

THE COUNTY OF HALIBURTON

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2003

Presented to the County of Haliburton

Prepared by
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October 9th, 2003

Preface

The updated Strategic Plan presented to the County of Haliburton has been produced by the consultant, Dr. Christopher Bryant, Econotrends Ltd., according to the Terms of Reference as laid out by the County of Haliburton.

The updating process started out with the initial 1997 Strategic Plan. In the updating process, a number of sources of information were utilized: a) two public consultations held on August 1st and on August 14th, in Stanhope and Wilberforce respectively; b) a meeting with members of Council and County staff on October 18th; c) a public consultation with members of the County of Haliburton's business community on September 18th; d) feedback on various occasions from the County of Haliburton Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee; e) the views of various stakeholders (primarily garnered through responses to an E-mail questionnaire) and other citizens (from responses to an on-line survey mounted on the County of Haliburton web site by the Chamber of Commerce); and f) various sources of statistical information.

The 2003 Strategic Plan is presented in two parts:

1. The Strategic Plan itself
2. Appendices, in which supporting evidence is provided

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Executive Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the analysis undertaken of the 1997 Strategic Plan, progress in its implementation and input received from citizens and stakeholders during the summer of 2003, and additional meetings with the County Council and representatives of the business community in the County:

1. the renewed vision for the County is presented; and
2. a series of recommendations is presented that specifically require County Council endorsement and / or action.

Other recommendations aimed more specifically at the groups working in the different Strategic Orientations are presented in that part of the Strategic Plan which details each of the four Strategic Orientations retained. These are presented in the form of suggestions for these groups (e.g. the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee) to consider in terms of their own planning and action.

The Renewed Vision for the County of Haliburton's 2003 Strategic Plan

The vision that has emerged as the guiding light for the development of the County of Haliburton is:

A County with a co-operative environment within which the different players and population groups work together continuously to achieve a sustainable County community. This sustainable County community is characterized by: effective co-operation and communications between the various stakeholders and the population; a more stable, diversified and year-round economy based on environmentally friendly economic activities and carefully managed development; well-managed residential development, both seasonal and permanent, in keeping with maintaining a small town atmosphere, the environmental integrity particularly of the lakes and forests, and adequate accessible services for people, including social services, educational services and recreational opportunities; a strong and dynamic social fabric; and a strong sense of regional identity with a more inclusive and tolerant community and a strong sense of belonging, providing for a high quality of life for families and individuals.

This vision is a logical development from the 1997 vision and is entirely compatible with it. The 2003 vision establishes the three cornerstones for the sustainable development of the County of Haliburton: 1) the nature of the economic development to pursue; 2) the nature of the quality of life that citizens wish to enjoy; and 3) the bio-physical environment (which is one of the foundations of both the type of economic development that is desired and of the quality of life that residents (permanent and part-time) wish to have access to).

Based on this vision, and the efforts required to move the County closer to this vision, four broad Strategic Orientations, or major directions for managing and encouraging change, were identified and validated during the different discussions. They are:

1. Communications
2. Economic Diversification
3. Environment
4. Services for People

Recommendations Involving County of Haliburton Initiatives

The following recommendations represent the key contributions of the County Council to ensuring a dynamic and sustainable County economy, community and environment. Further discussion of the recommendations is found in Section 2.3 (The 2003 Strategic Plan: County of Haliburton Initiatives). The recommendations requiring County of Haliburton endorsement and / or action are:

1. That **the County of Haliburton** establish a Community Economic Development Office, with a Community Economic Development Officer and adequate resources to work with the various Strategic Orientation groups (Committees or other groups established from time to time) and other stakeholders to review their priorities and develop action plans.

This recommendation is based on the following conclusions from the analysis of input received:

- a. Volunteer efforts are critical in keeping the various initiatives progressing, both those already underway and new ones. However, there is a limit to what volunteers can accomplish, particularly in light of the extent of efforts required to move the County closer to the vision of the economy and community as identified above.
- b. In order for many of the initiatives to be achieved (and even initiated) in the short to medium term, a concerted effort is required that can only occur through dedicating resources to support a full-time professional in Community Economic Development. This person would devote his or her time partly to playing an important role in the economic development field as traditionally understood. In addition, he or she would also play a role in helping the various Committees and other groups plan and take action. Underlying many of the initiatives is a real need to build capacity and create a broader leadership base in the County. Only a full-time office and personnel can produce results within a time-frame that would respond to the expectations of citizens and stakeholders.
- c. In addition, it is important to underscore that the County of Haliburton is one of the few bodies that does not have a full-time Community Economic Development Officer or an Economic Development Officer in Eastern and Central Ontario.

Discussion of the appropriate time-frame, the resources required and the principal functions of this Office is provided in Section 2.3.

The Community Economic Development Office would become one of the principal foundations for implementing the County's Strategic Plan.

2. That **the County of Haliburton** make a commitment to managing the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan through setting up a County Strategic Planning and Management Steering Committee. This should be a very small committee – one representative from Council and two from the community, for example, one each from the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee and the Environmental Advisory Committee. The way in which the different strategic orientations (see below) should be managed will take into account the level of development and interaction that already exists between the stakeholders at work in these fields (see below).

This recommendation to set up a small Steering Committee is based on the need for implementation of a strategic plan, and the importance of involvement of County politicians in managing and monitoring the implementation process. Further discussion of this, as well as the roles of this Steering Committee, is provided in Section 2.3.

3. That **the County of Haliburton** commit to holding a regular Community Forum (preferably in several locations in the County each year, and at least bi-annually) in order to ensure that citizen input is mobilized and incorporated into the planning and implementation processes. These Community Forums would not take on the role of managing the process of planning and implementation, but would: a. provide critical input to that process; b. represent a way of ensuring accountability to the community regarding whatever actions and initiatives are pursued; c. ensure that new ideas and newly emerging issues are captured in a timely manner; d. provide one way in which some of the potential human resources available in the County could be mobilized to help the County achieve its vision. The agenda of each of the forums would be set in advance through consultation with the Steering Committee and the Community Economic Development Office, and would be tailored to respond to specific issues either generally or that arise in the specific areas of the County in which they would be held.

Further discussion of this recommendation is provided in Section 2.3.

4. That **the County of Haliburton** put in place, as part of a broader communications strategy for the County, an efficient and effective communications strategy between the County government and the citizens of the County.

Further discussion of this recommendation is provided in Section 2.3.

5. That **the County of Haliburton**, based upon the 2003 vision statement and the efforts required to achieve it, endorse the importance of four Strategic Orientations, or major directions for managing and directing change. They are:
 1. Communications
 2. Economic Diversification
 3. Environment
 4. Services for People

In relation to these four Strategic Orientations, different approaches are appropriate in order to achieve progress in each. These differences take into account the existing level of cooperation between the different organizations and stakeholders in each, as well as progress made to date regarding planning and action within each of these Strategic Orientations. Discussion concerning recommendations 6, 7 and 8 for organizing planning and action within each of these Strategic Orientations is provided in Section 2.3. The specific recommendations are:

6. That **the County of Haliburton** endorse the operations of committees in two of the Strategic Orientations, Economic Diversification and Environment respectively:

The function of these two committees is seen, in addition to providing advice to County Council, as planning (for their respective strategic orientations) and ensuring that initiatives and projects are properly resourced and carried out). They will inevitably lead to the creation of other working groups dealing with specific sub-themes or issues, and they are to be encouraged in this, particularly if it leads to effective mobilization and action.

