



Discovery Workshop Report
South Lake
November 19, 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 Keswick, ON. Fifteen community leaders and business people from the Grenville 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 Peter Budreo, General Manager of the South Lake 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 Jeff Dixon for 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.



QUESTION 1

What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making South Lake a vital community?

Top Issues:

1. **Broadband.** “Build it and they will come.”
2. **Sustainability.** Develop economic capacity for the future and go beyond "traditional" economy into more sustainable and green industries.
3. **Youth development.** Our youth is our future. We must create opportunities for youth to stay if they want (education, etc.) or come back later in their lives (if they do leave)
4. **Education.** The best possible K-12 and post-secondary education must be emphasized and made available.
5. **Rural density.** We must seek out new business opportunities for rural and low density areas.
6. **Agriculture.** How do we maintain a vital farming industry in a global economy?
7. **Transportation and infrastructure.** There are unknown challenges and potential with the 404 extension into our region.
8. **Infrastructure growth.** We must carefully plan to provide community services and hard infrastructure that keep up with residential development.
9. **Essential Skills Training** (see Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) model). We must offer targeted employment training for existing residents to be marketable in the new economy.
10. **Unity.** We must find ways to strengthen the relationships between government, community leaders and community groups to work together better.
11. **Financial instability.** There is a risk of loans and funding shrinking in the midst of the current international financial crisis.

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. **What development should we pursue?** What emerging industries in the next economy would be best for an area like this with our amenities? How do we develop them? E.g. alternate energy business development
2. **How can we brand South Lake?** What unique identity does Georgina, Brock, and East Gwillimbury have and how can we use it?
3. **What is working elsewhere?** We can use a list of transportable best practices in economic development.
4. **How can we support and tap into our youth?** We need ways to work with youth to help them develop their ideas about future-oriented opportunities.
5. **How can we develop broad engagement?** Research successful mechanisms by which to involve the entire community.
6. **What are best practices of healthy communities?** What are healthy communities doing, including promotion of health and wellness?
7. **How can we attract healthcare practitioners to South Lake?** We could use a study of best practices to attract and retain medical practitioners to rural areas. We should also research what practitioners want. Additionally, are there alternative healthcare delivery models (e.g., broadband-based) that we can adopt?
8. **How good is our quality of life?** Are there yearly Quality of Community Life Indicators that we can track and compare ourselves against?
9. **What is the economic potential of Lake Simcoe?** What are we currently doing and what could we do differently to effectively leverage our prime natural resource?
10. **What opportunities does broadband afford us?** What sort of economic opportunities can be developed using high speed communications?
11. **How can we support Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) businesses?** What can be done in terms of best practices, overcoming obstacles, promotion, tax policies etc.?

QUESTION 3

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

1. **What development should we pursue?** What emerging industries in the next economy would be best for an area like this with our amenities? How do we develop them? E.g. alternate energy business development
 - Windfall Ecology Centre – Brent Kopperson {#35}
 - David Suzuki Foundation, information on European Local Green Economies – David Suzuki {#36, 55}
 - Alliance for a Better Georgina – Chair Bob Matthews, Board Member Michael Claener {#38}

2. **How can we brand South Lake?** What unique identity does Georgina, Brock, and East Gwillimbury have and how can we use it?
 - South Shore Community Broadband board of directors – Margaret Hyvarninen {#32}
 - Georgia Trades Training Inc. – Gerry Brouwer, (705) 228-8004 {#39, 41, 44, 52}
 - Alliance for a Better Georgina – Annabel Slaight {#43}
 - Naked Truth strategic plan – Annabelle Slaight {#68}

3. **What is working elsewhere?** We can use a list of transportable best practices in economic development.
 - George Schrijver, WCM Consulting – george@wcmconsulting.com, (905) 478-8523 {#47}
 - List of 70 contacts for George's Report - Gerry Brouwer {#37}

4. **How can we support and tap into our youth?** We need ways to work with youth to help them develop their ideas about future-oriented opportunities.
 - Jericho Youth Centre {#33}
 - Windfall Ecology Centre – Hilary Van Welter, Chair {#48}
 - South Lake CFDC – Peter Budreo {#49}
 - Cheryl Daniel, Principal WJ Watson School {#53}
 - Mixed Company Theatre, Toronto – Simon Malbogot {#58}
 - Fusion Youth Project, Ingersol, ON {#59}
 - Art Niezen (905) 722 6300 (Referred by Jerry Brouwer) {#62}
 - Quammie Williams, Arts Administrator, City of Barrie {#65}
 - Cynthia Wesley, Esquimaux, Georgina Island {#67}

5. **How can we develop broad engagement?** Research on successful mechanisms by which to involve the entire community is needed.
 - Mixed Theatre Company Toronto – Simon Malbogot{#56}

6. **What are best practices of healthy communities?** What are healthy communities doing, including promotion of health and wellness?
 - Old Healthy Communities Coalition, JobsOntario community action {#60}

