



# THE MONIESON CENTRE

## CREATING VALUE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

### Discovery Workshop Report

#### Peterborough

*October 29, 2008*

#### 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 Peterborough, ON. Ten community leaders and business people from the Peterborough region 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 Judy Heffernan, General Manager of the Peterborough Community Futures Development Corporation. Dr. Yolande Chan, Director, The Monieson Centre, introduced the KIS project and Erik Lockhart, Associate Director, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop. Special thanks belong to Victoria McPhail and Jeff Dixon for their coordination of the workshop. The KIS project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit [www.easternontarioknowledge.ca](http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca).



## QUESTION 1

*What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Greater Peterborough Region a vital community?*

Top Issues:

1. **Skills development and Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) attraction and retention.** We have significant labour shortages resulting from a combination of outward migration and a lack of inbound immigration as well as lack of opportunities & training for youth at risk.
2. **Value-added void.** What are the best opportunities for taking agricultural products grown in this area, and instead of shipping them away and then buying back finished goods, produce the finished goods here? We need to find innovative ways to better link regional production and distribution systems to local/regional markets.
3. **Lack of identity.** Eastern Ontario lacks a clear identity and set of assets (contrast with Niagara and South Western (SW) Ontario's access to markets, Greater Toronto Area (GTA), etc.).
4. **Public policy in growth and development.** There is a serious gap in effective design, implementation and communication of public policy around growth and development (e.g. Places to Grow legislation<sup>1</sup>).
5. **Benefits of diversity.** Ethnic diversity is low in the region. How can we identify the strengths of ethnic diversity, increase its significance in our region and deal with the issue?
6. **Lack of regional collaboration.** How do we make regionally beneficial policy decisions given the multitude of governments in our region and their relative wealth discrepancies ('haves' and 'have nots')?
7. **Support for agriculture.** Producers need more support resources and less restriction in order to grow. How can we further develop the local food supply chain?
8. **Transportation coordination.** How do we achieve regional cooperation on road network (Ring road etc), regional airport, rail link feasibility and joint industrial park?
9. **Manufacturing restructuring.** Global and national restructuring of the manufacturing sector has made most of our large plants branch operations at risk of leaving.
10. **Private-public partnerships.** How can we encourage infrastructure investment that draws on private and public partnerships (such as the 407 Highway)?

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<sup>1</sup> The Places to Grow Act, 2005 is legislation enacted by the provincial government to identify and designate growth plan areas and develop strategic growth plans for those communities. The first phase of this legislation involved placing a greenbelt around the GTA. This greenbelt touches the southwest corner of the Peterborough region and effectively separates it from the growing GTA. For more information, see [www.placestogrow.ca](http://www.placestogrow.ca).

## 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. **Attracting foreign skills.** What are the best ways to attract and retain foreign trained workers to smaller cities and rural communities? How can we mitigate the lack of cultural diversity in our region so as to attract highly qualified people not interested in our region now?
2. **Value-added exports.** What strategies exist to best access global markets for local producers of goods and services especially in value-added areas? What are best practices elsewhere?
3. **Youth retention.** How can we encourage youth to stay in/attract youth to our community? What are the greatest drivers in retaining youth? What are the impacts of youth retention/loss?
4. **Growth and development.** What are the best steps to identifying the relevant issues around Places to Grow legislation and disseminating that information so as to take advantage of it? Do any other areas exist in the world with an imposed green belt around a large metropolitan area? What were the consequences for the surrounding communities? Did leapfrogging occur?
5. **What’s working elsewhere?** Investigate several communities that are successful today and compare them to Peterborough region (e.g. How have other communities of our size tackled economic & job growth and development issues? How do the taxes compare between the U.S.A., the European Union (EU) and Peterborough, etc.).
6. **Common regional identity.** What common interests and strategies exist in our region that could be developed into a local brand? How can we get the region to buy into this brand?
7. **Creative capital.** How can the region encourage creativity and innovation?
8. **Accessing capital.** How do we access funds, grants and other resources that can assist in employment growth? What types of government funding, grants, and initiatives have actually helped other communities in creating jobs?
9. **Getting governments to cooperate.** Is it possible for the multi-tiered government of our region to behave more like a regional one while still remaining focus on local issues? How are others doing this and what lessons have they learned?
10. **Skills training.** What is the feasibility of creating a new skilled-trades training facility?