7. That the **County of Haliburton** fosters the development of a working group or an ad hoc group to work on developing an overall communications strategy for the County, as part of the County's commitment to the Communications Strategic Orientation.
8. That **the County of Haliburton**, through the Community Economic Development Office, undertake to facilitate a bi-annual meeting of organizations and stakeholders involved in the fourth Strategic Orientation, Services for People, with the initial aim of helping the different players sort out the different roles and functions that they actually play and / or could play in the County's development.

Figure 1 portrays the strategic orientations and the most fundamental recommendations. This shows the Community Economic Development Office as one of the two foundations of development in the County. The Communications Strategic Orientation and the Environment Strategic Orientation are also portrayed as foundations upon which the Economic Diversification and Services for People Strategic Orientations are built. Figure 2 portrays the organizational framework recommended above. The Council creates the Steering Committee, and puts in place a Community Economic Development Office. The Community Economic Development Office provides support to the different Committees and working groups, and helps establish the Community Forums and lends its support organizationally to helping set up working meetings for the Services for People Strategic Orientation.

Figure 1 here

Figure 2 here

The 2003 County of Haliburton Strategic Plan

1. Updating of the County of Haliburton Strategic Plan

1.1 Recall of the Principal Aspects of the 1997 Strategic Plan

The 1997 Strategic Plan was based upon a vision that continues to lie at the base of the vision proposed in 2003. It reflects the desire expressed by the majority of residents and stakeholders who provided input to the consultant to see improvements in both the social fabric and the economy of the County to provide people with a higher quality of life, but without degrading the bio-physical environment, particularly the lakes and forests of the County which lie at the basis of many people's quality of life and much of their livelihoods (tourism, seasonal residents).

Not all of the Strategic Orientations identified in 1997 have been retained. In the case of County level marketing, planning and coordination, significant progress has been made on all fronts. Official Plans are now approved at the County level and the local municipal level that set out general guidelines for development in the County. In the case of the seniors and retirees orientation, this was dropped early on because of difficulties in mobilizing and interesting a sufficient number of people. However, the basic needs have not gone away, and it is considered that the issues related to seniors and retirees (both in terms of needed services and opportunities to utilize them as a valuable resource in the County's development) can be more than adequately addressed in the proposed Strategic Orientations of Services for People and Economic Diversification respectively. Similarly, transportation issues remain, but again it is felt that these can be more fruitfully dealt with in the Services for People Strategic Orientation.

The 2003 Strategic Plan therefore has maintained the importance of the effort that should be devoted to **Economic Diversification** (including continued marketing efforts, which include important activities currently being carried out by the Chamber of Commerce). Furthermore, it is strongly suggested that the effort be maintained regarding the **Environment** as it lies at the basis of much of what is essential for a high quality of life and for the success of many of the economic activities in the County. Two other thrusts have been singled out much more explicitly in the 2003 Update, Communications and Services for People. **Communications** – not just infrastructure, but also information flows and effective communication between the players and the population – has always been at the core of many of the issues in the County but pre-2003, it seemed an issue that people felt could be handled within existing efforts. However, in the last 6 years, an increasing effort has been made in this area, so much so that it is clear that communications has become the glue that holds everything else together. **Services for People** has also been singled out, since it is clear that achieving a high quality of life also depends upon having adequate and accessible services of many different kinds. The various organizations, public and private, actually and potentially involved in this Strategic Orientation have not yet established an umbrella group that could claim widespread support, but the situation is evolving. This is addressed in the recommendations below.

1.2 The Updating and the Process Followed, and Lessons Learned from the 1997 Implementation Process

The updating process started out with the initial 1997 Strategic Plan. In the updating process, a number of sources of information were utilized:

- a) Two public consultations were held on August 1st and on August 14th, in Stanhope and Wilberforce respectively. These were deliberately held outside the two main centres of Haliburton and Minden in an attempt to bring the process to other parts of the County.
- b) A meeting was held with members of County Council and County staff on September 18th.
- c) A public consultation was undertaken with members of the County of Haliburton's business community on September 18th.
- d) Feedback was received on various occasions from members of the County of Haliburton Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee.
- e) The views of various stakeholders (primarily garnered through responses to an E-mail questionnaire) and other citizens (from responses to an on-line survey mounted on the County of Haliburton web site by the Chamber of Commerce) were solicited and received.
- f) Various sources of statistical information were also used to verify a number of statements, as well as to set the overall context.

The implementation process for the 1997 Strategic Plan was maintained in the updated Strategic Plan in several areas. The Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee represents one of the groups (an amalgamation of two of the initial groups suggested) with the longest standing track record of following through on plans and action. In addition, it has expanded its range of action substantially.

In terms of the process that was followed after 1997, the initially innovative effort made through the 'Hub' Committee, as a coordinator and communicator between the different working groups, was abandoned, in the face of a number of difficulties. Part of the difficulties appears to have stemmed from having taken on too many functions – planner, coordinator, communicator and mobilizer in the community. Following from this, the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee took on some of the roles of the Hub particularly in relation to managing the updating process. During the 2003 updating process, it was clear that the overall process of managing and monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan was still an important function that had to be provided for. It was also clear that there has to be opportunity for citizens to have their say, not just in terms of criticism, but also in terms of contributing to and taking up specific initiatives.

One of the conclusions of the updating process is that the County government must play an important role in managing the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The roles include both providing for the basic infrastructure which would help the other

players and citizens in the County achieve the County's vision (see Section 2.3), playing a major role in facilitating appropriate development in the County, and in supporting and contributing to a major communications effort.

1.3 Significant Changes in Context for the County of Haliburton's 2003 Strategic Plan

In the last 6 years, some significant events have occurred and other trends have been reinforced. These have all been important in setting the context in which the updating process has been undertaken, and some have set parameters within which development planning and action must be placed in the County.

- A. The municipal reorganization and continued reorganization of the roles of the Province in local affairs
- B. The burgeoning of local associations of different types in different domains, e.g. recreation, tourism, residential associations, . . .
- C. The development of Official Plans at the County and municipal levels (and their relationship with the Strategic Plan)
- D. Continued change in the demographic composition of the County
- E. The continued shift towards the information economy

The municipal reorganization has generally been regarded as positive, allowing for more efficient and effective management of the County, although there are still issues regarding the functions developed at each level, and which level should be effectively responsible for certain services.

The many local associations that have developed provide a potentially important vehicle through which to communicate more effectively with different segments of the population, as well as to enlist their efforts in developing local action plans on specific matters.

The progress made on Official Plans can only be lauded, and the 1997 Strategic Plan recommended very strongly that the County make developing the Official Plan one of its priorities. These Official Plans provide some of the bases upon which development proposals can be assessed.

The demographic composition of the County continues to change. The ageing population is underscored by the most recent statistics available. This brings with it demands for additional services, as well as providing a source of new ideas and expertise for business development and other forms of socio-economic development. Young people continue to leave the County, posing a major problem for renewal and initiative. The trend of seasonal residents (a particular form of tourism) becoming permanent residents, on the other hand, continues to provide a major source of additional income to County businesses.

Finally, the continued move towards the information economy increasingly opens up opportunities for communications and for business that did not exist before. However, in order to capitalize on this, the necessary infrastructure must be in place.

1.4 The 2003 Community-Based Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan for a County is a general guide for managing change and development. It is like a dynamic blue-print, in that it is both a guide but at the same time, it requires constant attention to changing circumstances. A strategic plan for a county area is also something that is now generally understood to require the integration of the many stakeholders usually encountered in an area as well as the citizens of the area. Usually, no one player can reasonably expect to implement a strategic plan alone, and in many cases, the players who will take the ultimate responsibility for initiating action and seeing it through are not those who initiated the strategic planning process. The vision, as created through the input of citizens and stakeholders, represents a broad set of goals to achieve. The Strategic Orientations represent the general axes for development planning and action which citizens and the stakeholders believe will make a major contribution to achieving the vision.

