

from
Capacity
to
Action

Developing Tools
for Transition

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Fundy Model Forest



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes a study by the Rural and Small Town Programme (RSTP) to develop the tools required by forestry-dependent communities to help them transition from a one industry town. It builds upon an earlier capacity building project conducted by RSTP in 2008 in Blackville, Perth-Andover, Plaster Rock, and Petitcodiac. Two case study communities were identified for the purposes of this project: Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac.

The methodology for this project involved several phases in the two case study communities. Following the project start-up and the SWOT analysis, coaching and facilitation was provided to the communities as they worked through their priorities.

Throughout April and May 2009, project start-up meetings were held with Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac. These two communities were identified as the case study communities as the result of a previous project, the PLANT (Planning, Learning, Adapting Now and Tomorrow) project which was conducted by RSTP during 2008. Both communities were interested in moving their previous capacity building efforts to a higher level and begin to strategically form and implement new projects. Start-up meetings were held with committees put in place during the PLANT project, and encouraged new participants to become involved.

SWOT workshops were conducted in both Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac. In Plaster Rock, these took the form of participation by invited citizens from businesses, Council and the community. Petitcodiac's SWOT workshop also included interested citizens and was adapted to work with results of a community survey which had recently been completed. In Petitcodiac, regular monthly meetings were held, sometimes with invited guests who could provide additional information or resources to address identified priorities.

Although a skills assessment and labour force inventory had been thought to be important pieces of helping both case study communities to transition from a forestry dependent community, both communities felt they had not arrived at the point where an assessment and inventory would help solve their challenges. They felt that they would rather spend time further building community capacity and leadership, and realized that a skills assessment and labour force inventory would be a major undertaking, and one that they would be interested in pursuing once more community capacity had been built and additional infrastructure put in place. Both communities placed the assessment and inventory "on the shelf" as a future project.

Although this project did not involve the use of a formal evaluation questionnaire, participants commented that they were more knowledgeable about their community's assets and challenges and felt comfortable that they could now take some action to address issues that may arise. Having learned about building community capacity and working together on the SWOT analysis provided them with new insight into their communities and allowed them to involve the broader community, particularly youth.

A review of community capacity building helped to refresh the understanding of participants who had been involved from the beginning of the PLANT project and helped to provide a simple and comprehensible understanding of community capacity building to citizens who were new to this project. A quick review of the PLANT project ensued for the benefit of new participants. Discussion was held around the current project's objectives, and priorities were established. As previously mentioned, the consensus amongst both community groups was that conducting a skills inventory and labour force assessment should take place after there was evidence of further community involvement and capacity building as well as stronger leadership development. In Petitcodiac's case, it was felt that an integrated community sustainability plan (ICSP) should take place first.

RSTP designed a workbook for the SWOT analysis in Plaster Rock (see Appendix A) and a cross-section of the community was invited to participate. The workshop was held September 24, 2009 in the Village office. Participants were provided with a copy of the workbook prior to the workshop so that they could better prepare their thoughts, ideas and concerns. Having the workbook prior to the workshop allows for discussion among those invited, which not only serves to generate valuable ideas but helps to build community capacity and gain community involvement. The workbook is a valuable tool which can be adapted for use in other communities by replacing specific references to Plaster Rock (for example the Community Profile) with references for another community.

Through discussions within the three sub-committees and larger group and community discussions, the project Steering Committee in Petitcodiac realized that putting an integrated community sustainability plan (ICSP) in place would be beneficial not only to local planning, but to help access funding for capital projects. The committee also felt that an ICSP would help lay the groundwork for further economic development, attraction and retention of youth, and a more environmentally sustainable community. This led to a concentrated discussion about the benefits of completing an ICSP and funding sources were sought to move forward. Council has submitted an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) through its Green Municipal Fund, and RSTP has submitted an application to the Rural Secretariat's Community Development Program on behalf of the Village for the remainder of the funding to complete the year-long project. These two applications are currently in the final approval stage. Since Petitcodiac is a service, employment, education, and recreation centre for the region, residents from the outlying local service districts (LSDs) were invited to participate in the ICSP process. There are a number of initiatives, for example hiking, walking and biking trails which will become a collaborative effort between the Village and the outlying LSDs. Both the Steering Committee and the Recreation Council are planning other projects which would be complementary to the ICSP and would involve the broader community, particularly the youth.

This capacity building project addressed the objectives of assessing the state of capacity in both Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac, and provided a tool for other communities to conduct a SWOT analysis to further develop their community's assets and prepare strategic action plans. The process of coaching and facilitation throughout the project helped the two communities to see their

communities in a different light in terms of what strengths they already have and what is possible to build on. Challenges which may have been in the background became clearer, and participants in the project began the process of addressing them.

The desire to continue to build community capacity and to build leaders was clear in both communities. Leadership skills will play an important role as Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac continue to develop and implement their action plans, and will encourage partnerships with organizations and neighbouring regions.

Although the process followed was essentially the same in Plaster Rock as it was in Petitcodiac, end products from the two communities differed. Plaster Rock's focus was on their SWOT analysis and its results, and planning strategically to deal with the issues that arose. Their aim is toward economic sustainability in terms of traditional employment in the forestry sector along with new value-added products, and further development of the tourism industry with its associated businesses to build upon their natural assets. At the same time, they recognize the need for a strong volunteer base, strong leadership skills, and strong partnerships and collaboration with employers and citizens.

In Petitcodiac, the project took a more holistic approach. While participants worked within the SWOT analysis framework, they based it on a community survey which they had conducted on their own and which asked many questions related to bigger picture issues around the community (Survey results are shown in Appendix B). They realized that in order to transition from a one-industry town and to attract businesses and residents they would need to encompass social, cultural, environmental and economic initiatives. Council and the Steering Committee has now applied to various funding sources for assistance with infrastructure and to conduct an integrated community sustainability plan.

Participants in Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac have learned the value of community capacity building and have taken valuable steps forward to enhance community cohesiveness. The strategic planning process, through the SWOT analysis, has become part of their action plans and will serve as a reference point as they move ahead with other plans. They have begun to form new and strengthen existing partnerships between organizations, individuals and specific age groups within their communities, and have shown evidence of community pride and a cooperative community spirit. They have identified community assets and strengths and recognize weaknesses and threats which will be challenges for them. They have a workbook to refer to (Appendix A) as they continue to develop their strategic issues and actions. This workbook is a tool that can be adapted for use in any number of communities.

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INTRODUCTION

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METHODOLOGY

Project Objectives

1. Assess the current state of capacity in Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac after having completed “The PLANT Project” aimed at building community capacity
2. Conduct SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis with each of the two communities
3. Conduct skills assessment/labour force inventories with each of the two communities

Work Plan

The methodology for this project involved several phases in the two case study communities. Following the project start-up and the SWOT analysis, coaching and facilitation was provided to the communities as they worked through their priorities.

Project Start-up

Throughout April and May 2009, project start-up meetings were held with Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac. These two communities were identified as the case study communities as the result of a previous project, the PLANT (Planning, Learning, Adapting Now and Tomorrow) project which was conducted by RSTP during 2008. Both communities were interested in moving their previous capacity building efforts to a higher level and begin to strategically form and implement new projects. Start-up meetings were held with committees put in place during the PLANT project, and encouraged new participants to become involved.

SWOT Workshops

SWOT workshops were conducted in both Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac. In Plaster Rock, these took the form of participation by invited citizens from businesses, Council and the community. Petitcodiac’s SWOT workshop also included interested citizens and was adapted to work with results of a community survey which had recently been completed. In Petitcodiac, regular monthly meetings were held, sometimes with invited guests who could provide additional information or resources to address identified priorities.