## QUESTION 3

*What local resources (organizations, reports, past work etc.) might contribute to addressing the issues identified above?*

### Federal and Provincial Government

1. Eastern Ontario offices for relevant ministries – Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Ministry of Economic Development (MEDT), etc.
2. Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus - recommendations and local participants/leaders
3. MPP and MP offices

### Municipal/County Government

4. Area service clubs (i.e. Rotary)
5. *Chamber of Commerce can provide office space, computer, internet, meeting room*
6. Chamber of Commerce Resource Library / Chamber of Commerce resource library
7. Community foundation
8. Community social plan
9. Downtown economic impact study
10. Fleming College - Tony Tilly
11. Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation (GPAEDC) - Business Advisory Centre (GPAEDC) resource library
12. Kawartha Choice Farm Fresh buy local initiative
13. Kawartha Manufacturers Association
14. Ken Doherty, City of Peterborough
15. Local CFDC
16. Local Chamber of Commerce
17. New Canadians Centre
18. Peterborough Green Up
19. Peterborough Social Planning Council
20. Peterborough Youth Commission
21. Planning departments of each township, county and city
22. Sustainability Committee
23. Workforce Development Board

### Reports

1. GPAEDC - agriculture-impact study via GPAEDC
2. GPAEDC Industrial land report
3. GPAEDC "community profile"
4. Retail and tourism business retention and expansion (BR&E) studies
5. Task Force on Sustainable Development Report (1991)
6. Trent-Severn report
7. Vision 2020 Document - 20 year strategic plan, via GPAEDC

### Other

1. Numerous skilled trades studies via workforce development board
2. Past Business citizens of the year
3. Homebuilders - Peterborough homebuilders association

4. Peterborough Construction Exchange for skilled construction trades info.
5. Premier Rank Tourism Project
6. Prosperity Round Table
7. Sectoral advocacy groups
8. Trent and Fleming Interest Clubs
9. Trent University
10. Innovation Cluster
11. Two local consultants (Harry Kitchen and Doug Armstrong) have lots of experience with regional governments and how they act/interact.
12. Various cottage associations

## QUESTION 4

*If this project is to be successful, what are the things that you would see in place in the next two years?*

1. Defined best practices in attracting and retaining foreign trained workers.// Success would be a strengthened immigrant community. // Identified opportunities of methods/best practices that retain youth attract and retain trained immigrants.
2. Work with small steering committee or reference group to ensure research is value-added and not redundant.// Champions of change engaged in implementation.
  - Interim reports and refinements of the project to help steer it and ensure relevance
3. Answers provided by the research be placed somewhere we can access it. I.e. Web-site, local development agency.// The information would be compiled and consolidated and shared with public and local government.
4. KIS would identify that minimum federal contribution to job creation resulted in long term benefits for youth as well as community, i.e. new projects, innovation.
5. Develop a strategy to respond to the Places to Grow legislation in a manner which facilitates sustainable economic growth.
6. Research data be accompanied by editorial content by the researchers allowing us to prioritize and understand the results (include the rationale). This will give us the best chance to select the right strategies for us from the ones right for other regions.// Success would be new approaches, or fundamental changes, based on best practices from other communities.// Conduct a regional forum, perhaps through Eastern Ontario Development Program (EODP) network to place contextual framework around the data presented. Bring staff and volunteers both to this effort.
7. A plan of action for one of our wish list items is moving forward. // Emphasis on the achievable; avoidance of work on strategies that have low likelihood of financial viability and achievability.
8. Some of the studies actually influenced decision makers to implement new initiatives which they were not already considering or going to do anyway.
9. Define a series of objectives that a branding strategy should address.// A strategy for region to implement a local brand.// The Kawartha Lakes Region somehow managed to develop a brand name.
10. Define a realistic local agriculture value chain and strategies to implement it.
11. Evaluate the impact of the prosperity Round Table process.// Is it transferable to other communities?

