

Integrated Community Sustainability Plan 2009

Introduction

Renowned philanthropist Andrew Carnegie stated that teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision and is the fuel that allows common people to achieve uncommon results. Because of the notable benefit of teamwork, it was decided that the best approach to take on the completion of this project was a collaborative one. By working together, the communities of Deer Lake, Cormack, Reidville and Howley believe they will prosper now and for years to come.

What is an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)?

An Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is defined by the Gas Tax Agreement as “a long term plan, developed in consultation with community members that provides direction for the cities, towns and regions to realize sustainability objectives it has for the environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions of its identity”.

To best understand this definition it is beneficial to break down the acronym and define each word independently. ICSP stands for:

- **Integrated** - “Formed into a whole”. This indicates the unity of the five core pillars of sustainability (environmental, cultural, social, economic and governance).

- **Community** - “An agreement as to goals”. The four communities working together on this project share goals within their respective communities as well as collaborative goals within the region.
- **Sustainability** – “The capacity to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It involves managing an area’s ecosystems and natural resources while keeping conservation in mind.
- **Plan** – “Having the will and discretion to carry out some action”. For the needs of this plan, it is the tangible document that will be submitted and used as a strategic means of achieving a sustainable community.

How does having a completed Integrated Community Sustainability Plan benefit the region?

An ICSP acts as a guiding hand, leading its users in the right direction. It is a strategic plan in which sustainable communities and a sustainable region is the ultimate goal. It is designed to be a comprehensive planning document that can be referred to constantly and updated accordingly to remain useful.

In accordance with the Gas Tax Agreement signed between the Federal Government of Canada and the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, each municipality must complete an ICSP by March 31 2010. The submission of this

document will allow each of the four partnering communities continued access to its allotment of funds under the Gas Tax Agreement.

Cormack – INSERT TOWN MAPS

History

Originally named The Upper Humber Land Settlement, Cormack was christened with its current name in 1948. The name was chosen in memoriam to the Scottish explorer and natural historian William Epps Cormack. It was under this name that the community was incorporated on April 8, 1964 under the Community Council Act (1962). The community's beginning is a rare one. Between 1934 and 1942 the Land Settlement Scheme of the Commission of Government established 11 land settlements containing a total of 340 families. The Upper Humber Land Settlement, located 13km north of Deer Lake, was one such settlement. Although this scheme was abandoned in 1938, the high proportion of fair to good soil in the Upper Humber Valley spurred interest in the area and it was chosen for the Post War Settlement Program. This program was designed to breathe new life into Newfoundland's declining agriculture industry as well as provide a future for the provinces returning war veterans. Once the government secured 30,000 acres of good agricultural land from Bowater Newfoundland Ltd., the community was established under the Land Development Act (1944). The first veterans arrived in May, 1946 and had to live in 12' X 16' bunkhouses housing six men. The men each received 50 acres of arable land and were paid 55 cents per hour to clear this land. The first winter

was a tough one, especially for the war brides from urban cities in Europe such as Scotland and England. These women were used to running water and electricity. It was not until April 1965 that electrical service was provided to Cormack, followed by telephone service in 1969.

Since its distinct beginning, Cormack has depended on cohesiveness and partnerships as the pillar of its community. As they had no other family members around to help them in times of hardship, the settlers from all areas of the province developed close bonds. Soon after settlement, 85 of the settlers set up their own consumer's cooperative where they could buy groceries and supplies. Purchasing shares for \$5.00 each, they were able to buy supplies and a building to operate out of. Also in the early years, members of the settlement formed a farmers' association, the Upper Humber Farmers Association, which found markets for their produce, mostly to Bowater's woods camps.

