



THE MONIESON CENTRE

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Discovery Workshop Report Kawartha Lakes *February 8, 2010*

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a 3-hour workshop in Lindsay, ON. Twenty-nine community leaders and business people from Kawartha Lakes gave feedback on their community's economic development needs and research questions. This information, along with similar information gathered in 14 other communities in Eastern Ontario, will guide the research pursued over the course of the KIS project.

The workshop was hosted by Andrew Wallen, General Manager, Kawartha Lakes CFDC and Linda Skilton, Principal-Frost Campus, Sir Sandford Fleming College. Dr. Yolande Chan, Director, The Monieson Centre, and Jeff Dixon, Project Coordinator, The Monieson Centre, introduced the KIS project and Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop. The KIS project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit www.easternontarioknowledge.ca.



QUESTION 1

What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Kawartha Lakes a vital community (economic, social, health)?

Top Issues:

1. **Political leadership.** We need local government to promote innovation and growth by leveraging the single-tier, less-bureaucratic political governance structure we have.
2. **Transportation.** There is a need for better public and commercial transportation, and expansion of an accessible transportation infrastructure.
3. **Community collaboration.** There needs to be better cohesion and partnerships between communities to work towards a unified direction. The silos between the different urban and rural communities need to be broken down.
4. **Local health care.** There is a lack of access to local health care services including doctors.
5. **Shortage of technical skills.** There is a skill training gap resulting in a shortage of skilled technical and engineering personnel.
6. **Demographic perception.** There seems to be a disconnect between the perception of our community and the reality of our social and economic demographics.
7. **Aging population.** There is concern about community sustainability as there has been a decline in the youth population.
8. **Removing barriers.** Red tape and extraneous steps need to be removed so focus can be placed on sustainability, and social and economic issues.
9. **Arts and culture.** Increased support is needed in developing arts and culture as well as better leverage of existing talent in the Kawartha Lakes region.
10. **Immigration.** There needs to be better attraction and transitioning for new community members.

QUESTION 2

If you had access to our researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?

1. **Economic development.** What are the economic and demographic opportunities that are realistically available for us to flourish? What are best practices in other communities to facilitate small and medium business enterprises?
2. **Immigration and skills attraction.** How do we attract and retain dynamic people to our community? How can we promote local attributes?
3. **Innovation.** What is the potential for the local development of innovation and product commercialization? What are the factors that are important to attract innovation here?
4. **Transportation.** What transportation models are best suited to the rural circumstances of our community?
5. **Communication.** How do we obtain and provide accurate statistics regarding workforce and other demographic info to the greater community to remove misconceptions?
6. **Skills development.** What are the employment needs for our community over the next 5-10 years? How do we facilitate local training to meet the identified skill needs?
7. **Agricultural change.** What would encourage farmers to embrace change in their production methods and crop selection? How sensitive is the local agricultural industry to changes in global markets?
8. **Removing barriers.** How can we overcome barriers to working together, specifically surrounding complex issues?
9. **Economic sustainability.** How can we analyze existing economic contributors to create a viable economic development strategy?
10. **Political development.** What types of education and skill sets are required by municipal politicians to enable them to provide the leadership required in Kawartha Lakes? Is there a gap between the political will and the resources required to carry forward that will?

QUESTION 3

What local resources (organizations, reports, past work etc.) might contribute to addressing the issues identified above? What in-kind support can you contribute (office space, personnel, etc.) for research?

1. **Economic development.** What are the economic and demographic opportunities that are realistically available for us to flourish? What are best practices in other communities to facilitate small and medium business enterprises?
 - Chamber of Commerce

2. **Immigration and skills attraction.** How do we attract and retain dynamic people to our community? How can we promote local attributes?
 - Peterborough Partnership Council for Immigrant Integration -see *focus groups*
 - Kawartha Lakes Health Care Initiative - Robyn McNabb
 - Innovation Atlas of Canada
 - Job Board on CKL for Professionals/Engineers -see Career Services (www.careerservices.org)
 - Improve CKL website on economic development
 - Ross Memorial Hospital- Chief of Staff Office or Human Resources
 - Trillium school board -Human Resources
 - Stats Canada Report - 15% of people move to an area because of positive contact with local special/cultural events
 - "Who's Your City" SSFC GIS project done for Richard, Florida
 - Provincial "Places to Grow" may have a negative impact on this issue
 - Research the availability of multicultural community support
 - Church groups
 - Support events such as Lindsay Homecoming and Fall Fairs

