

## Executive Summary

It had been some time since Leamington reviewed its strategic economic plan. Therefore, a focus group meeting was planned to seek wide scale public/private input into the creation of a new economic development strategy for the Municipality of Leamington.

An economic development strategy provides a blueprint for achieving community objectives by translating a community's broader vision and goals into economic initiatives. However, it is always a challenge to enroll the stakeholders in this process to determine their vision and goals.

Each member and organization within a community has a stake in its overall wellbeing. Therefore it is critical that stakeholders be represented in the economic development planning process.

One way to elicit at least some of the overall community's vision is to conduct stakeholder meetings and focus groups. Generally, these consultations take into consideration current conditions, the economic environment, opportunities/constraints, strengths and weakness. In other words they are confirming or adding to our understanding of the community in its local, regional and broader context and the data gathered can be used to shape short and longer term goals and objectives.

A focus group meeting was organized for June 16, 2007. This informal session was meant to generate ideas and practical projects and will help form the economic development plans for Leamington in the coming years.

In an effort to gather as much information as possible the questions used at the focus group meeting were also put on the Municipality's web site for on-line confidential response. In total 22 on-line responses were completed. Fifty-three persons attended the focus group meeting representing tourism, agriculture, business services and professional, arts and culture, not for profit/NGO groups and the commercial/financial sector.

The accompanying report presents a review of previous economic development plans, summit meetings and other pertinent reports along with the comments made at the June 16 meeting. Interestingly, current comments clearly followed past comments indicating the continued importance of the observations and validating the priorities stated in past efforts. Verbatim responses from the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting can be found in Appendix A.

### **Focus Group Observations:**

The following is a general discussion based on the focus group comments. The intention of the forgoing discussion is to develop a list of potential areas for further action planning.

- A. What do you perceive as the greatest opportunities for stimulating economic growth in Leamington?

A review of the comments received during the discussion of this question essentially revealed five areas of opportunity. Specifically these areas can be grouped as:

- Arts/culture/historical roots/ethnic diversity
- Tourism/hospitality and related
- Agribusiness/agriculture/greenhouses/energy
- Waterfront/location
- Retirement/quality of life

These five areas relate closely, if not identically, to opportunities listed in previous strategic exercises and the Regional Report. Clearly the community still sees these elements as the pillars of Leamington's uniqueness and we should still focus our economic efforts on building on these pillars.

B. What would you say are some of the biggest problems and obstacles faced by Leamington for the future growth of the area?

In this part of the discussion several themes emerged as well. Obstacles around developing our tourism industry included:

- Lack of a recognizable "brand"
- Lack of regional focus
- Signage
- Need to build the off season
- Not focusing on our uniqueness and diversity
- Taking tourism for granted ie: birders
- Lack of bus tours, regional transportation
- Not taking advantage of our waterfront

Obstacles connected with encouraging development included:

- Need to complete East Side Arterial Road (ESAR)
- Lack of (or perceived lack of) serviced, zoned, development ready land at competitive prices
- Restrictive zoning
- Incompatible land uses
- Lack of a redevelopment plan for the Uptown
- Provincial policies that don't encourage development

Other obstacles of note include:

- Educational levels and need for job training
- Language barriers, communication, resistance to change

C. What do you think will generate economic investment?

Here comments focused on the need for better marketing and promotion, particularly in our own "backyard". A number of suggestions focused on tourism and how we promote

ourselves as a destination. It was felt that we needed to build on our ethnicity by developing festivals, “Mexican Town” marketing campaigns, entertainment for all ages and a need to get the private sector to partner more with destinations such as Point Pelee.

Partnerships were a key element in this discussion, not only related to tourism but to building the educational networks, centres of excellence, “ambassador programs”, energy programs etc.

Business retention programs which focus on assisting business in the way of seminars and workshops and entrepreneurial training would be beneficial. There appears to be a need to conduct some gap analysis to identify what products and services should be supplied locally. This would then lead to a business attraction program. Incentives and special programs are needed in the uptown to encourage retail/service to locate in this area rather than gravitating to the fringes.

In general there is a need to better promote our assets, improve infrastructure such as Hwy. 3 and the ESAR, and to focus on becoming a leader in “green” technologies.

D. How can we enhance the current business mix?

Here comments focused on a few common themes:

- Business development: gap analysis, incentives, training programs, access to innovation, education gaps/programs, business retention committee and business information centre, company visitation, networking, make processes easier
- Stimulate investment/business that provide entertainment/activities for all ages: focus group to determine areas of interest, lifestyles, waterfront development, film festival, cultural inventory and cultural assets
- Promote Leamington as a great place to work, live and invest-find our niche and focus on it, creative thinking

E. What should Leamington look like ten years from now?

This question was aimed at trying to provide us with some long term strategic focus.

Comments were varied and creative with a particular focus on:

- Environment, “green”, and quality of life indicators (culture, residential communities, acceptance, diversity, creativity, completion of Seaciff Park, waterfront plan, clean and beautiful, safe
- Interconnected-linkages with neighbouring communities, county, Windsor, Pelee Island, transportation routes
- Exciting and eclectic mix of businesses and services, people want to come here to shop and mingle, development that encourages enjoyment in the uptown, downtown hotspots, dynamic and active public spaces, attractive and appealing, unified theme
- Retirement haven-quality of life for seniors, access to service, housing availability, lifestyle attributes
- Active waterfront-place for people to go and enjoy, boutique shopping, active and bustling, beautiful, artistic and cultural

- Culturally attractive-active theatre and arts, cultural activities, ethnic celebrations and destinations, shows, galleries, exhibits, B&Bs and tourist spots

F. How can we accomplish this?

This part of the discussion was rather weak as it was getting towards the end of the time allotted. The online survey comments were more concrete items. Refer to the Appendix for complete details.

- Standards, zoning, rob and duplicate, everyone of same page, community design standards, plan the plan and work the plan, private sector involvement, development incentives, ESAR
- Long term planning, gap analysis, measurables with public consultation, focus groups aimed at all age groups/sectors of public to get a diversity of opinion
- Marketing, promotion, ambassadors
- Green programs, green incentives

G. What should the Economic Development focus on?

This question was not addressed in the focus group meeting but certainly the comments from the day illustrate several projects. In addition, the on-line comments provided many specific suggestions for action planning. See Appendix A.

Next Steps:

Based on the content of this report and the comments received at the focus group meeting and on-line it is apparent that there are a number of “actionable” items that can be addressed by the EDO and the Economic Development Committee. It is now up to the committee, municipal staff and council to develop its short, mid and long term economic development action plans and develop time lines for implementation. Many of the items discussed at the meeting are not within the realm of the economic development office, but that is not to say that they cannot be passed along to appropriate agencies etc. or are not deserving of our lobbying efforts.

