



## **Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula**

# **Economic Development Strategy**

## ***Main Report***

*Prepared by*



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July 2017







July 11, 2017

**Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula**

56 Lindsay Road 5  
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Lion's Head, Ontario  
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Attention: **Mr. Bill Jones**  
CAO

**Reference: Economic Development Strategy – FINAL**

**Dear Bill:**

WCM Consulting is pleased to submit enclose the Final Report of the Economic Development Strategy prepared for the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula.

We also wish to thank the many participants from the Community, not least the Members of the Economic Development Committee.

Sincerely,

WCM CONSULTING INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Schrijver".

**George Schrijver**  
Principal

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MAIN REPORT





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Throughout this document:

- The term “Municipality” means the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula (NBP)
- “EDC” means the Economic Development Committee of the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula (please see Appendix D for the EDC Terms of Reference)
- “EDS” means the Economic Development Strategy of the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula.
- We have used the terms:
  - Local permanent residents, with their primary residence in NBP
  - Seasonal residents (cottagers), with their primary residence outside NBP
  - Tourists, visitors with neither permanent nor seasonal residence in NBP

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*Acknowledgement: Detailed input was received from the following organizations:*

**Bruce County Economic Development** (<http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/business/economic-development.php>)

The County Economic Development Strategy for 2017 through 2021 can be found at:  
<http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/assets/files/EconomicDevelopment-2017-2021.pdf>

**Local Parks Canada representatives**

*Acknowledgement: Direction and critique were provided throughout the project by the Northern Bruce Peninsula Economic Development Committee.*

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## Section 1.0 Executive summary

Northern Bruce Peninsula (NBP) is a municipal corporation that commenced operations on January 1, 1999. It encompasses the former Townships of Eastnor, Lindsay and St. Edmunds and the Village of Lion’s Head. Many other hamlets within NBP including Tobermory, Stokes Bay, Pike Bay, Miller Lake, Barrow Bay, Ferndale, Dyers Bay and the Lindsay 20 communities. NBP covers an area of 781.51 square kilometres boasting a permanent population of 3,900 year round residents and just over 5,000 households.

Tourism is a major draw to Northern Bruce Peninsula; apart from the marquee attractions of the national parks, vacations specializing in a multitude of interests are offered, such as camping, boating, birding, diving, fishing, golfing, cycling, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, lighthouse tours, swimming, shipwrecks, wildflowers and wildlife.

The intent of the project is to create the first economic development strategy for Northern Bruce Peninsula and consultants were hired to facilitate this task. In time the goal is to enhance the prosperity of the community through increases in the tax assessment and job creation; this will lead to the provision of more services and amenities for all residents.



Economic analyses were performed and consultations held to gather input. In the process, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified that pertain to NBP. Clearly, as in many more remote jurisdictions, the challenges of sustaining an economy have created a resiliency in the community

Conclusions were drawn from the consolidated data and recommendations were made. The tourist industry is the

overwhelming source of local economic activity; however, it functions as a source of prosperity for less than half of the year. The Municipality has clear deficiencies in critical infrastructure, such as high-speed internet access, although activities to remedy this are well in hand. In addition, there is a lacking in municipal water and sewage treatment facilities. Affordable housing for younger families is essential in order to help remedy the lack of a workforce to meet the seasonal needs of the tourist sector.

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Opportunities do exist and this report recommends focusing on several main thrusts, shown in no particular order:

- Ensuring that high-speed internet is developed locally.
- The creation of broader tourism offerings, both outside of the physical area of the current centres as well as on either side of the current peak season.
- Encouraging institutions of higher learning to locate courses and campuses in NBP, attracted by the excellent opportunity to pursue environmental related courses of study.
- Attracting residents: young families, retirees and New Canadians
- Attracting entrepreneurs
- Further enhancing the relationship and cooperation with other local economic development agencies such as Bruce County Economic Development.
- Performing a rigorous “investment readiness test” in order to identify where improvements must be made.
- Creating a master plan for infrastructure development as the underpinning for the future.

These activities will lay the foundations for a broader-based and more resilient economy but they will not be implemented overnight nor will the benefits accrue until some time in the future; perhaps half a decade or more.

There are many barriers to be faced and hurdles to overcome but all can be surmounted with sufficient will and excellent cooperation. Among these are numbered the cost, a lack of human resources to implement the plans, conflicts in what and how to carry the necessary steps, developing the inevitable but acceptable compromises, excellent formal leadership of the local government and excellent informal leadership from community leaders and influencers.

All of this requires that the Community as a whole, not just the municipal government, understand and commit to a long term plan that far exceeds the term of a local government. Changing direction every few years will result in much time being invested and tax-payer dollars spent with little to show for it. Thus the Community must share the vision and support the mission of developing the local economy.

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## Section 2.0 Introduction and Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

Northern Bruce Peninsula (NBP) is a municipal corporation that commenced operations on January 1, 1999. It encompasses the former Townships of Eastnor, Lindsay and St. Edmunds and the Village of Lion's Head. Many other hamlets within NBP including Tobermory, Stokes Bay, Pike Bay, Miller Lake, Barrow Bay, Ferndale, Dyers Bay and the Lindsay 20 communities.

The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula is the northerly neighbouring community to South Bruce Peninsula; Highway 6 traverses northerly through NBP. The peninsula itself is surrounded on the east by Georgian Bay and on the west by Lake Huron. NBP is home to Fathom Five National Marine Park, Bruce Peninsula National Park, the Bruce Trail, Niagara Escarpment, UNESCO World Biosphere, Cabot Head and Lion's Head Nature Reserves, two First Nations Hunting Reserves and a large Bruce County Forest Tract.

NBP covers an area of 781.51 square kilometres boasting a permanent population of 3,900 year round residents and just over 5,000 households. The Public Works Department maintains 475 kilometres of roads and streets, some of which are paved, some gravelled. Some roads provide year round access while others enjoy only summer accessibility.

Tourism is a major draw to Northern Bruce Peninsula; apart from the marquee attractions of the national parks, vacations specializing in a multitude of interests are offered, such as camping, boating, birding, diving, fishing, golfing, cycling, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, boat tours, lighthouse tours, swimming, shipwrecks, wildflowers and wildlife. In 2004, NBP was proclaimed as a "dark sky community" in the hope of preserving and protecting the night time environment and our heritage of dark skies through the use of quality outdoor lighting and goals established which are intended to stop the adverse effects of light pollution.

