



# MOMENTUM: Town of Erin 2015-2018 Economic Development Action Plan

Presented by:  
the Town of Erin Economic Development Department  
Tuesday November 3, 2015

# MOMENTUM



- ▶ *The impetus and driving force gained by the development of a process or course of events*

# Process

- ▶ The Economic Development Coordinator authored the DRAFT “Momentum” Action Plan for Council and public review and presented the draft plan to Council on August 3, 2015 for review by the public until August 25, 2015.
- ▶ In total, fifteen (15) submissions were received from the general public with many concerns about time constraints and summer vacation impediments.
- ▶ At its September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Council, permission was sought and approved to extend the deadline for public comment until October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.
- ▶ All eighteen submissions were forwarded to EEDC members as they were received. Submissions were also received from the East Wellington Chamber of Commerce (EWCC) and the Village of Erin BIA.
- ▶ The Town of Erin engaged the services of Bruce Withrow, President of *Meeting Facilitators International* to facilitate a day long planning session in mid-October 2015
- ▶ Members of the Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC), the Mayor and CAO /Town Manager reviewed over 230 comments and suggestions and provided advice on the content and final direction for the Momentum Action Plan
- ▶ The Economic Development Coordinator authored the Final Momentum Action Plan for presentation to Council November 3, 2015.

# PRIMARY GOALS



- Support the Retention, Growth and Expansion of existing businesses.
- Balanced growth in industrial, commercial and residential development.
- Build a positive business climate.
- Work cooperatively and strengthen links with all partners at all levels.
- Establish the Town of Erin as a Premier location for Equine Enthusiasts.
- Promote and market the Town of Erin as a Four Seasons Tourism Destination.
- Develop a Sustainable Economy.

# BACKGROUND



- ✓ The Town of Erin engaged the services of a qualified economic development coordinator in November 2014 for one year to establish the Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC) and facilitate the development of a four-year economic development action plan.
- ✓ The EEDC was established in February 2015 and mandated to provide advice to the office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) on economic development in the community.
- ✓ The EEDC conducted four (4) focus groups in July 2015 to get a clear understanding of sector priorities and suggested initiatives that could be explored by the community over the next four years.

# EEDC Focus Groups



- ▶ Agriculture and Equine Industry
- ▶ Tourism
- ▶ Downtown Revitalization
- ▶ Business Investment Attraction

## Town of Erin



- ▶ It is an exciting time for economic development in the Town of Erin. The community is on the threshold of experiencing growth in housing and is considering key investments for improving municipal infrastructure and services to enhance the quality of life experience and aid appropriate development.
- ▶ The Town is strategically located a short distance from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and a population in excess of 6.5 million people generating year-round visitors exploring small time rural living and taking advantage of riding, golfing, hiking, cycling, festivals, fairs, events and an array of other leisure activities.



# Vision and Mission



To achieve the mission and vision statements, a series of goals and action objectives have been established, all of which aim to provide direction to inform decision making over the term of Council.

Proposed -

- ▶ Vision: *“A Town of innovation and sustainability where nature, community, and business thrive”*
  
- ▶ Mission: *“Erin will foster sustainable growth through infrastructure and public service development to enhance quality of life”*



# Economic Development Goals



## ► *Support the Retention, Growth and Expansion of Existing Businesses:*

- Building a more positive business climate, while streamlining policy and regulatory processes is important to retaining and encouraging business growth and expansion in the Town of Erin.
- The Economic Development Officer will work with the Village of Erin BIA and the East Wellington Chamber of Commerce and colleagues at Wellington County Economic Development to strengthen the Town's capacity to support the business community.

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)



## ► *Balanced Growth in Industrial, Commercial and Residential Development:*

- The Town of Erin must maintain a balance in the growth of its industrial, commercial and residential development to ensure appropriate services are in place, demand and residential growth meets the needs of families considering the Town of Erin as a great place to live, work and retire.
- Decisions will need to be made during the amendments to the Town's Official Plan (OP) and further public consultation will be undertaken during that process.

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)



## ► *Build a Positive Business Climate:*

- It will be imperative for the Town's new Economic Development Officer (EDO) to maintain open dialogue with all facets of the business community and their representative organizations (BIA and Chamber of Commerce).
- The Town of Erin entered into a collaborative relationship with both the Village of Erin BIA and the East Wellington Chamber of Commerce (EWCC) in January 2015 to work towards building a more positive business climate in the community
- The Town of Erin maintains three distinctive business areas; Village of Erin, Village of Hillsburgh and those businesses that exist within the rural areas throughout the community

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)



- ▶ *Work Cooperatively and Strengthen Links with Partners at all Levels:*
  - Local economic development is about partnerships and cooperation, this includes partnerships with all levels of government, professional associations, social groups, and of course the business community
  - Communication assures a degree of community buy-in and participation.
  - Communication provides for a better understanding of local employment history, expansion needs, barriers to growth and a comprehensive approach for addressing issues
  - The Town of Erin will work towards enhancing future region wide partnerships and maximize every opportunity for cooperation.