In this document, the updated Strategic Plan is presented in two parts:

The Plan itself

- i. The Plan contains a certain number of Recommendations that cut across all strategic orientations (e.g. the central functions that should be developed at the County level), including the management of the implementation of the strategic plan and its monitoring
- ii. The Plan also contains plans for each of the different Strategic Orientations, their objectives and recommendations or suggestions for planning and action.

The Strategic Orientation Profiles

In the Appendices (in addition to updated Milestones, Challenges and Issues and Opportunities statements based on citizen and stakeholder input from surveys and questionnaires), a synthesis of the information used to make the diagnosis of each Strategic Orientation retained is briefly laid out.

This format of presentation is consistent with 'best practice'. This should allow the strategic plan to be readily used both in managing the overall implementation process, as well as making it easy for any orientation action group to utilize the plan effectively in its own planning and action program.

2. The County of Haliburton

2.1 Situation Analysis for the County as a whole

In Table 1, the general strengths and weaknesses of the County are identified, based on the 1997 Strategic Plan, changes in the general situation, and input received in the Updating process.

On the positive side, the County's permanent and seasonal residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life, related to the small town atmosphere and relatively low population density in the area. Haliburton County is outstanding in the large areas of relatively untouched natural beauty it possesses. There are also significant forest resources with economic potential. The people are seen to be welcoming, and there is an active social and cultural life. Wage rates are relatively low. The internal infrastructure is improving in a number of areas, particularly in relation to the trails system, educational facilities (Sir Sanford Fleming College and the Fine Arts School). Today, the County has a reasonably good road system, and improvements have continued over the last 6 years. The local and County governments have become more effective with the recent municipal re-organization.

On the negative side, weaknesses include the perception frequently voiced that there is not enough understanding of the differences or the similarities of the seasonal versus the permanent residents, and continued difficulties in establishing effective communications between the different players and segments of the population. Major issues have appeared in relation to the adequacy of the septic systems and waste management. Some of these weaknesses have appeared more acutely as the province has decentralized more responsibility to local and County levels. Concerns are increasing regarding lake pollution on some lakes, including noise levels.

The County continues to experience an ageing population and out-migration of many of its youth. The economic base is still not diversified enough, despite encouraging trends in this direction. Wage levels are relatively low, encouraging youth to move elsewhere. This simply reflects the relatively limited range of employment opportunities present in terms of skill requirements and wage levels. A number of services are still seen to be inadequate, such as seniors' housing, education, transportation and communications (e.g. systematic County-wide media coverage).

Strengths and weaknesses are always relative to other areas. Strengths and weaknesses also change over time. In several areas noted above, important improvements have been made (e.g. health care and hospital infrastructure, educational opportunities, some economic development). On other indicators, such as waste management and septic system maintenance, the issues are growing. Finally, while up to the mid-1990s, the County of Haliburton's population was growing quite rapidly in relation to other nearby counties, over the period 1996 to 2001, the population has remained static (based on the 2001 Canada Census of Population), while in some surrounding areas the population has continued to increase (see Appendix 2).

The County's *main strengths* include the quality of its natural environment, the changing composition of its population with the retiree or 'near-retiree' population representing an enormous potential to draw upon, the changing needs of this changing population, the

lively social and cultural life available in the County, the very active volunteerism present in the County, and reasonably good access to major external markets. These strengths are reinforced by the continued trends for some seasonal residents to become permanent residents, and the potential for small and medium sized businesses to engage in exporting beyond the County, both in terms of goods manufacturing and in certain types of service activities (e.g. consulting activities), and the quest for many people to have access (as tourists or as seasonal residents) to the natural environment.

In capitalizing on these strengths, it will be important for the County and its citizens to ensure a more diversified economic base with a broader range of activities with a broader range of skill requirements and a broader range of income generating potential for labour, particularly the County's youth.

A more detailed presentation of the ideas concerning the issues, challenges and opportunities as provided by the citizens and stakeholders is presented in Appendix 1. This provided some of the input to the brief strengths and weaknesses analysis presented above.

Table 1		
General Strengths and Weaknesses of the County of Haliburton		
	Strengths	Weaknesses
General atmosphere	Small town, slower pace Good quality of life Low crime rate A family place Spirit of cooperation improving	Inadequate understanding of the similarities and differences between seasonal and permanent residents Inadequate communications between the different segments of the population and the various players in the County's socio-economic development
Resources (natural)	Pristine diverse beauty Natural areas are accessible, less pressured than in other areas such as the Muskokas Lakes make for attractive scenic resources Forestry resources Attractive building lots Aggregate minerals	Inadequate environmental protection and enforcement of standards Quality of septic systems Water quality Noise pollution in some areas
Resources (people)	Good population mix Integrity of people Versatile, friendly Large and dynamic volunteer base Many active clubs and associations Logging and mining history Diverse skills, reasonable wage rates An important retiree population with significant resources (financial, intellectual, professional, networks) to draw upon to help the socio-economic development of the community	Ageing community Lack of ethnic diversity Continued high unemployment and income dependency Young people tend to leave Low education/skill levels Divisions still apparent in the population Inadequate appreciation of the importance of families and children at risk
Infrastructure (internal)	Recreational trails Other recreational activities The educational system Fine Arts School & Sir Sanford Fleming College Improved water and sewage Improved health services (new hospitals) Communications infrastructure improving Greater availability of training programs Major efforts have been underway to market the County	Inadequate services in relation to: Seniors Transportation Emergency system Post-secondary education Lack of rental accommodation (medium to long term)

Infrastructure (external relationships)	Proximity to large population concentrations Air traffic infrastructure Both these provide potential business opportunities	Perceived inadequacies in external transportation (particularly in relation to links between Haliburton and Toronto and Ottawa)
Employment	Arts and crafts potential Tourism, especially eco-tourism Forestry potential Potential in catering to changing service needs of the changing population (seasonal and permanent)	Inadequate youth opportunities Inadequate range of employment opportunities in terms of skills required and income generated for labour Too much emphasis on tourism Still too much seasonality in the economic base Inadequate development of manufacturing, despite recent improvements
Business	Potential for small business development within County, e.g. from the retiree and near retiree population	Too far from large markets Small local market Leakages of shopping expenditures to other areas, including for some services Access to supplies (for some activities) Inadequate diversification of sources of capital
Ways of doing things	Greater levels of intermunicipal cooperation after the municipal reorganization A more effective County government	Political structure often perceived as not being sufficiently involved and supportive Perception of inadequate public input Need stronger commitment to long term planning Resistance to change Inadequate data availability to plan effectively

Based upon this above analysis, economic diversification and development and social development in the County require a continued and substantial integrated effort. This has to occur by paying attention to the business environment and economic diversification, to the quality of life experienced by residents (permanent and seasonal) in the County, and the environment. The environment is at the base of one of the most important sectors of the County, tourism in its broadest sense (including seasonal residents), and is a driving force for many former seasonal residents who take up permanent residence in the County. The opportunities for linking the economic and environmental dimensions in terms of appropriate development that can generate employment opportunities to create a dynamic and appropriate labour market in the County are enormous. Building upon these opportunities will provide the County's communities with an edge that could make it the envy of other recreational/tourism-oriented communities in Ontario.

2.2A revised Vision for the County of Haliburton

The renewed vision for the **County of Haliburton's 2003 Strategic Plan** is:

A County with a co-operative environment within which the different players and population groups work together continuously to achieve a sustainable County community. This sustainable County community is characterized by: effective co-operation and communications between the stakeholders and the population; a more stable, diversified and year-round economy based on environmentally friendly economic activities and carefully managed development; well-managed residential development, both seasonal and permanent, in keeping with maintaining a small town atmosphere, the environmental integrity particularly of the lakes and forests, and adequate accessible services for people, including social services, educational services and recreational opportunities; a strong and dynamic social fabric; and a strong sense of regional identity with a more inclusive and tolerant community and a strong sense of belonging, providing for a high quality of life for families and individuals.

