

PKED Regional Plan Analysis

Includes:

Final Report, Sample of Interview Questions

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PETERBOROUGH & THE KAWARTHAS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC AND COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS



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Regional Analysis of Strategic & Community Action Plans: Project Report

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1. Abstract

Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development's (PKED) mandate is “To facilitate an environment which will contribute to the creation of wealth, the growth of new employment and the development of an improving quality of life for area residents.” To achieve this, PKED has created the *Future Ready Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2024* (Future Ready Strategic Plan) as a strategic plan of collaboration among the County of Peterborough and the eight rural townships within it, two First Nations, the City of Peterborough, and other organizations and stakeholders to promote innovation, sustainability, and partnerships throughout the Peterborough Region. This project aims to assess the alignment of the Peterborough & the Kawarthas Future Ready Strategic Plan and other strategic plans in the County, and to assess the factors that may facilitate or impede strategic planning coordination across jurisdictions.

Following a literature review and a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the investigation found that while there are many differences between the region's strategic planning and on-the-ground implementation, there is opportunity to improve communication and collaboration among the townships and PKED to facilitate better coordination in strategic planning.

2. Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to thank all the members of PKED and the representatives of the townships who volunteered their time and energy to support this research project. Notably, the researchers wish to acknowledge the efforts of the CEO of PKED, Rhonda Keenan, whose coordination was paramount in bringing this project to fruition. Other thanks to Gabi Dragomir,

the Rural Economic Development Officer of PKED, particularly for her kind reassurance during this report's final stages of completion.

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3. Executive Summary

The Future Ready Strategic Plan is composed of four key Objectives: (1) promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, businesses, entrepreneurs, investors, and students; (2) leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and businesses; (3) build a job-ready, highly skilled and innovative workforce for the future; and (4) support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses. Based on these key objectives, internal documents, and interviews with key representatives from the townships and PKED, researchers sought to establish the areas of alignment and nonalignment within strategic plans and their relation to PKED Future Ready. Additionally, the researchers assessed the factors facilitating or impeding coordination.

Research findings suggest that the localized strategic and community action plans are generally consistent with Objectives 1, 3, and 4. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. Localized strategic plans prioritize the needs of their townships and therefore, tend to have localized factors inhibiting coordination such as small industrial parks, lack of funding, employment land servicing, and essential services needed to attract new businesses, investments,

and tourism. Moreover, some of the Economic Development Officers (EDO) representing the rural townships identified additional factors that hinder coordination, such as the high turnover rate of EDO staff, the need for more support from PKED to rural/ local business communities, and the sometimes-prevalent short-term goals by elected officials. One significant inconsistency highlighted in the interview findings was the rural-urban dichotomy (explained further in section 7. 4).

The report concludes with a number of recommendations, including *providing education and training sessions, organizing joint planning initiatives, promoting better communication channels, and undertaking initiatives for community involvement.*

4. Introduction

According to PKED, the City of Peterborough alone is expected to have a 41% increase in population by 2041. As the population grows, so too will the demand for new and improved infrastructure, available spaces, employment, community services, and residential expansion. An increase in demand of this size will profoundly impact the sociocultural, political, environmental, and economic well-being of Peterborough and the Kawarthas and all its members. These forces will challenge the status quo of existing communities. As the PKED region attracts new opportunities, it must welcome new attitudes, opinions, and outlooks. For this transition to be relatively smooth, the PKED region has created the Future Ready Strategic Plan as a blueprint for an inclusive and sustainable future.

PKED's modus operandi to achieve economic development is based on its partnerships with the City and County of Peterborough, seven townships, one municipality, and two First Nations communities. A key working assumption of PKED is that successful strategic planning

requires broad and consistent strategic plans across the various ‘planning units’. This project aims to ascertain the alignment of the Peterborough & the Kawarthas Future Ready Strategic Plan with other strategic plans in Peterborough County and to assess the factors facilitating or impeding strategic planning coordination across jurisdictions.

Briefly, our research questions asked: What is the degree of alignment of PKED Future Ready Strategic Plan with other strategic plans in Peterborough County, and what factors facilitate and inhibit greater coordination among planning units?

The first component of the research involved a review of the multiple existing township economic development plans to identify areas of alignment and non-alignment. The results of this exercise are presented in a matrix form and cover objectives and action items (see Appendix B for township-specific consistency matrix). The second component involved a series of semi-structured interviews of relevant stakeholders from different PKED planning units. Interviews provided insight into the experience of coordinated strategic planning across the PKED region with emphasis on reasons for the misalignment of plans and factors promoting and inhibiting better coordination in strategic planning.

5. Methodology

The research was conducted in two parts. First, the researchers carried out a literature review to understand the strategic planning processes. Secondly, researchers performed a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the strategic planning process within townships. These included six interviews with representatives from townships and one municipality in the Peterborough County, and with three members of PKED.

While this process generated helpful insight and information, there were also limitations of the approach that should be noted:

1. **Self-Assessment Bias:** Interviews required participants to assess their work and their colleagues' work; therefore, it is relevant to acknowledge that the findings may reflect a certain self-assessment bias.
2. **Availability:** Researchers met with seven key representatives of the eight townships, and three members from PKED. Each interviewee represented key perspectives specific to their jurisdiction. However, results are partial given the exclusion of representatives from the City of Peterborough, the County of Peterborough, and two First Nations communities.
3. **Knowledge Gaps:** Some representatives interviewed were relatively new to their positions and to the process of strategic planning and accordingly, unable to comment on past experience of coordinated strategic planning with PKED.
4. **Positionality:** A number of interviewees were former PKED employees, which may have led to biases in responses.

6. Literature Review

Strategic Planning is recognized as an essential tool for promoting economic development which can help townships identify their strengths and weaknesses, set goals and priorities, and allocate resources effectively. In turn, this can create favorable business environments, attract new businesses/industries, and stimulate economic growth.

The first section of the literature review gives a brief overview of the importance (*section 6.1*), process (*section 6.2*), different approaches (*section 6.3*), and challenges in strategic

planning (*section 6.4*). Next, the literature review explores issues concerning the effectiveness of implementing strategic planning across geographical locations, as well as the possible challenges (*section 6.5*). The literature review was conducted to understand the strategic planning processes and implementation.

6.1 The Importance of Strategic Planning

Research has shown that organizations who engage in strategic planning outperform those that do not¹. Reasons for strategic planning successes include:

- 1. Direction and clarity for achieving long-term goals:** Strategic plans must identify visions, goals, and targets to provide a clear definition for all participants in the organization to work towards achieving. This clarity ensures that everyone is working towards a similar objective, to improve coordination while eliminating any confusion.
- 2. Guides decision-making:** Strategic planning helps organizations make informed decisions based on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Assessing the organization's trade-offs will assist in resource allocation decision-making and ensure that decisions are aligned with the organization's vision and goals.
- 3. Improves Performance and adaptation to change:** From identifying potential threats and opportunities, organizations can address potential problems before they arise by regularly monitoring the external environment and assessing internal strengths and weaknesses. This is fundamental to economic development because it helps keep organizations knowledgeable of emerging competitive markets and capitalize on emerging trends.