The intent of the project is to create the first economic development strategy for Northern Bruce Peninsula. In time the goal is to enhance the prosperity of the community through increases in the tax assessment and job creation; this will lead to the provision of more services and amenities for all residents.

### 2.2 Benefits and caveats in economic development

Economic development is the process by which a jurisdiction improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people. In the simplest terms, economic development provides jobs and livelihoods, and through taxes, enables governments to fund a range of projects and services intended to improve the lives of present and future generations. A "virtuous circle" has favourable results, while a "vicious" circle has detrimental results; both apply with respect to the economy.

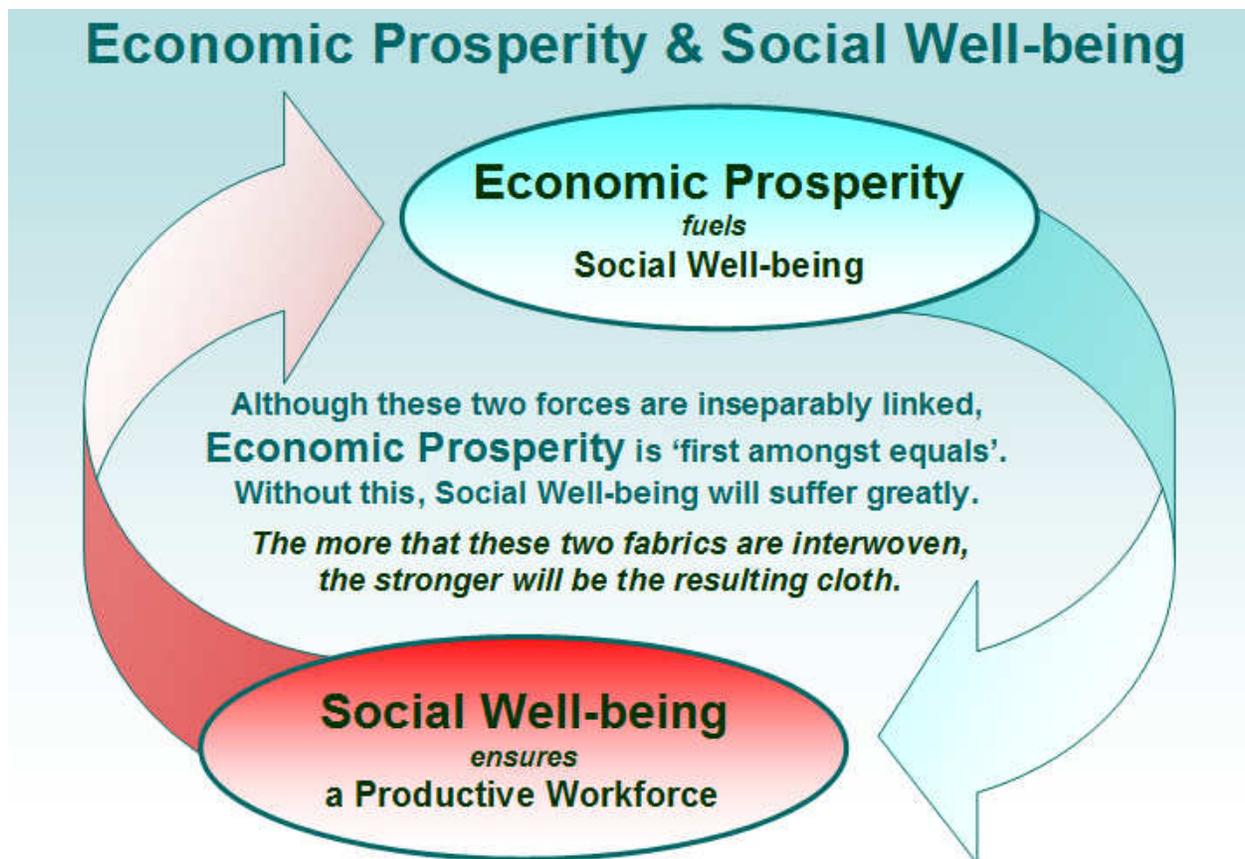
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While job creation, economic output, and increases in the taxable base are the most common hard measurements, economic development typically invokes improvements in a variety of indicators such as literacy rates, life expectancy, and poverty rates.

Economic developers do not typically create jobs, but facilitate the process for existing businesses and start-ups to do so. Therefore, the economic developer must make sure that there are sufficient economic development programs in place to assist the businesses to achieve their goals. At the regional and local level this typically includes activities such as job creation and retention through specific efforts in business finance, marketing, neighbourhood development, workforce development, small business development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer, and real estate development.



In times of unusual and rapid economic growth, as happened in the twenty years after World War Two, there were more than enough opportunities to meet the economic development requirements of most communities. This tended to push severe competition into the background. Today, most especially when competing globally, one inevitable ubiquitous consequence of economic development is the intense competition between communities to get their share.





With the struggle to attract and retain business, competition can be further intensified by the use of many variations of economic incentives to the potential business such as: tax incentives, investment capital, donated land, utility rate discounts, and many others. Jurisdictions in Ontario are restricted in the incentive field; these restrictions are intended to reduce the possibility of a “downward spiral” of cost competition, resulting in diminishing returns for the jurisdiction. This provides a more level playing field intra-Ontario but can create a disadvantage when competing with less restricted jurisdictions, most notably in the U.S.

Economic development has a “cost” beyond the monetary investment required by the jurisdiction. In some instances this cost can be high, socially and environmentally, depending upon how the activity of economic development takes place. To some members of a community a higher cost is acceptable and to others, no collateral cost is acceptable.

### Sustainable development

The term “sustainable development” has gained traction in recent decades, especially as the realization of environmental and social impacts of economic development have moved higher on the public agenda. From the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report: “Sustainable development is defined as a process of meeting human development goals while sustaining the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends.” Clean water and the safe disposal of sewage are two such examples where the benefits to the community are clear and which can be addressed by sustainable and ecologically sound means.