## **Economic Development Focus Group Meeting June, 2007**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Developing an economic development plan is no small task. Any successful strategy should be grounded with these principles in mind<sup>1</sup>:

- Our community comes first—the interests of the broader community are placed ahead of special interest groups or individuals
- Generation of wealth for residents and businesses is the foundation for achieving a prosperous community vision
- Shared responsibility for action and results. The participation of partners with a shared community responsibility for action with leadership that supports the initiatives of other community organizations that are working to achieve common economic goals.
- Local success depends on regional success. Leamington is located within a regional economy. What happens in the region effects Leamington and vice versa. Local activities should compliments rather than compete with activities elsewhere in the region, recognizing at the same time that Leamington has its own unique strengths and opportunities.
- Cooperation. We can't accomplish everything within our own limited context. When things are beyond our local control we will work with associations and partners with common interests and other government jurisdictions (regional, provincial and federal) to advocate for positive change.

It had been some time since Leamington reviewed its strategic economic plan. Therefore, a focus group meeting was planned to seek wide scale public/private input into the creation of a new economic development strategy for the Municipality of Leamington.

An economic development strategy provides a blueprint for achieving community objectives by translating a community's broader vision and goals into economic initiatives. However, it is always a challenge to enroll the stakeholders in this process to determine their vision and goals.

Each member and organization within a community has a stake in its overall wellbeing. Therefore it is critical that stakeholders be represented in the economic development planning process.

One way to elicit at least some of the overall community's vision is to conduct stakeholder meetings and focus groups. Generally, these consultations take into consideration current conditions, the economic environment, opportunities/constraints, strengths and weakness. In other words they are confirming or adding to our

---

<sup>1</sup> Economic Development Group of Nanaimo, May 2002.

understanding of the community in its local, regional and broader context and the data gathered can be used to shape short and longer term goals and objectives.

In order to gather the required information, business owners, managers, professionals, entrepreneurs, other stakeholder groups and those interested in participating in a lively and stimulating focus group discussion aimed at developing a practical economic development plan for the Municipality of Leamington were invited to bring their thoughts and comments to The New Leamington Dock Restaurant on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Guest speakers included Mr. Matt Fischer, CEO of the Windsor-Essex County Development Commission who provided an over view of the new regional economic development strategy, and Mr. Gordon Orr, Managing Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Windsor, Essex County and Pelee Island who addressed the changes and challenges taking place in the tourism industry. Following these presentations those in attendance were divided into groups to undertake a creative discussion which will be facilitated by members of the Economic Development Committee.

This informal session was meant to generate ideas and practical projects and will help form the economic development plans for Leamington in the coming years. The following questions were used as the basis for discussion.

- A. What do you perceive as the greatest opportunities for stimulating economic growth in Leamington?
- B. What would you say are some of the biggest problems and obstacles faced by Leamington for the future growth of the area?
- C. What do you think would generate economic investment in the community?
- D. How can we enhance or grow the current business mix?
- E. What should Leamington look like ten years from now?
- F. How can we accomplish this?
- G. What activities/priorities should the economic development office focus on?

In an effort to gather as much information as possible these same questions were put on the Municipality's web site for on-line confidential response. In total 22 on-line responses were completed. Fifty-three persons attended the focus group meeting representing tourism, agriculture, business services and professional, arts and culture, not for profit/NGO groups and the commercial/financial sector.

### **Review:**

To put in context the comments received at the focus group meeting, it is perhaps important to review outcomes of past economic development strategic reviews. The following table summarizes the reviews that have taken place since the early 1990's.

Strategic Priorities (objectives) Summary as related to Economic Development in Strategic Planning Documents			
1991 Retreat	1993 Strategic Plan	2000 Strategic Retreat	2003 Strategic Retreat
<p>Industrial and Commercial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracting new business</li> <li>• Making municipal services available</li> <li>• Sharing responsibilities with developers</li> <li>• Providing good locations</li> <li>• Good roads, possible airport</li> <li>• Competitiveness</li> </ul> <p>Marketing and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive marketing and promotion of good life, good labour relations</li> <li>• Good networking with Windsor/County ie. their development committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the education and skill level of present and future labour force</li> <li>• Market for external investment from targeted niche business markets based on Leamington's comparative advantages</li> <li>• Enhance the competitiveness of existing economic base toward maintaining current and creating additional employment and tax assessment</li> <li>• Investigate avenues to realize economic benefits from the senior population in a manner consistent with improving their quality of life</li> <li>• Advise and assist in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure potential industrial lands are zoned and pre serviced to the maximum extent possible (sewage treatment plants)</li> <li>• Target specific industrial sectors (agribusiness, greenhouse suppliers, high tech, ethnic industries)</li> <li>• Promote municipality as a regional centre</li> <li>• Municipal industrial park desirable but preferably as a public/private partnership (construct first part of road system, sewage package plant)</li> <li>• East road construction top priority</li> <li>• Implement uptown study</li> <li>• Promote seniors development and establish seniors committee</li> <li>• Encourage more creative subdivision design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ways to assist existing business and industry</li> <li>• Pursue construction of East Side Arterial</li> <li>• Assist in improvement of border crossing</li> <li>• Incorporate "quality of life lens" into program/project objectives</li> </ul> <p>(other priorities were identified but these were not specifically related to economic development)</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline all the community pluses</li> <li>• Non-financial incentives such as “fast tracking”</li> </ul> <p>Seniors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand services in the areas of medical services, hospital accommodation, transportation</li> <li>• Quality of life for seniors in community</li> <li>• Network with seniors locally</li> <li>• Senior housing and accessibility</li> <li>• Business community relationship</li> <li>• “cutting-edge” community in terms of services for seniors</li> </ul> <p>The 1991 retreat identified a composite list of issues which in addition to the</p>	<p>formulation of municipal policy that is supportive and responsible to the needs of the existing and potential members of the business community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the creations of an entrepreneurial culture</li> <li>• Increase the recognition of Leamington as an integral tourism component in Essex County</li> </ul>		
---	--	--	--

above included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future of tourism</li> <li>• Development of Leamington's image</li> <li>• Multiculturalism</li> </ul>			
---	--	--	--