3. **Innovation.** What is the potential for the local development of innovation and product commercialization? What are the factors that are important to attract innovation here?
 - CAWT/Fleming College can offer: some staff time (administrative, research, clerical, technical, student researchers), office space, and access to broad network of universities, private sector, government partners engaged in collaborative applied research or innovation projects
 - Fenelon Falls Study- see University of Waterloo study in early 1990s- Mike Barkwell
 - Green Hub Community Improvement Plan (Kawartha Lakes, Economic Development Office, Sept 2009)

4. **Transportation.** What transportation models are best suited to the rural circumstances of our community?
 - Community Care Health and Support Services Report on transportation needs in the area
 - 2008 City of Kawartha Lakes Transportation Study
 - 2008 Durham Region Master Transportation Plan
 - Review previous consultant reports over the last ten years- economic, social and environment

5. **Communication.** How do we obtain and provide accurate statistics regarding workforce and other demographic info to the greater community to remove misconceptions?
 - Workforce Development Board (www.solutionsatwork.info)
 - Service Canada Reports
 - 2006 Census stats
 - KL Small Business Enterprise Centre Annual Survey (www.klsbec.ca)

6. **Skills development.** What are the employment needs for our community over the next 5-10 years? How do we facilitate local training to meet the identified skill needs?
 - Workforce Development Board partnership with other stakeholders such as the universities, colleges and employers
 - Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment (previously Eco Canada) studies and surveys
 - Tailor college programs into needs of local employers (i.e. talk to local farm equipment dealers with respect to needs in heavy equipment school)

7. **Agricultural change.** What would encourage farmers to embrace change in their production methods and crop selection? How sensitive is the local agricultural industry to changes in global markets?
 - Fleming College - Environmental scan on sustainable agriculture program
 - European Economic Union agricultural best practices- integration/merging different countries & cultures
 - Kawartha Lakes Agriculture Action Plan
 - CKL and Durham Agricultural Advisory Groups
 - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
 - "Farmers Markets Ontario" Office in Brighton
 - Seminars, trade shows on how new technologies and markets can be adopted locally
 - Provide demographic info on their closest market (Toronto) and research into products consumed by that demographic
 - Provide funding assistance to develop local food processing, value added processing and cold storage Develop value chains

8. **Removing barriers.** How can we overcome barriers to working together, specifically surrounding complex issues?
 - Social Analysis Systems (approaches and tools for managing complexity)
 - Asset mapping process

9. **Economic sustainability.** How can we analyze existing economic contributors to create a viable economic development strategy?
 - Community Futures Community consultation process 2008-09
 - Use PRTD and Agricultural Action Plan Results within CKL
 - 1998 Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategy
 - Ontario Trillium Foundation Annual Regional Reports on Cultural Social Needs
 - Economic Development Mission for Kawartha Lakes in 1997

10. **Political development.** What types of education and skill sets are required by municipal politicians to enable them to provide the leadership required in Kawartha Lakes? Is there a gap between the political will and the resources required to carry forward that will?

- Involve public and staff in planning initiatives
- Provide Council training and information sessions regarding all sectors/departments following elections
- Benchmarking with other municipalities
- Examine orientation processes of local large boards (including Ross Memorial Hospital and Sir Sanford Fleming College)

QUESTION 4

If this project is to be successful, what are the things that you would see in place in the next two years? What must happen in order to ensure that the KIS project makes a positive impact on your community?