The term environment itself has various interpretations and agreeing on what everyone understands by these terms is a key first step in moving forward in a cohesive manner. Each community is likely to have its own views on this topic and this is appropriate. **Agreeing** on a Community acceptable definition of “sustainable development” is not easy, but one of the important first steps. People have many vantage points and where they stand will colour their definition of acceptability; some compromise may be necessary in order to achieve this

***Failing to achieve a full consensus at the outset, while detrimental in the long run, may be a valuable short term outcome if this redoubles the efforts of all to continue dialogue in moving towards an optimum definition.*** The Community (including the Municipality) must have an ongoing dialogue in order to start the road towards consensus. ***Such a process should not delay the plans to develop the economy*** but at all times these plans should be sufficiently malleable to adjust to new findings and ideas that can better achieve the goals of all with less compromise.





## 2.3 Methodology

Both public meetings and on-line surveys were used, with the latter open for input throughout the project. Meetings were held as follows:

- |                |                                                 |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| June 9, 2016   | Business Stakeholders forum held in Lion's Head |
| August 8, 2016 | General public forum held in Tobermory          |
| August 9, 2016 | General public forum held in Lion's Head        |

Outcomes of the consultations listed above are provided in Appendix E.

SJ Research Services Inc. of Regina, a well respected analytics company, was contracted by WCM to perform the analysis of available Statistics Canada data and these results are shown in Appendix A.

Also, research was conducted on-line, focusing on strategies and tactics to help NBP develop a path forward towards achieving its goals.

Details of some of the general economic development principles used are shown in Appendix C.



## Section 3.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Gaining an understanding of the characteristics of the municipality is essential when determining which attributes can lead to economic growth and which attributes may detract from that growth unless remedied or otherwise mitigated.

Input was obtained through observation, literatures reviews, Stakeholder consultations and through discussions with the EDC. Appendix B describes the principles used when conducting this SWOT assessment.

The main strengths of the Community lie in the natural environment resulting in a high level of “quality of Place”. Not only is this a pleasant environment for residents, it is also the foundation of the local economy in the visitors that are attracted to the area. There are an increasing number of highly capable and engaged retirees who bring their experience to bear on the Community and who may also start small businesses. Land is available for development.

Challenges exist in the lack of infrastructure (broadband internet connectivity, municipal water and sewage facilities and affordable housing) as well as in a shortage of younger workers to service the needs of businesses in the peak tourist season. The distance from major markets and highways makes local goods production a challenge. Lack of available serviced land adds to this predicament.

There are opportunities, but investment and resources will be required. Continued development of the tourist shoulder seasons and improved facilities to service visitor needs while respecting the life-style of residents are some areas for consideration. Cultural and natural assets outside of the main tourist areas can provide additional economic stimulus. Remote education facilities leveraging off the natural environment can also be developed. With funding, selected lands can be serviced and made shovel-ready for new or relocating businesses. Concerted efforts can be made to attract people: entrepreneurs, retirees and New Canadians.

If little progress is made in developing the economy, then the tax base used to fund municipal services will stagnate and, with inflation, effectively shrink. The very high reliance on tourism as the economic driver, and its limited in its ability to expand directly implies that there are too many eggs in this basket for the longer term. The continued pressure on schools and the impact on the ability to attract families if these close, is a very real concern. Attracting families with school age children is key to maintaining the local schools and that means jobs for the parents through the development of the economy.

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## Strengths

- A unique natural environment and quality of place
- A strong sense of community
- A very significant, highly regarded tourist destination with multiple natural attractions
- Dark sky designation
- Biosphere designation
- National Parks
- Local organizations are active and engaged
- The diverse and entrepreneurial potential of the retiring portion of the seasonal resident population
- Close to other people-attractive locations, forming a cluster of attraction
- Cultural assets
- Aggregate supply
- Available land for development

## Weaknesses (Impediments)

- Low telecommunication (internet) speeds and variable access
- A lack of younger workers, especially in the summer peak season
- Limited housing choice and affordability
- A lack of accommodation for peak-season workers
- Distance from major markets and urban centres
- No municipal water supply in Tobermory
- No municipal sewage system in Lion's Head
- Lack of enhanced Economic Development web presence
- Difficulty in attracting any sizeable industries, limiting improved employment opportunities and the attraction of younger families
- An ageing demographic
- Shore-line access limitations diminish attraction potential in attracting new residents
- Severe traffic congestion in peak season
- An almost total economic reliance on tourism
- Available land is not serviced
- Conflicts between the desires and needs of non-business residents and those dependent on tourists for their livelihood
- A low population and tax base creating challenges for major capital project outlays
- No natural gas supply
- A present lack of year-round retail and food service beyond the peak tourist season
  - This is a classic "chicken and egg" scenario; in order to sustain the year-round retail and food service you need people to buy and consume year-round. At present that is not the

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case with few, if any, visitors year-round. Probably the first step would be to create the year-round visitation market, and then the businesses will respond. This can take many years to come to fruition.

## Opportunities

- Improved parking and tourist management to reduce local impacts
- Increase in tourist business in the shoulder seasons (but businesses must support this for several years in order to solidify the attraction)
- Potential to create a more year round tourist experience
- Strengthening tourism assets
- Strengthening and leveraging cultural assets
- Creating locales appealing to tourists and residents alike. For example do not focus exclusively on development to meet the needs of tourists (which may negatively affect residents). Instead develop in a manner which is at least acceptable, if not appealing to local residents.
- Development of land for residents, commercial and light industrial
- Marketing and promotional efforts geared to new residents, visitors and investors
- Enhanced municipal website geared towards the economic attraction goals
- Enhance communications and partnerships with local organizations, businesses and the Community
- Continuously improve the development/permit approvals process
- Policies to encourage new entrepreneurs (from within the community and to attract new residents
- Retirement living and associated support industries
- Attraction of creative industries that rely upon telecommunications rather than goods delivery
- An eco-tourism centre that would provide education on the environment
- Attracting artisans and artists, adding to reasons for visitors to come to NBP
- Attracting “second career” persons
- “Tourist tax” and “pay for” to fund improvements
- Attracting a remote secondary education campus (use underutilised schools?)
- Leveraging the biosphere to create an environment educational hub
- Leveraging the Dark Sky designation
- Greenhouse industry
- Business conference retreats
- Promotion as an event location
- First Nations tourism
- “Packaged” tourist experiences
- National Park open more months in the year
- Encourage home-based businesses
- Value-added aggregate products (finishing)



## Threats

- A small tax base and the inability to fund improvements holding back desirable developments
- Limited tourism growth potential unless compromises are reached
- Continued reliance on tourism peak-season as the key economic driver; there are too many eggs in this one basket. The imperative is to add create some additional baskets, aside from tourism
- Potentially failing/over-used septic systems impacting water quality
- Loss of schools that will impact the attraction of younger families
- Inability to retain former young adults who have left to take secondary education
- Growth in tourism impacting residents quality of life
- The migration of “snowbirds” during the winter months, reducing the economic turnover in the area

## Comments on regulations that may constrain economic development

Unbridled economic development can create a community that is “unliveable” by the standards of many in the community; hence there are regulations designed to preserve the overall quality of life within the community. However, some of these regulations may cause unnecessary, or unintended, restrictions on economic development.