### Strengths/Weakness/Opportunities/Threats

Each report/retreat reviewed the perceived strengths/weaknesses/opportunities and threats as they relate to the prosperity and future growth of Leamington. The following table summarizes these characteristics.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong community leadership</li> <li>• Large range of municipal services</li> <li>• Up to date facilities</li> <li>• Ethnic diversity</li> <li>• Diverse economic base</li> <li>• Excellent institutional facilities</li> <li>• Apparent low crime rate</li> <li>• Safe community</li> <li>• Waterfront</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure deficit</li> <li>• Incomplete services for seniors</li> <li>• Inaccessibility for physically challenged</li> <li>• Senior government funding</li> <li>• Limited by-law enforcement</li> <li>• Municipal debt load</li> <li>• Low income jobs in community</li> <li>• Education levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to existing business and industry as major source of job creation</li> <li>• Trails and soccer pitches</li> <li>• Investigate development of Estate Residential lots</li> <li>• Encourage widening of Hwy 3</li> <li>• Investigate possibility of new cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of diversification</li> <li>• Infrastructure deterioration and ability to pay</li> <li>• Lack of senior level funding</li> <li>• Financial obligations for growth</li> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Restructuring</li> <li>• Taxation of greenhouse sector (intensive agriculture)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding location</li> <li>• Point Pelee</li> <li>• Market proximity</li> <li>• Close to Windsor/markets</li> <li>• Climate</li> <li>• Post secondary education nearby</li> <li>• Volunteerism</li> <li>• Leamington as a “regional centre”</li> <li>• Varied infrastructure for seniors</li> <li>• Strong entrepreneurial community</li> <li>• Long range proactive planning</li> <li>• Stable economy</li> <li>• Road side produce stands</li> <li>• Clean and friendly</li> <li>• Seacliff Park</li> <li>• Image</li> <li>• Uptown potential</li> <li>• Greenhouse industry</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Quality of life for all ages</li> <li>• ecotourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of vertical integration in agri-business</li> <li>• Shortage of serviced land for new industry</li> <li>• Shortage of doctors</li> <li>• Shortage of outdoor recreation facilities such as soccer fields and trails</li> <li>• Poor beach water quality</li> <li>• Lack of tourist destinations/attractions within community</li> <li>• Lack of local specialized training for greenhouse industry</li> <li>• Few owner/occupants in downtown retail</li> <li>• Lack of housing specifically designed for seniors</li> <li>• Lack of job opportunities for post secondary graduates</li> <li>• Limited access to 401 limits industrial growth</li> <li>• Developable lands held by few owners</li> </ul>	<p>festivals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine service and other proposals with a “quality of life lens”</li> <li>• East side arterial road</li> <li>• Reduce the border crossing challenges</li> <li>• Development of tourism as a major industry</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on culture and diversity</li> <li>• Develop range of sub sectors associated with greenhouses – technology, energy, waste management, value added etc.</li> <li>• Regional centre focus</li> <li>• Ecotourism</li> <li>• Cultural related activities</li> <li>• Seniors as a tourist market</li> <li>• Waterfront related tourist activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakness in economy regionally</li> <li>• Dollar, border, energy costs</li> <li>• Duplication of economic development/tourism marketing etc.</li> <li>• Lack of regional cooperation</li> <li>• Aging population and strain on social services etc.</li> </ul>
--	--	--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse industry sensitive to input costs</li> <li>• Existing industrial park too small</li> <li>• Closest test driving facility in Windsor</li> <li>• The future of Heinz</li> <li>• Lack of focus on uptown/implement uptown study</li> <li>• Weak uptown commercial core</li> <li>• Poor subdivision design-lack of creativity</li> <li>• No tourism plan or strategy</li> <li>• Aging population/workforce</li> <li>• Seasonal employment</li> <li>• Seasonality of tourism industry</li> </ul>		
--	---	--	--

Interestingly, the SWOT discussions, although varied in depth depending on the report/retreat, consistently identified common elements over the 14 year time span of the strategic process.

In 2004 the Economic Development Officer introduced the Regional Centres Report. This report presented a cursory comparison of Leamington with other similar communities in Canada. A number of recommendations/observations resulted. These are presented below in topic areas. Note that some of these have been completed, are in process, are contingent upon budget considerations, are more the responsibility of the region, or are outside the realm of the economic development office and require lobbying for their implementation.

**Population:**

- Redevelop “retirement” package to be a more general relocation package stressing quality of life, family living and cohesiveness of community.
- Target market to professional groups who may chose the advantages of Leamington lifestyle over their current living arrangements in Windsor or other urban centres;
- Continue with retirement advertising focusing on high-end materials and ad placement;
- Continue with newsletters but change emphasis to lifestyle rather than retirement exclusively etc.;
- Encourage creative residential development in certain waterfront locations such as dock-o-miniums (condominiums located above personal dockage), a senior’s residential community or adult community.

**Health Care Recruitment:**

- Develop web pages devoted to physician recruitment with direct links to hospital and other sites for information about local health care services
- Provide information and statistics to recruitment committee, which are useful in helping potential recruits with their decision
- Review best practices in Physician Retention to recommend programs of local impact.
- The most expressed need by seniors (and all residents) is for medical care and access to physicians. For this reason, Physician Recruitment should be incorporated into the EDO’s role if even in some basic form ie. web information, liaison with groups undertaking similar efforts.
- Encourage the South Western Ontario Medical Education Network to explore should the feasibility of a specific focus on geriatrics and aging.

**Language and Culture:**

- Encourage various ethnic groups to continue and expand their festivals through more vigorous promotional efforts. Assist in the promotion of these events where possible.
- Consult with ethnic groups to determine the types of specialty businesses they think would benefit Leamington.
- Encourage community groups and social agencies to form clubs, teams and other outlets for the migrant population to mitigate social and cultural conflicts.

- Capitalize on the municipality's ethnic flavour through event planning such as a celebration of our multi-cultural heritage.

#### **Education and Skills Development:**

- Inform Boards of Education of our concerns regarding low education levels and encourage them to promote, through school age children and their parents the importance of higher education and skills training.
- Further analyze educational statistics to understand how things like culture and heritage have skewed the figures and put more emphasis on the remaining group.
- Contact Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) to develop a profile of local job seekers as it relates to educational levels.
- Request HRDC conduct a more in-depth analysis of the labour needs of Leamington's economic sectors – specifically food processing, greenhouse technology and automotive parts.
- Initiate discussion on the feasibility of developing a long-term program for skills development with private/public sector consultation and support.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a skills training centre to deliver specialized training programs based on the analysis conducted above.
- Coordinate an "Occupation Speaker Series" in conjunction with Small Business Week.
- Develop a central database of education and training contacts.
- Facilitate, in conjunction with Junior Achievement, the school boards and private sector, the creation of an entrepreneurial culture in Leamington that leads to the development of new business and employment opportunities.

#### **Business Attraction/Expansion & Retention:**

- Identify business needs and barriers.
- Continue to work with partners such as Community Futures Development Corporation, Chamber and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food/Municipal Affairs to deliver training and seminars as identified by employers and small business.
- Analyze regional specialty businesses, particularly those in Windsor and target with promotional material as potential new businesses in Leamington.
- Encourage, if possible, through the planning process and the Municipal Act, uptown redevelopment policies, which focus on design standards, signage, architectural appearance and creative multi-use projects.
- Promote uptown as area for specialty and high-end boutique development.
- Prepare report on average lease costs in Leamington compared to other communities in an attempt to determine market rates and establish a sense of where we stand competitively.
- Develop a "Guide to Researching your Small Business" to compliment the existing Entrepreneur Guide.