¹ Bryson, 2018

4. **Increases Accountability:** Strategic planning aids in the establishment of goals and targets of the organization and thereby enhances accountability for the achievement of results.
5. **Enhances communication:** A strategic plan provides an outline for reacting to novel possibilities and changing conditions. In the face of uncertainty, this makes the organization more adaptive. This was exemplified by PKED in the alterations they made during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategic planning plays a crucial role in economic development, as it helps policy makers and business leaders establish policies and programs that promote sustainable economic growth, job creation, and improve the standard of living for its citizens.

6.2 The Process of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning may involve several steps, including defining an overall vision designed to help organizations develop effective strategies to achieve their goals. While the specific steps may vary depending on the organization and the contexts, the following are common steps in the process of strategic planning²:

1. **Define the organization's mission, vision, and values:** This step involves developing a clear and concise statement of the organization's purpose and core values. This specific and brief statement is the foundation for the strategic planning process and will guide future decision-making.
2. **Conduct a situation analysis:** This step involves assessing the internal and external environment of the organization, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

² Kaplan et al., 2004

threats (SWOT analysis). A SWOT analysis can identify the key factors that may influence the development of the strategy.

3. **Develop strategic goals and objectives:** Based on the SWOT analysis, the organization can develop strategic goals and objectives aligned with its mission, vision, and values. These goals and objectives should facilitate the development of indicators which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).
4. **Develop and evaluate strategies:** Strategies should be evaluated based on feasibility, effectiveness, and potential risks and benefits.
5. **Develop an implementation plan:** After the strategies are developed, the plan should outline the actions, resources, and timelines needed to achieve the defined goals. This plan must be realistic and consider the organization's resources and constraints.
6. **Monitor and evaluate progress:** This assists organizations in identifying the areas that may require improvements to ensure the plan's implementation is on track to achieve its goals and objectives.

Research has emphasized the importance of involving the community and key stakeholders to ensure buy-in and ownership of the plan.

6.3 Different Approaches to Strategic Planning

Several strategic planning approaches include a classical/traditional approach, an incremental approach, a resource-based approach, a scenario-planning approach, and an emergent approach (Table 2). Researchers have found that each approach has advantages and

disadvantages and that organizations must choose which approach is most appropriate to satisfy their objectives and goals³.

Table 2.0: Approaches to Strategic Planning.

Approaches to Strategic Planning	Description of Approach
Classical/ Traditional Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involves a formal, structured process that emphasizes rational and comprehensive analysis of the internal and external environment of the organization. - Involves the development of a long-term plan. - Can be time-consuming and resource-intensive and <i>may not</i> be flexible enough to adapt to rapidly changing market conditions⁴.
Incremental Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involves making small changes over time, based on feedback and learning, rather than developing a new plan all at once. - Often used by organizations that are already successful and want to maintain their competitive advantage.
Resource-Based Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focuses on identifying and leveraging unique resources and capabilities to gain a competitive advantage. - Based on the idea that available resources and capabilities are the most valuable assets and should be the focus of strategic planning. - Effective in situations where there is a clear

³ Ansoff, 1987

⁴ Ansoff, 1987

	competitive advantage but <i>may not</i> be successful in highly competitive or rapidly changing markets.
Scenario-Planning Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involves developing multiple scenarios that best describe different possible futures, and then developing a strategy that can withstand all scenarios⁵. - Useful in situations with a high degree of uncertainty about the future. - Can be complex and time-consuming.
Emergent Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Based on the idea that strategies should be in response to changes in the external environment, rather than being developed in advance and then implemented. - Involves continuous adaptation to changing circumstances. The emergent approach emphasizes experimentation, innovations, and learning. - Ongoing monitoring of the external environment and adjusting the strategy in response to changes.

6.4 Challenges in Strategic Planning

Despite its benefits, strategic planning can be challenging for organizations. Some common challenges include difficulty obtaining accurate information, resistance to change, lack of commitment from key stakeholders, and difficulties in implementation. These challenges may

⁵ Schoemaker, 1995

be addressed by including key stakeholders, using a collaborative approach, and focusing on implementation and follow-up⁶.

6.5 Effectiveness in Strategic Planning among/across Jurisdictions

The effectiveness of strategic planning can vary depending on the specific context and goals of the organization, as well as the level of coordination and collaboration among different jurisdictions. Several studies have explored the factors that can contribute to the success of strategic planning initiatives across jurisdictions, such as through collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication⁷.

One factor is the level of collaboration among different jurisdictions. Studies have shown that planning initiatives are more effective when there is a high level of collaboration and coordination; this can be achieved by establishing formal or informal networks among jurisdictions and developing shared goals and objectives⁸. Collaboration is effective because it often involves different inputs from many perspectives, knowledge, and experiences that can all come together to enrich the strategic planning process. Moreover, these diverse perspectives can help identify potential risks and challenges in the effectiveness of strategic planning. This may also lead to a feeling of involvement and commitment to the resulting plan.

Another factor that can contribute to the success of strategic planning across jurisdictions is the involvement of stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders in the strategic planning process can help build support for the initiative and ensure that the goals and objectives are aligned with the

⁶ Bryson, 2018

⁷ Teng & Lee, 2018

⁸ Bryson, 2018

needs and priorities of the community. Engagement may be achieved through focus groups, surveys, and other stakeholder engagement forms.

Additionally, effective communication is critical to the success of strategic planning across jurisdictions. Communication helps build trust among townships and ensures that everyone is working effectively and towards similar goals while at the same time keeping key stakeholders informed about the progress of the initiative. Effective communication may be possible through regular meetings, progress reports, and other forms of information sharing.

Nevertheless, it is relevant to address the challenges in implementing strategic planning among/ across jurisdictions⁹:

1. **Uncertainty and complexity:** The environment in which organizations operate is often complex and uncertain, making it difficult to predict the future with certainty. This can make it challenging to develop effective strategies that will enable the organization to adapt to changing circumstances.
2. **Lack of commitment and participation:** Strategic planning requires the commitment and involvement of key stakeholders. If stakeholders are not fully engaged in the process, the resulting strategies may not be practical or fully implemented.
3. **Limited resources:** Strategic planning requires time, money, and other resources. Suppose an organization has challenges securing these resources, particularly if competing priorities or limited funding are available. In that case, it may be challenging to devote sufficient attention and resources to the strategic planning process.

