England and Dortmund in Germany. Both of these cities have been identified as being at similar stages of economic development and already investments have come about as a result of these partnerships.

The Allegheny Conference celebrates 60 years this year and still maintains its leadership role. In a new organizational structure just completed in 2004 it brings together policy making, advocacy, research and marketing in a partnership designed to continue to move Pittsburgh forward.

The Pittsburgh experience supports the major strategies identified in other communities researched. The diversification process started back in the 1940s has been long term. The Allegheny Conference sets its strategy for ten years in order to see results. The Conference itself has shown leadership throughout the years. Partnerships have been demonstrated between organizations and sectors. Workforce development is a major issue and there are many organisations involved in profiling the labour market as well as addressing the issues e.g. Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board and Catalyst Connection.

The development of the downtown and the waterfront are seen as essential to improve the quality of life for residents and workers in the city. The plan for the waterfront includes residential buildings as well as offices, shops and restaurants to ensure activity there day and night. Development of the Station Square has provided an attractive area with restaurants and shops as well as access to the riverside. It incorporates some of the artefacts of the steel industry in a creative way to remind the city of its heritage. Pittsburgh is unique in not only being able to access both state and federal funds but also having access to at least 30 foundations providing finance e.g. Mellon, Carnegie, Alcoa and PNC. The PNC stadium and Heinz Fields stadium are significant assets to the waterfront and the city as well as a focus for sports activity and community pride.

Pittsburgh still struggles with its identity and branding as its diversification is broad based and still has major issues to address such as its ageing workforce. There is no doubt, however, that it has established itself as dynamic area with an industrial base founded on emerging technologies and industrial sectors. Unemployment currently stands at 6% and the cost of living in comparison with other U.S. cities is low.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

UK COMMUNITIES

CORBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Background

Corby is situated in Northamptonshire within commuting distance of London. It has a population of 53,000 and was one of the first wave of new towns built in Britain in the early years after the Second World War. Once a thriving steel town, it suffered a catastrophic decline following the collapse of the industry in the early 1980s, when unemployment in the town rose to 30%. The other town in the UK researched is Corby. It was selected because it is similar in size to Welland, in a region similar in size to Niagara and within the same commuting distance of London as Welland is to Toronto.

Strategy

Over the next twenty years a number of programs attempted to promote economic growth in Corby and unemployment did fall to 3%. However, wages remained low and the town has never regained its former prosperity. The most successful enterprise in the town has been the creation of The Rockingham Speedway which opened in 2001. This is a sporting attraction that has spun off into precision engineering and motor sport building.

The establishment in 2001 of Catalyst Corby, an Urban Regeneration Company, united the private sector with local, regional and national agencies in a genuine partnership to deliver a new strategy for Corby for the 21st Century. Catalyst Corby aims to attract funding, improve public services and infrastructure and to promote the town as a place to invest, live and work. Its objective is to put the people in the community first. Corby's regeneration is based on a 20 year plan and £4 billion funding from the UK government.

A Regeneration Framework has been prepared on behalf of Catalyst Corby. It sets out an exciting strategy to transform Corby into a vibrant and successful town. The plan is based on strategic areas of development:

1. **Central Corby Framework** to develop the town centre by introducing new uses and facilities that create a mixed-use town core.
2. **Residential Strategy** to improve and expand the housing market to accommodate the goal of doubling the population in the next 20 years.
3. **Economic Strategy** to create an environment to attract new jobs, broaden the economic base by focusing on existing manufacturers strengths and create new employment opportunities. It also aims to develop high quality accessible industrial land. Create training and skills development for the population.
4. **Transport Strategy** including investment in public transportation and a new transportation network.
5. **Environment Strategy** to protect the environment using natural resources effectively.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

In 2003 another important part of the regeneration strategy was launched as the Community Strategy. It aims to deliver co-ordinated action on three strategic areas – economy, environment and community. It was prepared by Corby's Local Strategic Partnership which includes representatives from public, private and voluntary organizations in the Borough.

