

**Town of Goderich**  
**2016 Economic Development Strategic Plan**

## Introduction

The Canadian economy is experiencing rapid and far-reaching structural changes, and many communities are struggling to understand how best to position themselves for success in the emerging economic environment. The Town of Goderich has chosen this time to examine its current and future economic opportunities and positioning, and to develop an action-oriented approach to building an economic development strategy that is tangible, practical and sustainable.

This economic development strategy makes a strong statement on the direction for the town, setting out a plan for the strategic and sustainable growth of Goderich's economy. While the Town has a central role in facilitating its implementation, the strategy relies on a mixture of public and private sector resources, active partnerships with the business community, public institutions, and all levels of government. Given the significant changes that the region has and continues to experience in terms of economic growth, global influence and global and community challenges, the successful implementation of this strategy will also be about adapting, learning from success and failure, and refining the approach over time to adapt more quickly to changes in the environment.

The Town of Goderich has an important role to play in economic development. The municipality, more than any other level of government, is closest to the businesses which are creating employment and contributing to the local tax base. The Town is best positioned to uncover businesses which are struggling or those looking to expand, and provide assistance to help them succeed. In addition, understanding the composition of our local economy and characteristics of our resident base provides the Town with insight into which sectors or types of businesses to attract to enhance our local economy.

At a basic level, the Town's role in economic development is to attract new businesses to Goderich and to retain existing businesses by connecting them to the resources they require to succeed.

To this end, in late 2015 the Town of Goderich participated in the County-Wide Economic Development Strategic Planning process, facilitated by OMAFRA and Huron County Economic Development Services. Local planning was conducted by a core team of facilitators, supported by a larger working group of business owners and other community stakeholders. This group engaged in in-depth discussion and analysis of the economy of Goderich, and targeted consultations were undertaken in specific economic sectors.

Based on this analysis, six strategic priorities have been identified for economic development in Goderich in the coming years:

- Workforce Development and Attraction
- Port of Goderich Development
- Health Care Development
- Business Attraction and Retention
- Airport Development
- Tourism Development

Each of these strategic priorities have specific action items that form the basis for the Economic Development workplan. Although the strategic priorities will have a long-term impact on the growth of Goderich's economy, the majority of activities will be initiated by end of 2016.

## Strategic Priority: Workforce Development and Attraction

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to diversify Goderich's workforce by attracting and developing skilled labour.

### Why are we doing it?

Access to skilled labour has been consistently identified as the largest challenge facing business in Goderich. Businesses cannot operate or expand if they cannot find skilled, reliable employees. Recent research shows that while many Goderich businesses cannot find skilled labour locally, they do not have the ability to attract labour from outside the region. This strategy aims to alleviate this issue by conducted targeted recruitment campaigns to attract specific types of skilled workers to Goderich.

Workforce development is not just about attracting skilled labour; we must also create opportunities for local entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. Networking and mentoring opportunities, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions will help address this need. In addition, the potential for a business incubator to provide dedicated space for entrepreneurs to grow their businesses will be investigated.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item  | Timeframe  | Agencies Involved                    |
|--|------------|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify key areas of skilled labour that are deficient Goderich.</li></ul>                        | April 2016 | Town of Goderich<br>FCLMPB           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assemble team of community ambassadors to drive skilled labour recruitment efforts.</li></ul>      | June 2016  | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Design and conduct recruitment campaigns focused on bringing skilled labour to Goderich.</li></ul> | Fall 2016  | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand opportunities for local skills development.</li></ul>                                       | Ongoing    | Town of Goderich<br>Fanshawe College |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate the feasibility of a specialised business incubator in Goderich.</li></ul>             | Fall 2016  | Town of Goderich<br>Huron County     |

### When will it be done?

The immediate tasks associated with workforce development will be complete by the end of 2016. The results of these efforts will need to be assessed before next steps can be planned.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Completed three targeted recruitment campaigns for identified workforce segments.
- Studied the feasibility of a local business incubator.