Skills/Labour Force Assessment

Although a skills assessment and labour force inventory had been thought to be important pieces of helping both case study communities to transition from a forestry dependent community, both communities felt they had not arrived at the point where an assessment and inventory would help solve their challenges. They felt that they would rather spend time further building community capacity and leadership, and realized that a skills assessment and labour force inventory would be a major undertaking, and one that they would be interested in pursuing once more community capacity had been built and additional infrastructure put in place. Both communities placed the assessment and inventory “on the shelf” as a future project.

Evaluation

Although this project did not involve the use of a formal evaluation questionnaire, participants commented that they were more knowledgeable about their community’s assets and challenges and felt comfortable that they could now take some action to address issues that may arise. Having learned about building community capacity and working together on the SWOT analysis provided them with new insight into their communities and allowed them to involve the broader community, particularly youth.

CASE STUDY COMMUNITIES

The project start-up meetings in both Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac began with a short review of what community capacity building is using the following explanation:

What is Community Capacity Building?

What is community capacity building? It is building:

- Partnerships and networks
- Skills, abilities and assets
- Resources
- Initiatives and effective organizations
- Leadership

These are all the things needed for community-based development, for taking charge of your own future. The purpose of community capacity building is to enable people in a community to work together, make well-considered and collaborative decisions, develop a vision and strategy for the future, and act over time to make these real – all while tapping into and building individual skills and abilities of an ever-increasing quantity and diversity of participants and organizations within the community.

Community capacity building efforts can encompass a wide range of activities, from formal leadership development efforts to community-wide strategic planning to a wide variety of less

formal activities that build trust and camaraderie among citizens – like church socials, Girl Guide and Boy Scouts groups, volunteer community clean-ups, or regular Chamber of Commerce breakfasts.

This review helped to refresh the understanding of participants who had been involved from the beginning of the PLANT project and helped to provide a simple and comprehensible understanding of community capacity building to citizens who were new to this project. A quick review of the PLANT project ensued for the benefit of new participants. Discussion was held around this project's objectives, and priorities were established. As previously mentioned, the consensus amongst both community groups was that conducting a skills inventory and labour force assessment should take place after there was evidence of further community involvement and capacity building as well as stronger leadership development. In Petitcodiac's case, it was felt that an integrated community sustainability plan (ICSP) should take place first.

Plaster Rock

The forestry sector and its associated businesses have been a mainstay in Plaster Rock since 1906. Fraser Paper was the largest employer in the area at the downturn in the global forest industry, and consequently a number of its mills were closed. In June 2009, with financing assistance from the Province of New Brunswick, Fraser Paper's spruce and fir sawmill in Plaster Rock was shut down for modernizing work, which included a wood-fired energy plant, new kilns to dry lumber and improved sawing equipment. At the heart of the renovations was a biomass boiler to provide the heat and energy needs for the lumber mill and kiln dry operations. Many employees who had previously been laid off from the mill were able to complete the renovations rather than having the work contracted out. In December 2009, with the renovations complete, the Plaster Rock mill reopened, even as Fraser Papers underwent restructuring. With the modernization of the Plaster Rock mill comes considerable energy savings, allowing workers to continue to have employment into the future.

Plaster Rock has also become world renowned for its annual World Pond Hockey Championship (WPHC), held in February. Begun in 2002, the event now hosts over 100 teams from around the world annually. Proceeds from the WPHC have helped construct the Tobique Plex (a combination Municipal Offices/arena/multi-use facility) and hundreds of volunteers contribute to making each year a success. Late 2009 saw the construction of a 60 ft. by 100 ft. log pavilion next to Roulston Lake (the location of the WPHC). This pavilion was constructed by local contractors and funded through ACOA and contributions from the WPHC.

The tourism industry and its development plays an important role in Plaster Rock and the surrounding area. The area is famous for its natural beauty, particularly along the Tobique River and in nearby Mt. Carleton provincial park. A number of local people have established Outfitting businesses which provide accommodations as well as equipment and guides for tourists. However, because of large tracts of land being owned by the various lumber companies and others, access to the river is limited. Working with the landowners to form a partnership that would allow access to

the river and provide spaces for community events and so on has been an important part of Plaster Rock's capacity building.

A strong sense of community and a "can do" attitude keeps Plaster Rock fairly self-sufficient and looking toward the future. A very strong volunteer base keeps community events strong, and celebrations are hosted from time to time to thank the volunteers for their commitment to the community and its people.

As the result of the previous PLANT project, a Steering Committee of citizens, business people, and representatives of Council had been formed to lead some initiatives determined through capacity building exercises. The Steering Committee formed three sub-committees to focus on the most important areas identified through the PLANT project: Business Development; Community Marketing; and Riverfront Development. Some of the issues the sub-committees wished to address were:

Business Development:

- Conduct a SWOT analysis
- Acquire market research information and access to potential capital and investors
- Prepare business plans for identified value-added manufacturing products
- Explore the possibility of manufacturing value-added products, taking advantage of natural resources and proximity to markets
- Deliver an economic development program for entrepreneurs
- Establish capital investment to start a mining operation
- Explore the possibility of a co-generation plant

Community Marketing:

- Create a package about the community and area which would be widely circulated
- Celebrate Local Champions
- Ensure the community is welcoming
- Create interactive maps of the region to make it easier to attract businesses and investors
- Work with the media to promote the area

Riverfront Development:

- Meet with stakeholders who own property along the Tobique River to establish a working relationship
- Establish access points along the Tobique River
- Create areas along the Tobique River where local area activities can be held
- Create a space for camping

Even though each sub-committee listed their priorities above, the group as a whole overwhelmingly agreed that a SWOT analysis should be conducted first. The group felt that this would allow them

to more clearly see what assets they had to build upon and what challenges they faced both locally and from outside the community.

RSTP designed a workbook for the SWOT analysis (see Appendix A) and a cross-section of the community was invited to participate. The workshop was held September 24, 2009 in the Village office. Participants were provided with a copy of the workbook prior to the workshop so that they could better prepare their thoughts, ideas and concerns. Having the workbook prior to the workshop allows for discussion among those invited, which not only serves to generate valuable ideas but helps to build community capacity and gain community involvement. The workbook is a valuable tool which can be adapted for use in other communities by replacing specific references to Plaster Rock (for example the Community Profile) with references for another community.

Building on some of the examples given in the workbook, the group listed the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Table 1):

TABLE 1. PLASTER ROCK – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

<p>STRENGTHS (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lakes/river/wilderness/Mt. Carleton • trucking industry • proximity to US markets • friendly atmosphere • land availability (not currently used) • volunteers • railway system • length of seasons (tourism) • peat bogs/moss • churches and community centres • restaurants • fibre (round wood) • high number of seniors • low cost of living • pre-existing infrastructure (e.g. refurbished mill, civic centre, etc.) • global partnerships from WPHC • hospitality/welcoming/friendly • high labour capital in certain trades • forward thinking people willing to strategize about the future 	<p>WEAKNESSES (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • downsizing in health care • retail sector • lack of professional services • larger urban shopping centres close by • losing youth and low enrolment in schools • lack of amenities for low income households • geography - perceived remoteness • defeatist attitudes in community • off the main transportation route • money/resources • lack of local accommodation • low/no diversity in economy • inaction • low labour capital in some trades • no public transportation (bus, train, taxi)
<p>OPPORTUNITIES (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Park • World Pond Hockey Championship & Fiddlers on the Tobique • value-added manufacturing • mining potential • tourism growth • technology • peat moss manufacturing • rail shipping • alternative energy (wind, biomass, cogeneration, green fibre, agriculture, ethanol) • senior housing / homecare/ products/ assistance • retirement immigration • accommodation development • amalgamation/regional governance • forest products manufacturing 	<p>THREATS (External)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exodus of skilled labour • state of economy • loss of primary local economy • community readiness • provincial highway conditions • further loss in public services / centralization

After having compiled the list in Table 1, workshop participants went on to identify and rank strategic issues. A strategic issue:

- has a major impact on the community
- is directly related to the future of the community
- needs to be addressed sooner rather than later
- needs specific actions/tasks to be identified and completed

After further discussion, the strategic issues emerged as follows (Table 2):

TABLE 2. PLASTER ROCK – STRATEGIC ISSUES

#	STRATEGIC ISSUES
	How can we draw people to use the underutilized resource of Mt. Carleton?
	How can we attract people to spend money while using Mt. Carleton?
	How can we make Mt. Carleton an economic stimulus for Plaster Rock?
	How do we find and build symbiotic partnerships for business development?
	How do we find money/resources for community planning and development?
	How do we create a package/tour for inquiries about business development?
	How do we access “unused” land?
	How can we generate revenue from our available land?
	How do we identify what land is available for sale (formally and informally)?
	How do we compile a list of assets?
	How do we advertise our potential assets to interested buyers?
	How do we get to know who the venture capitalists are?
	How can we identify local markets for products that are currently shipped outside our community?