Cormack, as a rural dormitory community for Deer Lake, is very successful with respect to regional cooperation given the added benefit of providing extra income for families through part-time logging and farming. Due to declining numbers of school-aged children in the community and the trend of regionalization fostered through paved roads and improved transportation, students are now bussed to school in Deer Lake. Though times have changed and the area has become more centered around larger towns in the area, residents of Cormack have fond memories of growing up and attending elementary school in the community. It was in March 1947 with nine students, that the first classes started in the front room of a residential home. Another of the many attractive features of

this town is St. George's Church which was built as a memorial to the war veterans and is the only one of its kind in Eastern Canada

With excellent building conditions, and attractive surroundings and low land prices, Cormack continues to attract new residents employed in the region as well as retirees looking for a quiet, rural setting. Due to expanding markets, refrigeration, transportation and a diverse agricultural base, Cormack is currently considered a major agriculture area. By evolving from root crop to today's predominant dairy industry, Cormack was able to maintain its core industry, agriculture. Though the community's population has seen a significant decline in the last 10 to 12 years, they still play a vital role in the Island's agriculture industry. By setting asset-based goals, Cormack envisions itself as a future tourist magnet that will attract both the adventurous traveler and the peace-seeking tourist.

Community Strengths and Challenges

The Town of Cormack utilizes its resources effectively; this is evident in its Municipal Sustainability Self-Assessment Report (APENDIX) which portrays the community's successful administration and financial management. Community cohesiveness is also apparent throughout the town due to the strong sense of pride in the community. Common to many small, rural towns this pride and togetherness is an asset that will be used in achieving the goals set by Cormack and the region.

Asset based planning is the most effective method of turning goals into actions and then to success stories. This is how the Town of Cormack plans to address its

challenges. Another strong point of the community is its ability to maintain a level of community well-being. By concentrating on the assets it has, the community can address and successfully meet the needs of its citizens.

The main focus of the community is to provide healthcare services for the elder citizens as well as to vigorously promote tourism within the community. Due to its location, a trip to the hospital in Corner Brook, or even to see a doctor in Deer Lake is a copious task. This is also true when it comes to picking up medications as there is no pharmacy within the town. For elders who may not have a viable means of transportation, this is a grave concern. Other concerns are mirrored across the majority of rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. An aging population and a decrease in the number of youth are two such problems. Cormack does operate a 50+ club to accommodate the aging population. Youth retention programs and community building programs are also needed within the community as well as a way to educate citizens about the environment and the effect of climate change, especially with regards to agriculture.

With a current population of 657, Cormack experienced a population decrease of 2.7% between 2001 and 2006. This is a dramatic improvement from the 12% decrease the community saw between 1996 and 2001 however it still does pose concern. A high unemployment rate within the community, 27.9%, as well as the high job potential in Western Canada in the past decade can explain why these population decreases have occurred. However, with a relatively healthy youth population, strong dairy farming industry, effective management and determination, Cormack will prosper.

Howley

History

Deriving its name from the settlement's founder and government geologist, James Howley (1847-1918), the prime factor responsible for the town's birth was the construction of the Trans Island Railway along with the pulp and paper mill erected at Corner Brook. The earliest residents of Howley were employees of the railway. Later residents were attracted to the rich logging site and the job opportunities in the woods camps.

In the early days, settlers had to pull together, providing free labour to construct houses, churches and the town hall. The town also had a saw mill, pump house, company owned stable and an American repeater station used during the Second World War. Due to the early understanding that hard work pays off, the town sprang to life.

The young town of Howley started to boom in the 1920's and the Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Company began to establish facilities for its workers. The company set up a store, cook house, and bunk house. Howley was a company town supplying water and telephone service to its residents working for the Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Company.

When Bowater moved its operations out of Howley in 1950, the town lost many of its citizens but that is not to say the community lost its vigor. Howley is a beautiful town with a unique and interesting history as well as a hopeful future. Home to superb hunting and fishing in a secluded environment, this picturesque town is already

surrounded by cottages as well as a tourist park with both serviced and un-serviced lots, close to fishing and boating. The community also has some of the most beautiful beaches in the country with lakes of pristine, unspoiled, fresh water.

Although Howley isn't the boom town it was in the 1920's it has adapted with the changing times and now acts as a rural dormitory community for Deer Lake and surrounding areas. The only current industry within the town is a dairy barn and henneries. The town does have a town council, volunteer fire department, community centre, service station, lounge and a café. One of Howley's tourist features is that in 1904, four moose were introduced to the area from New Brunswick. These non-native deer relatives were the first surviving moose in the province and are largely responsible for the vast moose population the Island has today.