It should be noted that the Municipality may or may not have the ability to amend these regulations since many originate at the provincial level. The following summary was provided by a member of the NBP Economic Development Committee for further consideration by the Municipality.

### *Municipality’s Zoning Bylaw:*

- Section 6.7.2: There shall be no more than one (1) assistant who is not a resident of the building.
- Section 6.30.1: The flood proofing clause does not identify that coastal assessments or design could be implemented to alleviate these requirements.
- Section 6.32.3: The parking design requirements are currently one of the most conservative design guidelines in Bruce County.

### *Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Guidelines & Policies*

Highway 6 is the major arterial road through the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula. The MTO has permitting authority (development control) for all developments within 185m of the Highway unless the Highway is considered to be part of the “connecting links”, in which case the Municipality has jurisdiction for development.



A summary of MTO's more restrictive policies are summarized below:

1. One property – one entrance
2. No structures or features pertinent to the development may be located within 14m from the Highway's property line.
3. Commercial Entrances must conform to an entrance standard in the Community Safety Accreditation Schemes (CSAS) manual.
4. Commercial entrances must be a minimum of 800m from other public roads and entrances (for new commercial properties). *This eliminates the potential for new commercial property along Highway No. 6, due to the spacing of existing public roads and entrances.*

There are additional policies that will have an impact on new developments which may be found in the MTO's Highway Access Management Manual and the MTO's Building and Land Use Policy. The MTO's policies only apply to Municipality's who are not part of the connecting links program. For example, developments adjacent to MTO highways in Wiarton, Collingwood and Meaford have not needed to comply with these policies.

All the items listed above have restricted development, compromised good designs or eliminated the potential for development for recent projects within this Municipality.

### *Provincial Policy Statement*

"The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Policy Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land." (Provincial Policy Statement, 2014). The following Natural Heritage provincial policies may have impacts on development in the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula:

Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:

- a) Significant wetlands
- b) Significant coastal wetlands
- c) Significant woodlands
- d) Significant valley lands
- e) Significant wildlife habitat; and
- f) Significant areas of natural and scientific interest

Within this Municipality woodlands and wetlands appear to be abundant and most properties could contain significant heritage features which could restrict development. There have been situations where the provincial policies above deemed 30% to 75% of a client's property not developable within Bruce County. In some cases there have been conflicts between the MTO guidelines and policies and the Natural Heritage policies.

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## Section 4.0 Conclusions

### 4.1 Consultation outcomes

Appendix E contains the detailed outcomes of the consultations.

Support for developing the local economy was evident from the three public consultations held in June and August. Equally evident was the concern that this development not be at the expense of the local environment and the quality of life of existing residents.

The tension between the economy and the environment is a common balancing act, seen in many communities and it stands out even more in a locale such as Northern Bruce Peninsula, where at present, the natural attractions are the foundation of the local economy.

Many voices suggested that the extent of summer tourist visitations in the summer months have already caused impacts, especially with respect to traffic congestion, visitor trespass on private land and over-used septic systems, presenting a potential threat to the environment and public health.

### 4.2 Existing tourism sector

Northern Bruce Peninsula is a mecca for the outdoor enthusiast. Within the Municipal boundaries lie the Niagara Escarpment, a World Unesco Biosphere, two (2) National Parks, Flower Pot Island, the Grotto, Singing Sands, several Provincial Parks/Reserves, historic Cabot Head Lighthouse, thousands of acres of Nature Conservancy lands, First Nations hunting grounds, the Bruce Trail, two (2) harbours, inland lakes and 5,000 acres of Bruce County forests/trails. The municipality is also home to several Provincially significant plants and animals.

The tourism sector is the mainstay of the present economy of Northern Bruce Peninsula. While it may bring crowds and much traffic in the peak summer months, this economic activity creates jobs and livelihoods for many permanent residents. Visitor levels are likely to increase and means must be found to accommodate this and minimize the impacts on local residents. Additional shoulder-season visitors will help to smooth out the demand and may warrant further investment to service these increasing needs.



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Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five National Park are the foundations for the existing tourism sector, with an increasing amount of future tourism activity anticipated for Lionshead. Presently the parks are fully open with all facilities from April through November. As such, extending their opening season would do little to directly increase the shoulder season traffic for the general visitor population. Seasonal climate is also a factor for the vast majority of visitors. School holidays will dictate the timing for a large section of visitors while retirees appear to favour September. Finally, in order to identify the area as a tourism destination in the shoulder seasons, local services and stores must remain open. Studies have shown that solidifying this in the minds of the public can take five or six years, with,

potentially, little to show for it in the hands of the business owners in that period.



During the peak summer months, the demand for the Parks is already well over capacity and they must turn away many potential visitors. This is believed to be a contributing factor to visitors finding “alternative opportunities”. Recognising these impacts, the Parks are examining ways to better manage this high level of

demand to spread the load into the shoulder seasons and permit more visitors to participate, with the consequent benefits to local commerce. This may also extend the level and duration of employment that the Parks offer to seasonal workers. They are promoting the shoulder seasons and not emphasising the peak months; however, it may not be possible to separate the effects of this marketing, since the place will become even better known and nothing constrains when visitors can come.

The Parks are planning on a “first come first serve, day of reservation” system. This will encourage day visitors to register since they may be denied access if there is no space available. This may reduce the amount of traffic in general and the side-effects of inappropriate visitor behaviour. The Parks are considering opening the popular yurts into the winter season.