Note: the group brainstormed and then categorized into the following buckets:

The following suggestions fit within the scope of the KIS project and may be completed if identified as a priority across Eastern Ontario:

1. Highlight examples of best practices from other communities.
2. Establish a solid framework of recruitment and retention strategies for young professionals.
3. Create networking opportunities for people who work in different domains to share ideas.
4. Identify characteristics of the community that can attract and retain community members.
5. Develop KIS "Best Practices" for the new incoming municipal councils in 2011, with local highlights.
KIS may be able to develop a Knowledge Synthesis on rural governance if resources allow.
6. Share research results performed by KIS with each participant.
7. Engage the community in as many stages of research as possible.
8. Create a framework or process for attracting and retaining business immigrants.
9. Create a knowledge synthesis for understanding our community's strengths and opportunities.
10. Measure intended deliverables and action items.
11. Engage key stakeholders to identify their data and information needs to make informed business decisions.
12. Obtain acknowledgement and credibility from council and local media for KIS project
13. Take the first step towards a successful healthy happy community.
14. Increase new businesses in the area. *KIS can support with research, best practices and related Knowledge Syntheses.*

The following are beyond the scope of the KIS project, but may be completed if the KIS project is expanded through additional funding or if an external partner provides leadership; they may also find helpful strategies and ideas through the KIS project's information resources:

1. Create a forum for continuing consultation to implement recommendations on local economic opportunities.
2. Increase access to education opportunities that are aligned with the local labour demands.

The following are beyond the scope of the KIS project:

1. Start two new manufacturing businesses.
2. Restart Lindsay Homecoming event.
3. Start establishing Kawartha Innovation Centre.
4. Establish Farmers Markets in more communities with many more local farmers selling locally grown food products of many new and interesting types.
5. Use the Green Hub Community Improvement Plan to concentrate attraction, retention and expansion of knowledge based economy in Kawartha Lakes.

Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Kawartha Lakes a vital community (economic, social, health)?

Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 21

Total number of voters (N): 28

Rank	Votes	Issue	Comments
1	17	Political Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of political leadership and vision. Local government needs to promote innovation and growth. Leadership is there, the bureaucracy is not. How do we take advantage of single tier status? (We don't have to go through 2 tier red tape)
2	15	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation-lack of public and commercial Public transportation limits mobility within the city. Living in CKL means you must own a car. Better transportation access, i.e. highway widening, expansion Hwy 35 is a "just in time" manufacturing risk.
3	14	Community Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting communities in CKL to work together in a unified direction/focus Inability to use local knowledge to transfer local knowledge/best practices (lack of local Champions) x sector, x region Urban/rural divided- e.g. Fenelon Falls, Lindsay, agriculture, retail, industry, between political wards
4	12	Local Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary health care Doctors, better available health care services and access
5	11	Shortage of Technical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortage of skilled technical and engineering personnel Skill training gap
5	11	Community Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Disconnect of information between the facts about our social economic demographics and common perception e.g. we have most seniors, high welfare rate
7	9	Aging Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics and aging population Decline in youth population means we need to question our sustainability

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis needs to be placed on attracting young families vs. retirees
8	8	Removing Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing complexity and removing barriers • Sustainability focus/mindset to orient community around the social/economic and environmental issues • Red tape and paper work -reduce to minimum of what is needed
9	7	Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional supports for culture (e.g. special events, arts, theatre) • Need to tap into the talent in KL region
9	7	Immigration	Immigration: how to leverage/welcome/prepare new people to our region?
11	6	Community Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure - more serviced land • Housing
11	6	Community Services Funding	Lack of funding for services - new business, health care, education, etc.
11	6	Economic Targets	Set economic targets and opportunities for immediate implementation
14	5	Central Facilities	Development of central facilities such as hotel/conference centre near the downtown or golf course
14	5	Innovation	Manufacturers think tank / Centre of Innovation
14	5	Employment	Employment
17	4	Work Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusually high percentage of work force with poor work ethic • Not interested in improvement
17	4	Increase Opportunities	Enhance opportunities for retail, commercial, social interests
19	3	Agriculture Profitability	Economic issue with lack of profitability for the agricultural sector - beef specifically
20	1	Engagement of Seasonal Residents	Target involvement of seasonal residents - their time and money

Appendix B – Rough Ideas for Question 2

Question 2: If you had access to our researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?¹

Note: prior to voting, the group brainstormed questions. Below is the result of selecting top questions

Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 5) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 15