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)

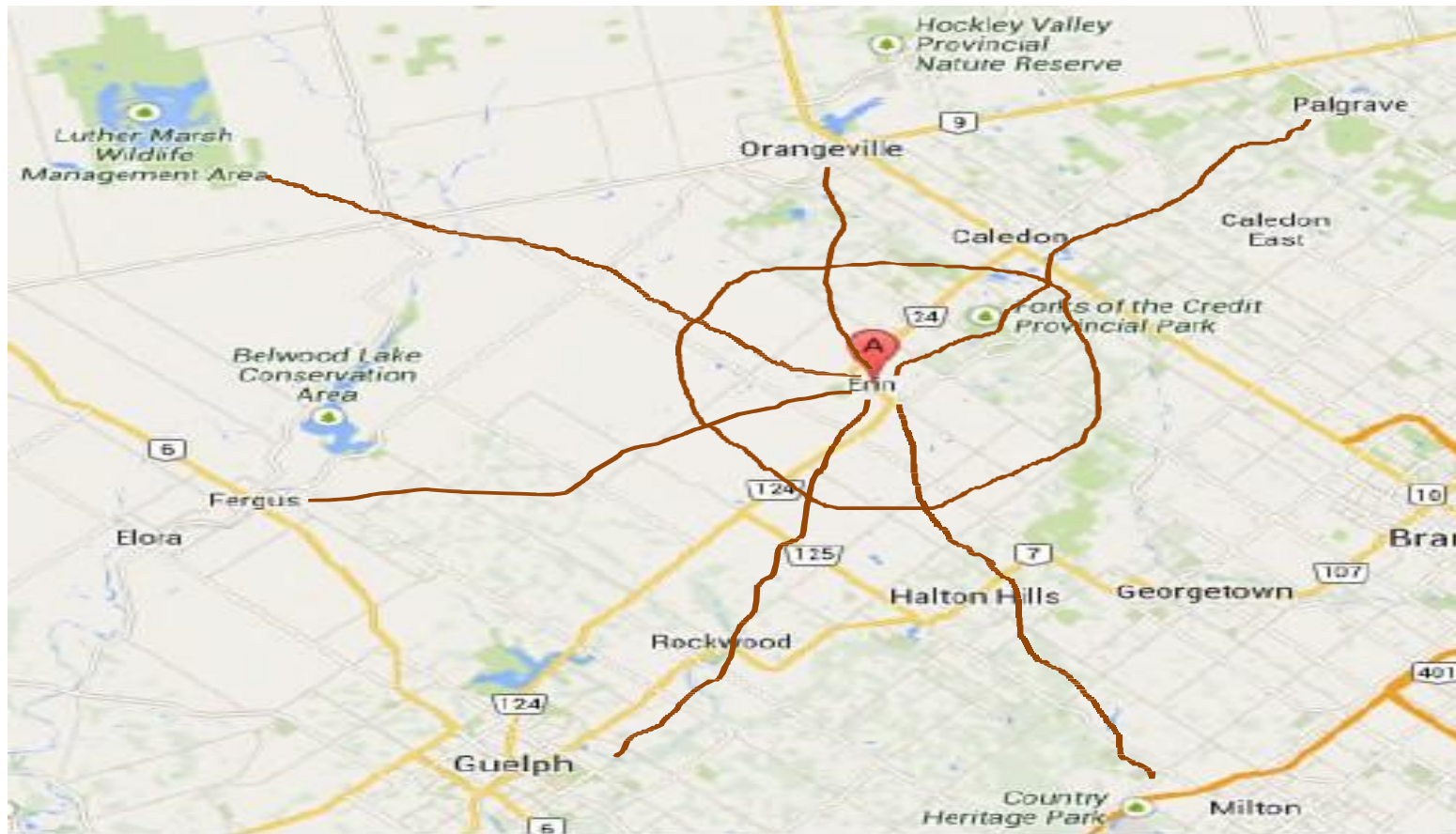


## ► *Establish the Town of Erin as a Premier Location for Equine Enthusiasts:*

The Erin Equine Economic Development Report was completed in December 2013 and specific recommendations included:

- Adopt equine as the initial economic development engine
- Focus on marketing Erin as the GTA's equine playground
- Expand trail infrastructure to attract riders and leverage nearby event facilities
- Approach neighbouring jurisdictions to form a regional trail committee
- Attract equine manufacturing for maximum tax revenue growth
- Use equine to establish an economic development framework

## PROPOSED ERIN EQUINE TRAILS “HUB”:



- A new, more comprehensive application for funding will be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Rural Economic Development (RED) Program in November 2015. Funding is shared on a 50% basis.

