

Summary Report
of the
North Dumfries Community Visioning Day
and
Service Provider Workshop

Hosted by:

The YMCA of Cambridge
Community Support Services of Ayr and North Dumfries
The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries
The Langs Farm Village Association Satellite Community Health Centre

November 15 & 16, 2005

Prepared by:

The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries

Overview

With more people moving out of cities and into rural areas than ever before, the face of rural Ontario has been changing¹ and the Township of North Dumfries is no exception.

Challenged by significant population growth that is expected to continue, it seems timely to develop a long-term vision for programs and services in the Township.

To that end, representatives from several local non-profit organizations recently came together as a task force to plan and host two events: a Community Visioning Day and a Planning Workshop for service providers and policy makers.

The Community Visioning Day was held on November 15, 2005 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Brigid School in Ayr. This event, facilitated by internationally known consultant and educator David Hasbury, focused on the development of future community goals.

The ideas generated during the Community Visioning Day were presented at a workshop for service providers held on November 16, 2005 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Fire Hall in Ayr. Those in attendance have the option of using the information presented to develop work plans and inform local strategies.

¹ Powers, N. (2000, February 2). Public hearing grapples with concerns over 'intensive farming' operations. *The East Northumberland Independent*.
<http://www.eastnorthumberland.com/news/newsFebruary2000/IntensiveFarming0202000.html>

The Community Visioning Task Force

The Task Force's role was to plan and coordinate the Community Visioning Day and Planning Workshop and to follow up on the recommendations generated by participants. The following organizations were represented:

Community Support Services of Ayr and North Dumfries is a multi-service social service organization that works to meet the needs of individuals and families residing in the township.

The Langs Farm Community Health Centre currently serves residents of North Dumfries through its Cambridge location and through nurse practitioner outreach clinics at the Community Support Services office. Approval was received in 2004 to start a satellite community health centre in the Village of Ayr.

The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that actively participates in building and strengthening community through research, analysis, facilitation, and education.

The YMCA of Cambridge has provided daycare services at various locations in North Dumfries for the past 10 years.

North Dumfries Community Visioning Day - November 15, 2005

Participants

Task force members agreed that the Community Visioning Day should be publicized as widely as possible. Email messages, newspaper ads, personal communication, and newsletters were all used to create awareness. A total of 22 local residents participated in this event.

Process

Linda Terry of the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries started off the evening with greetings and introductions, followed by brief comments from each of the other organizations represented on the Community Visioning Task Force. Facilitator David Hasbury provided an overview of the evening and introduced participants to “group graphics”, an innovative method of capturing words and ideas using images and colour.

The format of the evening was highly interactive. During two small group breakout sessions attendees had the opportunity to interact with each other, exchange ideas, and create a shared vision for their community.

In the first breakout session participants were asked to address three questions:

- 1) What is it like to live in North Dumfries?
- 2) What has changes?
- 3) What is needed?

In the second breakout session they were asked to prioritize community needs. The results of each breakout were reported back to the whole group and are summarized below.

Summary of Comments

Breakout Session #1: Community Visioning

Question One: What is it like to live in North Dumfries?

- Awesome – great community spirit
- A strong community that continues to grow
- Nice, quiet place
- Friendly
- Safe
- Feeling of trust
- Nice looking
- Park in the centre of the village is a positive
- Small business owners have done a lot to preserve buildings and keep them
- Feels like a suburb
- Not multiracial
- Teenage “wasteland”

Question Two: What has changed?

- Town continues to grow
- More and more young families moving to Ayr
- Increased community activity and vitality
- View of a rural community has changed with the generations past and present
- Growth in trucking industry

- Growth of small business
- Increasing vandalism
- The needs of the community have outgrown current facilities
- The nature of farming has changed
- Support groups are no longer available
- There is now a need for food support and Christmas hampers
- Change in industry
- Youth need to leave North Dumfries for job opportunities
- Drug problem
- Drinking
- Train-traffic problems

Question Three: What is needed?