## Strategic Priority: Port of Goderich Development

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to expand business opportunities at the Port of Goderich.

### Why are we doing it?

The Port of Goderich is a highly productive economic driver. Goderich is the only deepwater port on the east shore of Lake Huron, with the capacity to load vessels to the maximum seaway draft. It services approximately 250 vessels, carrying over 6 million tonnes of cargo annually. Port businesses support 958 direct jobs; each direct job supports 3.1 indirect jobs regionally. In addition, the Port creates an estimated \$138 million in gross domestic product, \$254 million in economic output, and \$70 million in wages.

The Port does not have the ability to take on new cargoes due to a lack of available land. This limits the ability of the port to grow. To address this, the Goderich Port Management Corporation, in partnership with the provincial government, are expanding the port. The first phase of the expansion will create four new acres at the harbour and two new docks. These new facilities will need to be marketed to attract new business to the Port.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item   | Timeframe | Partners                 |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lobby for expansion funding from other orders of government and private industry.</li></ul> | Ongoing   | Town of Goderich<br>GPMC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete the phase 1 port expansion.</li></ul>  | 2017/18   | GPMC<br>Town of Goderich |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Complete a market study to identify opportunities for new cargoes.</li></ul>                | June 2016 | Town of Goderich<br>GPMC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Market the port to attract new users and cargoes.</li></ul>                                 | Ongoing   | Town of Goderich<br>GPMC |

### When will it be done?

The phase 1 expansion will be completed in 2017/18. Attracting new cargoes to the expanded port is a long-term project which will take years to complete, although marketing can begin immediately.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Completed a market study to identify new opportunities for port business.
- Developed a marketing strategy to go after these opportunities.
- Started construction of the phase 1 expansion.

## Strategic Priority: Health Care Development

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to develop Goderich as a regional health care hub by attracting specialized care facilities.

### Why are we doing it?

Between the Alexandra Marine and General Hospital and the Maitland Valley Medical Centre, Goderich is home to a busy and growing health care hub. Health care remains one of the largest sectors of the local economy, in terms of both employment and economic output, and is one of the only sectors of the economy that has consistently grown over the past decade. Goderich has an opportunity to expand this segment of the economy by attracting specialized health care facilities that would complement existing uses.

Further research needs to be completed to identify which opportunities in specialized health care would be most suitable for Goderich. Once this work has been completed, suitable sites for development will be identified and marketed to private operators to solicit interest in a project.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item   | Timeframe   | Partners         |
|---|-------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research opportunities for specialized health care that would succeed in Goderich.</li></ul>                                  | May 2016    | Town of Goderich |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare business case for the operation of a specialized health care facility in Goderich.</li></ul>                          | August 2016 | Town of Goderich |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify suitable sites for a facility, prepare a site package, and proactively work to remove regulatory barriers.</li></ul> | Fall 2016   | Town of Goderich |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Market the opportunity for health care development to private sector operators.</li></ul>                                     | 2017        | Town of Goderich |

### When will it be done?

Research and site preparation work will be complete by the end of 2016. Marketing opportunities has the potential to be an ongoing and long-term task.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Identified the most suitable types of facilities for Goderich.
- Completed a business case for specific specialized health care facilities.
- Prepared specialized site selection package.

## Strategic Priority: Business Attraction and Retention

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to market and develop business opportunities in Goderich.

### Why are we doing it?

Business attraction and retention is one of the core functions of economic development. While all communities strive to be “open for business”, successful communities take a targeted and strategic approach to investment attraction and retention. No community is competitive in all areas; success relies on identifying which areas a community has a competitive advantage in and targeting those opportunities.