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)



## ► Promote and Market the Town of Erin as a Four Seasons Tourism Destination:

- Examples: St. Patrick's Day Festival, Summer Rodeo, Ribfest Celebration, Christmas Parade, Winter Carnival, Equine Events, etc.
- Future opportunities abound for development of a "Riverwalk" trail that runs along the shoreline of the Lower West Credit River from Charles Street in the Village of Erin north to the Elora Cataract Trail and then northwest to the Village of Hillsburgh and around the Millpond.
- Development of a "Riverwalk" Trail network within the community has the potential to draw additional visitors to the community, expand opportunities for commerce and reinvigorate locals interested in walking or riding the trail. Such a development would complement the Town of Erin's desire to become a "Hub" for equine enthusiasts.
- The Town should act as the principal facilitator for these events and work with local groups to ensure an active community and regional participation.

# Economic Development Goals (cont'd)

► **Develop a Sustainable Economy:**

- The long term objective for the community should be to establish a local economy that would meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- In the short term, environmental conservation and green energy alternatives present economic opportunities for the Town and great positive brand potential.

➤ **This Action Plan aims to increase the resilience of Erin's local economy, by:**

- Retaining existing employers, including commercial and industrial tax base and jobs, because these support the Town's ability to provide its residents with services and facilities.
- Maintaining the ability to accommodate a steady share of regional employment growth in the sectors in which Erin has a competitive advantage.
- Diversifying the economy, so that it is more robust in the face of major economic or environmental change



# Action Items



The action items identified in the following sections of the Momentum Action Plan have been broken down into six distinctive areas;

- Downtown Core
- Centerpiece
- Economic Development Officer (EDO)
- Funding
- Collaboration
- Planning

Each of these six action areas are directly aligned with the seven core goals established by the Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC) following input from the public, the Village of Erin BIA and East Wellington Chamber of Commerce.

# Action Items

(Cont'd)



## ► Downtown Core (10 Items):

- Make Application to Ontario Trillium to Undertake a Riverwalk Trail Feasibility Study (2016-100% Grant)
- Establish a Town of Erin Wide Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2015-2016)
- Conduct a First Impressions Community Exchange with the Town of Mount Forest (Summer 2016)
- Initiate Steps for Development of a Crosswalk in the Village of Erin (2015-2016)
- Establish Public Washroom Facilities in the Village of Erin (2016)
- Investigate Options for Creating a Winter Skating Environment on the Lower West Credit River between Charles and Church Street in the Village of Erin (2017)
- Develop an Erin Community Ambassador Program (2016)
- Investigate the Potential of Extending Business Store Hours in the Community (Winter 2016)

## ➤ Four Seasons Attraction:

- Develop a Four Seasons Attractions Strategy and Destinations Experience for the Town of Erin (2016 Ongoing)

## ➤ Wastewater :

- Although not directly responsible for the Wastewater EA Process, the Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC) feels it will be extremely important to ensure that the terms of reference, for completion of the assessment review process, be comprehensive and take into consideration all avenues of potential impact on the overall assimilative capacity. (2015-2018)

# Action Items

(Cont'd)



## ► **Economic Development Officer (EDO) Actions:**

### ➤ **Centerpiece Priorities (4 Items):**

- Develop a Four Season Attractions Strategy and Destinations Experience for the Town of Erin (2016-Ongoing)
- Wastewater Environmental Assessment (2015-2018)
- Undertake a Follow-Up Review of BR&E Contributing Businesses (Fall 2015 Ongoing)
- Submit New Application to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to Develop the Equine Industry within the Town of Erin as an Equine “Hub” of Trail Infrastructure (2015-2018)

## ➤ **EDO - Core Functions (5 Items) :**

- Develop External Business Attraction Marketing and Promotion Campaign (2016)
- Develop a Town of Erin Community Profile (Print and Web Based) (2015-2016)
- Support Commercial/Industrial Enquiries and Provide Coordination Role (Ongoing)
- Development of Industrial and Commercial Lands (Ongoing)
- Establish a Business Visitation Plan (Ongoing)

# Action Items

(Cont'd)



## ► EDO - Priorities (13 Items):

- Establish a Business Visitation Plan (Ongoing)
- Undertake an “Open for Business” Marketing and Promotional Campaign (2015 Ongoing)
- Promotion of “Live and Work Erin” Web Portal (2015)
- Attract Equine Manufacturing and Equine Service Business to the Town of Erin (2016)
- Produce a Trails Network Plan and Promotional Brochure (2016)
- Explore the Potential for Attracting a Post-Secondary Educational Facility (2015-2016)
- Initiate Photometric Analysis of Village of Erin Downtown Core Lighting Upgrades (2016)
- Semi-Annual Mayor’s Business Breakfast (Ongoing)
- Establish an Erin Equine Marketing Alliance (2016 Ongoing)
- Create a Web Based Erin Equine Business Directory 2016)
- Investigate Ways to Leverage Headwaters “Horse Country” Marketing (2016)
- Develop a Corporate Sponsorship and Advertising Policy (May 2016)
- Investigate Opportunities for an Additional Transfer Station, Recycling Program and Composting Facility (2016)