Community Strengths and Challenges

With a strong history as a logging community, residents are no strangers to the outdoors or to hard work. This is evident through the numerous residents who work in the construction industry, many with the well known construction company Mike Kelly and Sons Ltd. operating out of Howley. By identifying the assets within the community and setting achievable goals based upon these assets, Howley will focus on promoting the beautiful, vibrant community as a tourist hub, attracting those looking for a peaceful, quiet getaway with access to fishing, hunting, and boating. Due to its successful administration and effective equipment and infrastructure maintenance, the community will be able to concentrate its efforts on the challenges facing it.

As a small community of 241, Howley faces challenges similar to many small, rural communities in Western Newfoundland and Labrador. With an 11.1% population decrease between 2001 and 2006 following a 19.3% decrease in population between 1996 and 2001, the community has been hit hard by outmigration. The province has seen a large decrease in population over the past decade and small rural communities have really been hit hard. They also face the problem of people leaving their community to move to bigger centers within the province.

Howley has a lot to offer with respect to low cost of land and the fact that it is a quiet, safe place to live. By focusing its efforts on youth retention and community building programs, along with programs to address cultural and environmental sustainability, Howley will attract families working outside the town. Very attractive land price is also an asset to the community; Howley will build plans based upon its assets to attract young families as well as promote tourism by addressing each of the five pillars of sustainability.

Reidville

History

During the Great Depression when 25% of the Newfoundland population was receiving government relief and fish prices fell by 48%, many fishermen made the difficult decision to pull up stakes in the industry and follow a new direction. One such man was William Thomas Reid. William left his home in Neddie's Harbour with the

promise of providing for his family inland. His son, already living across the river from what is now Reidville, travelled to Lomond to pick up William Reid and take him to the Humber Valley.

In the spring of 1933, William Thomas moved his family across the river from his son, cleared land and built a log cabin on the bank of the Humber River between two ravines. This was the beginning of Reidville. William Thomas completed his cabin during the fall of 1933 and in 1935 William's son Herbert moved his family from Neddie's Harbour to Reidville.

It didn't take long to realize the need for a school in the community to service Reidville as well as nearby townships. There are dear memories held by the elders of the community of their early education in Reidville, especially when they went out into the field to play ball.

Each of the early families cleared land, sowed crops and cut and sold pulpwood to the mill in Corner Brook. Like other woodsmen in the area, the Reid's used whatever means were available to carry out their daily tasks. This usually meant cutting wood with a buck saw and trimming it with an axe. At first, the Reid families cut the wood and cleared land on their proposed lots. Later they received contracts to cut pulpwood in the area owned by the paper company. The pulpwood or logs would then have to be transferred to a waterway to be floated down to the mill in Corner Brook. The cutter was responsible for landing the wood into the river. During the 1930's this was done with dog team and sled, horse and sled, or sled hauled by hand. The pulpwood was floated and sacked all along the river system until it reached Deer Lake. There it was towed in a

boom the length of the lake and then floated down river to Humber Mouth where it was towed in a boom once again to the mill in Corner Brook.

Since its modest beginning, Reidville has been a town built on pride, hard work, and perseverance. Just like its early pioneers, the citizens of Reidville are determined to achieve the goals it sets for itself now and in the future.

Community Strengths and Challenges

Reidville has seen a population increase of 3.2% from 2001 to 2006 to its current population of 511. The median family income is \$42,353 which is just slightly below the provincial median income. With the vast majority of its residents working outside the town, Reidville is successful when it comes to regional cooperation. As indicated by the Municipal Sustainability Self-Assessment Report (APENDIX), the community demonstrates success in the categories of administration and financial management. By securing low debt levels while delivering the current level of services and meeting the requirements of the Municipalities Act, Reidville is surely able to focus on and achieve set goals.

The priorities of the community are reflected in Reidville's Strategic Economic Plan (APPENDIX) as well as by the Self-Assessment Report. By focusing on community development, tourism and heritage development and business development, the town will conquer challenges such as; the need for youth retention programs, the need for community building activities, the need for environmental education programs, and the

need for cultural awareness. Another challenge facing Reidville is the need for more committees of council.

Through asset-based planning and determination, Reidville will be able to achieve set goals thereby overcoming the challenges it faces.

Deer Lake

History

Deer Lake is firmly established as a popular tourist destination as well as the gateway to the scenic northern peninsula of the Island. Located only 32 kilometers from the entrance to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Gros Morne National Park, Deer Lake is confident of a prosperous future with special respect to tourism. With some of the most affordable housing in the country, improving recreational facilities, business opportunities, Deer Lake is a community proud of its past yet planning for the future.