Since September of 2015, the Town of Goderich has been conducting a online targeted marketing campaign, designed to market Goderich to businesses in the areas where the town has a competitive advantage. From this campaign, Goderich Economic Development staff have cultivated a database of potential leads. In 2016, we will conduct targeted outreach to the most promising leads, and directly market business opportunities in Goderich.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item  | Timeframe   | Partners                             |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Update all marketing materials</li></ul>   | June 2016   | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assemble team of ambassadors to assist in targeted business attraction.</li></ul>  | July 2016   | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review all leads received as part of targeted marketing campaign since Sept. 2015 and identify fifty most promising targets.</li></ul> | August 2016 | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contact leads through cold calls, in person discussions, familiarization tours, etc.</li></ul>   | Fall 2016   | Town of Goderich                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitate networking and mentoring opportunities for entrepreneurs.</li></ul>   | Ongoing     | Town of Goderich<br>Fanshawe College |

### When will it be done?

The marketing campaign will be complete by the end of 2016. Lead generation and qualification will be an ongoing project. Marketing materials will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly, annual, or biannual basis, as required.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Conducted a targeted, proactive marketing campaign aimed at qualified leads and publicized the results.

## Strategic Priority: Airport Development

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to develop the Goderich Municipal Airport as a regional transportation hub.

### Why are we doing it?

The Goderich Municipal 'Sky Harbour' Airport has the potential to be a significant contributor to the regional economy. Its 1525 m runway is the longest runway in the region, allowing larger aircraft to use the facility and giving Goderich a competitive advantage over other airports. The airport also reinforces Goderich's position as a multi-modal transportation hub, serviced by rail, air, land, and water links. However, the return on the investment required for the sustainable development of the Goderich Airport has not yet been quantified.

There are examples of other rural airports in Ontario that have been successfully redeveloped as regional transportation hub. We need to study these examples, assess the current state of our own airport, and develop a sustainable model to both develop and operate the Goderich Municipal Airport.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item  | Timeframe   | Partners                         |
|--|-------------|----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Study other local airports that have been redeveloped as regional transportation hubs.</li></ul> | Fall 2016   | Town of Goderich<br>Huron County |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify necessary investment to get the airport "market-ready".</li></ul>                       | Winter 2016 | Town of Goderich<br>Huron County |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop business case, funding model, and marketing plan to secure future investment</li></ul>   | Spring 2017 | Town of Goderich<br>Huron County |

### When will it be done?

The redevelopment of the airport is going to be a long-term project. A list of necessary investments, a business case, and marketing plan for attracting interest will be developed in 2017.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Completed asset analysis and feasibility study on airport in partnership with Huron County.

## Strategic Priority: Tourism Development

### What are we doing?

Our goal is to develop Goderich as a cohesive tourist destination.

### Why are we doing it?

Tourism is one of the three largest sectors of Goderich's economy. However, the tourism industry is undergoing a period of significant upheaval. Visitors increasingly want and expect more from their time away. They do not simply want to see things; they want to be engaged and they want to immerse themselves in the places they visit. Visitors want to connect with a destination on a personal level and actively participate in memorable experiences.

Communities that want to continue to attract visitors need to adapt to this new reality.

Experiential tourism does not develop by accident, nor does it develop in a vacuum. Goderich will only develop as an attractive, cohesive tourist destination through proactive, coordinated planning. This will require a group of motivated tourism operators willing to collaborate on this venture, as well as an honest assessment of the current state of Goderich's tourism assets.

### How will we do it?

| Action Item   | Timeframe   | Partners                          |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a working group of tourism operators to drive experiential tourism development.</li></ul>              | Fall 2016   | Town of Goderich<br>HTA           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the current state of tourist infrastructure, identifying any gaps or underperforming assets.</li></ul> | Winter 2016 | Town of Goderich<br>RTO4          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and develop a series of pilot experiential tourism projects.</li></ul>                               | 2017        | Town of Goderich<br>Working Group |

### When will it be done?

Experiential tourism development is not static; it is an ongoing effort. Experiences need to be constantly reviewed and refreshed to stay meaningful. This will be an ongoing project, although preparation work will be completed by the end of 2016.

### What will we have accomplished by the end of 2016?

By the end of 2016, we will have:

- Assembled a working group of committed, creative tourism operators to drive the development of new tourism experiences in Goderich.
- Completed an inventory of existing tourism experiences and assets, and identified gaps or underperforming assets.