This vision is a logical development from the 1997 vision and is entirely compatible with it. The 2003 vision established the three cornerstones for the sustainable development of the County of Haliburton, i.e. the nature of the economic development to pursue, the nature of the quality of life that citizens wish to enjoy and the bio-physical environment which is one of the foundations of both the type of economic development that is desired and of the quality of life that residents (permanent and part-time) wish to have access to.

2.3 The 2003 Strategic Plan: County of Haliburton Initiatives

Recommendation 1

Apart from the four Strategic Orientations that have been retained in the 2003 Strategic Plan (dealt with in more detail below), a number of overriding considerations have been identified. They involve specific roles and functions that are recommended for the County government. Their successful endorsement will make the difference between success in achieving the County's vision and failure.

All of the work in the various Strategic Orientations requires a concerted effort to coordinate and mobilize human and other resources in the County. The effort required is substantial. Much can be accomplished by the extensive volunteer networks in the County, but there is a limit to what volunteers can undertake in a timely and efficient manner. It is therefore considered essential that a Community Economic Development Office be established within the County, staffed by an energetic and visionary Community Economic Development Officer. Placing such an Office in the County will ensure that the demands made upon that persons' time from the different Committees and other groups can be managed appropriately, as the County will determine – with other input – the work priorities of the Office.

Thus, it is recommended:

Recommendation 1:

That **the County of Haliburton** establish a Community Economic Development Office, with a Community Economic Development Officer and adequate resources to work with the various Strategic Orientation groups (Committees or other groups established from time to time to review, plan and take action in the various Strategic Orientations) and other stakeholders to review their priorities and develop action plans.

This recommendation is based on the following conclusions from the analysis of input received:

a. As just noted, volunteer efforts are critical in keeping the various initiatives progressing, both those already underway and new ones. However, there is a limit to what volunteers can accomplish, particularly in light of the extent of efforts required to move the County closer to the vision of the economy and community as identified above.

b. In order for many of the initiatives to be achieved (and even initiated) in the short to medium term, a concerted effort is required that can only occur through dedicating resources to support a full-time professional in Community Economic Development. This person would devote his or her time partly to playing an important role in the economic development field as traditionally understood. In addition, he or she would also play a role in helping the various Committees and other groups plan and take action. Underlying many of the initiatives is a real need to build capacity and create a broader leadership base in the County. Only a full-time office and personnel can produce results within a time-frame that would respond to the expectations of citizens and stakeholders.

c. In addition, it is important to underscore that the County of Haliburton is one of the few bodies that does not have a full-time Community Economic Development Officer or an Economic Development Officer in Eastern and Central Ontario.

Time-frame:

It is recommended that this Office be established as quickly as possible, and be supported for an initial period of three years, a time-frame within which tangible results can be expected.

Resources:

A minimum resource base for salaries (a professional and an assistant) and other expenses would be of the order of \$150,000-\$200,000 per year. The Community Economic Development Officer would be assisted by an assistant who would not play the traditional secretarial role, but it is envisaged that it would be someone who could also play a significant role in providing support to the various stakeholders and Committees.

Functions:

a. This Office would act in a variety of proactive and support roles to foster the development of the County.

b. In the field of Economic Development, it is envisaged that the Community Economic Development Officer and his or her assistant would work to establish a strategy with the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee to identify target activities and both attract them to the County and nurture their development from within the pool of existing and potential entrepreneurs in the County.

c. The Community Economic Development Officer would also work closely with the Haliburton County Development Corporation and with the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce, each of whom have specific roles that they play in the County's development, the former focusing on key aspects of business development such as financing and the latter on matters such as tourism marketing.

d. This Office would act in both a support role to the various Committees, other groups and other stakeholders, as well as in a proactive role in suggesting initiatives and ensuring that they are pursued effectively.

e. The Office would also play a critical support role for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (see below).

f. The Office would also play a significant support role in any communications strategy developed, including developing an adequate and accessible information base for several of the Strategic Orientations and their Working Groups. It is important to underscore that this support role does not involve this person or his or her assistant actually collecting data or setting up the information or data bases; that is the role of other players.

g. The Office would also play an important proactive role in mobilizing different segments of the population and various stakeholders to take on the responsibility for initiating projects coherent with the overall vision of the County, and then providing support to them. The efforts initially can be expected to be strongly focussed in the economic development area.

h. Because of the need for this Office to be involved with several different groups, it will be important to ensure that the different groups and players have a sound understanding of each others' roles and functions in the socio-economic development of the County. The Community Economic Development Officer will clearly be instrumental in helping clarify these roles and functions.

The Community Economic Development Office would become one of the principal foundations for implementing the County's Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 2

While the political structure does not include all of the players involved in development processes, the effected officials do have a potentially very important role to play. They are elected, are accountable to the population, and do have access to certain resources. The local and County politicians should therefore become involved in managing and implementing the Strategic Plan. Therefore, Recommendation 2 is made.

Recommendation 2:

That **the County of Haliburton** make a commitment to managing the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan through setting up a County Strategic Planning and Management Steering Committee. This should be a very small committee – one representative from Council and two from the community, for example, one each from the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee and the Environmental Advisory Committee). The way in which the different Strategic Orientations (see below) should be managed will take into account the level of development and interaction that already exists between the stakeholders at work in these fields (see below).

This recommendation to set up a small Steering Committee is based on the following observations and conclusions:

- a. A strategic plan only makes any sense if it is implemented, therefore some monitoring and management is required.
- b. Given the large number of stakeholders involved, and the likelihood that others will emerge, implementation of the County's Strategic Plan will continue to take place through a variety of organizations in the different Strategic Orientations. The Committees linked directly to Council will, of course, work closely with the County political structure (and, of course, the local municipalities where appropriate). In the case of other stakeholders and organizations, the relationship with Council is likely to be more indirect, but the Community Economic Development Office can provide certain types of support role (after careful consideration of the priorities in the County).
- c. The task of management and monitoring need not be very demanding of resources (especially in terms of time), but it definitely has to be undertaken.
- d. There is a need to involve the political process and elected politicians in this management structure, in order that they not become dissociated from the actions being undertaken in the County. A County representative should be part of the Steering Committee, and of course, of any other Committee that the Council sets up such as the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee.
- e. Taking all of this into consideration, the above structure is recommended.
- f. This Steering Committee would report to Council on what is happening in each of the Strategic Orientations. Because this Steering Committee is small, and it's functions limited to management and coordinating, this Steering Committee would not become a vehicle through which requests for resources are funnelled to Council. One of the Steering Committee's functions would be rather to suggest, where needed, to Committees, other groups and other stakeholders how to mobilize resources from other sources. The Community Economic Development Officer would be a significant resource person in this regard. (His or her work priorities would be initially determined through dialogue between the Steering Committee, the incumbent, and the Council.)

Recommendation 3

At the same time, in order not to have the management structure become side-tracked from its main tasks of communicating and helping the Strategic Orientation Committees or groups undertake their own planning and actions, there must be an opportunity for citizens to have input. This can be undertaken through holding Community Forums, the conclusions of which should be used to inform the management of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 3:

That **the County of Haliburton** commit to holding a regular Community Forum (preferably in several locations in the County each year, and at least bi-annually) in order to ensure that citizen input is mobilized and incorporated into the planning and implementation processes. These Community Forums would not take on the role of managing the process of planning and implementation, but would: a. provide critical input to that process; b. represent a way of ensuring accountability to the community regarding whatever actions and initiatives are pursued; c. ensure that new ideas and newly emerging issues are captured in a timely manner; d. provide one way in which some of the potential human resources available in the County could be mobilized to help the County achieve its vision. The agenda of each of the forums would be set in advance through consultation with the Steering Committee and the Community Economic Development Office, and would be tailored to respond to specific issues either generally or that arise in the specific areas of the County in which they would be held.