- Continue to position the municipality as a site for call centres although finding suitable available properties will remain the main stumbling block to success in this area.
- Focus on attracting national chains that are now looking at smaller regional markets.
- Revise web page to provide more pertinent business attraction information such as available properties, planning information, labour force data, call centre and other industry specific details.
- Work with the Windsor-Essex County Development Commission and Connecting Windsor Essex to ensure that the real estate and business locator components of the community portal become a reality.
- Promote area as a location for value added agricultural industries focusing on innovation, emerging technology, the environment and R&D.
- Develop a strategic marketing plan targeting niche business sectors and geographic markets.
- Conduct a retail consumer market study to determine retail investment opportunities that could be targeted specifically.
- Develop specific sector profiles that can be used to target gaps or new and emerging businesses. ie. call centre report, greenhouse report, retirement report, automotive report.
- Produce a high end community profile for business and relocation purposes..

#### **Business Parks/Municipal Infrastructure:**

- Meet with landowner(s) of property coming on stream in the new official plan to determine their intentions to develop the land and reach a servicing/ partnership agreement.
- Develop a formal concept plan in partnership with the owner(s).
- If appropriate, encourage landowner(s) to approach a private developer with experience in business park development for development.
- Determine feasibility of buying a portion of the land ourselves to develop a business park in phases (each parcel sale financing additional servicing).
- Determine the effectiveness of reducing or eliminating development charges in attracting new business investment as is commonly practiced in other communities.
- Evaluate on an annual basis the cost and supply competitiveness of Leamington as a business location. (land costs, taxes, utility costs, etc.)

#### **Web Page Development:**

- It is highly recommended that the municipality move away from the current commercial content of the web page and focus more specifically on municipal business and services.

- Explore the best arrangements with other groups to deliver web based tourism information and the commercial aspects of the web which are popular with web site visitors.
- In the interim examine current business information and update pages to provide additional information of value to investors and site selectors.
- Examine use of Bell Technology Fund, Industry Canada Funding or other sources for a web pilot.
- Continue to provide support and input to the current Connecting Windsor-Essex initiative particularly the GIS components, the business locator and the property data base component.

### **Tourism and Hospitality:**

- Establish as tourism committee as a sub committee of the economic development committee to examine roles and responsibilities and to provide direction for the creation of a short and long term tourism plan for Leamington.
- Review the current delivery of tourism services and develop a tourism strategic plan.
- Encouraging the adoption of the Seacliff Park plan for further waterfront development.
- Undertake discussions with H.J. Heinz and other processors to develop a unique attraction that is both educational and enjoyable.
- Examine relocating the Marine Heritage Museum to the Marina perhaps in conjunction with a marine theme sculpture park or showcase for the Nessen relics.
- Work with other lakefront communities to promote all our waterfronts based on their unique appeal.
- Examine the feasibility for a private water park with adventure rides skateboard park, wall climbing etc.
- Encourage growth of agri-tourism as a cottage industry
- Strengthen partnership between the Essex Region Conservation Authority, the Visitors and Convention Bureau, Point Pelee, Pelee Island etc. to develop a common direction.
- Develop “hospitality infrastructure” to complement growing wine industry to capture and promote a whole experience as is done in Niagara and California.
- Examine the potential of developing sport fishing promotional materials, perhaps in conjunction with diving materials, which would encourage non-diver participation.
- Encourage tourist industry partnerships to fund marketing and coordination of specific “packages” as opposed to using municipal dollars for limited generic marketing.
- Explore the feasibility of funding an events coordinator to expand current festivals and events and examine the potential for new events.

### Economic Development:

- Continue to build on our strong ties with the Community Futures Development Corporation and other groups for regional and inter regional projects.
- Continue to learn from other communities regarding effective use of tools and best practices.
- Establish stronger ties and develop joint partnerships as appropriate with surrounding communities.
- Continue to show commitment to the Regional Economic Development and Tourism Task Force to develop a relevant service delivery model for the region.

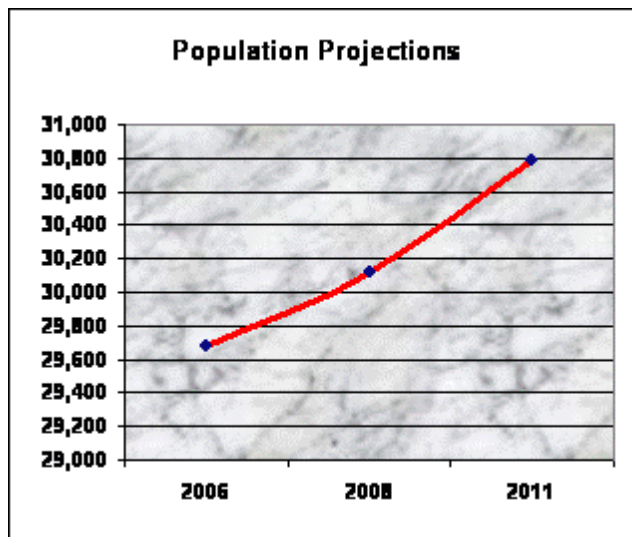
It is indeed interesting that the 2007 focus group identified virtually identical elements as identified in their previous works, indicating that we are (A) traveling in the right direction, (B) are still plagued with many of the same weaknesses and (C) still have a lot of potential opportunities upon which we can build viable plans for the future.

### Context:

The following data is from the 2001 Census of Canada (the latest figures available) and other quoted sources. Each indicates the population characteristics of Leamington in relation to the rest of the Province.

<b>Leamington Population Projections</b>	<b>2006-actual</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Change %</b>
Population:	28,833	30,117	30,789	3.76%
Households	10,562	10,793	11,136	5.44%

Source: 2006 Census of Canada and Financial Post



## Population Characteristics

Age characteristics	Leamington, Municipality			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total population	28,835	14,570	14,260	12,160,285	5,930,700	6,229,580
0 to 4 years	1,940	1,015	930	670,770	343,475	327,290
5 to 9 years	1,920	995	925	721,590	369,670	351,920
10 to 14 years	1,995	1,000	995	818,445	420,705	397,740
15 to 19 years	2,170	1,130	1,040	833,115	427,185	405,925
20 to 24 years	1,955	1,010	950	797,255	400,445	396,815
25 to 29 years	1,855	980	880	743,695	360,525	383,170
30 to 34 years	1,805	985	825	791,955	382,030	409,925
35 to 39 years	1,950	1,060	895	883,990	430,220	453,770
40 to 44 years	2,240	1,235	1,005	1,032,415	507,130	525,280
45 to 49 years	2,070	1,100	970	991,970	486,390	505,585
50 to 54 years	1,725	885	840	869,400	423,345	446,060
55 to 59 years	1,495	755	745	774,530	378,530	395,995
60 to 64 years	1,285	625	660	581,985	283,545	298,440
65 to 69 years	1,045	465	585	466,240	222,640	243,600
70 to 74 years	1,055	485	570	401,950	187,510	214,445
75 to 79 years	965	405	565	338,910	149,585	189,325
80 to 84 years	735	270	465	250,270	97,240	153,035
85 years and over	630	190	440	191,810	60,555	131,260
Median age of the population	37.1	36.0	38.4	39.0	38.1	39.9
% of the population aged 15 and over	79.7	79.3	80.0	81.8	80.9	82.7

Source: 2006 Census of Canada – Community Profiles

This table indicates that we have slightly less people of working age in Leamington than the rest of the province and a higher level of seniors that is found elsewhere in Ontario.