The Town of Deer Lake has a rich heritage and history dating back to 1864 when the first settlers arrived from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The leader of this group, George Aaron Nichols, went on to serve as a guide on many tourist exhibits including a visit from U.S. President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The original settlers were loggers and trappers; however it did not take long for these pioneers to discover the farming potential of the area with its fertile soil and suitable climate. The story of how the town came to be known as Deer Lake dates back to the time of its earliest settlers. Numerous caribou

could be seen crossing the vast lake; these caribou were mistaken for the deer familiar to Nova Scotia, hence the name “Deer Lake”.

In 1922 a work camp was established to support the International Pulp and Paper Company. This camp would later become the Town of Deer Lake, with a formal town site being constructed in 1925. At this time, the community housed a railroad terminal, a small hospital and places of worship. Deer Lake was a company town, incorporated in 1951. The woods camps became home to the large number of men who first came to the area to aid in the construction of the power plant but were encouraged to stay cutting pulpwood as a means of making a living.

The construction of the hydroelectric plant at Deer Lake is responsible for the town’s early success. The hydroelectric development at Deer Lake was built to provide power to operate the paper mill built in Corner Brook. This hydro power was also harvested to provide power to the communities of Deer Lake and Corner Brook. In 1929, power was extended to Buchans and its mine as well as Howley, Baie Verte, and Springdale a few years later. Due to modifications at the pulp and paper mill, all the power generated by the power plant in Deer Lake since 1977 has been used solely by the mill.

With the construction of the generating station came the building of a diversion dam at the outlet of Grand Lake which flowed into Junction Brook and the Humber River. This Ambursen-style dam, called Main Dam, runs 244 meters long and 24 meters high. Man, horse, and steam power were used to excavate and remove approximately four million cubic meters of earth to build the canal. The largest of the six massive, steam powered draglines had been used years earlier in the construction of the Panama Canal.

Deer Lake Power's contribution to the province can be measured in terms of the economic development and social benefits its electric power service has made possible to areas once considered remote.

Promoting the community as a tourist destination is nothing new to Deer Lake. "Built on the shores of beautiful Deer Lake and set at the heart of the scenic Humber Valley, only minutes from some of the best salmon fishing in North America, Deer Lake is the centre of a tourist area without peer. Its people are hospitable, its atmosphere cosmopolitan". This excerpt from the Western Star is dated 1969. Though this year marks the 40th anniversary of this advertisement it is clear that what drew people to the community then is strikingly similar to what draws them here today. Fishing and hunting coupled with the hospitable urban environment makes Deer Lake a tourist magnet waiting to be utilized.

Community Strengths and Challenges

Deer Lake has experienced a 1.2% population increase since 2001 bringing the 2006 census population to 4,827. The modest population growth coupled with the boom in house construction over recent years (30 new homes were constructed in 2008 with similar numbers in previous years) demonstrates the potential Deer Lake has to offer. With a healthy school system, expanding businesses and state of the art recreation facilities, Deer Lake has all the amenities of a larger centre yet continues to hold its quiet, small town charm. A safe and caring community proud of its past, Deer Lake is a fostering environment for children to grow and mature. Its physical location and beauty is

an asset without dispute. With its unparalleled scenery and close proximity to the Western Memorial Regional Hospital in Corner Brook and the geographical wonder of Gros Morne National Park, Deer Lake's location and hospitable people are its most visible assets.

The Deer Lake Regional Airport serves Western Newfoundland with regularly scheduled flights to major destinations in Canada with connections worldwide. Demanding a large workforce, the airport and other businesses within the town depend on workers from outside the community. Because of the need for a workforce comprised of Deer Lake residents as well as residents of communities such as Reidville, Howley and Cormack, Deer Lake is no stranger to regional cooperation. As indicated in the Municipal Sustainability Self-Assessment Report (APENDIX), Deer Lake is successful in the categories of administration and governance. Deer Lake will utilize its immense flow of assets to achieve the challenging yet attainable goals it sets for itself, as well as the regional goals it will collaborate with partnering communities to achieve. According to the Self-Assessment Report, Deer Lake is very successful when it comes to service delivery and effective maintenance and supply of equipment and infrastructure needed for the town.