Following the identification of the strategic issues, the group ranked those issues. They did not list issues in the “medium” and “low” priority areas because they felt they wanted to deal with their highest priority items at present. The High priority issues for Plaster Rock were identified as:

- Marketing Plan: an inventory of assets/services/potential that can be packaged using community marketing techniques

- Determine what/how much land is available for sale and for different development opportunities (identify possible target markets). Approach Acadia Timber as the largest land holder surrounding the community as a first contact.

Because of time limitations and other commitments, the workshop session ended with a review on how to proceed with development of an action plan as well as its implementation. The group then made arrangements to meet again to work on an action plan which will help them achieve their highest priorities. They will then be able to move on to their other priorities, using the process outlined in the workbook.

Petitcodiac

In Petitcodiac, 3 sub-committees had been formed as the result of capacity building exercises during the PLANT project: Geographic Location; Community Development; and Economic Development. These 3 sub-committees engaged additional citizens and have moved ahead on several issues.

Geographic Location:

- A new website was created for the Village of Petitcodiac by a community resident (www.petitcodiac.ca). This website is more comprehensible than the previous and provides information about events happening in the village, land and other real estate, tax rates, and so on.
- A monthly calendar of events was created and is widely circulated around the village. The calendar is completed each month entirely by community volunteers, and has become a much anticipated tool each month in the area.
- A new map of the village and area was created and printed professionally. It includes points of interest, a brief history of the village, numerous photos, and a service guide. This map is used at the Information Centre for tourists to the area and is circulated to other networks for inclusion with New Brunswick tourism options.
- A business directory for the area is in the process of being developed. This is in keeping with the aim of encouraging people to shop locally and to educate citizens on what businesses and services are available locally.
- The group has designated an area for the establishment of an Industrial Park, and has applied for federal funding to help with its development.

Community Development:

- The previously established Business Improvement Association (BIA), which has been non-operational for a number of years, has been encouraged to re-organize. Local business owners have been invited to meetings to discuss the possibility of raising the BIA or forming a similar kind of organization. The business community has been receptive to the idea and

continues to meet to make decisions on their role and support needed. The re-establishment of the BIA will support a shop local campaign, among other things.

- This committee designed and delivered a community survey which garnered a total of 119 responses. After analyzing the results, a presentation was made to the Steering Committee (see Appendix B) which incorporated a SWOT exercise. The actions suggested from this exercise have led to various new capacities in the village, including involvement of young people.
- A Recreation Council has recently been incorporated to work with young people to determine their needs and gain their involvement in the community. The Recreation Council works closely with the Petitcodiac Boys and Girls Club as well as local schools. Some of the initiatives being considered are: establishment of walking/hiking trails and involvement of youth as a Youth Town Council. The Boys and Girls Club plans to have a new gym and teen centre added to their building which will provide young people with the opportunity to hold music and theatre events; use the new computer centre and fitness centre; have access to Counsellors and support groups for issues like addiction, abuse, grief, etc. Youth in the area have been encouraged to get more involved in the community, and have participated in events like a Youth Engagement Program which hosted 61 young people from middle school through high school. The objectives of the Youth Engagement Program were to: (1) increase community capacity for holistic development (asset-based) of all youth in the area; (2) support and empower a Youth Relations Council; (3) increase youth connections with opportunities and resources in the community; and (4) develop strategic plans for engagement of youth in the Petitcodiac area. It is planned to host this event annually.

Economic Development:

- Initial talks have been held with Codiac Transit to explore the feasibility of providing a bus service to and from Moncton. This would be patterned after a similar service which runs between Hampton and Saint John on a twice-daily basis, and would help those who need to get to appointments in Moncton, do their shopping, attend social events, or get to work.
- The committee has worked with Enterprise Fundy to set up information sessions about such things as: establishing a business; encouraging new business start-ups; writing a business plan; getting funding, etc. These sessions are planned to be on an ongoing basis.
- The committee continues to look for funding opportunities that could help with new business start-ups or revitalization of empty buildings, and has been instrumental in helping with the search for available land for an industrial park and infrastructure funding to support its development.
- Newspaper articles have been published to raise awareness of lifestyle in the area as well as to let the general public know that the village and its surrounding area is “open for business.”

Through discussions within the three sub-committees and larger group and community discussions, the Steering Committee realized that putting an integrated community sustainability plan (ICSP) in place would be beneficial not only to local planning, but to help access funding for capital projects. The committee also felt that it would help lay the groundwork for further economic development, attraction and retention of youth, and a more environmentally sustainable community. This led to a concentrated discussion about the benefits of completing an ICSP and funding sources were sought to move forward. Council has submitted an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) through its Green Municipal Fund, and RSTP has submitted an application to the Rural Secretariat's Community Development Program on behalf of the Village for the remainder of the funding to complete the year-long project. These two applications are currently in the final approval stage. Since Petitcodiac is a service, employment, education, and recreation centre for the region, residents from the outlying local service districts (LSDs) were invited to participate in the ICSP process. There are a number of initiatives, for example hiking, walking and biking trails which will become a collaborative effort between the Village and the outlying LSDs. Both the Steering Committee and the Recreation Council are planning other projects which would be complementary to the ICSP and would involve the broader community, particularly the youth.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

This capacity building project addressed the objectives of assessing the state of capacity in both Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac, and provided a tool for other communities to conduct a SWOT analysis to further develop their community's assets and prepare strategic action plans. The process of coaching and facilitation throughout the project helped the two communities to see their communities in a different light in terms of what strengths they already have and what is possible to build on. Challenges which may have been in the background became clearer, and participants in the project began the process of addressing them.