⁹ Cullingworth & Nadin, 2006

4. **Resistance to change:** Strategic planning often involves changes to the organization’s structure, processes, and culture. If stakeholders resist change, it may be challenging to implement the resulting strategies effectively.
5. **Political considerations:** Preferences of elected officials or the interests of specific constituencies may not always align with the organization’s defined goals.
6. **Lack of data and analysis:** Developing effective strategies requires accurate and timely data and analysis, and it may be challenging to develop effective strategies.
7. **Overemphasis on short-term results:** Strategic planning is often focused on achieving long-term goals and objectives; however, organizations may face pressure to prioritize short-term results, which can lead to strategies not aligned with the organization’s long-term vision and goals.

7. Matrices of Township Strategic Plans

7.1 Asphodel- Norwood 2022-24 Strategic Plan

Asphodel- Norwood			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	1. Strength: <i>healthcare, community programming, recreation/ parks/ trails</i> : community events, enhancement of public parks, construct an outdoor skating arena, and inclusion of accessible options in all green spaces 2. Sustainability: <i>responsible growth</i> : mixed housing developments, adopt Official Plan and update Zoning By-Law 3. Prosperity: <i>business attraction</i> : servicing of commercial		1. Strength: <i>wastemanagement, emergency management</i> 3. Prosperity: <i>broadband</i> : not sure what this means?? 4. Engage: <i>volunteerism and community engagement</i>
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	3. Prosperity: <i>agriculture</i> : support of agricultural community through increased prosperity, support agricultural initiatives and businesses		
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	1. Strenth: <i>healthcare, community programming</i> , actively participate in physician recruitment, expanding youth/ senior initiatives 2. Sustainability: <i>accountable governance</i> : staff development and cross training		
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	1. Strength: <i>community programming</i> 2. Sustainability: <i>responsible growth, proactive financial management</i> 3. Prosperity: <i>business attraction</i> : ensure no municipal roadblocks for retail expansion	4. Engage: <i>emphasis of volunteerism and citizen engagement</i>	2. Sustainability: <i>accountable governance</i> : digital services and software solutions
NOTE: this SP has four strategic directions: 1. Strength <i>- healthcare, community programming, recreation/ parks/ trails, waste management, emergency management/ response</i> 2. Sustainability <i>- responsible growth, proactive financial management, accountable governance</i> 3. Prosperity <i>- broadband, business attraction, agriculture</i> 4. Engage <i>- volunteerism, citizen engagement</i>			

Asphodel- Norwood’s 2022-2024 Strategic Plan seems generally consistent with PKED’s Future Ready. However, there was one inconsistency in relation to Objective 4. This township has strategically emphasized *volunteerism and citizen engagement* as a means to deliver township services, events, and programs. While this might be emphasized due to a lack of labor supply, it seems that a tendency towards relying on unpaid labor is in direct opposition to Objective 4. And though volunteerism can help support the growth of small businesses, relying on volunteerism in a growing economy cannot be sustainable. Men are more likely than women to participate in recreational and work-related activities, and adults, in general, are more likely to volunteer than teenagers¹⁰. Therefore, volunteerism will prove to be gendered and age specific, removing those historically underrepresented from waged employment.

7.2 Cavan Monaghan’s Official Plan

Cavan Monaghan			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	1. Community: residential growth targets, housing targets (ensuring enough land is available for residential development), infrastructure: ensuring development in the urban area and building 'upwards'... and create an integrated transportation system 4. Economic Development: improve and enhance the quality of tourist facilities	3. Culture: ensuring the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage resources, promoting public awareness of civic pride??	4. Economic Development: emphasis on water and sewage??
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	5. Sustainability	**2. Natural Heritage: protecting land- limiting growth in the Countryside Areas to preserve agricultural economy agriculture, and natural heritage	1. Community: residential growth targets: directing increased residential population into urban areas ie Millbrook
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	1. Community: employment targets: employment rate (1 job for every 3 people), creating new employment opportunities 4. Economic Development: establishing employment areas that provide a range of job opportunities		
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	4. Economic Development: encouraging the development of home-based businesses, and improve and enhance the variety of tourism related businesses 5. Sustainability: financial well-being and management of the municipality		
NOTE: this is in reference to its Official Plan and its strategic directions: 1. Community 2. Natural Heritage and Resource Management 3. Culture 4. Economic Development 5. Sustainability 6. Special Study Area NO. 1??			

¹⁰ Romero

One aspect of Cavan Monaghan’s Official Plan that was unclear was its emphasis on conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage in the township and promoting public awareness of civic pride. Conserving cultural heritage suggests to the researchers that this could be a step backwards in attracting economic investments, thereby impeding the actualization of Objective 1, such that it maintains an ‘outdated’ perspective. While seemingly this township values its history, the applied language could be interpreted as an inconsistency to Objective 1. Additionally, this township’s Official Plan was approved by the County of Peterborough in 2013 and is said to “serve as the basis for managing change in the Township to the year 2031” (p.1), therefore, it should be expected that more inconsistencies will arise with the changing economic forces caused by COVID-19.

7.3 Douro- Dummer’s Strategic Plan (located in the Peterborough County Official Plan)

Douro- Dummer			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawartha as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	11.2.1: Development adjacent to Scenic River Road Trail 11.2.2: Commercial development 11.2.6: development of a golf course? (tourism)	11.2.2: specific space dedicated for commercial development: 4,500 square metres, and 1,500 square metres for single uses 11.2.1: "right of way for access over the trail 11.2.13: max "number of single dwelling units in a single building shall be three"	- Rural site specific policies: 11.2.4, 11.2.5, 11.2.11, 11.2.12, 11.2.13, 11.2.15, 11.2.16 - what is the innovation cluster project?
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	11.2.3: Lot 15, Concession 6= 4 hectares permitted uses include sale of farm produce, baked goods, ETC.		11.2.3: owner must first enter a Site Plan agreement with the Township
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	11.2.4: Rural site specific policy- rural land may be used for school or related activities 11.2.8 & 11.2.9: Employment site specific policy	11.2.4: specific land that will not allow for "development" 11.2.8 & 11.2.9: limited to manufacturing operation restricted to wood production, and limited to dry industrial and commercial uses unless full municipal servicing	
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses		11.2.8 & 11.2.9: limited to manufacturing operation restricted to wood production, and limited to dry industrial and commercial uses unless full municipal servicing	
NOTE: This plan only included action items from 11.2.1 through to 11.2. 16			

After examining Douro-Dummer’s Strategic Plan (located in the Peterborough County Official Plan), it seems that this township is generally inconsistent with Objectives 1, 3, and 4. This township’s action items prioritizes the maintenance of rural living and land allocated for agricultural type businesses. This may be interpreted as inhibiting economic development and attracting tourism, businesses, and entrepreneurs, while at the same time, may also be interpreted as a means of attracting a different type of business: farming. After speaking with this township’s representative and a member of PKED, the researchers have a more profound understanding in valuing agriculture as a business type in itself.