As indicated in the Town of Deer Lake's Strategic Economic Plan (APENDIX), by promoting Deer Lake as a tourism destination and active living community, Deer Lake will continue to benefit economically from the tourism industry. As a regional tourism centre and transportation hub, the town plans to breathe new life into the community and attract young families to combat the issue of an aging population. Like many other small towns with an above average unemployment rate, 24.5% in 2006, Deer Lake faces

the challenge of seeking a more effective tax collection method. Other challenges faced by the community are typical of the region, thus opening the door to cooperate on a regional level. These challenges are the need for youth retention programs and environmental education programs.

By making use of such assets as its vast volunteer base and its success with committees of council, Deer Lake will obtain the goals it has set for itself.

The Region

History

With soil as rich as its history, the Humber Valley is home to 10 beautiful and scenic communities each of which has a rich history of its own. Four of these strong, persevering communities are working together to achieve the goals they have set. As was described in the previous sections, each of the four communities; Cormack, Deer Lake, Howley and Reidville, have their own unique assets and challenges that they will strive to overcome. Through the development of strong partnerships the common goals that have been established amongst these communities can be achieved together. As can be seen in the preceding community histories, all four partnering towns have a very significant aspect of their history in common. Logging played a big role in the establishment of the communities and continues to act as a source of income today. Also, each community has used, and continues to harvest, the great potential of the Humber Valley.

Development of the Humber Valley is late in the history of Newfoundland; through the east coast of the province had been inhabited for centuries, an agreement with the French had prevented settlement on the west coast. Due to its young history, its earliest beginnings are alive in the memories of our seniors and the tales told to them by their parents.

In the middle of the 19th century, people began to move into the Humber Valley. They came for the stands of white pine and stayed for the rich and fertile farmland. Completion of the railway in 1898 opened up the valley. This led to the development of a paper industry bringing people to cut pulpwood and work on one of the largest hydroelectric projects in the world at that time. The advancements led to the establishment of the communities in the valley today. Though changes have taken place in how the people of the valley make a living, much of why the area was developed still plays an intricate role for those living there today.

Regional Strengths and Challenges

Given the beauty and unspoiled potential of the region, it is no surprise that each of the four communities have a strong desire to promote tourism within the region. Each community has its own unique culture and landscape to attract visitors and also has common attractions based around the Humber Valley's vast wilderness, excellent hunting and hiking, and some of the best salmon fishing in North America. The Humber River can be utilized by all communities in the region and is our greatest common asset.

Through collaboration of the partners will tackle each challenge by basing attainable goals upon the region's uncompromising assets.

Common challenges that the partnering communities face that will be addressed throughout this document are; the need for youth retention programs, the need for environmental education programs, and the need for a more suitable waste management facility. In the document Western Regional Waste Management Plan (APENDIX), it is indicated that a plan is in development to service the entire Western Region of Newfoundland with a Regional Waste Site. Through continuing the effective teamwork these partners have used so well in the past, all challenges can and will be met.

Where are we now? DISCUSS ASSET BASED PLANNING

To establish where the communities currently stand with respect to sustainability it was paramount to involve the community. Each of the four partnering communities distributed surveys (APENDIX) to community members with the goal of receiving input from at least 5% of citizens. The purpose of this survey was to encourage feedback from citizens of the communities regarding community sustainability. By developing a list of questions encompassing the sustainability pillars, each municipality was better able to assess its current sustainability.

Another valuable tool in community self-assessment is one distributed through Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador. This Municipal Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool Kit was used by the region not only as a starting point in strategic planning, but also to determine which needs were unique to a community and which were common. The benefit of this is that determining common needs will allow the partnering municipalities to collaborate on certain issues pertaining to sustainability.

By holding a meeting with the Town Council, each community was able to address each pillar of sustainability separately and discuss significant issues or needs, current partnerships, and local assets for each pillar. This led to the creation of a vision statement; eventually, collaborative and independent goals were also determined.

Enhanced through the use of visuals, an evaluation of the region demonstrates the current “health” of our community sustainability and paints a picture of what must be changed in order to achieve and maintain a sustainable community for future generations.