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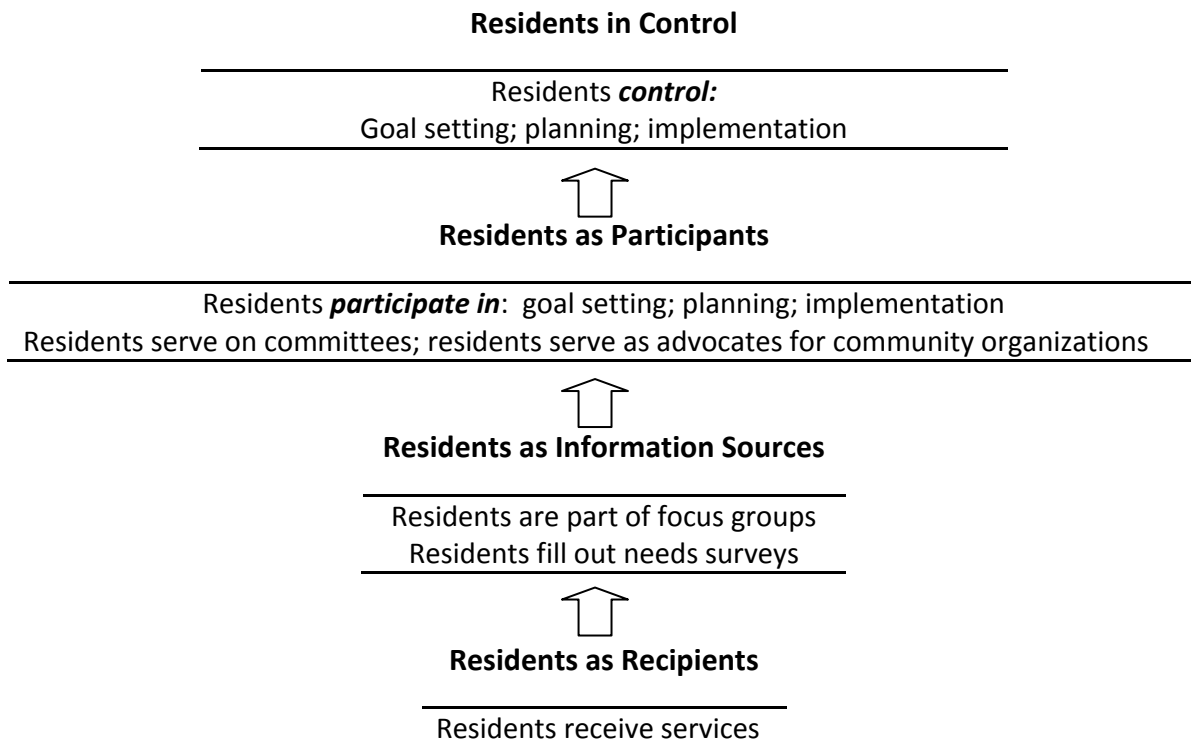
CONCLUSION

This project, like the previous PLANT project, was undertaken as part of the Fundy Model Forest's four objectives (Community Capacity; Science and Innovation; Bio-economy Diversification; and International Relationships), built on the principles of partnership, collaborative problem solving and research, and mutual respect. The Community Capacity objective's aim is to develop tools that can be used by communities to analyze their current status, identify opportunities, and help adapt to the dynamic nature of today's forestry industry.

Participants in Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac have learned the value of community capacity building and have taken valuable steps forward to enhance community cohesiveness. The strategic planning process, through the SWOT analysis, has become part of their action plans and will serve as a reference point as they move ahead with other plans. They have begun to form new and strengthen existing partnerships between organizations, individuals and specific age groups within their communities, and have shown evidence of community pride and a cooperative community spirit. They have identified community assets and strengths and recognize weakness and threats which will be challenges for them.

Participants in this project have moved through what the ABCD Institute identifies as “A Power Ladder” (Figure 1). The ladder shows participants (residents) moving from simply receiving services delivered by the municipality to becoming involved in identifying community needs and assets to playing more active roles and being part of plan implementation. Through this climb up the ladder, community capacity is built and the community becomes revitalized. Examples outlined in this report have shown that residents in Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac have moved up the ladder and are now more knowledgeable and willing to get involved with planning for the future of their communities.

FIGURE 1. A POWER LADDER



Source: Kretzmann et al., 2005, pg. 25

There are many tools of community development and sustainable planning which can be used in various communities. In these two communities, although the underlying principles were the same, i.e. to build community capacity that would help them to transition from their previously forestry-dependent communities, the method of performing a SWOT analysis differed. This illustrates that the workbook and the process used in Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac are flexible and will adapt to particular needs of other communities, just as the citizens themselves and the resources available are different.

Plaster Rock and Petitcodiac, through this project and the previous PLANT project, have learned what community capacity is and how to build it. They will continue to use these principles through the development of their action plans and the creation of new collaborative partnerships with citizens, organizations, businesses, and the surrounding areas. By asking their communities what they value, they have encouraged creative solutions – perhaps to encourage new energy efficient manufacturers or industries that use new technologies or recyclable materials to increase sustainable jobs in the area, or perhaps to encourage young people to remain in the local area over the long-term. Involving people in collective decision-making about the future of their community can go a long way to fostering a sense of common purpose and building social capital.

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APPENDIX A: THE SWOT ANALYSIS WORKBOOK

WORKBOOK

FOR

PLANT(ing):

The SWOT Analysis

Plaster Rock
September 24, 2009



**RURAL & SMALL TOWN
PROGRAMME**

Funded by: Fundy Model Forest

Facilitated by: Rural and Small Town Programme

Definitions:

PLANT: An acronym for the Planning, Learning, Adapting Now and Tomorrow project begun by the Village of Plaster Rock and citizens in summer 2008 and ongoing. Funding provided by the Fundy Model Forest and Enterprise Grand Falls Region.

SWOT: Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats

Capacity building: Building partnerships and networks; skills, abilities and assets; resources; initiatives and effective organizations; and leadership. These are the things needed for community-based development and for taking charge of your own future.

Community development: Happens when a group in a community initiates a planned process to change the economic, social, cultural or environmental situation. Change equals action in the community equation.

Strategic planning: Strategic planning boils down to vision; analysis; action: imagining a vision for the future; analyzing how to reach the vision; and making action plans based on the analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Plaster Rock's strategic planning SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) workshop designed to generate ideas and actions to help Plaster Rock move forward during challenging economic times.

This workshop will follow a basic strategic planning process based on accepted principles of community economic development. During this workshop, we will lay the groundwork for potential outcomes and begin to develop the actions to achieve the outcomes. All of this will be guided by a vision of the village that you as business people and property owners will propose.

In this workshop, we will take a look at global trends and issues affecting Plaster Rock. We will then arrange issues and identify which are priorities. **Please read and complete pages 1 - 14 in the workbook prior to the workshop.**

The next step is to take the priorities and move on to developing action plans to deal with them. We will discuss who determines the action plans and how they will be implemented. (pages 15 - 30 in the workbook).

Since there will be limited time at the workshop, it is imperative that you take some time to read through this workbook and complete the requested tasks before attending. It is your input and that of other stakeholders that will determine where Plaster Rock goes and how it will prosper into the future.

We sincerely thank you for participating in this workshop, and look forward to working with you on the vital issue of direction for Plaster Rock's future.

Remain open, flexible, curious.
- Life's Little Instruction Book

BACKGROUND

The PLANT project so far

In the spring of 2008, Mount Allison University's Rural and Small Town Programme received funding through the Fundy Model Forest to carry out a community capacity building project in forestry dependent communities in New Brunswick. Due to the decline in the forestry industry, such communities need to look at ways to build new capacities in order to continue to be sustainable in the future. There is much discussion about "building capacity" in project and program activities, but there is very little understanding of what is meant by the term "capacity," especially in a rural context. In addition, there is often very little focus on making direct and explicit connections between:

- activities which can or do build capacity;
- which "capacities" are being built;
- communities, organizations, and/or individuals; and
- what can be done with an improved or larger or new "capacity."

This project, dubbed the PLANT (Planning, Learning, Adapting, Now and Tomorrow) project, identified the specific connections between these and created a menu of choices allows communities and organizations to more readily identify what capacities can and should be built, how to build them, and what can be done with the newly built capacity.

The PLANT project began in Plaster Rock during summer 2008. A group of community members who later became the project steering committee met to learn what community capacity is and completed a community capacity questionnaire. Respondents to the community capacity questionnaire believed that:

- Issues like community leadership, working together for the betterment of the community, involving multi-generational and multi-genders in community affairs, showing respect, celebrating successes, and participation in community decision-making are important in Plaster Rock.
- Encouraging a transition of power to a younger generation is a concern.
- Investment in the community, in terms of volunteers, donations for projects, support for local projects, and having a well-maintained infrastructure is a source of pride.
- Having positive things for young people to do in the community is a concern.
- Young people are not encouraged to remain in the community or return to the community after graduation, and alternatives to university programs are by and large not addressed.
- Things like a micro-lending program, business or entrepreneurial training, and networking/mentoring opportunities are minimal.
- The Village's economic development efforts work well with both town and country businesses, and farms etc. are recognized as part of the business community.