7.4 Havelock- Belmont- Methuen Community Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan Report

Havelock- Belmont Methuen			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawartha as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "A number of financial incentive programs are designed to assist in brownfield remediation or redevelopment" - "The promotion of residential rehabilitation, intensification and conversion of existing space for residential use." - "Increase tourism through the promotion of employment" - "encourage expansion and new development by both the private and public sectors to improve the Municipality's property and business tax base" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is anticipated that there will be no major changes to land uses over the lifetime of the Official Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "guidelines pay particular attention to maintaining the traditional architectural character of the existing built resources in more urban areas (Havelock) while making use of modern technique and materials"
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leakage of money spent in other communities 	
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	-N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -one weakness outlined in the SWOT analysis is the lack of job opportunities in the township (strategic plan report) 	
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial incentive programs provide a variety of tools for local businesses to improve their viability and success - "where financially feasible, continue to develop and improve municipal services, public utilities, and community facilities and services" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participate in and/or encourage projects, programs, and volunteer efforts which improve the Municipality's built environment and expand the economic base 	
<p>NOTE: The points addressed in this matrix are found in the township's Community Improvement Plan (from pg. 19 to pg. 24).</p>			

There is a clear preference in the Community Improvement Plans for development in infrastructural designs in Havelock-Belmont Methuen (HBM), specifically, the designs for city aesthetics to target tourist interests. This township provides many financial incentive programs to local businesses to improve their viability and chances of success. These specified designs are an

attempt to attract tourism. Additionally, there are plans to promote brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, which in turn has the potential to attract investors to HBM as a destination of choice.

The document the researchers are assessing is specific to the Village of Havelock, and thus, there could be potential inconsistencies that are prevalent in the other villages. For example, one weakness outlined in the SWOT analysis (located in the Strategic Plan Report 2018) is the lack of job opportunities in the township, and one threat addressed in this analysis is the “leakage of money spent in other communities.” This implies the prioritization of one community over the others in the township.

7.5 North Kawartha 2019- 2022 Strategic Plan and Economic Development Plan

North Kawartha			
Objectives	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	1. Development: residential development/ intensification, employment lands, mixed used zoning, revitalization plan 2. Infrastructure: Communal servicing, VIA Rail, Internet & cell service, transit 4. Tourism: township branding,	- development of internet and cell service is personal to this township. Perhaps it is unfair of PKED/the ptbo region to wish for development when "internet and service is sketchy." - lakefront pushback (seasonal residents)	1. Development: innovation in housing 2. Infrastructure: VIA Rail (HFR)? 4. Tourism: visitor accomodation tax
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	*reconciling champion investments* 2. Infrastructure: ORV access on county roads 3. Labor: Rural and northern immigration pilot	- does not seem that the township has clearly identified their champion investments behind hoping for VIA,	1. Infrastructure: ORV access on county roads
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	1. Development: employment lands, attracting remote workers 3. Labor: partnership with Fleming College/ Trent University, home based businesses		
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneursh, while also supporting existing businesses	1. Development: mixed used zoning 3. Labor: supporting entrepreneursh 4. Tourism: short-term rentals	- lacking the infrastructure and money -investments in municipal infrastructure	4. Tourism: seasonal event? "plan infrastrucutre development with <i>demographic needs</i> "
NOTE: this economic development plan consists of 5 categories: 1. development 2. Infrastructure 3. Labor 4. Tourism 5. Economic Diversification			

North Kawartha’s Strategic Plan is very well done and cohesive, while also quite intentional in being consistent with PKED’s Future Ready and its objectives. For example,

consistent with Objective 3, North Kawartha has an established relationship with Trent University and Fleming College and already has a lake association working with Trent University on fighting invasive aquatic species. Fleming College's skilled trades program has upper year students looking to complete apprenticeship in the skilled trades (p. 14 of North Kawartha's Economic Development Plan). However, the inconsistencies in this plan relate more to external factors such as a lack of infrastructure and the lack of financial resources to make such infrastructural developments feasible. Moreover, there seems to be a 'push and pull' between addressing the needs of the township's permanent residents and its seasonal residents.

7.6 Otonabee South Monaghan 2017 Official Plan

Otonabee- South Monaghan			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	<p>2.2.2: Population Projection</p> <p>2.2.4: Recreational development- to provide important recreational facilities</p> <p>2.3.2: (e) culture, recreation and community needs - provide safe, affordable and adequate living standards</p> <p>2.3.2 (f) tourism- promote culinary tourism and local food</p>	<p>2.21: Continuing Importance of Agriculture- encouraging the growth of a strong agricultural community</p>	
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	<p>2.2.1: Continuing Importance of Agriculture- capitalizing on local food market, and expanding intensive livestock farms and the preservation of prime agricultural lands</p>	<p>2.2.3: influence of the city of PTBO- proximity to the City may <i>continue</i> to result in pressure for residential development</p>	
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future			
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	<p>2.2.6: Aggregate Resources- increasing demand gravel resources in the municipality</p> <p>2.3.2: (d) Economic development- that promotes retention, expansion and diversification. - employment lands as a focus</p>		
<p>NOTE: These points are taken from Section 2 of the Official Plan: "Basis and Objectives of Plan" 2.2.1 to 2.3.3</p> <p>These sections include Official Plan Review and Approval, Background Factors, and Township Vision Statement and Objectives for Land Use.</p>			

Otonabee- South Monaghan is broadly consistent with PKED Future Ready, the points used for the township's matrix (found in section 2 of the Official Plan) are generally broad and

idealistic, this makes its implementation difficult and less likely to be achievable. The Official Plan does not include any objectives that relate to Objective 3 in PKED Future Ready. To the researchers, this suggests that the priority targets more or less relate to current needs of its community as opposed to creating a job-ready, highly skilled and innovative workforce, This may be a result of lacking necessary infrastructure.

An interesting point raised in the Official Plan is the influence of the City of Peterborough and the township's proximity to it, which adds to the pressures of attracting tourism and residential settlement. Yet, this proximity may concurrently be a geographical advantage for the township as city residents may be in search for housing or leisure activities just outside of the city. The township must plan accordingly to meet such demands. The policies and schedule contained in this Official Plan cover a twenty-year planning period up to the year 2023, and therefore, the plans are likely to be revised soon.