Partner opportunities

- GPAEDC - providing information and evaluation of progress (Andy Mitchell) {#26}.
- Suggest looking at lead contact role through GPAEDC and Workforce Development Board, given their respective resources and mandates (Tony Tilly ) {#27}.
- Ron Millen Reeve Smith – Ennismore Township - if you would send a summary of your project and the type researchers that you could provide to our Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Janice Lavalley, she may have a research project for your consideration in our township {#28}

## Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

*What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making the Greater Peterborough Region 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): 13 teams at the computers

Votes	Rank	Research Issue
10	1	Skills development and highly qualified personnel (attraction and retention).// Labour shortages resulting from a combination of outward migration combined with a lack of inbound immigration.// Youth at risk, alternate education/training.// Change focus from manufacturing to skilled trades development.
8	2	Value added in our region. What are the best opportunities for taking agricultural products grown in this area, and instead of shipping them away and then buying back finished goods, produce the finished goods - "added-value" products here.// Finding innovative ways to better link regional production and distribution systems to local/regional markets.
8	2	Lack of perceived eastern Ontario identity and set of assets (contrast with Niagara, SW Ontario access to markets, Greater Toronto Area (GTA), etc.).// Business attraction.
7	4	Need for effective design and implementation of public policy regarding growth and development (e.g. Places to Grow).// Lack of understanding of the implication of the Places to Grow legislation.// Regulatory issues, especially in land use planning are very rigid - attracting creative economy industries.
5	5	How can we identify the strengths and significance of the lack of ethnic diversity in our region and how do we deal with the issue?
5	5	How do we make regionally beneficial policy decisions given the multitude of governments in our region and their relative wealth ('haves' and 'have nots').// Elected officials continue to work in collaborative manner.
5	5	Agriculture-producers need more support resources and less restriction is needed in order to grow.// How can we further develop the local food supply chain (e.g. Kawartha choice)?
4	8	How do we achieve regional cooperation on road network (ring road including Trent university), regional airport and joint industrial park?// Feasibility of a rail link.
4	8	Global and national restructuring of the manufacturing sector - most of our large manufactures are branch plants, with consolidation & rationalization, at risk of going south.
4	8	Investment in private and public infrastructure.
3	11	Agriculture average age of farmers is 55+ - succession planning transferring farm assets to next generation very costly.// Prime agricultural land going out of production.
2	12	Balancing growth with social concerns (e.g. environment etc).
1	13	Need for consistent and current "report card" on economic health, labour force.
1	13	Youth retention - opportunities for youth - keeping Trent/Fleming graduates in community.
1	13	Tourism- decline in US visitors resulting from US credit crisis.// Decline in visitation combined with below average expenditures by those who do visit.

<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	Accessibility issues for residents - consider access to services - transportation etc.// Transportation issues for areas north of Buckhorn, North Kawartha, east of Havelock.
<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	Access to health services.
<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	Poverty - breaking cycles.
<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	Means for coordinating and sharing knowledge about relevant initiatives in the community - lots going on here: how do we share the knowledge/activities in a coherent way?
<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	We need to create a sense of pride in the strengths of our region rather than focusing on it's weaknesses.