- St. Brigid School needs to look more permanent
- More kids programs
- Programming for youth
- Youth visioning
- Childcare
- Trails and parks in planned development
- More open space
- Keep trees
- Public pool
- Victoria Park needs a splash pad
- Soccer programs and maintaining fields
- Up to date community centre that is multifunctional and can satisfy the needs of various organizations
- No more baseball diamonds
- Physical police presence
- Enforcement of bylaws
- Three-way stop at corner
- Re-route trucking
- Public transportation
- Seniors programming and housing
- Affordable housing
- Better planning
- Curb drug/alcohol problems
- Clinics such as blood work
- Shopping – groceries
- Music events
- Promote tourism

Breakout Session #2: Generating Priorities

TOP 10 COMMUNITY NEEDS	TOP 5 COMMUNITY NEEDS	TOP 3 COMMUNITY NEEDS	TOP COMMUNITY NEED
Group 1			
Long-term care facility	Long-term care facility		
Daily transportation to K-W and Cambridge	Daily transportation to K-W and Cambridge		
Performing arts centre			
Swimming pool (indoor)	Swimming pool (indoor)	Swimming pool (indoor)	
Organized preschool	Organized preschool		
Multi-purpose building	Multi-purpose building	Multi-purpose building	Multi-purpose building
Outdoor recreation on or near the river	Outdoor recreation on or near the river	Outdoor recreation on or near the river	
Family programs			
More visible police support			
Tim Horton's (employment)			
Group 2			
Labs – blood work			
Multi-use community centre	Multi-use community centre	Multi-use community centre	Multi-use community centre
Nursing home	Nursing home		
Theatre			
Seniors housing			
Work-industry surrounding towns			
Youth activities			
Job mentoring			
Public Transportation	Public Transportation	Public Transportation	
Environmental activities	Environmental activities	Environmental activities	
Physical police presence	Physical police presence		
Better shopping-groceries			
Bypass route - truck			
Bylaw enforcement			
More open space			
Train crossing			
Promote tourism			
Group 3			
Park playground equipment with water activities	Park playground equipment with water activities	Park playground equipment with water activities	
Green space – walking trails	Green space – walking trails		
Multipurpose recreation and community centre	Multipurpose recreation and community centre	Multipurpose recreation and community centre	Multipurpose recreation and community centre
Permanent medical clinic	Permanent medical clinic	Permanent medical clinic	
Public transportation			
Vehicles for communication	Vehicles for communication		
Group 4			
Traffic/growth plan	Traffic/growth plan		
Health care facility	Health care facility	Health care facility	
Multipurpose centre	Multipurpose centre	Multipurpose centre	Multipurpose centre
Housing growth strategy	Housing growth strategy	Housing growth strategy	
Teen strategy	Teen strategy		

Conclusion

A key priority emerging from the Community Visioning Session is the need for a multi-purpose recreation/community centre in the Township of North Dumfries. Other priority areas include health care facilities, park/environmental activities, a housing growth strategy, and public transportation.

It is worth noting that while these workshop participants should not be considered representative of the population of the township as a whole, many of the priority areas identified during this event are similar to those identified in larger studies, such as the Moving Forward Together Project (for more information on this major research effort visit www.movingforwardtogether.ca).

Community Visioning Day Participant Evaluation Feedback

Fourteen participants completed the feedback form. Their responses are summarized below.

What attracted you to attend this evening's forum?

- Planning.
- Representing the Centre for the Community Foundation group.
- I am interested in our community.
- I have a young family (ages 3&1), I plan on living in Ayr for a while, and I often have to leave Ayr to find activities for my children – I prefer to stay local!
- Community development.
- My ability to reside in Ayr during my senior years, Ayr's ability to retain its current youth population as they become adults, promote environmental concerns associated with growth.
- Interest in community.
- Interest in the community.
- Interest in future plans for area.
- Interest in the development of this community, an opportunity to express need and concern for green space – environmental concerns.
- Attaining information and putting in my ideas for improvement.
- YMCA presence.
- Wanted to know what can possibly happen to this community – childcare is one of my main reasons for attending.
- The needs of Ayr Minor Hockey Association as well as want to be a part of the community.