This recommendation is based on the observation and premise stated in the Terms of Reference for updating the Strategic Plan, that citizen input is considered important. This is so for a number of reasons, including having citizen input in terms of assessing implementation, identification of new issues and ultimately, recruiting some people to become involved directly in initiatives and projects.

It is recommended that this event not be part of the operations of the Steering Committee, but is rather organized independently of the Committee, although advice from the Steering Committee and the Community Economic Development Office would be solicited as input to the process. In addition, the results from the Forums would naturally be fed into the Steering Committee for its members to take into consideration.

The success of much of the implementation of the Strategic Plan depends not only upon having a full-time Community Economic Development Officer and Office, but also upon developing and maintaining an effective and efficient communications strategy between the County government and stakeholders and citizens. Holding regular Community Forums should become part of a broader communications strategy for the County as a whole (see Recommendation 4).

Recommendation 4

It is essential to maintain effective and efficient communications between the County government and the citizens of the County. This, it is recommended:

Recommendation 4:

That **the County of Haliburton** put in place, as part of a broader communications strategy for the County, an efficient and effective communications strategy between the County government and the citizens of the County.

A communications strategy (see the Communications Strategic Orientation) would not only deal with the essential infrastructure needed to maintain communications in a modern world, but would also lay out the building blocks for communications between County government, citizens and the various stakeholders involved in the County's socio-economic development. Such a strategy could include: a) the Community Forums identified above in Recommendation 3; b) developing a protocol for organizing meetings between the various interest groups implicated when major decisions have to be made regarding significant development proposals, both from the private and public sectors. This is developed more fully in the presentation of the Communications Strategic Orientation.

Recommendation 5

Based upon the 2003 vision statement and the efforts required to achieve it, it is recommended:

Recommendation 5:

That **the County of Haliburton** endorse the importance of four Strategic Orientations, or major directions for managing and directing change. They are:

1. Communications
2. Economic Diversification
3. Environment
4. Services for People

In relation to these four Strategic Orientations, different approaches are appropriate to making progress in each. These differences take into account the existing level of cooperation between the different organizations and stakeholders in each, as well as progress made to date regarding planning and action within each of these Strategic Orientations. The specific recommendations are:

Recommendation 6

Recommendation 6:

That **the County of Haliburton** endorse the operations of committees in two of the Strategic Orientations, Economic Diversification and Environment respectively, to undertake planning and foster action in both of those Strategic Orientations

6.1 Economic Diversification

The Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee has been working for several years on various themes or sub-orientations (such as Arts and Culture). In addition, several other directions have been suggested that require considerable work, particularly in the service centres in the County, the attraction and nurturing of appropriate industry, and some of the key infrastructure that is needed (either requiring development or simply being maintained) (such as a more diversified access to capital for business, a unified system for providing business with information on rules and regulations and procedures, transportation infrastructure, and communications infrastructure – the latter being dealt with by another group in the County).

The key sub-orientations recommended for the Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee are:

- a. Arts and Culture
- b. Tourism development of a kind compatible with the vision of the County
Tourism development includes a variety of types of activity, including servicing the seasonal population (a large component of the County's service economy already), ecotourism, get-a-way tourism, and tourism based on sports activity (e.g. cross-country skiing, dog sledding, fishing)
- c. Environmentally friendly businesses (services, light manufacturing less affected by product or materials transportation costs, and light manufacturing using locally available raw materials (e.g. forest resources)).
- d. Maintaining and creating viable and dynamic service centres in the County
- e. Ensuring the creation and maintenance of an adequate infrastructure for business development in the County

Additional commentary is provided in the Economic Diversification Strategic Orientation Plan.

6.2 Environment

The County of Haliburton provides an exceptionally attractive natural environment, and there has long been concern that certain types of development can not only pose a problem for residents, but can also detract from the attractiveness of the area for certain types of business development (e.g. tourism, consulting).

The County already has in place an Environmental Advisory Committee. It is recommended that this Committee be charged with taking on the responsibilities for planning and managing change in this orientation. Inevitably, this Committee has to work with other groups and stakeholders in the County, including the citizens at large, and the Environment Haliburton group (EH), as well as agencies and ministries. A number of urgent environmental issues are being tackled in the County currently, including waste disposal and septic system inspection and maintenance. In addition, this Committee should take on the responsibility for the development of a set of

criteria which can be used both in marketing and in directing efforts to attract economic activity, as well as in managing it.

The function of these two committees is seen, in addition to providing advice to County Council, as planning (for their respective Strategic Orientations) and ensuring that initiatives and projects are properly resourced and carried out). They will inevitably spin off other working groups dealing with specific sub-themes or issues, and they are to be encouraged in this, particularly if it leads to effective mobilization and action.

Recommendation 7

Recommendation 7:

That **the County of Haliburton** fosters the development of a working group or an ad hoc group to work on developing an overall communications strategy for the County, as part of the County's commitment to the Communications Strategic Orientation.

Already progress is being made by the Connect Ontario group, and other communication initiatives. Communications is, however, more than getting in place the modern infrastructure for internet access and communications. It also entails the development of forms of communication tailored to each of the segments of the County's community in order to ensure: a) that the County can reach out to the different segments of the community to encourage them to participate in debates surrounding issues in the development of the County; and b) that the human resources in the County can be more effectively mobilized to either support or become directly involved in the County's development.

7.1 It is recommended that the Community Economic Development Officer be assigned the responsibility for initially assembling such a group (an ad hoc working group initially), and then acting in a support role as the group develops a strategic communications plan.

Recommendation 8

Recommendation 8:

That **the County of Haliburton**, through the Community Economic Development Office, undertake to facilitate a bi-annual meeting of organizations and stakeholders involved in the fourth Strategic Orientation, Services for People, with the initial aim of helping the different players sort out the different roles and functions that they actually play and/or could play in the County's development.

The reasoning behind this recommendation is that:

- a. It is clear that the Strategic Orientation, Services for People, is very broad and contains a number of very significant issues that need resolving for socio-

economic development in the County to advance significantly. This is why it was retained as a Strategic Orientation.

- b. However, there are many organizations and stakeholders involved currently, and there is no clearly identifiable 'voice' or vehicle through which plans can be made collectively taking into account the various organizations and issues.
- c. This is a common observation in Strategic Orientations, i.e. while everyone agrees there are a set of fundamentally important issues, there is no generally acceptable way in which collective planning and action can be pursued.
- d. Thus, this recommendation supports an effort to get the organizations working together to define their individual roles and functions, with the aim of eliminating unnecessary redundancies and building the synergy necessary to have more organizations working together in a complementary way on issues of importance. Specific suggestions for directions that these discussions could take are given in the detailed presentation of the Services for People Strategic Orientation Plan.

3. The Strategic Plans for each Strategic Orientation

*In this section, a template is provided for a plan for each of the four Strategic Orientations (**Recommendation 5**), together with suggestions in terms of initiatives and time-frame, and stakeholders to be involved. The intent is that these be used as a starting point for reflection by the groups working in each of the Strategic Orientations, to which modifications and additions can be made as their work progresses.*

3.1 The Communications Strategic Orientation Plan

A situation assessment

Communications is now generally seen as one of the keys to effective socio-economic development. This is not only in terms of the development of infrastructure, but also in terms of ensuring effective linkages between all of the players involved in socio-economic development and the population at large (and its various segments, such as youth, seniors, seasonal residents, and permanent residents, segments at risk, and business owners and operators). In socio-economic development, there are generally few linkages between players that involve actual control or authority (e.g. between an elected council and the business community), so that if an elected body wishes to facilitate development, it must do so through encouragement and persuasion. Effective communications provides the glue for this to occur.