Participants were asked to wave their magic wand and make three wishes for Plaster Rock's future. The steering committee then took the compiled results and identified three areas they wished to focus on: Business Development; Community Marketing; and Riverfront Development. Action plans were developed for each of these three and projects have begun based on the action plans. This SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was ranked as a priority for the village as an important step to moving the village forward and addressing other issues and projects.

Plaster Rock's economy has historically been focused mainly on agriculture and forestry. Today, the village is home to shops and services, many outdoor adventures operators, the world famous World Pond Hockey Championship and other events. There is a very strong volunteer base, but like many other communities people who volunteer for one or two projects volunteer for all projects. A number of major projects have been accomplished because of the involvement of volunteers, including the new Tobique Plex. The village is also home to a number of planning and advisory committees and services clubs serving all ages. The timing is right to focus on new opportunities for Plaster Rock through development of a vision and strategic action plan.

Village of Plaster Rock: Community Profile

POPULATION STATISTICS

Village of Plaster Rock Population in 2006	1150
Village of Plaster Rock Population in 2001	1219
Labour Force	905
Employed	445
Average Total Income of Persons Reporting Income (2005)	\$22,108

AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic (2005)	Plaster Rock			New Brunswick		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total - All persons	1150	545	605	729,995	355,500	374,500
Age 0-4	45	30	20	34,435	17,555	16,875
Age 5-14	155	85	65	83,815	43,100	59,530
Age 15-19	75	40	35	47,700	24,465	23,235
Age 20-24	40	15	30	44,625	22,310	22,320
Age 25-44	255	120	130	196,950	95,735	101,200
Age 45-54	180	85	95	120,075	58,745	61,290
Age 55-64	145	70	75	94,765	47,090	47,680
Age 65-74	105	50	60	56,850	27,190	29,660
Age 75-84	100	35	65	36,685	15,045	21,635
Age 85 and over	50	15	35	14,105	4,255	9,850
Median age of the population	45.6	43.7	47.4	41.5	40.7	42.3
% of the population ages 15 and over	82.6	78.7	86.8	83.8	82.9	84.6

INCOME STATISTICS

Characteristics (2005)	Plaster Rock	New Brunswick
Persons 15 years of age and over with income	880	573,785
Average total income of persons 15 years of age and over (\$)	\$22,108	\$41,412
Composition of total income (100%)	100.0	100.0
Earnings - % of income	62.1	71.1
Government transfers - % of income	23.6	16.5
Other money - % of income	14.2	12.4

Trends

Trends influence the general direction in which something tends to move. Listed below are several of the many trends which affect Plaster Rock and many other small towns economically, socially, and politically.

Globalization

As borders open and communication improves, more competition is created in the marketplace. This in turn creates more competitive pricing from other parts of our region and the world.

Education

There is an increasing emphasis on quality skills in the workplace. Trade and technical skill jobs are remaining unfilled because many of those who had those skills are retiring. More businesses are requiring their employees to become more efficient and multi-tasked, with the movement away from the previously required “brawn” to “brain.” More small and home-based businesses are starting up, and there is more challenge for small businesses to grow.

At the same time, there are more incentives for businesses to hire new employees and split work weeks or provide shorter work weeks, therefore providing employment for more people but employment which may be part-time and paying less salary/benefits. Businesses are also being encouraged to offer new services like daycare for their employees.

Technology

Technology is being implemented faster and faster in both urban and rural areas. High-speed internet is available in most rural areas, allowing businesses to operate anywhere. Improvement in communication access through the internet, telephone, satellite, fibre optics, etc. allows businesses to operate without the previously required physical presence close to their customers. Customer Contact Centres have provided employment to many rural areas.

Aging Population

Our aging population provides both challenges and opportunities. As the population ages, a shortage of people in the workplace occurs and health needs increase. However, this segment of the population also offers a supply of well-skilled part-time employees and opportunities in the service and recreation industries.

Are there other trends affecting Plaster Rock? Describe them.

Issues

Plaster Rock and its surrounding area is rich in natural beauty and cultural history. While traditionally relying on the forestry and agricultural sectors, the area has also attracted some service, retail and tourism employment.

Location

Plaster Rock is geographically perceived to be remote. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. Situated away from main routes makes it difficult to attract consumers. Having unique cultural and natural assets is an opportunity that could be capitalized upon.

Tourism

Positive strides have been made in the area with such events as the World Pond Hockey Championship and the various fairs and events which take place throughout the year. The natural beauty of the area, opportunities for outdoor activities, and businesses such as Outfitters have also enhanced the village and helped to market it past its own borders.

Initiatives like creating a package about the community and area, building on successes of festivals and events, and working on ways to make the river more accessible have the potential to increase visitor traffic while encouraging people to spend some time exploring what else the village has to offer. Along with more tourism potential comes the need for more services in the form of shops with unique local products, motels, inns, bed and breakfast inns, campgrounds, tour packages, and quality restaurants. Many of those ventures could be located in the central area and create employment.

Clustering (creating connections between tourism operators and service providers, ex. linking accommodations with nearby arts and crafts, local history, music, events and activities, and hiking trails) of tourism experiences around the Tobique, with its scenic beauty, could be realized. Scenic drive loops could be developed to lure travellers off the Trans-Canada highway to visit the local area.

Perception

Plaster Rock justifiably prides itself on its quality of life and small town atmosphere. Working together as a cohesive unit can only enhance that image and help to dispel negative perceptions. Consistent efforts in unique events and products (outdoor activities, “green” initiatives, etc.) will work to make the village a welcoming and inviting place to be.

Marketing/Branding

Plaster Rock’s unique position as a world class outdoor event centre, combined with the many skills, talents, and resources of its citizens make it a mecca for environmental and recreational events. Along with events come the niche markets which service them and make Plaster Rock

different from surrounding larger centres, as well as carve out a special place for Plaster Rock's entrepreneurs.

Business Retention and Expansion

Business retention and expansion involves existing businesses. It is all economic development efforts designed to keep existing businesses in the community and encourage them to grow. Two other major economic development strategies that are related to BR&E include business attraction (bringing new businesses to the community) and business incubation (helping new businesses start). Business retention and expansion efforts are designed to help local firms become more productive and thus more competitive.

BR&E efforts should depend on the types of businesses in the area and the competitive pressures they are facing; local factors, including labour, services, and infrastructure; and staff and volunteer time available. How do you determine these things? By visiting local businesses to get their input. In this way, businesses realize that the community appreciates their contribution to the area; you can help existing businesses solve local problems; local businesses are assisted in using programs aimed at helping them become more competitive; and community capacity to sustain growth and development is built. Local area businesses are the backbone of the area and employ local people. If they feel valued and appreciated, they will be more likely to remain in the area and more likely to grow and expand, which in turn may bring in new businesses or encourage local entrepreneurs to start new businesses.

What other issues should be discussed? Why?

Every place - community, city, region, province, or nation - should ask itself why anyone wants to live, relocate, visit, invest, or start or expand a business there. What does this place have that people need or should want? From a global perspective, what competitive advantages does this place offer that others do not?

VISION

What is a community vision? A community vision statement describes the community at some point in the future.

A vision statement should:

- state what the community will be like five or ten years from now
- embody the hopes and dreams of the community
- emphasize the strength and diversity of the community
- emphasize what sets it apart from other communities
- be specific and concrete
- challenge what exists
- be short and to the point
- encourage direct actions
- convey forward direction and values
- be developed by leaders and supported by the community
- be comprehensive and detailed
- be positive and inspiring

For example...

...will be a community that is growing, attracting new businesses and people and more jobs through industry, manufacturing and economic growth.