Total number of voters (N): 25

Votes	Rank	Issue	Comments
1	18	Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are best practices in other communities that facilitate more expeditious opportunities for small business to come to community of Kawartha Lakes? • What are the economic and demographic opportunities that are realistically available for us to flourish?. • What are the strengths and weakness of the present CKL economic policies for small to medium size businesses? e.g. by laws, policies, adm procedures
2	16	Immigration and Labour Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to we attract, retain dynamic people to our community/rebound to our community? • How can we use /promote the local attributes to attract more residents to the city • How receptive is the CKL and the people of CKL to new business/new people/new ideas/new Canadians? • Where and why do people work within this community? At what level of satisfaction - socially, are people happy here?
3	15	Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the potential for the local development of innovation and product commercialization? • What niche markets are available to manufacturers/designers that currently aren't being filled? • What are the factors/conditions that are important to attract innovation here (people, organizations, start ups)
4	11	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you research the exact need / potential usage of enhanced transportation across CKL?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What transportation systems fit our rural circumstances? • What are transportation models to improve access to schools and work in rural communities?
5	9	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we obtain and provide accurate statistics regarding workforce and other demographic info to the greater community to remove misconceptions? • What are the demographics of CKL and what are their needs/want/concerns?
5	9	Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we translate the reports that focus on skill gaps into training and re-training programs at local college and university programs? • How do we facilitate local training to meet the identified skill needs? • What are the employment needs for our community over the next 5-10 years? Are there other sources to build this capacity?
7	7	Agricultural Change	What would encourage farmers to change, & to produce new food items for the changing markets in S. Ont.? How would local agriculture operations react to changes in global markets? e.g. sensitivity analysis on local producers of world conditions
7	7	Removing Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we overcome barriers to working together (political, community), setting a common vision and seeing some concrete, preliminary outcomes from this process • Including tools and approaches for managing complex, common issues (like poverty) into the distant future?
9	6	Economic Sustainability	What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of our economic contributors (manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, retail and residential) from which a long-term (10 years+) economic development strategy can be created, and followed in an accountable way?
9	6	Political Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the type of education & skill set required by municipal politicians to enable them to provide the type & level of leadership required in CKL? • Is there a gap between the political will of Council and the bureaucracy responsible for carrying forward that will? • Can Council focus on removing roadblocks to private sector initiatives, instead of coming up with their own?
11	5	Technology Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging Technology gaps • What should we be monitoring/doing to stay on the leading edge and connected to new tech developments?
12	4	Health Care	How to meet health care needs of aging demographic are met?
12	4	Tourism	Tourism & Profiling. What exactly do tourism operators (hotel,

			conference centres) really want to come here?
14	1	Climate Change	What will the effect of climate change have on recreation, tourism, agriculture in the City of Kawartha Lakes?

Appendix C – Session Overview

The **purpose** of the workshop was to engage community leaders and academics to collaborate in order to:

- Identify Eastern Ontario knowledge needs and resources
- Prioritize research needs and opportunities
- Share experience and knowledge
- Build lasting relationships and communication channels
- Serve Eastern Ontario

Discovery workshop groups **explore four topics**:

1. Burning issues. What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Kawartha Lakes a vital community (economic, social, health)?
2. Research wish list. If you had access to researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?
3. Local capacity. What are the local resources (organizations, capabilities, past work etc.) that might contribute to addressing the issues identified above?
4. Defining success. If this project is to be successful, what are the things that you would see in place in the next two years? What must happen in order to ensure that the KIS project makes a positive impact on Kawartha Lakes?

Appendix D – Methodology

Information Gathering and Community Consultation process

The community consultation process included an information gathering component composed of a series of interactive workshops using facilitators from the Queen's Executive Decision Centre. The purpose of this component was to get input from a broad cross section of community stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted using a group decision support system also known as an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen's School of Business. The Queen's EMS, called "the Decision Centre", combines expert facilitation with a state-of-the-art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, and idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 500 organizations around North America use the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the consultations, participants were asked, for example, "What are your region's burning issues with respect to economic development". Participants typed in ideas on the laptops all of which appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. The group was then asked "if we could only address five of these in the next year, which ones are most critical?" Individuals selected his/her top 5 and the overall results were then displayed to the group and further discussed.