A diagnosis, based on the strengths and weakness for Communications

The following table summarizes the principal strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and constraints faced by the Communications Strategic Orientation. The County is in a better position than in 1997 with respect to progress being made on getting the basic infrastructure in place for telecommunications and use of web sites for communication purposes. There is still much to be accomplished, in terms of ensuring that the infrastructure is completed. In addition, there is now a greater awareness that a solid base of information needs to be available for many purposes associated with implementation of the Strategic Plan. Finally, real communication between the County government, local government, the various stakeholders and the different segments of interest in the population is still in its infancy. Lack of progress in addressing these issues will likely slow down implementation of several parts of the Strategic Plan.

The elements of a vision and the broad objectives for Communications

The elements of a vision and the broad objectives for communications in the County could include:

- A telecommunications infrastructure that places businesses in the County on an equal footing with other areas in terms of access to the internet
- An effective communications strategy covering all significant aspects of communications, including the protocol (guidelines) to help organize public meetings on: a) specific issues; and b) public consultations
- Holding regular Community Forums to encourage community input into monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan, as well as to benefit from the other positive aspects of public participation

- Ensuring the development of an adequate, up-to-date and accurate information base, within a GIS framework wherever possible, to help planning and management of change in the different Strategic Orientations
- Ensuring that the population's needs are well understood by all the pertinent players and that local taxpayers are properly informed
- In short, a County in which access to information and the ability to communicate ideas and concerns characterize a management system focused on the stakeholders and the citizens.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints for the Communications Strategic Orientation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An active committee at work through Connect Ontario, to investigate and put in place the necessary telecommunications infrastructure - An increased awareness of the need for effective communications - The existence of the County web site, and its increased use - Increased availability of newsletters - The ability of the Chamber of Commerce to contribute to the maintenance of the County web site - CANOE Radio - 911 system in progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The necessary infrastructure is not yet in place, whereas in other areas it is - A lack of accessible and identifiable data on many aspects of the environment and life in the County (social services, economic services, demographic and assessment data, etc.) - Inadequate understanding of the differences and similarities between seasonal and permanent residents - Inability to get a representative section of interests to participate in debates about significant issues - The lack of systematic County-wide media coverage to provide information to citizens
Opportunities	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geographic Systems Information technology provides a significant tool for the management of geo-referenced data bases, which could be useful in marketing, managing residential and economic development, tourism development (including trails) - An up-to-date information base would also allow for effective monitoring, by permitting benchmarking to be undertaken in priority areas (e.g. the Strategic Orientations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of a resource person to help organize communications - The lack of a broad-based group able to plan and integrate all of the initiatives that are deemed necessary to develop an effective communications strategy for the County and its citizens

Principal recommendations and initiatives, time-frame and stakeholders

The principal initiative recommended is:

- The creation of an ad hoc working group (**Recommendation 7**) on communications to review all aspects of communications, as identified above
- The Community Economic Development Officer ideally could take a lead role in establishing this group, and then in supporting it

- The group should therefore be established as soon as the Community Economic Development Officer is in place, or before January 2004, whichever comes earlier
- The group should include representatives from the Connect Ontario group, from the Strategic Management and Planning Committee (or a delegate), and from the effort underway to develop a GIS system. It should also include a representative from the Chamber of Commerce (because of their marketing interest, and expertise in relation to web site development). Eventually, local media should be involved
- This group should be encouraged to develop an overall communications strategy by April, 2004, including the components for effective communications between the Council and the population of the County (**Recommendation 4**).

3.2 The Economic Diversification Strategic Orientation Plan

A situation assessment

The Marketing and Economic Diversification Strategic Orientation has had the longest standing working group in the County since 1997. It is a very broad orientation, and as it has evolved over the last six years, a number of sub-orientations have emerged, and continue to do so.

The citizens of the County of Haliburton through its vision, both in 1997, and even more explicitly in 2003, place a high value on their environment, on having a dynamic and diversified labour market and on their neighbours having a high quality of life. Through the discussions, several sub-orientations emerged, all of which have to some extent emerged already. Some need pursuing, others need reinforcement and strengthening.

The sub-orientations that are deemed essential to pursue in the next few years are:

- a. Arts and Culture
- b. Tourism development of a kind compatible with the vision of the County
Tourism development includes a variety of types of activity, including servicing the seasonal population (a large component of the County's service economy already), ecotourism, get-a-way tourism, and tourism based on sports activity (e.g. cross-country skiing, dog sledding, fishing)
- c. Environmentally friendly businesses (services, light manufacturing less affected by product or materials transportation costs, and light manufacturing using locally available raw materials (e.g. forest resources)).
- d. Maintaining and creating viable and dynamic service centres in the County
- e. Ensuring the creation and maintenance of an adequate infrastructure for business development in the County

Pursuing these sub-orientations are significant to the County in reinforcing its economic base, creating more diversified employment opportunities on a year-round basis, especially for the youth of the County, and generating the necessary tax base to support services to the population.

A diagnosis, based on the strengths and weakness for Economic Diversification

The following table summarizes the strengths, weaknesses, major opportunities and constraints pertinent to the Economic Diversification Strategic Orientation. The County possesses a number of significant assets upon which the different sub-orientations can be based. Much progress has been made with respect to Economic Diversification, but much remains to be accomplished.

The sub-orientations suggested are self-explanatory, but some additional comments are offered here.

Arts and Culture represents an area in which already much progress has been made. The County is well-known in Ontario for its arts and crafts tours, and the cultural life of the County is very dynamic. This is an area that requires continued attention, even though it is 'doing reasonably well'. Furthermore, it is a sub-orientation that provides important resources that are used in tourism development. It represents a bundle of activities that is also environmentally friendly and contributes to what most people see as a high quality of life in the County.

Tourism is already a very significant component of the County's economic base. It draws in such activities as hotels and lodges, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and services generally (especially when seasonal residents are included as part of the tourist population), arts and crafts, ecotourism, dog sledding and fishing. There are some activities offered year-round, but the shoulder season could be further reduced. One criticism of tourist activities is the relatively low wages frequently earned, and much work is needed to develop value-added tourism and recreation activities which require higher skills and which are capable of generating higher earnings. A number of efforts underway should be encouraged to keep their momentum, such as the Trails & Tours organization. Just because tourism is already quite well-developed in the County does not mean that its further development and transformation should be forgotten.

The tourism marketing effort underway should be maintained, always ensuring that it covers the developing assets and activities that newer forms of tourism can be based upon. The Chamber of Commerce has a major role in this effort.

The attraction of *environmentally friendly businesses* (e.g. services including consulting services, light manufacturing less affected by product or materials transportation costs, and light manufacturing using locally available raw materials (e.g. forest resources, local agricultural produce)) should become a significant part of the economic development effort pursued in the County. This would be compatible with the County vision as it would involve low environmental impact activities, and would also contribute to a more diversified economic base. The human resource base in the County, especially the retirees and the near retirees represent a significant resource that can be drawn upon to help existing businesses as well as develop new ones.

While some potential may exist to develop a business incubator strategy for some of these types of business, it is also of utmost importance not to lose sight of the fact that the whole County should be seen as an 'incubator' for business development.