The Community Social Planning Council of Kingsville and Leamington, in their 2006 Seniors' Quality of Life Report indicated that Leamington has the highest level of persons over the age of 65 in Essex County at 17.3%, followed by Kingsville at 16.6% (compared to 12.6 in Windsor). This is an indication of the area's popularity as a retirement destination, but also points to stresses on health care delivery and associated services.

Census Canada 2001 Data	Leamington Ontario (Town)			Ontario (Province)		
	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
Language(s) First Learned and Still Understood	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total - All persons (19)	26,625	13,540	13,090	11,285,545	5,529,145	5,756,400
English only	15,945	7,885	8,065	7,965,225	3,913,300	4,051,925
French only	640	290	350	485,630	230,080	255,550
Both English and French	50	35	15	37,135	17,165	19,975
Other languages (20)	9,990	5,330	4,660	2,797,555	1,368,600	1,428,950

Immigration Characteristics	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total - All persons	26,625	13,540	13,090	11,285,545	5,529,145	5,756,400
Canadian-born population (23)	18,390	8,995	9,390	8,164,860	4,029,890	4,134,965
Foreign-born population (24)	7,105	3,595	3,515	3,030,075	1,453,510	1,576,565
Immigrated before 1991	5,235	2,580	2,660	2,007,705	964,585	1,043,120
Immigrated between 1991 and 2001 (25)	1,870	1,020	850	1,022,370	488,930	533,440
Non-permanent residents (26)	1,125	945	180	90,615	45,745	44,870

The tables related to language and immigration characteristics are indicative of Leamington's ethnic and cultural diversity.

School Attendance	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total population 15 years and over attending school full time	1,715	760	955	1,060,115	519,905	540,215
Age group 15-19 attending full time (50)	1,150	530	620	570,550	291,735	278,810
Age group 20-24 attending full time	380	170	215	312,470	148,215	164,255
Total population 15 years and over attending school part time	520	225	295	436,730	187,750	248,980
Age group 15-19 attending part time (50)	30	0	20	19,045	9,675	9,375
Age group 20-24 attending part time	110	65	50	57,580	29,190	28,390

Highest Level of Schooling	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total population aged 20-34	5,570	2,975	2,595	2,263,910	1,112,910	1,150,995
% of the population aged 20-34 with less than a high school graduation certificate	37.7	43.5	31.2	13.2	14.9	11.5
% of the population aged 20-34 with a high school graduation certificate and/or some postsecondary (46)	30.3	31.9	28.3	33.7	36.1	31.5
% of the population aged 20-34 with a trades certificate or diploma	8.7	9.1	8.3	7.9	9.6	6.2
% of the population aged 20-34 with a college certificate or diploma (47)	12.9	9.7	16.6	19.5	16.5	22.4
% of the population aged 20-34 with a university certificate, diploma or degree	10.4	5.7	15.8	25.7	23.0	28.4
Total population aged 35-44	4,130	2,230	1,895	1,949,840	954,260	995,580
% of the population aged 35-44 with less than a high school graduation certificate	40.1	45.7	33.2	17.3	18.8	16.0
% of the population aged 35-44 with a high school graduation certificate and/or some postsecondary (46)	25.4	23.5	27.7	25.6	23.7	27.5
% of the population aged 35-44 with a trades certificate or diploma	10.9	11.7	10.0	11.5	15.0	8.2
% of the population aged 35-44 with a college certificate or diploma (47)	14.9	11.0	19.5	21.2	18.0	24.3
% of the population aged 35-44 with a university certificate, diploma or degree	8.8	7.8	9.8	24.3	24.6	24.1
Total population aged 45-64	5,555	2,805	2,755	2,684,705	1,311,380	1,373,325
% of the population aged 45-64 with less than a high school graduation certificate	50.8	52.9	48.5	27.5	26.5	28.4
% of the population aged 45-64 with a high school graduation certificate and/or some postsecondary (46)	20.3	16.0	24.7	22.9	19.9	25.7
% of the population aged 45-64 with a trades certificate or diploma	10.5	13.4	7.8	11.6	15.8	7.7

### Level of Schooling, con't

% of the population aged 45-64 with a college certificate or diploma (47)	10.4	7.3	13.2	16.6	13.8	19.2
% of the population aged 45-64 with a university certificate, diploma or degree	8.1	10.3	6.0	21.5	24.0	19.0

School attendance and highest level of schooling clearly indicates that Leamington is continues to have lower than expected levels of educational attainment making it difficult to attract jobs requiring higher levels of skill, and indicating that those with a higher education move elsewhere for employment opportunities.

Earnings in 2000	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All persons with earnings (counts) (48)	13,960	7,895	6,065	6,319,535	3,311,105	3,008,425
Average earnings (all persons with earnings (\$))	28,895	35,215	20,665	35,185	42,719	26,894
Worked full year, full time (counts) (49)	7,295	4,605	2,690	3,527,045	2,061,355	1,465,690
Average earnings (worked full year, full time (\$))	38,952	44,548	29,363	47,299	53,937	37,962

Income in 2000	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Persons 15 years of age and over with income (53)	19,785			8,598,560		
Median total income of persons 15 years of age and over (\$) (54)	20,527			24,816		
Composition of total income (100%) (62)	100.0			100.0		
Earnings - % of income	75.1			78.7		
Government transfers - % of income	13.1			9.8		
Other money - % of income	11.9			11.5		

Earnings and income are below the provincial average primarily due to our reliance on the primary sector, lower education/skill levels, and type of employment available. In

addition a higher level of the population relies on social assistance than elsewhere in the province.

Labour Force Indicators	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Participation rate (38)	66.7	75.7	57.3	67.3	73.4	61.5
Employment rate (39)	63.6	72.3	54.6	63.2	69.1	57.6
Unemployment rate (40)	4.5	4.4	4.6	6.1	5.8	6.5

A seemingly rosy picture is painted by our lower than provincial average unemployment rate but this is an indication of available work in agriculture and our cultural fabric.