Please respond to the following statement about your forum experience

Forum Experience	Agree	Disagree	Unanswered
I was able to present my ideas	12	0	2
I was able to hear other people's ideas	11	1	2
The forum was well organized	12	0	2
The forum went the right length of time	12	0	2
The location was suitable	11	2	1

Would you like to make any other comments?

- Keep communicating! Keep us informed.
- Well done event.
- Need microphone – hard to hear.
- Need to communicate the plans for this community. Residents are committed – informal networks established and would support social supports. An example of this is the soccer club.
- Good atmosphere for exchange of ideas
- I was hoping for a larger crowd to better represent the community, and for more "regular folk"!
- I apologize for not being able to stay for the meeting. This is an important issue for me.

Request for further information

Of the 14 participants who returned feedback forms, 13 provided contact information and wanted to be kept informed about forum outcomes.

Service Provider Workshop - November 16, 2005

Participants

There was a great deal of diversity among attendees at the Service Provider Workshop. The 20 participants included representatives from both formal and informal community organizations, foundations and government funders, and local political leaders.

Process

After greetings and a round of introductions, workshop participants were presented with a summary of the previous evening's Community Visioning Session as well as the priorities generated at that event. The facilitator then worked with participants to brainstorm strategies that would address these issues.

Priority Areas and Strategies

Participants in the Service Provider Workshop discussed priority areas and suggested a number of strategies:

Priority Area: Funding

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support funding:

- Local grass roots groups could partner with charitable organizations to access funding
- Building endowments would benefit the township

Priority Area: Youth Engagement

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support youth engagement:

- Plan a day for youth
- Invite youth and show them the mural created at the Community Visioning Day
- Solicit youth input – facilitate a meeting around the thoughts presented here
- Increase the “buffet” (i.e. choices) offered to youth

Priority Area: Communication

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support communication:

- Keep bringing people together. The Social Planning Council can be involved in facilitation role
- Internet and email can be utilized more
- Other regional groups could be brought on board
- Faith groups should be brought to the table
- Township Council should see the Community Visioning Day mural

Priority Area: Service Delivery

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support service delivery:

- Groups should pool efforts so that the community sees one face
- Integrate more health services
- Use one group that's already out to connect with other groups in the area
- St. Brigid's School as a permanent site
- Share space
- Look at models from other townships

- Consider a feasibility study

Priority Area: Community Economic Development

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support economic development:

- Build entrepreneurial skills for youth
- Build small business
- Work with others – employment, entrepreneurship

Priority Area: Natural Environment

Local strategies suggested by workshop participants to support the natural environment:

- Local groups could build trails
- There is an opportunity to do some convening around trails (e.g. this is part of the mandate of the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration, Culture, Tourism, and Health Promotion)

Outcomes

One immediate outcome of this workshop was the commitment to host a similar session to facilitate an understanding of issues for youth in the community.

Where do we go from here?

On December 12, 2005 the Community Visioning Task Force held a follow-up meeting to review results and determine next steps. Citing near-by examples of what can be achieved when people work together towards a common goal (such as the Centre 2000 multi-use facility in Erin, Ont.) everyone present saw merit in pursuing a collaborative approach for addressing community needs.

The importance of ongoing communication was recognized and to that end the following steps were suggested:

- The continuation of regular quarterly meetings of the Community Visioning Task Force with the Mayor of North Dumfries.
- A joint presentation of forum findings to North Dumfries Township Council early in the New Year.
- A presentation of forum findings to Regional Council in the spring of 2006.
- Expansion of the Social Planning Council email distribution list and circulation of forum findings to the community via both email and newsletter.

ACTIONS:

- The Social Planning Council will arrange a meeting date with the Mayor of North Dumfries in January of 2006.
- The Social Planning Council will take the lead role in preparing a presentation for Township Council.
- The Social Planning Council will prepare a newsletter item summarizing forum results for distribution to the community.