The Community Strategy objectives are:

- To establish Corby as a major business and commercial centre in the wider regional economy
- To build on the Rockingham Speedway opportunity to generate a local cluster of hi-tech engineering
- To develop a modern competitive town centre as a powerful driver of local economic development
- To create a flourishing culture of entrepreneurship and a dynamic base of growth orientated small firms
- To ensure Corby's skill base is much improved and closely attuned to the needs of a dynamic modern economy
- To establish a marketing campaign aimed at developing a stronger image and identity for Corby as a place to live and do business

Results

Strong partnerships between the community and the public and private sectors have been formed to obtain government funding. This partnership is the Urban Regeneration Company, Catalyst Corby. The company developed a regeneration strategy which compliments the community development plan prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership. The latter would implement the objectives of the regeneration strategy. It addresses improving the downtown, developing a more diverse economic base, improving infrastructure, building on existing manufacturing strengths, providing retraining and skills development as well as an inward investment marketing plan to attract new businesses to Corby.

These strategies have been developed recently and it is difficult to measure success. They are long term strategies. However, Catalyst Corby has already achieved results in securing government funding to introduce a new bus service, location of a new office building with 220 jobs, a £12 million investment in road infrastructure and secured assistance for leisure, sport, housing and community projects.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Throughout the 1980s a number of UK industrial cities experienced the erosion of traditional manufacturing as a source of employment and economic prosperity. They were forced to develop strategies to regenerate their city centre, diversify their industrial base and revitalise their economy. The cities included Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Bradford and Sheffield. The lessons learnt from each are largely similar, but Sheffield presents the most relevant example to consider further and from which to identify strategies that could be applied to Welland.

Sheffield is an exciting example of a community that has developed a successful economic strategy and kept its manufacturing base largely by diversifying into sport and cultural tourism as well as urban and city centre regeneration. Although a much larger city there are many parallels and strategies that can be considered in the development of a strategic plan for Welland.

<u>Background</u>

Prior to 1972 Sheffield was a thriving city with low unemployment based on the traditional manufacturing industries of steel making and cutlery. In the late 1970s/early 1980s there were events happening nationally and internationally which were outside Sheffield's control. This resulted in the drastic rationalisation of the steel industry, closure of companies, derelict land, loss of 50,000 jobs and the realisation that for the first time in 150 years, the city could no longer rely on manufacturing as the major source of employment.

<u>Strategy</u>

The City Council took a strong leadership role at this point. It formed partnerships with local businesses and higher education to co-ordinate a regeneration strategy.

As a result of their meetings, Coopers and Lybrand were commissioned as consultants to undertake a study into the historical domination of the steel industry and, based upon an analysis of Sheffield's strengths, to provide an assessment for the potential for diversification. This report is similar to the 'Competitive Analysis' carried out for Welland. From this a strategy was developed with Sport and Culture as the main catalysts for regeneration and diversification. This decision had the backing of all parties including the Council, Chamber of Commerce, Universities and the media.

1. Culture – the Cultural Industries Quarter has been developed in the city centre and now houses over 132 companies and includes studio and art workspace for artists. It has helped to create a sense of identify in the city and a city based tourism. The whole project has been largely successful but Sheffield has discovered that cultural business development is a long term project. Today, Sheffield's cultural life is vibrant and exciting and forms a major focus for their tourism strategy.

2. Sports – The Sports strategy was built around the decision to bid for the World Student Games in 1991 and to find a way to redevelop the derelict land left by the demise of the steel industry in the Lower Don Valley. Sheffield was successful in its bid for the games and this event became a catalyst to stimulate sporting activity and infrastructure and hence economic development in the city. The City Council originally made a large financial investment to build sports facilities. Initially they experienced a loss on this investment although the city as a whole benefited from secondary spending. In the longer term there is no doubt among those involved in economic development that the games provided the catalyst for the success of the strategy today. Between 1991 and 2001 there were 395 major sports events in Sheffield, 576,000 additional visits to the city, 365,000 bed nights within Sheffield and £33 million ($70 million) in secondary spending in the city as well as large numbers of jobs created.