# Action Items

(Cont'd)



## ► Funding Items (3 Items):

- Apply for County of Wellington 2015 Economic Development Funding (Completed October 2015)
- Apply to County of Wellington Planning for 50% Funding to Undertake a Trail Development (Spring 2016)
- Apply to OMAFRA “RED Program” for funding to develop an Equine Trail Hub in the Town of Erin and seek out other opportunities for expanding the Equine industry within the Town. This application is for matching funding (50%). (2015-2018)

## ► Collaboration (6 Items):

- Host a Business Showcase Networking Event/Economic Development Forum (April 2016)
- Explore the Potential for Developing a “Business Development Centre” in the Town of Erin (2015-2016)
- Support Regional Collaboration and Association Events Related to Economic Development (Ongoing)
- Collaborative Promotion with Erin BIA in the “In the Hills” Publication (Fall 2015)
- Develop and Maintain Relationships with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) (Ongoing)
- Support Regional Collaboration and Association Events Related to Economic Development (Ongoing)

# Action Items

(Cont'd)



## ► Planning Related Activities (10):

- Proceed with the Town of Erin Official Plan Amendment Process and Identify Growth Areas (2015-2016)
- Develop a Four Seasons Attractions Strategy and Destinations Experience for the Town of Erin (2016-Ongoing)
- Work with the County of Wellington EcDev Department to Upgrade Regional Road Signage (Aug. 2015 - 2016)
- Develop System Upgrades to the Town's Social Media Platform (2016-Ongoing)
- Investigate Opportunities for Expanding the Trail Infrastructure within the Town of Erin and Opportunities for Leveraging nearby Event Facilities (Spring 2016)
- Undertake a Town of Erin Recreation Masterplan (2016)
- Undertake a Transportation and Parking Plan for the Urban Centres of Hillsburgh and Village of Erin (June 2016)
- Explore Green Energy Opportunities within the Town of Erin (Ongoing)
- Establish a Town of Erin Wide Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2015-2016)
- Undertake a Review of Available Land for Industrial/Commercial Development (Dec. 2015)

# Monitoring and Update



- ▶ **The Economic Development office will produce an annual report summarizing:**
  - Key statistical indicators that track progress in achieving the aim of this Action Plan, particularly data on land availability, employment, commercial and industrial space, and business enquiries.
  - Annual measurement of economic development activity based on inputs and outputs
  - Actions that have been initiated or completed in the year.
  - Plans for the coming year.

The Action Plan should be reviewed by Council in 2018 and updated in 2019.

# NEXT STEPS



- ✓ Approval of the Momentum: Action Plan by Town of Erin Council (November 3, 2015);
- ✓ Commencement of the fulltime Economic Development Officer (November 9, 2015);
- ✓ Meeting of new Economic Development Officer and Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC) - November 11, 2015;
- ✓ Mentorship between existing contract Economic Development Coordinator and new Economic Development Officer (November 9-27, 2015);
- ✓ Economic Development Officer to begin work in collaboration with community partners (Village of Erin BIA, East Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Headwaters Tourism, Erin Agriculture Society, County of Wellington and neighbouring economic development departments);
- ✓ Economic Development Officer to initiate funding application to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) Rural Economic Development (RED) Program for Equine Hub Development (November 2015)
- ✓ Ongoing activities of the Erin Economic Development Committee (EEDC) to oversee implementation of the action plan and provide advice to the EDO and Town's CAO/Town Manager where appropriate.
- ✓ Development of the 2016 Economic Development Annual Budget

**NOTE:** *Advancing with proposed projects may be conditional upon the Town of Erin receiving funding from other senior levels of government.*



# Concluding Comments:



- ▶ There is no silver bullet - Economic Development must be viewed as a **long term investment** in the community, not an expense;
- ▶ Economic Development budgets must include funds that are capable of supporting project leverage and operational support;
- ▶ Special large scale projects typically require 50% matching funds and appropriate planning and reserves must be established to ensure the appropriate leverage of future development in the Town of Erin;
- ▶ “*Momentum*” establishes an initial roadmap for economic development in the community;
- ▶ With focus, collaboration and careful planning, the future offers great potential;
- ▶ The EEDC remains available and willing to work with the Town’s new EDO and CAO to facilitate progress and seize opportunity for development as identified.

THANK YOU!