



Social Prosperity Project for Dufferin Community Forum Interim Report

Steering Committee

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Introduction

On November 23, 2004, fifty-four leaders from the voluntary sector, business, and government in Dufferin met to begin a community dialogue about social prosperity, health and well-being in Dufferin. This community forum resulted in the creation of a shared vision for social prosperity in Dufferin.

Orangeville Mayor Drew Brown and Shelburne Rotarian Lynda Buffet greeted participants at the beginning of this forum.

Mayor Brown, Gord Gallagher, the Mayor of Mulmur Township, and John Oosterhof, the Mayor of East Luther Grand Valley closed the forum.

Through this forum, participants endorsed the following vision.

“Dufferin County will speak with one voice as we establish an integrated mechanism for social, economic and environmental planning in a way that respects historic continuity, maintains/protects the natural environment; coordinates and promotes services and establishes a sense of community for all of Dufferin County, so that we can enhance and celebrate the prosperity, health and well-being of the diverse citizens of our County.”

This vision is a starting point and will act as a guidepost as our community moves forward in creating a community plan for improving the social prosperity, health and well-being of all of Dufferin’s citizens.

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In preparation for developing a vision, the group heard a talk by facilitator Paul Born about the power of collaboration and working together. The group then shared their experiences in working together in Dufferin.

The group brought up several solid examples of experiences working together such as the recent building of the medical clinic in Orangeville, and the county-wide response to assist the village of Grand Valley following the tornado in 1985. Some brought up the importance of the growth of the arts community and how this has brought people together, and how organizations like the Dufferin Parent Support Network have provided the needed leadership to address needs in the community. Several individuals also pointed out that there has been little or no experience in Dufferin where the community has come together like this forum.

Key Social Prosperity Assets

Forum participants, after hearing a presentation by Cullen Perry (Project Consultant) about social capital and assets in Dufferin, were asked to rank and identify key social prosperity assets for Dufferin County. Assets are those things that are built upon when developing a social prosperity plan. The following are results from the roundtable discussions on community assets in Dufferin. Assets are ranked and numbered according to the number of tables that placed each asset in the top five assets.

- Impressive array of services considering the size of the community. (5)
- Best of both worlds- small town feel in Dufferin's communities and neighbourhoods but close to urban centres. (5)
- Strong sense of community & civic pride – demonstrated through events and festivals, civic organizations, recognizing and celebrating the area's history. (5)
- Good hospital and health services for a community of its size. (5)
- Natural environment for recreation. (3)
- Perceived good quality of life. (3)
- A safe community.(3)

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- A strong and stable economic development strategy (low unemployment rate, diverse business sector that creates economic sustainability). (2)
- Good schools. (2)
- Wealth in the community. (1)
- Philanthropy in the business community. (1)
- Stewardship of the environment. (1)
- Urban/rural diversity/mixed perspective. (1)
- Access to human resources capital in the community. (1)
- Location – access to urban and rural amenities. (1)
- Shared values – social cohesiveness. (1)
- Global growth development – lots of land (land and water – opportunity for future development). (1)
- Community self-awareness (awareness of issues for the future growth/ environment / open mindedness). (1)

Other Assets (not ranked)

- New people/new talents.
- Pace of life.
- Perceived affordable housing.
- Vibrant downtown(s), strong ability to promote itself.
- Fundraising opportunity is good.
- Minimal bureaucracy.
- Strong volunteers.

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Key Social Prosperity Challenges

Forum participants, after hearing a presentation by Cullen Perry about challenges in Dufferin, were asked to rank and identify key challenges to social prosperity in Dufferin County. Challenges are considered those things that are addressed and diminished in a community plan for social prosperity. The following are results from the roundtable discussions about challenges in Dufferin. Challenges are ranked and numbered according to the number of tables that placed each challenge in the top five challenges.

- We are becoming a bedroom community with a high proportion of people leaving Dufferin each day for employment in the GTA. This presents a barrier to people becoming involved/ engaged in community life. (7)
- There is pressure on the voluntary sector to provide more services to the growing and changing populations but without adequate resources (funding, volunteers) to grow with the community. Has created a competitive environment for organizations. Including primary health, social and children's services. (5)
- Planning of a human service (health, social services, education) delivery system to parallel other 'hard' infrastructure planning. (5)
- Economic disparity does exist in Dufferin. (4)
- High proportion of the population (20-44yrs) with less than a high school education. High proportion of youth who are not completing high school. (4)
- Lack of affordable rental housing. (3)
- No transportation alternatives to the automobile. (3)
- Residential growth has created more reliance on residential tax base to fund public services. (1)
- Lack of official county plan and regional economic developmental plan (1)
- Not a united voice (municipalities working for common good instead of own agendas). (1)
- Confusion of division of catchment areas for services. (1)
- Attitudes people are currently self-focused – hurts volunteerism and contributing to community. (1)

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- Greenbelt legislation. (1)

Other Challenges (not ranked)

- Need more industrial growth.
- Lack of awareness/communication of assets.
- Youth services as compared to adult services.
- Fragmented service providers.
- Collective denial – politicized (drugs, immigrants, homosexuality). Need to welcome diversity.
- We need to harness energy and ideas of different generations.