   Since 2001 several more sports facilities have been added including the UK's National Ice Centre and the UK's National Institute for Sport. No local authority finance was needed for these projects. Eleven new hotels have been built since 1990. With all this new construction taking place the city council has offered financial assistance to ensure that local workers have the skills necessary to take the jobs created by these projects.

   Although the original strategy was to develop a sports infrastructure, a sports manufacturing industry has also emerged. This includes a traditional wire company which now makes basketball hoops for the NBA and a forge shop that invested in new technology and makes ice hockey skate blades for the NHL.

Large areas of derelict land were transformed into sports arenas and stadiums as part of the overall sports strategy. Other successful regeneration included the development of the Meadowhall Shopping Centre and the Sheffield Canal. Meadowhall is now one of the largest retail parks in Europe attracting more than 30 million visitors a year. It is built on land where the steel companies used to be. Victoria Quays on the canal in the centre of Sheffield is one of the finest examples of waterside developments in Northern England including the building of offices and a hotel in a public/private partnership.

<u>Results</u>

The key factors in this success story have to be the strong leadership shown by Sheffield City Council, the partnerships formed between the public and private sectors, diversification into less traditional industries and specialist areas of tourism (sports and culture) as well as the regeneration of derelict land and the city centre. The City has taken what it calls collective ownership of its economic development under the umbrella of the organization called the Sheffield First Partnership. Despite the number of partnerships formed since the 1980s in the public/private sector, the working relationships were not good and overall no more than one third of a plan was ever delivered before a new one was developed. It was decided that something needed to be done and out of this came the Sheffield First Partnership launched in June 1999.

It produced a 12 point plan – “Putting Sheffield First – Achieving Excellence”. This plan was problem driven including the redevelopment of the city centre (all the growth had taken place outside the centre). This was developed as a three year plan to implement all 12 points with reporting of progress every 6 months. They defined what they wanted to achieve, who would be involved and who is responsible. The Board represents the public and private sector and all the members are at the Managing Director level, no substitutes are permitted. Representatives were selected following a personal interview and all are held accountable publicly. For statutory organizations the seat went with the job position and for voluntary organizations in the public and private sector it was the person that was selected.

This is a strategic body that oversees a number of delivery agents including the City Council, Chamber of Commerce, and South Yorkshire International Trade Centre. These agencies many of whom are made up of elected officials volunteer to report back to an unelected representative body. All have found that what they may concede in terms of total authority is made up for in the opportunity to influence the strategy and contribute to its implementation. All these factors come together to result in a city that has turned itself around and restored its self image and civic pride.

Sheffield has moved away from a supply chain driven investment strategy to focus on attracting dynamic companies who are market leaders. These market leaders would set the standards in work force etc e.g. Boeing.

The city is trying to narrow the gap between neighbourhoods. This means that the ‘poorer’ neighbourhoods with higher unemployment have to see a more dramatic increase than those better off, in order to make them equal. The strategy ‘Closing the Gap’ will be driven by transformational projects to help the city meet national targets on education, crime, employment, housing and the environment. Overall unemployment in the city stands at 3%.

The vision in 2004 is for Sheffield to become a successful, distinctive city of European significance, with opportunities for all. The city wants to build on innovation and skills, just as Sheffield had developed in the past. In the early 1900s Sheffield produced 90% of all UK steel and 50% of all European steel. To be distinctive in a European context is more important than in a UK context as it widens the market.

Branding is also an issue. Sheffield is unsure of its distinctive feature at the moment. They are looking at cities like Milan (design), Stuttgart (advanced manufacturing), Pittsburgh (advanced manufacturing), Tampere (Nokia, IT), Antwerp. Sheffield has gone from a city of steel to a city of culture and sport but still retaining a manufacturing base.

CITY OF WELLAND: BUILDING A COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR THE WAY FORWARD

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Brenda Kuntz, Vice President Existing Business Services, Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, Pittsburgh
Suzi Pegg, Director Global Investment Group, Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, Pittsburgh
Ron Painter, Executive Director, Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, Pittsburgh
Jane Heiple, Vice President Workforce Education and Development, Catalyst Connection, Pittsburgh
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