...is a community that promotes the uniqueness of the landscape and local culture through increased interest in and funding for tourism.

...will be an economically vibrant, environmentally responsible, aesthetically pleasing, caring, friendly and gracious community.

Perhaps even more important than how the vision statement is created is how it's used during the rest of community betterment projects. Is the vision of the ideal, preferred future the reference point for setting goals and taking action? Will this proposed goal (strategy, action) get us closer to our vision?

What is your hope for Plaster Rock in the next 10 years?

If you don't know which way you are going, any road will take you there. - Lewis Carroll

A community vision is a description of the community as you'd like it to be at a point in the future (in this case, 10 years).

What words or phrases come to mind that you would like to see as part of a vision statement for Plaster Rock?

Vision without action is merely a dream.
Action without vision merely passes the time.
Vision with action can change the world.

- Joel Barker

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is an assessment of the area's internal strengths and weaknesses in relation to external opportunities and threats as shown in the worksheet example.

A **strength** is a community resource (ex. natural resources; proximity to US markets).

A **weakness** is a community shortcoming (ex. there is little readily available business infrastructure).

An **opportunity** is an external chance to enhance the area (ex. tourism growth; value-added industries).

A **threat** is an external force that may cause problems (ex. exodus of skilled labour; current economy).

TASKS:

From your knowledge of Plaster Rock, make a list of issues you believe are an internal strength or weakness or an opportunity or threat from outside the region. Write these issues on the SWOT WORKSHEET. The SWOT WORKSHEET is laid out so that the positive aspects of the community appear on the left side of the page and the challenges appear on the right side. Issues may appear in more than one block on the SWOT WORKSHEET depending on how you view the issue. It's okay to put an issue in more than one place!

An example of a SWOT WORKSHEET is on the next page. The level of detail will likely correspond to the depth of previous knowledge. Additional research on new or important topics can be done along the way.

Strengths? What are our strengths?

What is it about your community that is special and unique? Communities should not blindly imitate the success of others. Some have trouble even thinking of their strengths. Think of what resources, expertise, organizations, and amenities are in the community. Sometimes it takes a stranger to point out the treasures the community

EXAMPLE: SWOT WORKSHEET

STRENGTHS (Internal) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lakes/river/wilderness• trucking industry• proximity to US markets• friendly atmosphere• land availability• volunteers• railway system	WEAKNESSES (Internal) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• downsizing in health care• retail sector• lack of professional services• larger urban shopping centres close by• losing youth• lack of amenities for low income households• geography - perceived remoteness
OPPORTUNITIES (External) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industrial Park• WPHC & Fiddlers on the Tobique• value-added manufacturing• mining potential• tourism growth• technology	THREATS (External) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• exodus of skilled labour• state of economy• community readiness

SWOT WORKSHEET

Strengths and Weaknesses are **Internal** (within your area) while Opportunities and Threats are **External** (affect your area from outside).

STRENGTHS (Internal)	WEAKNESSES (Internal)
OPPORTUNITIES (External)	THREATS (External)

IDENTIFYING AND RANKING STRATEGIC ISSUES (PRIORITIES)

What do we mean by a “strategic issue?” A strategic issue:

- has a major impact on the community
- is directly related to the future of the community
- needs to be addressed sooner rather than later
- needs specific actions/tasks to be identified and completed

The key questions are:

What are we going to do?

What issues should be addressed first?

Many communities will already have many initiatives or projects that various groups want to do. The aim will be to bring them together and collectively decide which ones are the most important and how they can fit together into one coherent plan. The following tasks suggest a way to move from the SWOT analysis to issues.

TASKS:

1. Consider what questions are raised by the SWOT analysis...

- What can we do about these items?
- What are the consequences if something is not done about an item?
- What are the opportunities?
- What are the dilemmas?
- What are the conflicts?

2. Identify strategic issues...

Try placing the words HOW CAN WE...in front of an item to help link items and form the issues. For example, if the river and the wilderness have been identified as a strength on the SWOT WORKSHEET, they may be combined with the tourism opportunity to create the following strategic issue: *How can we determine the tourism potential of the river and wilderness?*

3. Record strategic issues...

Follow this format for the other items on your SWOT WORKSHEET and record the strategic issues on paper.

TASKS:

4. Organize strategic issues...

Once your group has come up with a list of strategic issues, ask the following questions:

- Is there a way to combine or eliminate issues?
- Should any issues be divided into two or more issues?
- What issues are missing from the list?

After all the strategic issues have been organized, record them on the STRATEGIC ISSUES WORKSHEET.

5. Rank strategic issues...

The next task is to rank each issue listed on the STRATEGIC ISSUES WORKSHEET. Once all of the issues on the flip charts have been placed together, each group will be given a chance to rank them.

6. Summarize strategic issues...

Once ranked, strategic issues will be placed in order of priority (high, medium, low) on the STRATEGIC ISSUES SUMMARY.

EXAMPLE: STRATEGIC ISSUES WORKSHEET

#	STRATEGIC ISSUE
1	How can we develop ecotourism vacations that take advantage of our lakes and waterways?
2	How can we prepare for the eventual closing of our regional hospital?
3	How can we address the high percentage of our population that is elderly?
4	How do we make use of our remote lakes?
5	How do we improve the amenities in our community?
6	How do we address the acid rain affecting our lakes?

STRATEGIC ISSUES WORKSHEET

Place your strategic issues below. Try to organize them according to what you feel the priorities to be.

#	STRATEGIC ISSUE

STRATEGIC ISSUES SUMMARY

Record below the strategic issues under the appropriate headings - HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW priority. To help know where your issues fit, ask:

1. How much will addressing this issue contribute to the community vision?
2. How easily can the community influence this issue?

Low priority issues are those which are hard to do and contribute little to vision and high priority issues are those which contribute greatly to community vision and are easy to do.

HIGH PRIORITY

MEDIUM PRIORITY

LOW PRIORITY

DEVELOPING ACTION PLANS

Action plans are developed to address high priority issues. They contain enough detail so that they can be delegated to a community group who will take responsibility for implementation.

Whether the community is starting out with a fresh slate or has an array of initiatives already under development, this is where it all comes together. A detailed action plan should be completed for each high priority issue.

TASKS:

1. Prepare an action plan for each strategic issue.
2. Check against the community vision.

Prepare an Action Plan for Each Strategic Issue

If a great deal of conceptual development is needed, it may be decided that a workshop will be held to develop action plans over a longer period. Or, perhaps each initiative will be delegated to a community group for further development.

1. Review the high priority issues listed on the STRATEGIC ISSUES SUMMARY.
2. For each high priority issue, ask the following questions and record the responses on the ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET:
 - What initiatives (projects, programs, enterprises or tasks) address each high priority issue?
 - What priority does each initiative have? (High, medium, low)
 - Who will do each initiative?
 - What resources are required to complete the initiative?
 - When will each initiative be completed?
 - How will the initiative sustain the community?
3. Clearly describe the initiative on the ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET. Whoever takes responsibility for implementing a particular initiative will be responsible for the details. For instance, a consultant's feasibility study may be the detailed action plan for a big project. Modest initiatives will just get done by a ready and willing community group with the right skills and resources.

Check Against the Community Vision

How will each of the initiatives sustain the community? Check the action plans addressing each strategic issue against the vision. If the vision is grounded in the principles of sustainable community development and the business community's sustainable goals, then the action plans should also be sustainable. Perhaps the best criteria for testing an initiative is: "Is it the best for the children?"

Focus on making things better, not bigger.
- Life's Little Instruction Book

EXAMPLE: ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Use the sample chart below to plan your actions to address a strategic issue on the list.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: How can we develop ecotourism vacations that take advantage of our lakes and waterways?