The Parks consider that the Municipality’s proposal to develop a parking lot in the vicinity of Tobermory, with accompanying shuttle buses and comfort stations, is an important step towards mitigating some of the impact on the local population. As planned, this “pay for parking” lot would accommodate approximately 1,000 vehicles (forecasted to be largely day-trippers). This would alleviate the day-parking stress on the parks as well as Tobermory proper. Estimated to cost \$2 million, this would be paid back through the collection of parking fees, later becoming a source of additional municipal revenue.

In addition to the main attraction of the National Parks, there are many other opportunities for the visitor to enjoy the natural environment in conservation lands as well as the provincial park. Extending throughout is the Bruce Trail, which is yet another attraction for visitors. With all of these natural environment-rooted attractions, it may make sense to create an overall strategy throughout NBP to

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manage these attractions in a manner which is sustainable and at the same time reaping the maximum economic and social benefits for NBP and its communities.

If local businesses can join to offer lower cost “packages” for the shoulder seasons then this may encourage more visitors in these periods. Increasing shoulder-season economic activity should be an ongoing objective for the tourism sector and the Municipality.

### 4.3 *Other opportunities*

With limited municipal resources available to act on any strategy it is essential to focus on the strongly favourable characteristics of NBP.

Based upon the strengths and weaknesses, it was concluded that investment attraction opportunities are limited in the goods producing sector:

- There are few sources of raw material available which could be exported (in raw or value-added form) that are not already being used or which would attract investment.
- The distance to major urban markets and 400 series (or similar highways) precludes the attraction of good producing industries. This is not to say that such industries do not exist in NBP but these are so located largely because of the owners desire to live in the area rather than particular local economic advantages that can be parlayed into attracting similar businesses.

This does not mean that NBP is not a good place in which to invest in goods-producing industries. However the type of product has consequences. Products that are high volume, non-customised “widgets”, with a requirement of a “just-in-time” delivery, may not do so well. The distance to major highways and the cost of shipping to centres where these products may be used might preclude their production. On the other hand, high value, customised or artisanal products are relatively insensitive to both shipping costs and times and these will fare better in more remote locations such as NBP.

**Note that this does not mean that NBP can attract these industries due to economic advantages.**

Simply, the effect of the economic disadvantages is less significant, but this is still no basis for a marketing campaign. What can be done is to attract the owners of existing companies who are enamoured with living in NBP and get them to relocate their high-end/artisanal businesses. The same would apply to attracting entrepreneurs to start up such businesses.

Services present greater opportunities, especially those that may be worked on and delivered remotely from the market. In this instance the natural environment and the people-attraction qualities of life in the area can be used to advantage.





## 4.4 *The Vision and Mission of Northern Bruce Peninsula Economic Development*

### ***Economic Development Vision Statement***

Northern Bruce peninsula strives to improve the socioeconomic well-being of its residents and business operators, now and for our future generations, by improving and expanding infrastructure, fostering year-round employment opportunities and encouraging seasonal residents to work, live and play in Northern Bruce peninsula on a permanent basis. It is imperative that economic development opportunities are also viewed through an “environmentally sustainable” lens, in an effort to preserve and protect our world class environmental landscape for centuries to come.

### ***Economic Development Mission Statement***

Achieving this vision requires that Northern Bruce Peninsula must strive to:

- Enhance telecommunications to increase knowledge-based and creative business opportunities, as well as expanding “work from home” options.
- Work with new and existing businesses to promote shoulder and winter season tourism opportunities.
- Expand municipal infrastructure (water and wastewater) to provide growth opportunities, improve public health and safety and protect our natural environment.
- Actively consult with post-secondary and trades schools regarding the possibilities and benefits of locating a remote or satellite campus in Northern Bruce Peninsula.
- Collaborate with neighboring municipalities, upper tier governments and local organizations to enhance and broaden economic development opportunities.



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## Section 5.0 Recommendations

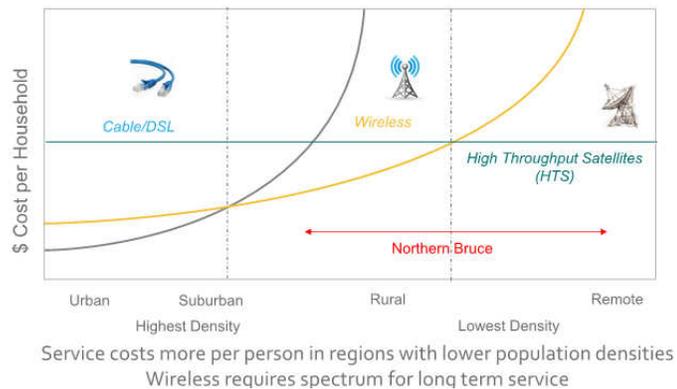
### 5.1 High speed telecommunications

In much the same way that roads or electricity were once considered a necessity to enhance a community's economic and social well, today high-speed internet access is equally essential. In the absence of high-speed internet access, economic development and the provision of services to residents is seriously impaired. As the private and public sector increasingly move to more self-service, lower-cost solutions and utilize quick response communications which provide easier and more transparent access to information, both the internet and technology has become the cornerstone for such initiatives.

Schools and institutions of higher education are also supported by this infrastructure. The same applies to hospitals, as well as agriculture and existing businesses.

In particular, knowledge-based and creative industries rely much more upon this capability than they do roads and other physical infrastructure. Attracting such industries to a locale is unlikely without high-speed internet. Video conferencing is a major plank in the efforts of most remote communities in attracting (and retaining) businesses; this requires higher speeds than may be available today and a more balanced “upload/download Ratio” since true two-way communication is required. Although “faster is better” and transmission speeds will continue to increase, not everyone requires the fastest connections.

The SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) Network is a plan to help regions connect, compete and keep pace in a digital world by building a holistic, ultra-high-speed fibre optic network. The concept is to be forward-looking with respect to future capacity increases as well as to be financially sustainable. Spearheaded by community and businesses leaders across southwestern Ontario, Caledon, and Niagara Region, SWIFT proposes to build an ultra-high-speed fibre optic regional broadband network for everyone in these areas. In 2016, SWIFT received \$180 million in funding support from the federal and provincial governments. The federal government’s portion of the project’s cost came from Industry Canada’s Connecting Canadians Program, which aims to “bring affordable, high-speed Internet to 280,000 Canadian households”.