The support provided by the Haliburton County Development Corporation and eventually, the Community Economic Development Office, along with other services, are cornerstones in this concept.

Maintaining and developing dynamic service centres in the County (the small towns, villages and hamlets) is important not only for the permanent population, but also as part of the tourism activity in the County. For both reasons, encouragement needs to be given to business owners to maintain a reasonable level of service throughout the year when possible. New potential services need to be explored, and a useful start in this direction would be to undertake a number of user surveys with the permanent and seasonal population (the latter could be accessed through the various lake associations).

Finally, no business activity can exist in a vacuum. Businesses need *an adequate infrastructure* in order to function, although what is needed varies from one business to another as well as between sectors. The County already has an important responsibility for the road infrastructure, and one of the local municipalities provides an important service in maintaining Stanhope airport. A communications infrastructure is being pursued currently, and it will be important that this be brought to a successful conclusion. In terms of other infrastructure that the Marketing and Economic Diversification may wish to include in its deliberations is the development of a centralized system of information for business, accessible at a number of points throughout the County, as well as exploring further the possibility of expanding the range of services available for businesses to access capital from.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints for the Economic Diversification Strategic Orientation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An attractive environment for living and working in - An improved road network for transportation, providing good access to Toronto, and reasonable access to Ottawa - A dynamic airport (Stanhope) offering potential for certain types of business - Reasonable wage levels - Improving facilities for labour training - An important retiree or near-retiree population base (much derived from seasonal residents becoming permanent residents) with significant resources - Available industrial park space - Educational facilities sensitive to the needs of the County's economic base - Significant forest resources - The Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC) with its long standing support offered to existing and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distance from external markets (at east the perception that the County is isolated relatively) - Relatively low skilled labour force - Lack of a solid inventory of skills available in the County - Low range of facilities offering access to capital - An economy still dominated by a high level of seasonality - The perception that the service centres could provide a better year-round offering of services - Inadequate employment opportunities for youth (range of skills and income generating ability) - Lack of a coordinated effort to target, attract business and nurture home-grown business - A small local market that is difficult to use as a starting point for many

<p>new business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The community grants program of the CED Committee of the HCDC - The Chamber of Commerce with its networking and marketing ability - The Trails and Tours Association - Master Plan for Rail Trails - Master Plan for the Arts; the Arts Committee - Numerous community projects aimed at arts and culture - Some new low impacts businesses started - Progress in getting high speed internet access infrastructure - Much improved health facilities infrastructure over the last 6 years - Official Plans in place that provide greater certainty regarding development conditions - Membership of Chamber of Commerce is increasing 	<p>businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a centralized system for providing information to businesses about rules and regulations, networking potential - Membership in the Chamber of Commerce needs to increase
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Constraints</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing business activity which is based on local resources (e.g. forestry resources, local agricultural produce, locally based arts and crafts) - Further development of the tourism industry (including providing commercial services to the seasonal residents who are the generators of substantial economic activity in the County already, both directly (their own needs) and indirectly (because of the impact they have on friends and family's decisions on where to vacation) - Building upon the assets of the County that can support tourism activities that are compatible with the County vision - Attracting and nurturing environmentally friendly business activity, e.g. consulting (home-based and other small business) - The potential to develop a centralized system of information for business development (accessible at a variety of points in the County) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ongoing difficulties associated with ensuring a fair and representative discussion of the issues associated with new development proposals (both private and public sector) - Lingering perceptions regarding the (poor) competitive position of the County in relation to other areas - Lack of adequate housing for rental to accommodate newly recruited workers in different fields - Nurturing home grown business is a viable option, but it is a long term process and patience (not always forthcoming) is needed

The elements of a vision and the broad objectives for Economic Diversification

These could include:

- An up-to-date infrastructure for telecommunications (on which the existing group working on that issue would continue to work), removing the County's disadvantage compared to many other areas in Ontario
- An adequate, up-to-date and accurate information base upon which to base further planning decisions and actions
- A diversified economic base, providing year-round employment opportunities for those residents who wish to work year-round (not necessarily at the same job, of course)
- Businesses that are environmentally friendly and contribute to the high quality of life in the County (e.g. through the employment opportunities they provide, through the taxes they generate to support services)
- A concerted effort to utilize the resources of the retiree or near retiree population to mentor existing or new businesses, as well as utilizing them as a source of potential new business

Principal recommendations and initiatives, time-frame and stakeholders

- That the Haliburton County Marketing and Economic Diversification Committee be endorsed as the body to undertake further planning and stimulating action to implement the Strategic Plan in the domain of economic diversification (**Recommendation 6**)
- That this Committee work with the Environment Committee to establish a set of guidelines for 'acceptable' development
- That this Committee take on the suggested sub-orientations identified above, determine which stakeholders should be involved in each one, and move towards developing an action plan in each of the sub-orientations (this may well require using existing action groups or organizations who are working along related themes, and encouraging them to involve other stakeholders as appropriate in their work)
- It will be important for this Committee in any case to involve other players (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce, the Haliburton County Development Corporation) in their work through spin-off action groups (such as Trails & Tours), simply because the Committee members cannot undertake all the necessary work themselves
- This Committee already exists, so that their work is ongoing. They will eventually be assisted by the Community Economic Development Office (**Recommendation 1**) once it is established.
- It is suggested that a decision regarding the priorities to be associated with the different sub-orientations can effectively be taken by December, 2003.

3.3 The Environment Strategic Orientation Plan

A situation assessment

For many people associated with the County of Haliburton, the perceived high quality of life in the County is very much based upon the quality of the natural environment – the appearance of a pristine environment over large tracts of the County with many areas still undeveloped. This quality of the natural environment is at the basis of many people's decision to become (remain) permanent residents and seasonal residents (an important component of the tourism industry in the County). Furthermore, the natural environment provides a significant support and resources

for other types of tourism activity in the County, notably ecotourism, trails and tours, and educational opportunities associated with outdoor education. Notwithstanding this, there remain concerns about the actual and potential degradation of the environment (lake quality, noise levels, forest management). Some people have strongly suggested the need to concentrate residential development in some areas while leaving other areas 'undeveloped'. For all of these reasons – quality of life, economic development grounded in respect for the environment – the environment has been retained as a strategically important orientation for the socio-economic development of the County.

A diagnosis, based on the strengths and weakness for Environment

The following table contains a summary of the principal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints faced in undertaking action in the Environment Strategic Orientation. The environmental strengths of the County are obvious, and are vital for several of the most important aspects of the quality of life and the economic base in the County. Yet there still remain serious concerns about real and actual degradation due to certain types of change. Some issues are being tackled as this Strategic Plan was in the process of being drawn up, notably septic systems and waste management. The County has developed expertise in several areas of the environment, and has in place an Environmental Advisory Committee, which is making linkages with other groups. Involving other groups and the various legitimate interests concerned with environmental issues provides one of the most fruitful avenues to continue to pursue in managing change in relation to the environment. This can be achieved in a productive manner, recognizing that some change is inevitable and often desirable.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints for the Environment Strategic Orientation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relatively low development densities provides an opportunity to manage change more effectively - Substantial forested areas, highly valued by many residents and visitors and by certain types of tourist activities - Absence of large industries generating significant negative impacts on the environment - Large number of lakes highly valued by many residents and visitors and by certain types of tourist activities - Some industrial development using natural resources (e.g. forestry resources) in an environmentally friendly manner - The development of various local associations, such as lake associations, which are developing standards and guidelines for their own localities - A substantial part of the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued difficulties in establishing standards that can be applied to development - Lack of enforcement of standards - Lack of an adequate information base to utilize in managing change - Failing septic systems in several areas - Continued uncertainty regarding where responsibility should lie

which is concerned about environmental quality - Formal recognition of issues related to septic systems and waste management	
Opportunities	Constraints
- To utilize the many local associations as a means of mobilizing residents, both permanent and seasonal, to voice concerns and to participate in constructive deliberations about different development proposals and environmental issues - To use the environment and its natural resources as part of the development of the County in ways that respect concerns for environmental degradation	- Increased responsibilities on lower tiers of government for environmental problems, and lack of resources commensurate to the task of managing environmental issues - Lack of staff expertise to handle complex environmental issues