7. **How can we attract health practitioners to South Lake?** We could use a study of best practices to attract and retain medical practitioners to rural areas. We should also research what practitioners want. Additionally, are there alternative health care delivery models (e.g., broadband-based) that we can adopt?
 - Nottawasaga Futures CFDC – Val Ryan {#61}
8. **How good is our quality of life?** Are there yearly Quality of Community Life Indicators that we can track and compare ourselves against?
 - Gregg Neelin has a draft preliminary list {#64}
 - Quality of Life indicators from the Toronto Community Foundation {#70}
9. **What is the economic potential of Lake Simcoe?** What are we currently doing and what could we do differently to effectively leverage our prime natural resource?
 - Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority {#34}
10. **What opportunities does broadband afford us?** What sort of economic opportunities can be developed using high speed communications?
 - South Shore Community Broadband – Margaret Hyvarinen {#45}
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11. **How can we support Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) businesses?** What can be done in terms of best practices, overcoming obstacles, promotion, tax policies etc.?
 - South Lake CFDC - Peter Budreo {#66}
12. **Demographics of unemployment** detailed by population centre // Studies of population trends and opportunities /unemployment detailed by population centre // Studies of population trends and opportunities
 - Sandgate Women's Shelter has demographics on population {#40}
 - Community data from York Region Data symposium – Michael Johnny, York University Research Office {#63}

Other resources and in-kind support:

- Potential short-term office space and administrative support, computers, and broadband access:
 - South Lake CFDC – Peter Budreo (905) 476-1244
 - Georgina Trades Training Inc. – Art Niezen (905) 722-6300 {#42, 69}
- Baseline Rd. Police Station has a free meeting room {#46}
- Daniele Zanotti, CEO, United Way of York Region
- Rosemary Park, York Region Community Foundation
- Bill Hogarth, Director, York Region District School Board
- Michael Johnny, York University (Manager, Knowledge Mobilization Unit)
- York Region's Human Service Planning Coalition {#50}
- Trish Robichaud, life coach {#54}
- Job skills employment development system re employment info – Nella Iasci {#57}
- Centre for Community Living – Harold Gullett {#71}
- John Gilbank (Jacksons Landing B&B) – Change entrepreneur {#72}
- Barbara Sibbald at Briars resort {#73}

- Dr. Robert Elgie, Chair of Green Belt Foundation has many political contacts {#74}

QUESTION 4

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

Measures KIS can achieve:

1. A report listing emerging industries in next economy, especially appropriate for rural areas.
2. Develop a sustainable network to support collaboration.
3. Queens partners with York to expand community resources. *KIS is intended to be a lasting network.*
4. Access to timely and relevant data/information/knowledge. // Concrete, non-academic "reports" (paper, web, CD-ROM, etc.) provided in timely manner, available to businesses, citizens, and local government. *Practitioner-oriented information is already online at www.easternontarioknowledge.ca*
5. Capacity building across the spectrum of community-university engagement (throughout research cycle).
6. A report summarizing best practices for recruiting and retaining medical practitioners to rural areas. *See easternontarioknowledge.ca*

Measures KIS can support:

1. Broadband completion. // Broadband available throughout the area. *KIS can provide information on rural broadband access.*
2. That the cooperative processes developed over those two years are codified and demonstrably imbedded within the fabric of the Community so that they may be used on an ongoing basis. *KIS can codify the information, but the communities need to implement them.*
3. Increased engagement of youth with both secondary and post-secondary education. // Youth initiate one program on their own as a result of this. // Youth engagement in the project. *KIS can provide ideas on how to improve youth engagement and report on best practices.*
4. Results of any study for improvement conveyed to public and local politicians. // The town agrees and champions the initiative. *KIS can produce the studies.*
5. A quality of life list of benchmarks is created, and adopted by the Town's Economic Development Dept. *KIS can provide research on quality of life benchmarks.*
6. The entrance to Georgina on Woodbine showcases the brand for the Town and new community pride. *KIS can highlight best practices on community branding and defining a unique identity.*
7. Communities become aware, develop capacity, and implement solutions to achieve their needs. Residents engage and care about their community. *KIS can outline best practices of community development.*

Measures KIS cannot achieve:

1. Food bank use reduced by X%, unemployment rate drops by X%.
2. Expansion of GTTI and continued success rate // Growth and support of GTTI initiatives.
3. Youth initiate one project on their own that relates to green enterprise.
4. Benefits/implication/challenges of Highway 404 extension profiled, and highway extension completed to Brock Township.
5. Recruit a minimum of one doctor (need Southlake Hospital on board). // New medical service facilities established and "accepting patients" (not chiropractors). Local care options available.

Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

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

Voting Results

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

Number of ballot items: 20

Total number of voters (N): 15 teams at the computers

Votes	Rank	Issue	Findings
9	1	Broadband	Make high-speed internet accessible throughout the region
9	1	Sustainability	Develop economic capacity for the future - beyond "traditional" economy (e.g. environment, green economy) // Go from "no"/limited industry to sustainable green entrepreneurship and industries
7	3	Youth	Create youth opportunities // Create opportunities to stay if they want (education, etc.) or come back later in their lives (if they do leave)
6	4	Education	Help students achieve education to Grade 12 and make education ability based.
6	4	Rural density	Create new business opportunities for rural low density areas
6	4	Agriculture	How do we maintain a vital farming industry? E.g. Shop local campaigns.
5	7	Transportation	Infrastructure challenges (includes Highway 404 extension)
5	7	Infrastructure	Infrastructure (supporting community services as we grow) // Increased residential development with no long-term planning for supporting infrastructure // Environmental impact of excess residential building
5	7	Skills Training	Essential Skills Training (HRSDC model) // Targeted employment training: how do we educate and train existing residents for potential new businesses?
5	7	Education Access	Access to post-secondary education
5	7	Unity	Keep strengthening the ability for government and community groups to work together // Partnering and true mutual support between the formal and informal leaders in the community, through both successes and "brick walls"
5	7	Financial Instability	Risk of loans & funding shrinking (given financial meltdown)
4	13	Health Services	Healthy Families / Healthcare professionals shortage: Study of best practices regarding attracting and retaining medical practitioners
3	14	Employment	Lack of quality employment
2	15	Uneducated Workforce	Demographics do not support economic development; the workforce is disproportionately uneducated
1	16	Public Employment	Quasi-government jobs pay much better than "normal" jobs, and are fewer in number (teachers, police, fire, etc)
1	16	Demographic Advantages	Link socio-demographic trends to economic opportunities (aging population and health care needs, etc.)
0	18	Disability Issues	Training to improve employment opportunities for disabled workers
0	18	Business Park	Business Park Development

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.

2. Transportation: Infrastructure challenges (includes Highway 404 extension)

- Highway 404 Extension
- Transportation: Extend 404 into Brock Township

4. Skills Training: Essential Skills Training (HRSDC model) // Targeted employment training: how do we educate and train existing residents for potential new businesses?

- Multi-skill training
- Reduce time needed to develop skills
- Make expanded knowledge-based training opportunities available locally
- Local education and skills development

5. Disability Issues: Training to improve employment opportunities for disabled workers

- Universal access, train accessibility, information

8. Broadband: Make high-speed internet accessible throughout the region

- Broadband
- 2nd the broadband statement

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 = 6) (Allow bypass)

Number of ballot items: 17

Total number of voters (N): 14

Votes	Rank	Findings
13	1	Emerging industries in next economy: explore types of green businesses and industries that would be best for an area like this (amenities with respect to Lake Simcoe, our countryside, proximity to Toronto), what would work well here, and how to get them, e.g. alternate energy business development
10	2	How to make Georgina a leader in something! How to get on the map. How to brand our area.
9	3	List of transportable best practices in economic development from similar communities.
8	4	Work with youth to help them develop their ideas about opportunities that are future-oriented.
7	5	Research successful mechanisms by which to engage the entire community
7	5	Best practices in building healthy communities (health & wellness promotion not just cures).
6	7	Study of best practices to attract and retain medical practitioners to rural areas e.g. what do doctors want? Are there alternative health care delivery models (e.g., broadband based)?
6	7	Can we develop yearly Quality of Community Life Indicators? Develop measures so that we can track and compare our year-to-year quality of life.
5	9	What is the economic potential of Lake Simcoe? What are we doing or could we do that is different given that we live by a lake?
4	10	What sort of economic opportunities can be developed using high speed communications?
3	11	Identify home-based business supports, practices, and obstacles. Find the "hidden" jobs (e.g. home-based businesses which are successful but nobody knows about). Explore mechanisms to fairly tax home-based businesses.
2	12	Demographics on unemployment detailed by population centre. // Studies of population trends and opportunities.
2	12	How to get politicians to do things that are good and necessary but not popular.
2	12	What are some examples of business park successes, including the time that it took and what had to be done to achieve them?
0	15	Study the benefits of extending Highway 404 to Brock Township.

0	16	Study the impact of reducing funding loans to businesses in face of financial turmoil (international capital markets tightening).
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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.

2. Emerging industries in next economy: explore types of green businesses and industries that would be best for an area like this (amenities with respect to Lake Simcoe, our countryside, proximity to Toronto), what would work well here, and how to get them, e.g. alternate energy business development.

- Access to innovation
- Creative business opportunities in a rural area
- What new businesses could flourish in our rural community?
- Being north of Toronto's narrow green belt, with what will always be limited transportation, what type of business environment would be the best course to pursue: clean tech or educational-based light industry, most of which will offer fairly low employment opportunities?

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 South Lake 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 South Lake?

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.