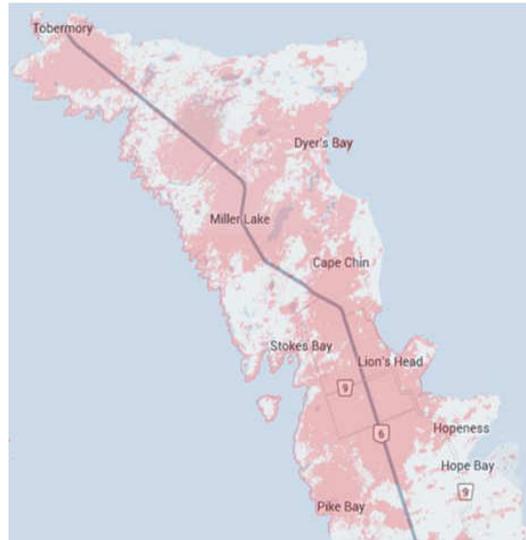
Currently NBP is serviced by Eastlink and discussions take place between the municipality and this company to enhance the existing service capability. NBP is also in talks with Xplornet to provide service





via towers and, alternatively, satellite connections. Speeds of up to 25 Mbps (megabits per second) are contemplated. NBP will continue to work with these firms as well as other service providers to further enhance capabilities across the community.

Xplornet is proposing a combined wireless and satellite solution for the peninsula. In 2016 new fixed wireless technology provides additional coverage for the peninsula, as shown in the shaded areas of the map, with speeds in the 5Mbps to 25 Mbps range.



The next steps for Xplornet include:

- Finalizing the network design
- Site verification and acquisition
- Land Use Authority approvals
- Industry Canada protocol
- Construction

Rather than a recommendation, this report fully endorses these efforts and urges NBP to find ways to contribute towards the speedy development of these services.

## 5.2 Broader tourism offerings

In this context, broader tourism offerings refer to attractions not centered on the area surrounding Tobermory and which have a central focus on the natural environment. Many people wish to enjoy the natural beauty of an area and to do so in a manner which has no discernible impact on the environment. Some reasons for this are:

- To enjoy the grandeur of nature
- To escape from the pressures of urban life
- To explore different landscapes
- To experience outdoor adventures in a natural setting
- To learn about the environment
- To participate in conserving the environment for future generations

Maintaining natural attractions and environmental assets is critical to the sustainability of nature-based tourist destinations as, by definition, these form the reason for leisure travel undertaken predominantly for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in a variety of outdoor activities. The challenge is trading off between conflicting objectives and different stakeholder interests in remote areas in particular. It is essential to manage visitors so that they do not degrade the natural ecosystems (animals, plants, geology, river systems, etc) that are an intrinsic element of the attraction. Determining





how this may be done is very site dependent (for example, visitor fees would reduce the traffic somewhat) and local policies may have to be established to meet the criteria developed.



Without detracting from the current economic benefits brought to NBP by the present tourism sector, ***it is essential to eliminate, reduce or mitigate the clearly undesirable (and largely unintended) factors that have grown alongside these benefits.*** For example, traffic congestion, potential overload of existing infrastructure, trespassing by visitors (often unknowingly), and so on. Mitigation efforts are already underway and these must be handled with care so as not to create collateral unintended, unacceptable consequences to the

industry.

There is no one solution for this. Problem resolution processes exist which are tried and tested; often, facilitation by an independent and “disinterested party” can be very valuable, if not essential. Some of the critical elements of this process will be:

- Not taking hard stands and simply exchanging opposing views across the table; this rarely produces results unless one “side” capitulates. While not producing an ideal result for any participants, compromise will be essential. Mutually respectful discussion and open-mindedness are essential.
- A common vision can be established over time but is unlikely to be attainable at the outset due to (most likely) diametrically opposed viewpoints. Perhaps start with the concept of a “negative Vision” where the parties can both agree on certain factors that they DO NOT WANT. This vision should be guided by movement towards optimizing the social, economic and (natural) environment benefits the benefit, socially, environmentally and economically. Requires discussion and compromise

With an extensive number of attractions, overnight visitor stays are more likely. As part of this some additional environmentally friendly activities can be offered such as information centres, arts and crafts exhibits and purchase opportunities, bird watching, star-gazing and astrophotography, cycling tours and hiking. Lion’s Head would serve as a good focal point for such activities, augmented by the nearby provincial park.

FINAL





Marketing will be essential to bring this new dimension of NBP to the attention of the public. The UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve designation and the Dark Sky recognition (Bayside Astronomy) would be key components of such a campaign, together with the many opportunities for activities that are connected to the environment, or which are friendly to the environment.

### **5.3 *Post-Secondary Educational Partnerships***

The various designations concerning the environment and nature are a clear attribute and may form the basis of attracting a remote campus connected to a post-secondary learning institute interested in opening a remote campus with a focus on the environment. The National Parks can serve as scientific laboratories for studies in many disciplines. In particular, the National Marine Park provides a special opportunity for study of marine environments in the Great Lakes.

The simpler it is for the main institution to establish the remote campus the more likely it will be that the efforts will come to fruition. If suitable vacant buildings can be found to house the campus when the course is being offered) then the costs and inconvenience to the institute can be minimised. When the level of student participation rises then more permanent and dedicated facilities can be considered. Note that post-secondary educational partnerships don't always require "bricks and motor" and should be considered as an alternative way to provide educational opportunities to residents.

Note that the availability of high-speed internet connections will be essential as well as suitable provisions to accommodate students when they are in the area.

Many educational institutions in Ontario offer courses that are focused on, or connected to, the environment. Appendix F contains a list of these colleges and universities.

### **5.4 *Attracting residents and entrepreneurs***

Many city-dwellers long for what people in small towns already have, and often take for granted: a slower pace of life, friendly people who know their neighbours, attractive open spaces and beautiful scenery, quaint shops, historic homes and buildings, parades, festivals, and streets that are safe and free of traffic congestion. NBP has many of these characteristics and can use them to attract residents, some of who may bring, or start up, businesses.

Many rural areas are relatively unknown outside of their own region. NBP is an exception since it is famous for the beauty of the local area. Attracting tourists to the area presents no challenge; converting their thinking from "a great place to visit" to "a great place to live" is the challenge.