7.7 Selwyn 2018- 2022 Economic Development Strategy

Selwyn			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	1. Development & Trades: township has a secondary plan for 370 acres in Lakefield to support urban serviced residential and limited commercial development 3. Retail: promote the area to independent retailers, franchises and entrepreneurs	- "limited commercial development" - what is selwyn's brand for tourism? - work with organizations to make selwyn a bike friendly community	- development of day trip and weekend itineraries
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business	3. Retail: promote farm gate sales opportunities and assist with promoting the Farmers' Markets in Lakefield and Bridgenorth		-exploring a partnership opportunity for a small-scale rural transportation pilot
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	4. Senior Services: services directed at retirement living and seniors, in-home care, transportation, home maintenance - participation in job fairs	- perhaps the specific desire to attract senior services??	
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	1. Development & Trades: promote quality of life to professionals looking to semi retire or relocate - finalize the Lakefield parking review to accommodate retail growth 3. Retail: promoting shop locally, residents want to if they have the options		
NOTE: this economic development plan consists of 5 categories: 1. development and trades 2. professional services 3. retail 4. senior services 5. tourism			

The township of Selwyn has an effective Economic Development Strategy that outlines specific action plans to achieve greater tourism rates, while also maintaining a productive relationship with the business community and other key stakeholders. This in itself is consistent with PKED Future Ready and the three objectives taken into account.

Nevertheless, some inconsistencies that arise are identifiable in the township's need for senior services- while perhaps necessary for its population demographic, this does not reflect Objective 3. Instead, this only addresses the building of a job-ready workforce-and not a workforce that is innovative.

7.8 Trent Lakes Strategic Priorities (2019-2021) and Community Improvement Plan (2017)

Trent Lakes			
OBJECTIVES	CONSISTENCES	INCONSISTENCES	UNCLEAR
#1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a destination of choice for visitors, business, entrepreneurs, investors and students	1. "work with Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) and other stakeholders to implement a telecommunications action plan to expand availability and quality of broadband & cellular coverage" 4. "Develop an economic development and tourism strategy" 7. "Implement recommendations for Buckhorn Streetscape/ Green-space enhancements- walkways, parking, landscaping"		1. broadband?? 9. "Review waste management plan & implement program enhancements to increase ratepayer satisfaction & reduce landfill waste"
#2: Leverage the Region's mix of rural and urban assets and business			8. "Develop a parks & recreation master plan to align facilities & services with changing demographics"
#3: Build a job-ready, highly-skilled and innovative workforce of the future	2. "Strengthen public engagement opportunities & improve communications" 3. "Work with age-friendly peterborough, community care & other stakeholders to support increasing need for senior services"	6. "Develop and implement a volunteer engagement policy that supports volunteer activities & meets labour law requirements" (UNCLEAR?)	3. emphasis on senior services?
#4: Support all phases of entrepreneurship, while also supporting existing businesses	2. "Strengthen public engagement opportunities & improve communications" 5. "Develop a plan to address the opportunities & challenges of short-term rentals"	6. "Develop and implement a volunteer engagement policy that supports volunteer activities & meets labour law requirements" (UNCLEAR?)	
NOTE: Consists of 4 strategic priority themes 1. Healthy, active living 2. Resilient & sustainable economy 3. responsible, accountable, government 4. environmentally, sustainable policies & practices (culminating of 10 actions?)			

Similar to Asphodel-Norwood, Trent Lakes emphasizes the need for volunteer engagement. While this may be due to low amounts of labor-supply, the need for volunteerism speaks to a degree of instability in the economic condition of the area. Moreover, it relies on the free time of its residents and assumes that residents are seeking civic engagement- this is

generally inconsistent with Objective 3. Trent Lakes' effort towards attracting year-round tourism could reflect the great need for volunteerism. Trent Lakes is working to make the location a more desirable destination of choice by leveraging the natural beauty and resources of the area; this consistency is reflected in the *Buckhorn Streetscape and Greenspace Master Plan*.

8. Interview Findings

As discussed, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten key informants: seven representatives from the eight rural townships, and three senior PKED employees. This section contains the findings from these discussions. The format is as follows: Section 8.1 addresses reasons for alignment and non-alignment of strategic planning and is organized around Objectives 1, 3 and 4 in PKED Future Ready Plan. Section 8.2 and 8.3 address factors facilitating and inhibiting greater coordination in strategic planning, respectively. Section 8.4 addresses an important axis of differentiation based on the urban/rural divide.

8.1 Reasons for Alignment and non-Alignment of Strategic Plans

Objective 1: Promote Peterborough & the Kawarthas as a Destination of Choice of Visitors, Business, Entrepreneurs, Investors and Students

The Peterborough and the Kawarthas region is comprised of several townships, each with its own unique characteristics and challenges. One of the townships in the region is focused on expanding their tourism sector and attracting more people to settle in the area. They have implemented short term rental bylaws, rebranded the image of the township, and are actively competing with other townships in proximity to attract tourists, especially those interested in cottages. Furthermore, they are aiming to bring in more permanent residents to live in the

township year-round. These endeavors are consistent with the goal of promoting the region as ‘a destination of choice’, as they are actively working to make the area more attractive to tourists and potential inhabitants.

Another township in the area has a relatively small industrial park, thereby inhibiting its capacity to attract bigger businesses or become a major destination of choice. However, smaller businesses that do not require a lot of serviced land (land with amenities such as functioning sewage systems, access to running water etc.) have largely been the key to success for the township. While this township may not strictly align with the objective of achieving an influx of business investment, it is concerned with maintaining an enabling environment conducive to the success of local business.

Yet another township in the region is located strategically adjacent to two major highways, making it an ideal destination for vacationing. Moreover, a popular cycling route runs through this township which features beautiful natural scenery, including the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Ganaraska forest. It is a prime spot for business investment and development as it is situated on a key transportation route. Furthermore, given the location, the accessibility to Toronto makes it a lucrative option for students and entrepreneurs looking for opportunities outside the bustle of the city. Therefore, this township is in a position to actualize Objective 1: *‘promoting the region as a destination of choice’*. Based on the interview with the representative from this township, it was found that there is an active effort to bring this to fruition as soon as possible.

Lastly, another township in the region is focused on attracting more tourism year-round. While this may seem like a relatively narrow focus, it emphasizes the value of identifying and utilizing the distinctive characteristics of each township in the area. This township is working to

make the region a more desirable destination by leveraging the natural beauty and resources of the area which is reflected in its strategic plan.

In essence, the townships in the Peterborough and the Kawarthas region each have their own unique assets and challenges. Nevertheless, by capitalizing on and recognizing their strengths, they can cumulatively contribute to the broader target of promoting the region as a destination of choice for visitors, businesspeople, entrepreneurs, investors, and students.

Objective 3: Build a Job-Ready, Highly Skilled and Innovative Workforce of the Future

The townships throughout the Peterborough region have unique and localized economic development strategies that are both consistent and inconsistent with the overarching goal of building a job-ready, highly skilled, and innovative workforce of the future in Peterborough and the Kawarthas.

In one township, the focus is primarily on attracting more tourism and drawing people to the area. To achieve this, the municipality has expanded the provision of short-term rental accommodation. It has also been rebranded to attract investment and tourism dollars, and greater efforts are being made to attract permanent residents. The interviewee expressed that the township is “*definitely trying to build a destination of choice...*” going on to say, “*We're trying to carve out a competitive position for us within the county and within our neighboring municipalities to kind of attract those folks that are coming for tourism related reasons, especially the ones that are cottages. We're trying to compete for more investment dollars for our township.*” While this is consistent with Objective 1, it may also negatively impact the collective ethos as proposed by PKED.