The elements of a vision and the broad objectives for Environment

These continue to be:

- Ensuring that an effective dialogue between all interests is maintained
- Recognition of the role of broad participation as a means of *contributing to* assessment of development proposals and monitoring change
- The development of a general set of criteria for assessing change and its impact on the environment
- Achieving a 'proper' balance between 'development' and 'environment'

Principal recommendations and initiatives, time-frame and stakeholders

- It is recommended that the Haliburton County Environmental Advisory Committee be endorsed as the body to organize monitoring and action to implement the Strategic Plan in the domain of the environment (**Recommendation 6**); this means that the Committee should be encouraged to anticipate issues and set its priorities for investigating them
- This Committee should be charged with the development of a set of general guidelines for the assessment of change and its impacts on the environment, taking into account impacts that affect the integrity of the natural environment, the quality of life supported by the natural environment and the economic activity supported by it (the seasonal population as an integral part of the tourist industry, other tourist activities, and resource utilizing activities such as forestry and agriculture)
- A reasonable time-frame for the development of this general set of guidelines would be the spring of 2004; in developing these guidelines, the Committee would be expected to call upon the expertise of other groups in the County
- As part of this exercise, one of the Community Forums could be held to focus on this set of issues specifically (**Recommendation 3**)
- This Committee could be regarded as the vehicle through which public consultation be organized on matters pertaining to the environment as well as providing a mediating role between the different interests implicated in changes affecting the natural environment

- This Committee should work with the appropriate group or groups in the Communications field to develop a protocol for ensuring that the different legitimate interests can be mobilized and brought together in a dialogue on issues of both general concern as well as geographically specific concerns
- This Committee could undertake a synthesis of the issues and make recommendations on the respective roles of the different authorities (notably the County and local municipalities) in managing various issues

3.4 The Services for People Strategic Orientation Plan

A situation assessment

There is a general consensus on the importance of the social fabric of the County community and on the services that are important to the population. These services can be potentially offered through private or public service providers. Some of the services exist already, others do not yet exist. Currently, there is a multitude of different organizations working in this general domain. In terms of issues, there are issues that relate to 'population segments at risk', such as particular segments of the seniors population, youth and some categories of families. In addition, other services are part and parcel of providing for a high quality of life in the County community, such as recreation facilities and libraries. Who is doing what, what the most important issues are, and how can the necessary work be organized more effectively are critical questions that need to be answered before coherent advances can be made in this general domain (we can expect advances will continue to be made because of the efforts of specific groups, for instance in the family services domain).

A diagnosis, based on the strengths and weakness for Services for People

The following table contains a summary of the principal strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and constraints faced by players working in the Services for People Strategic Orientation. Two principal strengths stand out today: 1) the explicit recognition of the importance of the social fabric and services for people in the County; 2) the large volume of human resources (volunteers, professionals) working in this very broad domain. On the other hand, it is difficult to gain a coherent picture of what the relative importance of the different issues really are, and what the roles of the different payers are. Not all of the issues deal with 'populations at risk', and many are simply just part and parcel of creating an environment in which people can construct and maintain a high quality of life.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints for the Services for People Strategic Orientation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A recognition of the importance of the social dimension of life in the County - A strong volunteer base - A large number of organizations at work in the domain of providing services for people - A committed educational system - Significant improvements in health facilities (new hospitals and an encouraging financial campaign) - A dynamic family services program and youth program - The community-based U-Links research initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing high levels of poverty, exclusion, unemployment and dependency in the population - The frequently encountered perception that there is redundancy in the efforts of several organizations - The lack of a consensus on what are the priorities - Inadequate information on what the roles and functions of different organizations and agencies really are - The lack of an adequate information base to inform people about the different dimensions of the social fabric in the County - The perception that this information exists in different places, but that it is difficult to access and assess - Transportation and accessibility for certain segments of the population and particularly in certain more isolated areas of the County - Concerns regarding school closures in smaller communities - Closing of the Women's Emergency House - Recruitment of medical personnel and other professionals represents a challenge - Issues related to seniors housing
Opportunities	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recognition that organizations and agencies would benefit from exploring ways of working together - The recognition that an concerted effort is needed to develop an accessible and up-to-date information base, allowing the Community Health and Social Health Report Card approach to be taken to monitor the situation with respect to people's needs and services available - Development of productive partnerships between County and local municipal governments and the private and non-for-profit sectors for different services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The geography of the County with a relatively small and dispersed population - Resource constraints in mobilizing the different players (who will bring the players together?) and in compiling at least an information base in which the different sources of information and their content can be identified - Inadequate housing opportunities to accommodate new professionals starting up

(e.g. recreation, transportation) - Coordination and cooperation between different players, e.g. in emergency services	
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The elements of a vision and the broad objectives for Services for People

These could include:

- An environment in which the services available to the population are meshed with the needs and priorities of the population
- Where the services are equally available and accessible to different segments of the population, and in the different geographic areas of the County
- Where the different organizations and agencies providing services, whether they be private or public sector players, work together to address priority needs through cooperative planning and action

Principal recommendations and initiatives, time-frame and stakeholders

The principal recommendation is:

- That a bi-annual meeting of organizations and stakeholders be held between the different players in the Services for People Strategic Orientation (**Recommendation 8**) and facilitated by the County
- The aim of this meeting would be to help the different players sort out priorities in terms of services for people, and the different roles and functions that the players actually play and/or could play in the County's development
- While the Community Economic Development Office, once established, could play a key supporting role in the organization of these events, the first such meeting should be held as early in 2004 as possible regardless of whether the Community Economic Development Office is functioning at that time
- The County thus has a potentially very important role in facilitating this type of encounter, preferably through the support that could be forthcoming from the Community Economic Development Office, once established

4. Summary: The Role of the County of Haliburton

The County of Haliburton has engaged in an important process since 1997 in involving citizens in its planning and development efforts. This commitment has been continued in the updating of the Strategic Plan in 2003.

The County of Haliburton has a significant role to play in the whole process of implementing the Strategic Plan. These roles can be played out in two ways:

- A. Providing for and contributing to the maintenance of the basic infrastructure necessary to achieve the vision of the County.

These roles involve those of supporting, in appropriate ways, the development of a Community Economic Development Office, with a Community Economic Development Officer and adequate resources. This person would act as a resource person, facilitator and mobilizer of resources (human, financial . . .) to achieve the objectives as set out in the different Strategic Orientations. Part of the functions of this office would be to identify as clearly as possible the different roles and functions of the different players in the County. This is much easier to undertake in the context of specific Strategic Orientations.

This basic infrastructure role also extends to ensuring an efficient and effective communications process be put in place and maintained between the County and its various population and activity segments.

- B. A management and facilitator role in orchestrating the whole process of implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The County, as representative of the population and in its necessary relationships with the local municipalities, has a major role to play in facilitating, and participating in, the whole process of managing the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the County, ensuring that necessary revisions are made from time to time and encouraging the various stakeholders and citizens involved and interested in each of the Strategic Orientations to undertake specific actions and initiatives in keeping with the County vision and the specific objectives laid out for each strategic initiative. A Strategic Plan is always a work in progress, and as such, requires constant attention and monitoring.