Industry	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total – Experienced labour force (41)	13,710	7,940	5,770	5,992,765	3,173,280	2,819,490
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	3,255	2,255	995	191,020	135,925	55,090
Manufacturing and construction industries	4,115	3,105	1,015	1,316,580	979,715	336,870
Wholesale and retail trade	1,850	885	965	950,730	484,505	466,230
Finance and real estate	295	125	170	401,445	171,350	230,095
Health and education	1,205	195	1,010	902,990	212,830	690,165
Business services	1,245	705	535	1,145,910	674,075	471,835
Other services	1,755	670	1,085	1,084,090	514,875	569,210

Occupation	Leamington, Town			Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total – Experienced labour force (41)	13,715	7,940	5,770	5,992,765	3,173,275	2,819,490
Management occupations	865	545	325	685,390	434,475	250,915
Business, finance and administration occupations	1,490	360	1,130	1,097,835	311,995	785,835
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	365	240	130	422,510	326,940	95,570
Health occupations	445	30	415	286,305	58,840	227,460
Social science, education, government service and religion	495	155	350	455,825	150,560	305,270
Art, culture, recreation and sport	120	35	85	171,840	79,010	92,830
Sales and service occupations	2,535	895	1,640	1,371,250	590,350	780,900

### Occupation, Con't

Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	2,395	2,275	120	845,130	778,735	66,390
Occupations unique to primary industry	3,005	2,140	865	164,365	122,555	41,805
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	1,990	1,280	710	492,320	319,815	172,505

The industry mix of Leamington as well as the occupations of those employed in the community, indicate our reliance on agriculture and related industries and the emergence of the service sector (which includes hospitality) as an important source of employment. Professional and related occupations are underrepresented.

### Discussion:

The mandate of the Economic Development Office is: “to create an economic development environment in the Municipality through the promotion, cooperation and communication between the public and private sector, enabling an increased standard of living for its residents while maintaining and enriching their quality of life“.

Services provided by the Economic Development Office include:

- Business development information
- Marketing and promotion
- Network development
- Project development and small business consulting
- Relocation assistance for residential and business purposes

Without a proper “road map” it is difficult to focus the direction of this mandate or to be truly effective in terms of service delivery. Reviewing where we are going and how we are going to get there will help provide the needed focus and prioritization, eliminating the trap of trying to “be everything to everyone”.

Since amalgamation, Leamington has experienced significant growth and new economic activity. The arrival of WalMart in 1999 was perhaps a catalyst for much of the recent commercial activity, indicating to developers that Leamington was “ready and receptive”. In addition, Leamington is seen as a desirable place to live...either in retirement or if raising a young family. This desirability has resulted in a healthy housing market with several new subdivision planned in the coming years. The growth in the greenhouse industry has been nothing short of remarkable positioning Leamington/Kingsville as the

North American centre for greenhouse produce. Our growers are progressive, innovative and entrepreneurial.

**Municipality of Leamington Building Permit Summary (\$ Millions)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Residential	18.1	20.3	28.8	19.6	30.6	26.1	17.2
Commercial	3.9	6.9	11.0	5.4	1.8	6.0	6.7
Industrial	1.5	8.8	2.1	2.1	2.3	6.0	1.3
Institutional	7.9	4.4	9.8	7.5	4.0	2.3	1.0
Agricultural	29.3	8.7	15.2	4.8	32.7	27.1	20.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>67.0</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>46.5</b>

Source: Municipality of Leamington Building Department

Note: we do not separate type of agricultural construction, but the bulk of it is new greenhouse/ancillary

However, all these positives are not without their negative side. Commercial development and demographic changes have impacted the uptown. It has lost its sense of “place” and needs see how it can re-invent itself. Families may raise their kids here, but those kids move away for school and are unlikely to return. The physician shortage presents challenges for everyone, but for retirees in particular. Lack of development ready land/infrastructure has made investment in manufacturing and commercial projects difficult. The greenhouse industry is challenged with rising costs of inputs stressing their competitive advantage. So how do we capitalize on the many opportunities at our doorstep, rise to the challenges to prosperity, build on our strengths and overcome our weakness?

**Focus Group Observations:**

The following is a general discussion based on the focus group comments. Please refer to Appendix A for all comments recorded at the meeting. The intention of the forgoing discussion is to list potential areas for further action planning.

H. What do you perceive as the greatest opportunities for stimulating economic growth in Leamington?

A review of the comments received during the discussion of this question essentially revealed five areas of opportunity. Specifically these areas can be grouped as:

- Arts/culture/historical roots/ethnic diversity
- Tourism/hospitality and related
- Agribusiness/agriculture/greenhouses/energy
- Waterfront/location
- Retirement/quality of life

These five areas relate closely, if not identically, to opportunities listed in previous strategic exercises and the Regional Report. Clearly the community still sees these elements as the pillars of Leamington’s uniqueness and we should still focus our economic efforts on building on these pillars.

- I. What would you say are some of the biggest problems and obstacles faced by Leamington for the future growth of the area?

In this part of the discussion several themes emerged as well. Obstacles around developing our tourism industry included:

- Lack of a recognizable “brand”
- Lack of regional focus
- Signage
- Need to build the off season
- Not focusing on our uniqueness and diversity
- Taking tourism for granted ie: birders
- Lack of bus tours, regional transportation
- Not taking advantage of our waterfront

Obstacles connected with encouraging development included:

- Need to complete East Side Arterial Road (ESAR)
- Lack of (or perceived lack of) serviced, zoned, development ready land at competitive prices
- Restrictive zoning
- Incompatible land uses
- Lack of a redevelopment plan for the Uptown
- Provincial policies that don’t encourage development

Other obstacles of note include:

- Educational levels and need for job training
- Language barriers, communication, resistance to change

- J. What do you think will generate economic investment?

Here comments focused on the need for better marketing and promotion, particularly in our own “backyard”. A number of suggestions focused on tourism and how we promote ourselves as a destination. It was felt that we needed to build on our ethnicity by developing festivals, “Mexican Town” marketing campaigns, entertainment for all ages and a need to get the private sector to partner more with destinations such as Point Pelee.

Partnerships were a key element in this discussion, not only related to tourism but to building the educational networks, centres of excellence, “ambassador programs”, energy programs etc.

Business retention programs which focus on assisting business in the way of seminars and workshops and entrepreneurial training would be beneficial. There appears to be a need to conduct some gap analysis to identify what products and services should be supplied locally. This would then lead to a business attraction program. Incentives and

special programs are needed in the uptown to encourage retail/service to locate in this area rather than gravitating to the fringes.

In general there is a need to better promote our assets, improve infrastructure such as Hwy. 3 and the ESAR, and to focus on becoming a leader in “green” technologies.