Another township's economy is driven by three key industries: construction, retail, and seasonal cottage-associated businesses. Efforts are being made to formalize outreach to seasonal residents and to encourage professionals to retire early from their city and relocate to this area. This means that the strategic plan of this township is consistent with Objective 1. However, given the focus on remote jobs for the services needed in the township means that the township is not looking to immediately build a highly skilled and innovative, locally-based workforce at the time of the research and therefore, is not fully consistent with Objective 3.

In another township, there is a focus on jobs for the local community and attracting investors by providing skilled labor. The previous council was particularly invested in this goal, recognizing the importance of having skilled workers to attract investment. Trent University's and Fleming Colleges' sustainable agricultural programs, combined with the Kawartha Trade Center, are well-positioned to provide a skilled labor force for the region's needs. This is reflected in the township's strategic plan while also being consistent with Action 3.1 in PKED Future Ready.

Further, another township focuses on talent management, retention, and succession as key priorities to ensure the workforce is prepared for an aging population. The focus is on succession planning to ensure that a high percentage of the workforce that is retiring is adequately replaced. This may be consistent with building a job-ready workforce, but it does not necessarily align with building a highly skilled workforce as outlined in the township's matrix.

While some townships are more aligned with the Objective 3 of building a job-ready, highly skilled, and innovative workforce, others prioritize other aspects of economic development.

Objective 4: Support All Phases of Entrepreneurship, While Also Supporting Existing Businesses

Supporting entrepreneurship and existing businesses in each township is a fundamental aspect in the growth of economic development, and therefore, most of the townships are generally consistent with Objective 4.

The townships examined were in relation to their entrepreneurship initiatives. As new businesses emerge in these townships, they are notified to register so that they may benefit from the ‘Small Business Advisory Services’. This allows local businesses to have support from PKED as they start, grow, and sustain themselves.

In one rural township, there is a disproportionately high number of entrepreneurs, which is actually considered to be positive by the EDO. This township has many owner-operator contractors and home-based businesses, and they are seeking to change their comprehensive zoning bylaws to make it more feasible for people to conduct their business there. One interviewee indicated that “...by overhauling our zoning bylaws, we want to increase the number of home-based businesses that you can have, and allow you to do things by what's called as of right, which means you don't have to get planning permission to use specific things. So that's one of the ways we're looking to change our bylaws and make it easier for people to do business here.” Increasing home-based businesses is consistent with Objective 4 and enables the security of different and evolving business styles.

In another township, there are a lot of small businesses, particularly in the downtown area, that have an established economic support system. At the same time, there are also many agricultural businesses that can be understood as entrepreneurial in their own right, yet which do not have a clearly defined economic support system compared to the downtown areas. In terms of consistency or inconsistency with Objective 4, some of the townships have specific

instruments that support entrepreneurship, while others do not have as clear of a focus on entrepreneurship, particularly in regard to agriculture.

Overall, these townships have varying degrees of support for entrepreneurship, with some specifically targeting initiatives to support small businesses and entrepreneurs, while others may have a more general focus on supporting existing businesses.

8.2 Factors Facilitating Coordination:

PKED plays a crucial role in stimulating growth and economic development in the region. One way that PKED does this is by organizing EDO meetings, where representatives (EDOs from different townships) congregate to share information and ideas. These meetings provide an opportunity for EDOs to learn about ongoing activities in the townships, including government funding opportunities that can help smaller (or less informed) townships.

The EDO meetings also offer information-sharing opportunities and the chance to ‘duplicate’ successful programs and projects from other townships. This not only saves time, money, and other resources but also promotes a spirit of collaboration and partnership among the townships. In addition, the meetings help build relationships among the townships, which is facilitated by PKED, providing a forum for networking. One township vocalized its positive relationship with PKED saying, *“I think we have a pretty good relationship with PKED. And they do organize regular meetings and check-ins so yeah, like I actually think we have a pretty good working relationship and a good framework [to] make those connections.”* This quote is reflective of the value of the information sharing opportunities.

Another way PKED promotes coordination is through the use of software within the county by sending emails to all townships regarding relevant information for business investment

opportunities. This enhances consistency and streamlines online processes while providing each township access to information at the same time, thus, saving time and money for all stakeholders. PKED also encourages programs and projects that work in parallel with other townships, creating synergies and cost savings. For example, they are currently working with Selwyn and other townships to potentially get electric vehicle charging stations installed.

Another benefit of the EDO meetings is economies of scale. The townships can work together to qualify for government funding opportunities that they might not have qualified for otherwise. The meetings also provide an opportunity to work together on issues and projects that may be less common. This allows EDOs to learn about what other townships are doing, both from a planning and developmental standpoint.

The round table meetings with councilors provide an opportunity to engage the community, and the fact that everyone in the county is getting the exact same presentation is beneficial for all townships. PKED recognizes that economic development is not just about individual townships, but about the whole region. They have an email list through which EDOs receive notifications about sites selected or businesses looking for certain services or infrastructure. This allows for greater awareness of events and activities in the region. One interviewee did express that some of these emails are felt as ‘random’, and suggested that PKED could organize meetings around the subject matter so all of the townships have equal opportunities to access the information.

Upon conducting the interviews, it was found that at the EDO meetings, most EDOs are largely supportive of each other’s townships and work. This spirit of collaboration and partnership is evident in that all stakeholders generally hold the view that working in collaboration alongside other townships and with PKED is mutually beneficial for all parties

involved. The meeting agendas usually cover opportunities in towns, the challenges faced by each township, and funding opportunities that may arise.

PKED actively strives to provide high-quality services with respect to content-sharing and opportunities through meetings and presentations to the councils. However, there is no established mechanism in place for all of those things to come together. This will be addressed in the recommendation section. This is an area where PKED could improve, by creating a centralized platform where all information can be easily accessed and shared by the townships.

The EDO meetings and the work of PKED play a significant role in advancing economic development in the region. The collaborative ethos and partnership among the townships are vital in achieving success.

8. 3 Factors Inhibiting Coordination

The Peterborough region experiences some challenges in coordination among planning units in economic development. One challenge is the high- turnover rate among EDOs. This high-turnover rate was noted by the researchers when meeting multiple township representatives who explained they had previously worked for PKED and/or previously worked as an EDO in another township within the region. One township indicated this concern saying, *“it's hard to keep staff in a position when people are very fluid in this kind of economy.”* This quote speaks to the tendency of strong employees to transition to new organizations, leaving the region in a constant state of change. Another township indicated that the high turn-over rate may be a result of burnout.