Promotion efforts should highlight the positive characteristic of NBP that potential residents (who may bring a business with them or create new one locally) would find appealing. For example:

- The opportunity to create a new lifestyle.
  - Price Edward County has a website dedicated to this message. Recently they have created a new version of this website [www.buildanewlife.ca](http://www.buildanewlife.ca)
- The lower cost of living in NBP compared to most urban areas, especially the larger ones
- The many unique natural aspects of the local area
- The availability of high-speed Internet (see caveat below)
- Available services
- Access to health care
- Recreational activity and programmes, such as curling, gardening, cycling, hiking, bird-watching
- Facilities such as the Rotary Hall

### New Canadians



It is estimated that in 2031 the proportion of the foreign-born population in the Canadian labour force will reach 33% (or 1 in 3 persons), and a similar portion (32%) will be visible minorities.

Further, based on the 2011 census data, two-thirds of the nearly two million people added to the country's population since the 2006 census were immigrants and *"without a sustained level of immigration or a substantial increase in fertility, Canada's population growth could, within 20 years, be close to zero."*

The Conference Board of Canada has reported that Ontario faces a shortage of more than 360,000 skilled employees by 2025, which is expected to escalate to more than 560,000 by 2030. Predictions are that many of these skilled vacancies must be filled by New Canadians.

For rural communities in particular, immigration has become an essential source of population sustainability, regional economic development and cultural vitality. Reports have shown that immigrants can assist businesses in addressing labour shortage issues, and provide professional services that are in demand such as in the health care profession. Also cited as a major benefit is that newcomers frequently start new businesses and create jobs as entrepreneurs.

This presents an opportunity to recruit such new Canadians to live in NBP but many other smaller communities are focusing on just that so there is significant competition. It is recognized that there are challenges in attracting and retaining new Canadians in rural areas like NBP.

FINAL





## Attracting retirees

Retirees contribute to the economic prosperity of a community through municipal taxes, spending locally, (pensions can be considered as “outside money” coming into the community) and through the consumption of services. With a sufficient number of retirees additional service providers may be encouraged to locate in the area, enhancing the level of service for existing residents as well.

Tourism is one of the main catalysts for retirees choosing to live in a particular area; NBP is already very well positioned in this regard. However, the amenities and services enjoyed and required by retirees must also be developed in order that the efforts are successful.

A non-profit organization, Elliot Lake Retirement Living Inc., was created to market that community to seniors. A number of vacant dwellings in the city were rented to seniors who were willing to migrate to Elliot Lake. Various facilities, especially the Renaissance Seniors' Centre, were developed to cater to the needs of seniors: <http://retireelliotlake.com/>. Whereas Elliot Lake used large signs on the major highways in the southern part of the Province, NBP already has much traffic attracted to the area and a few well-placed roadside signs in NBP will have the same effect in planting the seed of NBP as a great place to live.

## Caveats and needs

Reliable access to high-speed telecommunications is necessary, not simply desirable. Failing this, success in attracting people is much less likely.

- Younger families with a high dependency on on-demand entertainment regard this as essential
- Non-goods producing businesses trade in information, some of which require very large electronic file sizes and, consequently, high upload and download speeds are vital



Available, affordable modern housing with low maintenance requirements are essential to attract younger families; today’s young families engage in many activities, with less time available for other tasks.

FINAL



At present NBP is known almost exclusively as a great destination for tourists. Without detracting from this it will be important to enhance the brand by offering a lens on the benefits of living in NBP.

- A new web presence is recommended which focuses on the attraction of people, including home-based businesses.
- Ask local businesses to add a link to this page/web-site in a prominent place on their own web-sites
- Existing way-finder signage is in place but has a focus on the current tourism industry. Additional signage which addresses the opportunity to live in NBP should be developed.

**Schools must remain open.** A failure here would have an obvious detrimental impact on the ability to attract young families. The Peninsula Action Committee for Education (PACE) has been leading this effort for the Community.

Attracting residents and entrepreneurs requires a commitment to integrate the efforts of NBP with those of Bruce County. This may have an impact on staffing and costs.

## 5.5 Attracting entrepreneurs

*“Ask NOT how COMPANIES choose to locate; instead, ask how PEOPLE choose to locate”*

Richard Florida, in his book, ‘The Rise of the Creative Class’, projected that the future is trending towards economies in the developed world that can be located anywhere in a global sense. Where companies choose to locate is becoming less a function of the traditional economic drivers such as jurisdictional cost, a ready supply of unskilled or semi-skilled labour, proximity to markets and transportation nets **and much more a function of where people choose to live.** This applies most especially to the knowledge-based industries.

This is a special case of “Business Attraction”. The quality of life in NBP is its single most important attribute and can be used to attract entrepreneurial residents who may then start businesses. While such businesses may take many years to develop into sizeable enterprises, ultimately they may create opportunities for additional employment. There is much competition for this same target market in many rural locations, many of which are closer to the GTA.

By no means are entrepreneurs confined to the cohort of the “Baby Boomer”. However, Statistics Canada and other commentators have documented the demographics of the Baby Boomers and how this has had a profound effect on the out-migration from larger cities to smaller and more rural locations, especially in Central Canada. Members of this demographic group are often at the peak of their income earning cycle, have low fixed expenses and, as a rule, no mortgages. They have often



moved out of their original family home and prefer either condominium/townhouse living or rural/semi-rural settings. Accompanying this is a desire to find a more balanced life-work formula.

Many of these knowledge-based industries are small and, especially when starting up, one-person endeavours. This gives these entrepreneurs every opportunity to locate where they will.

Former residents of NBP who left to gain post-secondary education may wish to return and these present an additional specific target. Relatives of those who left may be prepared to share current contact information, or act on behalf of the Community in contacting them.

Seasonal residents/cottagers represent a very sizable (double the all-year population) element of NBP. These people already appreciate the characteristics of the area and within this group there may be retirees or semi-retirees who would consider starting a business. Contact can be made with these people to determine if they have considered this possibility and what, if any, barriers are preventing them from carrying through.

The caveat is that the access to high-speed internet must be excellent. This is especially true when the transmission of images and drawings are concerned since these files can very large. While they can still be transmitted, the time required can be longer than would be acceptable, especially if the entrepreneur is coming from an area with very high speed facilities. This can affect the choice of location.