K. How can we enhance the current business mix?

Here comments focused on a few common themes:

- Business development: gap analysis, incentives, training programs, access to innovation, education gaps/programs, business retention committee and business information centre, company visitation, networking, make processes easier
- Stimulate investment/business that provide entertainment/activities for all ages: focus group to determine areas of interest, lifestyles, waterfront development, film festival, cultural inventory and cultural assets
- Promote Leamington as a great place to work, live and invest-find our niche and focus on it, creative thinking

L. What should Leamington look like ten years from now?

This question was aimed at trying to provide us with some long term strategic focus.

Comments were varied and creative with a particular focus on:

- Environment, “green”, and quality of life indicators (culture, residential communities, acceptance, diversity, creativity, completion of Seacliff Park, waterfront plan, clean and beautiful, safe
- Interconnected-linkages with neighbouring communities, county, Windsor, Pelee Island, transportation routes
- Exciting and eclectic mix of businesses and services, people want to come here to shop and mingle, development that encourages enjoyment in the uptown, downtown hotspots, dynamic and active public spaces, attractive and appealing, unified theme
- Retirement haven-quality of life for seniors, access to service, housing availability, lifestyle attributes
- Active waterfront-place for people to go and enjoy, boutique shopping, active and bustling, beautiful, artistic and cultural
- Culturally attractive-active theatre and arts, cultural activities, ethnic celebrations and destinations, shows, galleries, exhibits, B&bs and tourist spots

M. How can we accomplish this?

This part of the discussion was rather weak as it was getting towards the end of the time allotted. The online survey comments were more concrete items. Refer to the Appendix for complete details.

- Standards, zoning, rob and duplicate, everyone of same page, community design standards, plan the plan and work the plan, private sector involvement, development incentives, ESAR

- Long term planning, gap analysis, measurables with public consultation, focus groups aimed at all age groups/sectors of public to get a diversity of opinion
- Marketing, promotion, ambassadors
- Green programs, green incentives

N. What should the Economic Development focus on?

This question was not addressed in the focus group meeting but certainly the comments from the day illustrate several projects. In addition, the on-line comments provided many specific suggestions for action planning. See Appendix A.

Next Steps:

Based on the content of this report and the comments received at the focus group meeting and on-line it is apparent that there are a number of “actionable” items that can be addressed by the EDO and the Economic Development Committee. It is now up to the committee, municipal staff and council to develop its short, mid and long term economic development action plans and develop time lines for implementation. Many of the items discussed at the meeting are not within the realm of the economic development office, but that is not to say that they cannot be passed along to appropriate agencies etc. or are not deserving of our lobbying efforts.

What follows is a preliminary action plan for the economic development office for 2008-2010.

### 3 year work plan plan-Economic Development

Priority Item	2008	2009	2010	comments
DVD and promo material	*			Have applied for CISP funding
Murals	*	*	*	Complete first in 2008, subsequent years coordinate with community but not fund
Birding Project	Web links and promotion of "Birding Month"	banner sign bird houses/banner sign Ability to complete birdhouse project depends on school curriculum, may have to wait until 2009	banner sign bird house project general promotion	Banner sign to be cosponsored by community partner such as Friends of Point Pelee. Welcome birders campaign. Continue with strategies suggested by regional birding report/committee-regional lead
St. Clair College campus	* Initiate discussions and community consultation	*	*	Will required coordinated community effort. Community consultations etc.
Signage		*	*	Billboard sign on Hwy 77, redo TODS signage on 401. Work with region to develop common tourism signage. Encourage PW to work on entrance way signage/gate way signage.
Uptown Redevelopment and Business Attraction Program	*	*	*	Prepare business case in 2008 Budget monies for 2009

				Ongoing promotion Coordinate with development services and BIA
Tourism and other Advertising	*	*	*	Research and develop targeted advertising campaign, partner with Pelee Days Inn? Focus on quality of life features. Explore TV campaign (2009)
Tourism Windsor- Essex	*	*	*	Strengthen relationship, work on regional projects such as “flavour trail”, destination packaging, joint marketing.
Tourism Partnership/strategic plan	*	*	*	In partnership with Kingsville. Develop joint marketing effort starting in 2008. Pick on project each year.
Windsor-Essex Development Commission	*	*	*	Strengthen relationship. Continue to provide assistance as needed. Attend trade shows with them? Visitation program etc. Work in liaison on items for local/regional significance such as Airport Project, Bio fuels project.
MedQuest	*	?	?	Set for 2008. Physician Recruitment Committee and Schulich to determine if it continues in subsequent years.
Develop Diversity Theme	*	*	*	In support of Tomato Fest as they build upon ethnic

				theme/programming. Applied for Celebrate Ontario Funding for 2008. Will explore Trillium in 2009-2010 to expand content.
Waterfront enhancements		*	*	Once Seacliff Park is completed encourage “waterfront” type businesses to locate in the area. Explore developing a commercial/tourism type project in the Dock warehouse.
Business Attraction and Retention	*	*	ongoing	<p>Various activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter (e and web)</li> <li>• Update business start up guide (2008)</li> <li>• Add more resources to web page such as “Employment incentives”, “Government programs for Business” (2008/2009)</li> <li>• Work with private land owners to develop marketing plan for Hwy 77 (part of CISP application for 2008)</li> </ul>
Visitation Program	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Visit a few businesses each

				month, perhaps with Mayor or council member. Continue to work with Welcome Wagon to develop their Business Welcome Program (with Chamber)
Beyond City Lights	*			Coordinate Essex County conference in 2008. Assist on planning committee if needed in other counties in 2009/10
“Light it Up”	Discussions with other communities re: attendance vs costs and spin off economic benefit	*	*	Maybe get it going in 2008. Work with high schools to build Christmas lighted displays for Seacliff park. Market jointly with Kingsville Festival of Lights. Need at least 10 displays to start (work with Essex Power), add displays each year. Once established hand off project to a community group.
“Greening”	*	*	*	Target green industries to support greenhouse industry, encourage R&D, investment etc. Support of OGVG, local developers/land owners, private sector, province.



**Appendix A – Focus Group and On-line Verbatim Responses**

## Round Table Discussion – Summary

A: What do you perceive as the greatest opportunities for stimulating economic growth in Leamington?