A Vision for Dufferin

Having identified the assets and challenges that affect social prosperity in Dufferin, participants were asked to create a picture in their minds of Dufferin in the future, and to describe what they see in their pictures. Participants shared their visions through roundtable discussions. Reporteurs selected by each group then met to share the visions of each of their groups, and to create a single vision statement shared by all participants. The vision that was developed from this process is as follows.

“Dufferin County will speak with one voice as we establish an integrated mechanism for social, economic and environmental planning in a way that respects historic continuity, maintains/protects the natural environment; coordinates and promotes services and establishes a sense of community for all of Dufferin County, so that we can enhance and celebrate the prosperity, health and well-being of the diverse citizens of our County.”

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Participants concluded the day talking about the risks and the barriers to implementing this vision. When asked, “Why do we not live this way”, participants brought up issues such as:

- time and energy needed by individuals to make a difference,
- organizations that are restricted by their mandates and/or concerned about protecting their programs,
- political barriers to county-wide planning,
- a tendency in Dufferin to react to issues and problems, and
- that leadership has been left to councils/ politicians.

When asked, “What would keep us from realizing our vision?” participants mentioned barriers such as:

- absence of buy-in to the vision, lack of leadership (Expecting someone else to do it – lack of time and/or apathy)
- the process becomes more important than the vision.
- Lack of funding for this work.
- Perception that barriers are insurmountable – taking on too much, and not celebrating successes.

Next Steps

When asked what they might do personally to realize a vision for collective health and well-being in Dufferin, 40 participants responded with ideas for themselves and/or their organizations. Of this group, 25 participants told this project that they want to be directly involved by volunteering on the working group or on a project committee to create or help implement a community plan that moves Dufferin towards this vision.

An additional 15 participants expressed strong interest in the results of this forum and want to be kept informed of developments. Almost all in this group also said they would take information about this community forum and the vision back to senior levels within their organizations for discussion. Some also offered suggestions as to how they think this work

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can move forward. Two individuals from this group representing provincial and federal ministries and departments told the project that they want to provide the project with linkages to resources that the project may need in the future to realize this vision.

The Social Prosperity Project's Steering Committee will be meeting on Wednesday December 1, 2004 to review the commitments that participants made, and to select people from this group who will be invited to join the new Working Group to begin helping to move this project forward in the weeks and months ahead.

The next few months will be busy and exciting as the Working Group writes a community plan, develops a leadership structure of individuals who will implement this plan, and raises the funds that will be needed to move forward with strategies in this plan.

Everyone who attended this community forum and others who become interested in keeping updated on progress will receive regular updates and progress reports in the months ahead.

Participants in this Forum

The following individuals participated in this community forum.

Barb Horvath, Beth Walden, Bob Baynham, Bob Borden, Brandy Robinson, Brenda Fraser, Brenda Urbanski, Brian Emery, Carol Jones, Dave Ferrier, Diane Ellis, John (Doc) Gillies, Dr. David Scott, Mayor Drew Brown, Earl Marshall, Elaine Scott, Eric Bryant, Eugene Lammerding, Gary Murray, Gary Putman, Mayor Gord Gallagher, Greg Maslen, Harold Sanderson, Helen Sherrard, Janine Kilburn, Jim Shaw, Mayor John Oosterhof, Kim Cook, Kurtis Krepps, Lisa DeZotti, Lorraine Leach, Lyn Allen, Lynda Buffet, Maggie Weidmark, Margaret Moorhouse, Mary Wilhelm, Maureen Childs, Maureen Riedler, Pamela Claridge, Paul Brophy, Phil Naylor, Randy McClelland, Réal Gagnon, Rob Rice, Chief Rod Freeman, Ross Kirkconnell, Roy Hillis, Ruth Phillips, Starr Olsen, Tim Murray, Tina Hinsperger, Valerie Quarrie, Detachment Commander Walter Kolodziechuck.

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Participating Organizations

Amaranth Lions Club, Canadian Mental Health Association, Choices Youth Shelter, Community Care Access Centre Wellington-Dufferin, Community Living Dufferin, Community Mental Health Clinic, Dufferin-Caledon Habitat for Humanity, Dufferin Child and Family Services, Dufferin County Community Services Department, Dufferin County Community Support Services, Dufferin Oaks Home for Senior Citizens, Ontario Provincial Police – Dufferin Detachment, Dufferin Parents Support Network, Dufferin-Caledon Health Care Corporation, , Eric Bryant Financial, Family Transition Place, Georgian College, Grand Valley Lions Club, Greater Dufferin Area Chamber of Commerce, Homewood Community Alcohol and Drug Services, Hospice Dufferin, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, North Peel & Dufferin Community Legal Services, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Orangeville and Area Small Business Enterprise Centre, Orangeville Baptist Church, Orangeville Citizen, Orangeville District Secondary School, Orangeville Lions Club, Orangeville Police Services, Orangeville Seniors Centre, Orangeville Food Bank, Primrose Central School, Canadian Red Cross Society, Royal Bank of Canada, Shelburne Rotary Club, Town of Orangeville, Township of East Luther Grand Valley, Township of Mulmur, Upper Grand District School Board, Waterloo Region-Wellington-Dufferin District Health Council, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health