Task	Priority	Who is responsible?	Resources required?	Check against vision	Completion date
List lakes and waterways in area	Medium	Tourism Work Team	Minimal \$ required, may need some experienced researchers/marketers	Eco-tourism adheres to all of the principles of sustainable community development and fits our Vision and sustainable goals.	2 months - - - then develop specific action to begin.
Find out who ecotourists are and what they do and don't like to do	High				
What kind of amenities do ecotourists want?	High				
Do we have any of these amenities?	High				
How much money does ecotourism generate?	Medium				
Investigate funding to develop marketing for ecotourism vacations.	High				

ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Use the chart below to plan your action to address a strategic issue on the list.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: _____

Task	Priority	Who is responsible?	Resources required?	Check against vision	Completion date

WRITING THE PLAN

The aim of writing the plan is to summarize the previous materials into an Action Plan that can be broadly distributed and discussed with the community and potential investors and funders.

Decide what format is required. Perhaps more than one summary is needed in the form of a poster, brochure, newsletter, press release, display, short report or colourful fold-out version showing vision and initiatives.

Keep it simple. Try to use as many graphics, maps, photographs, tables, and charts as you can. Keep the length of text short and to the point. Include interesting findings from the workshops and research. Format the document so it can be easily updated. Be sure to include a contact person that people can call for more information.

Finish the plan. Then do it. It is tempting to initiate an ambitious project to show you mean business. While this is laudable, beware of distractions. There will be plenty of time for implementation.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

This is where the Action Plan process goes from planning to action. This is not the end. This is the beginning of the bigger challenge: taking action. Planning now takes a back seat to management. The skills and expertise shift from the “thinkers” to the “doers.” Even more organizations and people will get involved. If they were not on board earlier, government staff and political leaders are now serious about their role as coaches and supporters because the business community means business. Lead, follow, or get out of the way.

Implementation is a long-term commitment of many years. The following tasks make up the implementation phase:

- Delegate the initiatives. Has a local organization already been developing this initiative? Which community group is best equipped with the resources and skills? Does this initiative need to be implemented by a partnership of several organizations, and if so, who? What government agencies will be involved (as resource people, as regulators, as funders)?
- Review the structure of the community team(s). As others in the community are encouraged to get involved, the mission needs to be reviewed and changes considered.
- Share the plan. Who should be targeted (municipal council, elected officials from all levels of government, government departments)? How will the strategic plan be promoted throughout the community (presentations, posters, brochures, newsletter, press release, display)? How will the strategic plan be communicated through the local and regional media? A management schedule for getting the message out and who will do what; who will be responsible for the budget; and creative ideas for sustaining interest over the long term needs to be decided.
- Coordinate fundraising and find investors. Seek out those who know how to write winning proposals and who understand how the various funding agencies work.
- Seek government support. All the appropriate government agencies should be somehow involved so they are ready to do their part when it comes to taking action. Seek political support. Any initiatives requiring government money should have a champion who knows the right people.

- Sustain volunteers and find more to relieve them. Celebrate the implementation phase and invite the community to come. It is a fact of community life that a few do most of the work. These few must be nurtured. Seek out the new potential leaders. People know each other in many roles and do not always appreciate each other's full potential. Build leadership capacity. This is good training ground for young community leaders.
- Document success. What was the challenge? What was the vision? What actually happened? What were the factors that led to success? How the initiative contributed to sustaining the community? Who should be contacted for further information?

Resist telling people how something should be done.
Instead, tell them what needs to be done. They will
often surprise you with creative solutions.

STEPPING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

Manage the implementation process through an organized system of monitoring, project reporting, and plan updates. The business community has a plan of action, but will it make a difference? Step back regularly to check on progress. Each initiative requires one or two indicators that can be easily measured locally so progress can be tracked. A person or committee should be delegated to monitor, evaluate, and report. This is based on the seventh-generation principle, the ancient aboriginal practice of appointing someone to speak on behalf of the unborn to ensure decision-makers always think of the next seven generations.

Groups responsible for measuring changes over time will want a specific target to aim for. A target is:

S = Specific - straightforward, emphasize what you want to happen

M = Measurable: progress toward the target is marked by indicators

A = Attainable: targets which stretch you but are within your reach

R = Realistic: “do-able”, target fits with the overall vision of organization

T = Time Based: target has a timeframe and can be tracked; there is a deadline

The idea is to transfer the vision into measurable actions complete with indicators and targets.

TASKS:

1. Ensure a monitoring system is in place for each initiative. The real test is to measure progress against the vision and sustainable goals. To do this, carefully choose at least one indicator or monitor. Indicators are community vital signs, measures of how a community is doing whether it's education, quality of life, or water quality. An indicator must be measurable over time.
2. Update the plan. Decide on a time frame to review progress reports and repeat a SWOT analysis to identify new challenges and trends affecting the community. Revise the plan. Include a list of completed initiatives; progress reports on all the initiatives underway; success stories; update on community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; update on global connections and important community issues; and new initiatives proposed.

Following the process outlined in this workshop allows the community to have developed a great deal of collective expertise. Other communities may wish to learn from your example. There may be a market for your expertise.

Hanging on for the Long Haul

This is not a project. It requires long-term commitment. The first couple of years are relatively easy. Volunteers are keen. Funding is found. Organizations are formed. Plans are made. The next years are more difficult. Small projects are undertaken. Volunteer fatigue sets in. New leaders are needed who have hands-on experience implementing and managing community and economic development projects.

APPENDIX B: PRESENTATION: STRATEGIC ISSUES



PLANT(ing)

**Planning, Learning, Adapting:
Now & Tomorrow**

Community Survey

*Enhancing local skills and resources for community
regrowth in forestry-based towns in New Brunswick.*

Background

- ▶ PLANT project began in 2008

- ▶ Four committees formed:
 - Community Development
 - Economic Development
 - Geographic Location
 - Youth

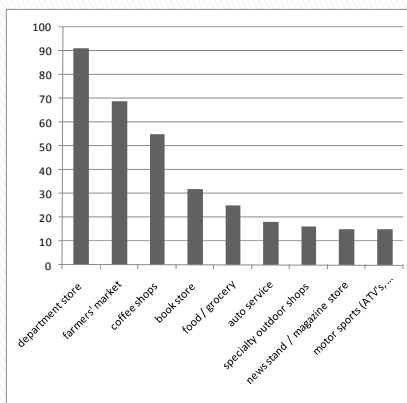
- ▶ Community survey conducted June 2009
 - 119 responses

Agenda

- ▶ Review results from community survey
- ▶ Small group discussion
- ▶ Identify strategic issues
- ▶ Action planning



Retail

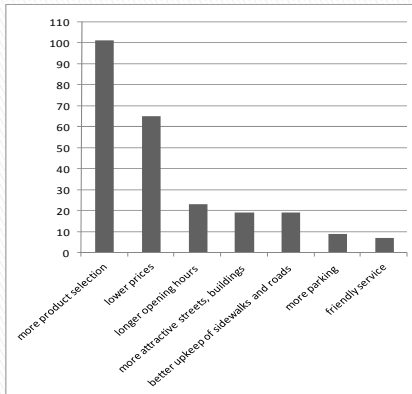


- ❖ Second-hand store
- ❖ Pet store
- ❖ Clothing/footwear
- ❖ Taxi
- ❖ Plumbing/electrical
- ❖ Outdoor supplies

Types of New Businesses

Suggestions for New/Expanded Business

Existing Business

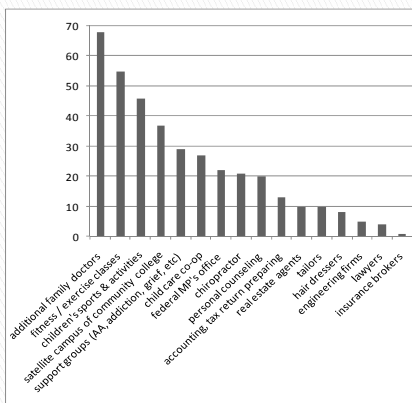


- ❖ Public washrooms
- ❖ Accessible for wheelchairs & walkers
- ❖ Sidewalk markings for safety, i.e. yellow lines
- ❖ Staff training
- ❖ Clean premises
- ❖ Good quality products