One significant challenge in economic development, and thus related to the fulfillment of attaining the goals and visions outlined in strategic planning, is the lack of essential services in

some townships. These services are critical to urban development, and without them, businesses and residents may be hesitant to invest in the area. Infrastructure is also a significant challenge for many townships in the region. One interviewee spoke to the structure issues inhibiting the actualization of their strategic plan, saying *“Our biggest challenges are residential vacancy rate. So, what I mean by that is, essentially, we have a 0% vacancy rate for apartments or housing up here. There's nothing that's available on the rental market, and the cost of housing still, is through the roof. So it's hard to attract people to come here. Our biggest issue is attracting the labor force.”*

There is a clear desire to develop and attract investments and tourism yet being inhibited to do so because of the lack of infrastructural development in the township. The lack of public infrastructure, such as transportation and water supply, is also a challenge. One interviewee spoke to this, saying *“We don't have municipal water and sewer. We don't have an Enbridge line, we don't have enough cell service, [or] internet service, we don't have public transit. Our healthcare up here ... we have one doctor for 770 square kilometers. And we're lucky to have one doctor, yeah, we don't have a nurse practitioner up here anymore.”*

Some townships also indicated that they feel they are not receiving enough support for the business community. With limited resources and manpower, it can be challenging for townships to implement strategic plans effectively. While PKED has been present and active in the process of strategic planning for multiple townships, three of the seven interviewees expressed a desire for PKED to expand its role and provide training and knowledge to local businesses. The County, as the planning authority for most things, has a significant role to play in helping to address these challenges. However, as lower-tier jurisdictions, they are limited due to

the lower-tier/ upper-tier delegations of power and therefore cannot make all the decisions themselves and must work collaboratively with the county.

In addition, two of the interviewees from townships explained that council members may have short-term thinking and thus, may be hesitant to commit to long-term plans or projects. This shortsightedness of some elected officials may hinder the formulation of long-term goals. The aforementioned apprehension of elected officials is aggravated during the election period as they may avoid making necessary but unpopular decisions.

Additionally, some townships without EDOs have expressed the need for PKED to clarify their roles and expectations for economic development in the area. This lack of clarity can lead to confusion and a lack of progress in the region. One township representative expressed the desire to have greater support from PKED because they do not possess the staff capacity to complement the fulfillment of economic development strategies. The same township also expressed that there needs to be a conversation about business support and what the roles and expectations are for PKED and clarify what the roles and expectations are for the township.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for greater collaboration. The PKED meetings provide an opportunity for sharing of information and collaboration, enabling townships to find synergies and cost savings. However, there is a need for even better communication and substantive dialogue among all parties involved to ensure that ideas along with progress are shared.

8.4 Factors Inhibiting Coordination II: The Rural-Urban Dichotomy

The urban-rural dichotomy refers to the fundamental differences between urban and rural areas. Urban areas are defined as densely populated areas, while rural areas are sparsely

populated. The differences between these two types of areas are vast, ranging from the types of services that are available to the types of businesses that thrive in each area. Objective 2 in the Future Ready 2020-2024 is to *Leverage the Region's Mix of Rural and Urban Assets and Business*. Interviewees spoke to a “push and pull” relationship between the rural and urban spaces. Some of the township representatives also felt that PKED can tend to have an urban focus, more than a rural focus. Consequently, given the preference afforded to the city, this militates against coordinated strategic planning.

One of the biggest differentiators between urban and rural areas is how services are delivered. Urban areas tend to have more centralized services, such as public transportation, municipal water and sewer services, and gas lines. Rural areas, on the other hand, lack these services, making development a challenge. Healthcare, for example, may require traveling long distances, and multiple townships have one doctor in their area. These basic services will likely impede investments and prevent attracting permanent residency.

For many of the rural areas, agriculture and farming are the main drivers of the economy. While some urban residents may not conceptualize agriculture and farming as a business, they are just as complex and sophisticated as any other business. Farmers often invest significant sums of money into their farms and must be knowledgeable in computerized systems, logistics, and marketing.

Developers often see farmland as an opportunity to create residential spaces, which can create conflicts between economic development and the preservation of farmland. Investors prefer serviced land, which is almost always located in the city. This leads to a situation where rural areas are losing farmland to residential development, while the city benefits from serviced land for new businesses. To prevent this from happening, policies are in place in the form of

permits. These policies require developers to justify why they are taking land out of agricultural use and converting it to employment use. Additionally, some farmers may sell their land to developers who want to build new homes, while others may hold onto their land and continue farming.

However, there can be pushback from rural community members to bring in large industrial businesses. This may be rooted in differences in rural versus urban values. Rural residents often value their way of life and do not want to see their communities change. From an economic standpoint, businesses want to grow and attract more customers. Additionally, rural communities may not want to grow in the same way as urban areas. As per information provided by one representative, when asked about challenges to coordinated strategic planning it was mentioned that some residents value the small-town atmosphere and may not want to see their communities change. This can create a challenge for economic development, as there may not be a demand for new businesses or services.

The urban-rural dichotomy is a complex issue that affects both urban and rural areas. The differences in services, economy, and culture make it difficult for economic development in rural areas. While policies are in place to protect farmland, there is still a need for more innovative solutions to help rural areas thrive. Ultimately, finding a balance between preserving rural culture and supporting economic development will be essential for the future of rural areas.

9. Recommendations

Recommendations for Enhancing Collaboration and Strategic Planning in Rural Areas

Strategic planning and collaboration among various stakeholders are crucial for promoting economic growth and sustainable development in rural areas. Many rural townships

have the opportunity to work together with external partners, such as PKED, to address various challenges within their rural positionality. This section discusses several recommendations suggested by township representatives for enhancing collaboration and strategic planning in rural areas, including education and training sessions, joint planning initiatives, better communication channels, and incentives for community involvement.

Education and Training Sessions

To promote collaboration and effective strategic planning, education and training sessions are essential for members of the council in rural areas. Some council members may lack sufficient knowledge and expertise in economic development, business management, and strategic planning, which may hinder their ability to make informed decisions and to work effectively with external partners, especially if they are newly elected. One township representative indicated a need to educate newly elected council members because it may be unrealistic to expect them to enter their position with a full understanding of strategic planning and economic development in their township, which may lead them to turn-over or make an uninformed decision. Therefore, education and training sessions can help to equip council members with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively engage in strategic planning and to participate in collaborative initiatives.

