

A COMMUNITY VISION

For the County of Brant

May 2013



THE COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

In 2011, the Council of the County of Brant approved the undertaking of a Community Visioning exercise. The Community Visioning exercise was visualized as a method to help understand the community's long-term needs and desires.

In late 2012, Council completed a number of events and activities that were designed to solicit the community's input into the Community Vision. These activities included public outreach sessions, a moderated group discussion forum, and a community survey.

The input obtained from the community has been used to craft a vision statement that is reflective of the goals and objectives of the citizens of this amazing and vibrant community. Further, the information provided by citizens through the visioning process has allowed for the development of a number of Key Performance Areas; these key performance areas will become the foundation for future strategic initiatives that will help to lead the community towards a future that is reflective of the aspirations of residents of the County of Brant.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The County of Brant... embracing its traditions to achieve a responsible, prosperous and resilient community of communities.

UNDERSTANDING THE VISION

The Community Vision statement is a reflection of four broad themes that emerged from the dialogue during the visioning process.

... embrace its traditions...

One of the common themes that emerged from the visioning process was the vital importance of the County's agricultural, social, architectural, and natural heritage. The community's past has shaped both the natural and social landscape, and preserving this unique heritage is of paramount importance to the community. Thus, by "embracing" these traditions, the community can...

... achieve...

The dialogue of the visioning process noted that the natural, social, and economic assets of the County of Brant create a profound opportunity for "achievement" towards a....

... responsible and prosperous...

Growth planning, governance structure, neighbouring relationships, economic development, and natural stewardship must be undertaken in a "responsible" manner, with a view to the long term sustainability of both the community and its broader surroundings; by proceeding responsibly, we will build resilience and prosperity for the residents of this...

... community of communities.

The County of Brant was formed when separate communities amalgamated to form a single municipal entity. However, the visioning process revealed that the individual identities of these communities remain, and this diversity of identity is what makes the County of Brant both unique and strong. Indeed, it is this diversity that gives the County economic breadth, social depth, and natural beauty, making the County of Brant a unique and opportunistic place to live, work, and play.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

The second outcome that was anticipated from the Community Visioning process was to determine a shortlist of “Key Performance Areas” that would serve to focus future strategic initiatives that the County of Brant will undertake. These “Key Performance Areas” will provide guidance to Council as they consider future strategic plan updates, master planning initiatives, and other community initiatives. While there were many other notions and concepts expressed during the visioning process, these areas have been selected due to the frequency of their occurrence in the visioning dialogue and the likelihood of their achievability given the context of the County’s financial, operational and legislative capacity.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA

ENGAGED MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The need for a more communicative and engaged dialogue between the citizens of the County of Brant and its local government was strongly voiced during the visioning process. This is consistent with the “responsible” part of the vision statement.

Objectives within this Key Performance Area include the following:

- Enhanced communication between the decision making processes of County of Brant Council and the citizens of the County
 - Productive use of information technology to inform and engage citizens, including the County of Brant website and social media
 - Frequent and productive outreach to the community, including meetings and dialogue sessions being held throughout the County of Brant
 - County of Brant policies, processes, documents and mandates expressed in a more consumable and understandable format
 - County of Brant services focused on optimizing financial, environmental, and operational performance
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KEY PERFORMANCE AREA

PRESERVATION OF COMMUNITY HERITAGE

The need to protect the agricultural, natural, social, and architectural heritage of the County of Brant was strongly voiced during the visioning process. This is reflected in the “embrace our traditions” element of the vision statement and has been broadly defined as “Community Heritage”. It is recognized that the reason people desire to live and work in the County of Brant are the tangible aspects of landscape and culture; by preserving these elements of the community, people will continue to want to call the County of Brant their home.

Objectives within this Key Performance Area include the following:

- Preserving, securing, and celebrating sensitive and unique natural landscapes
 - Protecting agricultural lands and celebrating the farming heritage of the County of Brant
 - Enhancing the cultural heritage of the County of Brant by recognizing and protecting built heritage, archaeological resources, and traditional cultural identities
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KEY PERFORMANCE AREA

CREATING OPPORTUNITY

A constant challenge facing the County of Brant is how to create opportunity for individuals, families, and businesses. The notion of “prosperity” contained in the vision statement is applicable to this Key Performance Area. The visioning process identified concerns about the lack of meaningful opportunity for both youth and small business in the County of Brant, and noting County was becoming a “bedroom community” for larger urban areas and lamenting a “commuter culture” that would result in a diminished sense of community and neighbourhood. The visioning process voiced a strong need to create opportunities to build an inclusive community where people can both work and play.

Objectives within this Key Performance Area include the following:

- Develop a leading edge tourism program to enhance local business opportunities
 - Undertake community engagement initiatives to build productive strategic partnerships and relationships that have meaningful results for local business
 - Undertake community development initiatives to foster a healthy, family focused place to live
 - To create employment opportunities through business incentives, employment land development and redevelopment, and local business support
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UTILIZING THE COMMUNITY VISION

The Community Vision is not just a statement; it is a goal for community excellence. The vision statement can serve as the foundation of a broader community strategy aimed at making the County of Brant a truly great place to live, work and play. The Community Vision should become the impetus of a broader Community Strategic Plan, where objectives are set that are consistent with the Key Performance Areas outlined above. These objectives will help the County of Brant take the appropriate and necessary steps to fulfill the Community Vision, and truly make this a “responsible and prosperous community of communities”.