On a specific point, there is a growing shortage of younger skilled trades people in the local area; taking this message to trades schools to demonstrate an opportunity for employment, together with lower living costs, may result in attracting some skilled workers.

Any efforts to attract a general population will contribute to attracting knowledge based entrepreneurs. However, more focus can be obtained by examining the industries that are regarded as being in this category and

identifying where such persons congregate as a profession and through which the opportunity to live in NBP can be promoted.

Appendix G contains an analysis of potential knowledge-based industries, using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

FINAL





## 5.6 Continue to work closely with local organizations involved in economic development

NBP cannot develop the local economy in isolation; it is essential that there be a close integration with various agencies involved in aspects of regional economic development. This is already taking place to a large extent but it is important to emphasize that this must continue. Some key organizations are:

**Bruce County Economic Development** (<http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/business/economic-development.php>)

The County has recently released its 2017 through 2021 Economic Development Strategy which may be found at <http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/business/economic-development.php>

*Activities include:*

- **Business Development** - entrepreneurial support and development, business recruitment, enhancement, opportunity development and business skills and higher education
- **Business Marketing/Promotion** - marketing and promoting opportunities in Bruce County to attract potential investment opportunities
- **Support/Outreach/Education** - coaching to start-up an existing businesses and access to a local network of entrepreneurs in addition to a wide range of educational opportunities that are geared to the needs of the local business community
- **Sector Development:**
  - Tourism Attraction and Product Development
  - Nuclear/Energy Support
  - Agriculture Enhancements

This is a particularly crucial relationship since economic development officers are available to work with the lower tier municipalities on specific projects. To achieve the best results the strategies and efforts of NBP must fit hand-in-glove with those of the County, without sacrificing the independent mission and efforts of NBP economic development activities.

**Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation** (<http://www.bruce.on.ca/>)

*Activities include:*

- Strategic community planning and socio-economic development
- Support for community-based projects
- Business information and planning services
- Access to capital for small- and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises

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**Four County Labour Market Planning Board** (<http://www.planningboard.ca/>)

*Activities include:*

- Providing reliable research
- Identifying employment trends
- Targeting workforce opportunities
- Promoting skills development
- Raising public awareness of workforce issues

**Business to Bruce Services** (<http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/business/economic-development/btob.php>)

*Activities include:*

- Consulting services on information covering business planning, management, marketing, hiring, E-business, financing, etc.
- Access to a public computer and workspace
- Workshops and seminars relevant to Bruce County entrepreneurs

**Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs - Owen Sound Regional Economic Development Office**

(<http://www.southwesthealthline.ca/displayservice.aspx?id=14058>)

*Activities include:*

- Assistance to food processing companies, municipalities, businesses and organizations to undertake economic development initiatives by providing programs, funding and extension
- Teams provide tools and resources, deliver advisory services and support for rural development

In addition local and regional not-for-profit groups may become partners in various economic development activities where interests overlap.





## 5.7 *Undergo a rigorous investment readiness test*

We recommend that the Municipality undergo a rigorous assessment using the “Investment Readiness Test (A Self-Assessment Tool for Northern Communities)”, which was developed by the Province. This is a comprehensive assessment tool and is widely used by communities in many parts of northern Ontario. It requires time and effort to administer this test and the results are generally an eye-opener for the jurisdiction. Not all aspects may be applicable to NBP but the majority of investigative points will apply. Being entirely truthful with oneself is vital if the effort is to pay off.

The assessment tool may be found at:

<https://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/en/northern-development/community-support/northern-communities-investment-readiness-initiative>

## 5.8 *Infrastructure*

In order to foster the economic growth and social well-being of the residents of the Municipality a comprehensive and far-reaching **infrastructure development plan** is highly recommended.

This plan should be:

- Broadly based to ensure that all aspects are examined and priorities set in a manner which does not create a critical-path shortfall in economic and social development. In other words various aspects of infrastructure should be developed in tune with growth demands and be balanced with each other.
- Far-reaching in time and look out 30 years as to the potential demands for services
- It should be implemented over many years (due to cost constraints) but never falter or be put off once underway

Supplying a property with **municipal services (water and sewer)** has many advantages such as:

- A safe supply of drinking water
- Environmentally safe way of treating sewage
- Protecting groundwater resources
- Allows for the creation of smaller lots, as there is no need to accommodate individual on site well and septic services.
- Increases the ability to attract commercial, industrial and institutional facilities
- Reduced insurance rates
- Increased property values
- Improved public safety
- Maintaining and enhancing public facilities such as schools, medical facilities, etc.

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Currently the Municipality provides the village of Lion’s Head with municipal water supply. The system is serviced by a relatively new water treatment facility that has a significant additional capacity. This additional capacity could be used to expand water services outside the current village limits, to service residential and/or business needs. In 2000, the municipality undertook an environmental assessment wherein the Municipality sought public interest in expanding water services to Isthmus bay area as well as the hamlet of Ferndale. 85% of respondents were opposed, primarily due to cost implications. The Municipality has recently (2016) contacted property owners in the Isthmus Bay area to see if there is any change in opinion regarding the expansion of water services to their area. These results will be released as part of the “Isthmus Bay Road Environmental Assessment” document later in 2017.

The village of Tobermory is partially serviced (downtown core and highway) by a municipal wastewater system. A water and wastewater feasibility study was undertaken in 2012 and presented to the residents of Tobermory. Although there was minimal public participation in the process at the time to move forward with a municipal system, the Municipality should consider revising and repackaging this study in the near future, as development pressures and opportunities have increased dramatically over the past 5 years.



**Affordable housing** is another critical component if a younger workforce is to be encouraged to live and work in Northern Bruce Peninsula.

**Broadband internet connectivity** is a key component of the infrastructure necessary to help develop the economy of NBP. See Section 5.1 of this report for more details.

## Section 6.0 Supporting documents

### **6.1 Implementation Plan**

This is a “living” document in XL format in order to provide a convenient method for tracking and updating progress on the implementation of the strategy.

The file name is: NBP EDS Implementation Plan

### **6.2 Appendices**

These are provided in a separate document: NBPEDS-Appendices to Strategy-FINAL