Joint Planning Initiatives

Collaboration among various townships in the County and with external partners can help to facilitate joint planning initiatives that address common interests and shared objectives. Such initiatives can include internet projects, cell projects, and other infrastructure developments that

require coordination and cooperation among different stakeholders. By working together, townships can pool resources, share expertise, and leverage their collective strength to achieve common goals. Multiple interviewees highlighted the collaborative initiatives formed between neighboring townships with similar demographics and spoke to the effectiveness of these collaborative experiences. This can be exemplified by the formulation of the Joint Community and Well-Being Plan among three townships- Asphodel-Norwood, Otonabee-South Monaghan, and Cavan Monaghan. One interviewee stated that, “ *the good thing... is if we do a joint procurement with them, we can bring the overall costs [down] to a point [where] hopefully ... [the] municipality can afford it. We can spread some of those savings to the other municipalities as well... so it is in our best interest to make sure that we deal with each other on a regular basis and see where we can find opportunities to work together. Because this example [of] joint procurements can be great.*”

Better Communication Channels

Effective communication is essential for promoting collaboration and strategic planning in rural areas. However, due to geographical distance and lack of communication infrastructure, many townships struggle to stay connected with each other and with external partners such as PKED. Therefore, better communication channels, such as monthly meetings and in-person meetings, can help to foster more frequent and meaningful interactions among stakeholders. One interviewee mentioned that without the current EDO meetings, they are not sure whether they would have any dialogue with the other townships. A further possibility is to rely more heavily on digital communication platforms such as SLACK to facilitate communication across townships.

Incentives for Community Involvement

Community involvement is imperative for widespread participation in strategic planning and economic development initiatives. Incentives such as prize draws for partaking in surveys, and other community engagement activities can help to promote participation and collaboration among community members. For example, one township created a draw for a \$225 gift card to local service and retail businesses for those who complete the surveys. This incentive has been highly successful within the community, indicated by the high rates of community engagement in the strategic planning process. While the effectiveness of incentives may be contextual and relevant to existing relationships in the township, there is the potential for incentives to promote active participation.

10. Conclusion

The framework of the research conducted for PKED can be encapsulated within two primary questions: (1) What is the degree of alignment of the PKED Future Ready Strategic Plan with other strategic plans in Peterborough County, and (2) what are the factors facilitating and inhibiting greater coordination among planning units? Research centered on the three key themes under the Objectives 1, 3, and 4 from PKED Future Ready Plan. Research findings suggest that the localized strategic and community action plans are generally consistent with the Objectives. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. Localized strategic plans prioritize the needs of their townships and therefore, tend to have localized reasons for inhibiting coordination such as small industrial parks, lack of funding, employment land servicing, and essential services needed to attract new businesses, investments, and tourism. Moreover, some of the Economic Development Officers (EDO) representing the rural townships suggested additional factors

hinder coordination, such as the high turnover rate of EDO staff, the need for more support from PKED to rural/ local business communities, and the sometimes prevalent short-term goals by elected officials. One significant inconsistency highlighted in the interview findings was the rural-urban dichotomy. The report concluded with a number of recommendations, including *providing education and training sessions, organizing joint planning initiatives, promoting better communication channels, and undertaking initiatives for community involvement.*

PKED's role within the county of Peterborough can be understood as the unifying body that brings the townships together while fostering a collaborative ethos with the goal of growth and development of the region. One interviewee highlighted this by saying, *"Each of the patches on a quilt is its own unique patch, and it has its own unique design. But stitched together is the region in its totality. And so, you know, none of us would be good on our own. We'd just be these tiny little patches."* Although certain challenges exist and inhibit their regional branding synergy, upon research findings, it can be concluded that the townships and the County as a whole both benefit and appreciate the work done by PKED.

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12. Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Questions for Townships & City of Ptbo

1. Can you describe your role with strategic planning in the township /City of Ptbo?
2. We are interested in learning more about the process of strategic planning in township x/ City of Ptbo.
Can you provide a brief description of the steps culminating in the final strategic plan?
Probes:
 - a. Can you describe the process of consultation for strategic planning within the township/City of Ptbo?
 - b. What, if any, role is played by organizations representing different interests, for example, the business community, environmental groups, seniors, youth, etc.?
 - c. How are opposing interests reflected in the final strategic plan?
3. What is your relationship with other strategic planning units in townships in the county of Peterborough, City of Peterborough and at the level of the county itself?
Probes:
 - a. Are any joint meetings held or not? Who coordinates this effort? If so, how often do you meet? How often are meetings held with other townships/ City of Ptbo?
 - b. Are meetings in person or online? (If in person) Where are meetings held? Does PKED offer any honorariums for travel costs?
 - ii. Are all planning units present during these meetings?
 - iii. Is there substantive dialogue between townships/ City of Ptbo/ county on economic development strategies?
 - c. Are there any incentives for your township to participate in meetings? i.e. information exchange with other planners, creation of a network, funding opportunities, etc.
4. We have read your strategic plan and noted both areas of difference and similarity with PKED Future Ready ... Are you familiar with the county's plan? We would like to ask you a few questions about areas of similarities and differences.
Can you tell us in what ways your strategic plan is consistent or inconsistent with the following objectives and why?
 - i. Objective 1: Building a destination of choice?
 - ii. Objective 3: Building a skilled labour force?
 - iii. Objective 4: Supporting the growth of small businesses/ entrepreneurship?

5. What are the most important challenges facing strategic planning within your township/ City of Ptbo?
 - a. Do financial resources pose challenges to SP within the township, or not? How about for coordinated SP?

6. If the strategic planning process were to change to promote better coordination within the county, what could be done differently?
 - a. Are there any ways to promote better coordination between PKED and the townships/municipalities or not?

Questions for PKED Staff

1. Can you describe your role in strategic planning with PKED?

2. Action 2.1 states that the PKED's economic development plans are to be aligned with City and county strategic plans and initiatives. In your opinion, to what extent has PKED been able to maintain this alignment?

Probes:

[if the respondents claim a high degree of alignment] What are the main factors that have contributed to this alignment?

[to all respondents] What are the main factors inhibiting greater alignment?

 - a. Are any joint meetings held or not? If so, how often do you meet? Who coordinates this effort? How often are meetings held with other townships/ City of Ptbo?
 - b.
 - i. Is this in person or online? (If in person) Where are meetings held? Does PKED offer any honorariums for travel costs?
 - ii. Are all planning units present during these meetings? How are meeting times determined and who sends the notification?
 - iii. Is there a substantive dialogue between the townships/ City of Ptbo/ county on economic development strategies?
 - c. In your view, are there any incentives for townships to participate in meetings?
 - i.e. information exchange, funding opportunities, etc.

3. Can you describe your relationship with the strategic planning units in the townships and City of Ptbo?

4. We have read the strategic plans for the townships involved in PKED Future Ready..., and noted both areas of differences and similarities among strategic plans.

Can you provide us with potential reasons for disalignment among townships with these PKED objectives and why?

- i. Objective 1: Building a destination of choice?
- ii. Objective 3: Building a skilled labour force?
- iii. Objective 4: Supporting the growth of small businesses/ entrepreneurship?

5. If the strategic planning process was to have been done differently to facilitate better coordination with townships and City of Ptbo, what would you have changed?