## 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?<sup>2</sup>*

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

### Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 7) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 20

Total number of voters (N): 11

Votes	Rank	Research Issue
9	1	What are the best ways to attract and retain foreign trained workers to smaller cities and rural communities?// What steps might be made to mitigate the lack of cultural diversity in our region so as to attract highly qualified people not interested in our region now?
9	1	Strategies to best access global markets for local producers of goods and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How might we overcome the competitive issues surrounding a strategy on value-added products from our resources?</li> <li>• What are the best practices in other communities regarding agricultural &amp; other added-value product creation/production?</li> <li>• Agricultural infrastructure in our region - what are the assets/gaps in Eastern Ontario (EO), Greater Peterborough Area (GPA)?</li> </ul>
8	3	How can we encourage youth to stay in/attract youth to our community?// What are the greatest drivers in retaining youth in a community?// Ask researcher for a year - impact that youth retention has on a community.
7	4	What are the best steps to identifying the relevant issues around Places to Grow and disseminating that information so as to take advantage of it?// Do any other areas exist in the world with an imposed green belt around a large metropolitan area? What were the consequences for the surrounding communities? Did leapfrogging occur?
6	5	Investigate several communities that are successful today and compare them to Peterborough region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have other communities our size tackled economic &amp; job growth and development issues - especially the issues outlined in previous question?</li> <li>• Research a tax comparison for a company to locate in Peterborough against United States of America and European Union.</li> </ul>
5	6	How to get region to buy into one brand (i.e. Peterborough region)// What is our "region" in terms of commonality of interest and strategy (Peterborough , Peterborough/City of Kawartha Lakes, Eastern Ontario, etc.)?
4	7	How can the region encourage creativity and innovation? R. Florida’s creative class - support, reward, incentives.
3	8	How to access funds, grants, resources that are available that can assist in employment growth and how do these programs compare to other communities?//

		What types of government funding, grants, initiatives actually work in creating jobs?
3	8	Government collaboration: is it possible for the multi-tiered government of our region to behave more like a regional one while still retaining focus on local issues? How are others doing this? What lessons have been learned? What have been the successes and failures?
3	8	What is the feasibility of creating a new Skilled Trades Training facility? Perform an economic impact analysis.
3	8	How can we engage labour in defining a path to mutual success while still allowing them to be responsive to their members? I.e. Can we find a way to feed more trade-oriented students through the system rather than taking steps to keep them out?
2	12	How many commuters would use a commuter rail link between Peterborough and Toronto?
2	12	How can we make small businesses (regardless of sector - existing and prospective) globally viable?
2	12	How do you best focus communities on future goals as opposed to past results?
2	12	How do you best marshal resources to pursue a holistic place-based economic development policy (health of the community)?
2	12	Identify strategies to promote our tourism assets in the competitive Greater Toronto Area (GTA) market place.
2	12	What will the Greater Golden Horseshoe look like demographically and economically in 20 years? What are the levers to influence that locally?
2	12	How can new technologies be used to better link regional production and distribution to local/regional markets?
1	19	Define 'sustainable development' in the greater Peterborough area context// It will be different here.

**Note: prior to voting, the group brainstormed ideas and then merged the similar items.**

**Below in non-bold are the merged items. These items are ordered as they were originally brainstormed (i.e. not as they were ranked by the group). Items that did not have any ideas merged are not included.**

**3. How to get region to buy into one brand i.e. Peterborough region// What is our "region" in terms of commonality of interest and strategy (Peterborough, Peterborough/City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL), Eastern Ontario, etc.)?**

- How to get region to buy into one brand i.e. Peterborough region?
- What are the assets that can be developed as part of the brand and identity?

**4. What are the best ways to attract and retain foreign trained workers to smaller cities and rural communities?// What steps might be made to mitigate the lack of cultural diversity in our region so as to attract highly qualified people not interested in our region now?**

- What investments need to be made to attract and retain labour (youth, ethnic, HQP, etc.) to the region?

**5. Strategies to best access global markets for local producers of goods and services.**

- What are the best practices in other communities regarding agricultural added-value product creation/production?

**7. Investigate several communities that are successful today and compare them to Peterborough region.**

- Communities that identified successful strategies in job growth, what did they do?

## 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 Greater Peterborough Region 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 Greater Peterborough Region?

## 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, 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.