Improvements to Existing Businesses

Public Issues

New Services

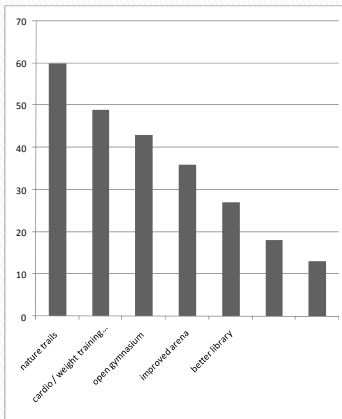


- ❖ After hours clinic
- ❖ Additional healthcare services
- ❖ One stop to pay
- ❖ Wider distribution of locked mailboxes
- ❖ Appropriate and affordable housing
- ❖ Training, i.e. computers

Types of New Services

Other Services

Recreation

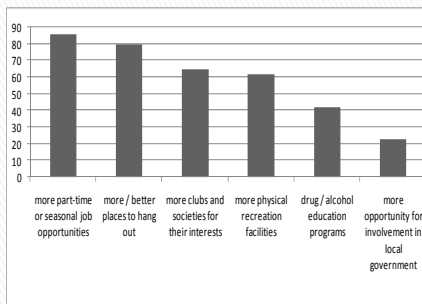


- ❖ Park with space available for live entertainment
- ❖ Community garden
- ❖ Play area for tots
- ❖ Campground

New Recreational Facilities

Other Recreation

Youth

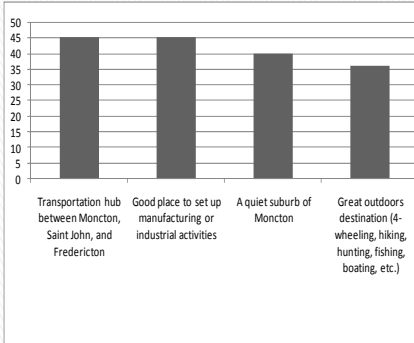


- ❖ Youth centre
- ❖ Safe area for skateboarding and bicycling
- ❖ Projects set up by teens
- ❖ Lifeskills

Youth Projects

Other Involvement

Community Identity

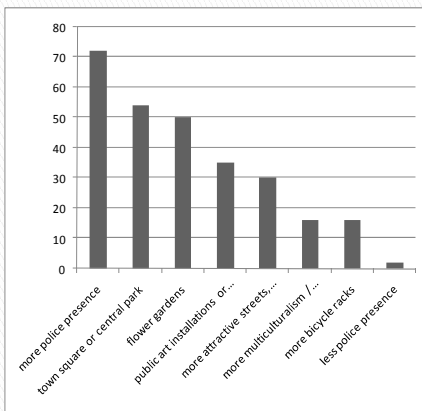


- ❖ Good place to raise a family
- ❖ “Hub” area between Moncton and Sussex
- ❖ The river
- ❖ Needs change of perception and “can do” attitude

Identity

What else can we be/do?

Quality of Life

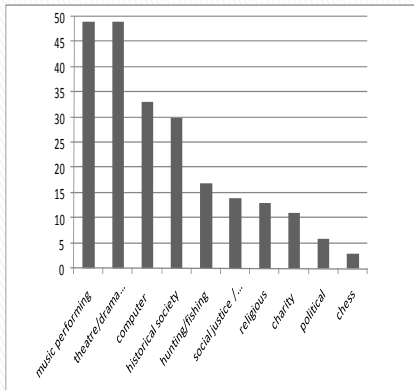


- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Cleanliness
- ▶ Beauty
- ▶ Community pride
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Youth involvement

Spending Time at Home

Most Important Issues

Social Issues

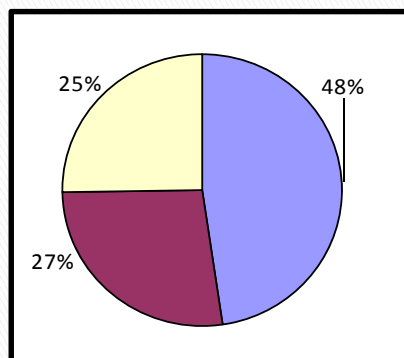


- ▶ More involvement for groups, i.e. Moms, women, parents
- ▶ More outdoor activities, i.e. trails
- ▶ Broader base of activities for youth
- ▶ More cultural activities, i.e. art, theatre, music

Clubs and Societies

Other Options

Transportation



- ▶ Feeling of isolation
- ▶ Loss of independence
- ▶ Doctor's appts.
- ▶ Work
- ▶ College/training
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ Visiting

Public Transportation

Transportation Issues

Strategic Issues

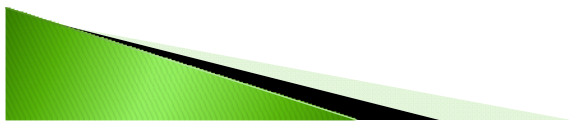
A strategic issue:

- Has a major impact on the community
- Is directly related to the future of the community
- Needs to be addressed sooner rather than later
- Needs specific actions/tasks to be identified and completed



Identifying Strategic Issues

- What do we see as opportunities arising from the community survey?
- What are we going to do? What issues should be addressed first?



Guiding Questions

- ▶ What can we do about this opportunity?
- ▶ What will happen if something is not done?
- ▶ What are the dilemmas?
- ▶ What are the conflicts?

- ▶ How can we...
 - Ex. How can we determine the tourism potential of the river?

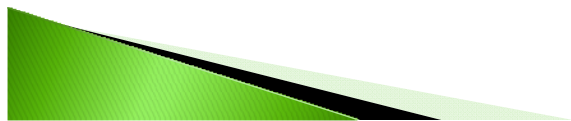


Ranking Strategic Issues

- ▶ Record all strategic issues
 - ▶ Is there a way to combine or eliminate issues?
 - ▶ Should any issues be divided?
 - ▶ What issues are missing from the list?

- ▶ Rank them by number

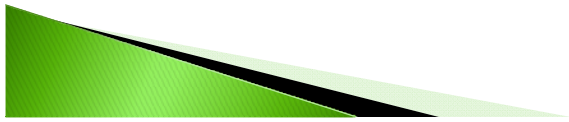
- ▶ Assign priority (high; medium; low)



Action Plans

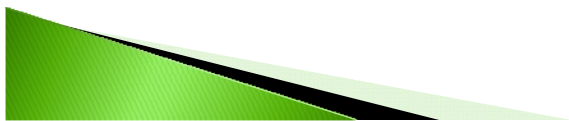
- Developed to address high priority issues
- One action plan for each strategic issue:
 - Who will do it?
 - What resources are required?
 - When will it be completed?
 - How will it affect the community?

Focus on making things better, not bigger.
– Life's Little Instruction Book



Then what?

- Write the Action Plan
- Implement the Plan
 - Delegate the initiatives
 - Encourage others to get involved
 - Share the plan
 - Coordinate fundraising, investment etc.
 - Seek government support
 - Sustain volunteers and find more
 - Document success



And finally...

- ▶ Step back to check on progress
- ▶ Monitor, evaluate and report over time; set targets
- ▶ Regularly update

- ▶ **A target is:**
 - ▶ **S** = Specific: straightforward; emphasize what you want to happen
 - ▶ **M** = Measurable: progress toward the target is marked by indicators
 - ▶ **A** = Attainable: targets which stretch you but are within your reach
 - ▶ **R** = Realistic: “do-able;” target fits with the overall vision
 - ▶ **T** = Time based: target has a timeframe and can be tracked