- Environmental quality – make it a keystone to our being eg: birders, nearness to lake, agri business (5)
- Agriculture (3)
- Greenhouse location – waterways, climate (sunparlour), border proximity (3)
- Big isn't working – small is an opportunity for growth (regional:local) small is an advantage (3)
- Greenhouse Production Tours (3)
- Multicultural – Mexico etc. , butterfly migration (3)
- Manufacturing and agricultural linkages – bio fuels, bio products, energy generation at farm level (3)
- Seacliff Park (2)
- Casino – riverfront boat from Windsor/Detroit to Leamington, tours (2)
- Birders – “not your father’s birder anymore”, environmental/sophisticated (2)
- Greenhouses – cluster: energy, equipment, resources (2)
- Leamington air port (2)
- Tourism (1)
- Entertainment – venue (1)
- Historical roots of Leamington – England (1)
- Greenhouse technologies – location, centre of excellence (1)
- Water/Infrastructure – recreation, agriculture, tourism, industry (1)
- Seniors/retirement community – living communities, medical support, town planning/incentives to develop (1)
- Developing and economic plan (1)
- Branding of area (1)
- Seniors (1)
- Greenhouses (1)
- Retirement living – focus (1)
- Marina-waterfront – needed marina service/boats (1)
- Multicultural area – heritage attraction, oldest community, heritage sites, edu-tourism (1)
- Outdoors – ice rink (1)
- Heinz Factor tour (1)
- Ethnic diversification – audience, culture, restaurants (1)
- Accessibility through technology and then geographic proximity (1)

Other items listed as opportunities for stimulating economic growth:

- Manufacturing
- Retirement Living
- Lakefront – marina
- Showcase Greenhouses
- Ethnic diversity
- Greenhouse Mall – government programs, community partners
- Sustainability of ag sector – greenhouses
- Wine industry – expansion, promotion of local wines in local restaurants
- Farming – promote use of local grown produce in restaurants
- Nature – monarchs, hawks
- Marinas
- Quality of living – cost of housing, secure communities, pace balanced
- Location
- Natural attributes
- Multi cultural fabric
- Beginning of shift towards acceptance and change (tolerance)
- Open door policy to investment
- Best infrastructure and amenities to support “quality of life” for investment
- Climate
- Current investment magnet for other investment
- Cultural events
- We have agriculture – wineries, Point Pelee are our strong points
- Make opportunities for small business to branch out and become bigger
- Waterfront, daytrippers, Point Pelee, Hillman Marsh, LDMH, multiple attractions
- Ethnic festivals – Mexican, Jamaican
- Accommodations, location, entertainment
- Excellent golf courses and restaurants
- Geographic – tourism, southern-Relax/Enjoy
- Demographic – 50 plus market – spending group
- Attractions –trained//educated for retirees
- Elder Hostel (organization)

B: Problems/obstacles

- Lack of commitment to environmental quality – birding, parks, physical look of town and area; infrastructure – lobbying of upper levels of government (6)
- “Brand” – do we understand where we are and where we want to go in the future? Do they match? (4)
- Signage to promote our area ie: greenhouse capital of Canada, etc. (3)

- No economic plan (3)
- Developers challenged with permits and delays and staff support (3)
- Post secondary opportunities for kids (2)
- Infrastructure ie power grid (2)
- Signage for tourism/ waypoint signs (2)
- More signage – Pelee Island not always included in promotions ie. discover Ontario (2)
- Leamington raceway –add race dates, simulcast, slots (2)
- Need training facilities to develop highly skilled workforce (1)
- Erie South gridlock (1)
- Lack of awareness of destination (1)
- Needed – agri tours, Heinz tour, horse farms (1)
- Joint marketing including internet (1)
- Increase bus tours (1)
- More entertainment choices (1)
- Improve ferry service and promotion (1)
- Marketing area “southern tip” (1)
- Waterfront-“gateway to” eg: Bracebridge, Grand Bend (1)
- Arts/culture –access (1)

Other comments regarding problems/obstacles:

- Off season?
- Gas and energy prices
- Land availability - \$competetive dollar
- Health care, doctor shortage
- Not developing our assets – waterfront, dollars
- No funding, or no longer available
- Heinz tours no longer available
- Not promoting our ethnic diversity, groups don’t work together/communicate
- Upkeep of marina-now 25 years old, needs updating
- Zoning – need more residential/industrial land
- Restrictive policies for rezoning
- Provincial rezoning policies/restrictions
- Ethnicity – language barriers, education, communication
- Community needs to recognize importance of birders/tourists – buy into it, connect
- Gas prices, US dollar impacting on tourist from states –find new markets
- Greenhouse tours difficult – spread of disease, contamination, maintain quality control
- Communication
- Community resistance to change – are we making the same movie?

- Signage
- Lack of defined sectoral areas that complement multiple land uses (ie. pollution plant next to subdivision)
- Although there is some willingness to partner there are still fractures
- Lack of cultural support
- Lack of support for local business
- Coordination/communication between organizations
- Marina – boat services
- Industrial land-lack of, zoning limits

C: What do you think will generate economic investment?

- Promotion – go further a field, (US isn't working, try GTA etc) (6)
- Research centre for greenhouse or ag centre of excellence (4)
- Partnerships-coopetition (4)
- Comprehensive development plan that encourages creativity, diversity and complementary uses (4)
- Educate the mind of public/business owners (4)
- Package tours (3)
- More events with big names, youth entertainment, (3)
- Racetrack – expand, school for jockeys, equestrienne interests (3)
- Get all business sectors to partner up ie: hotels, Point Pelee, wineries (3)
- Retain GST exemption for US visitors (2)
- Identify gaps and use these to lure suppliers and stop bleeding (2)
- Green powered town – windmills, hydrogen (2)
- Downtown facades of buildings and theme (2)
- Marketing and promotion (1)
- Put “Leamington” on the map, link with Point Pelee (1)
- Look at raw resources and develop around this (1)
- TV/radio/magazine commercials on Leamington (1)
- Canada/Ontario exists south of London (1)
- Promote Pelee Island (1)
- Convention space in town (1)
- Expand festivals – Mexican, Jamaican (1)
- Our own Mexican village etc. (1)
- Target marketing –fun for all age levels; bars, restaurants, gambling (1)
- Festivals, music, food (1)
- Grow the population – attract business variety (1)
- Complete east side arterials and other road works (1)
- Need industrial land (1)

- We need to change focus from Niagara area to South Western Ontario (1)
- Better research (polling) (1)
- Encourage your employees to “talk up Leamington” – educate (1)
- More outdoor cafes (1)
- Own opportunities –existing; support, stimulate new business-programs, draw interest in new business (1)
- utilize resources we have (1)
- Need attraction program (1)
- Review “global” (1)
- Diversity – change mind set of potential entrepreneurs eg. Huge market in water front. (1)

Other comments regarding generating economic investment

- Promote “South”
- Tomato symbol, promote what we’re known for
- Fishing, packing industry
- Country music
- Champion of local ag industry – local representation
- Promote seasonal opportunities
- Tax breaks and incentives
- Engage MP and MPP’s better
- Expansion vs new building – grow local companies
- Invite/arrange site visits
- Collateral (collaborative?) materials – print/web – testimonials, newsletter, mentoring
- Connect the hydrogen economy to the greenhouse industry
- Less studies and more drive/initiative
- Performing arts centre-theatre
- Focus on “green” climate
- Need to promote “take a tomato home” –did you get your daily veggie intake?
- Encourage business to come to Leamington – if not, why not?
- Extend marketing efforts to adjacent US
- More interaction with tour companies
- Traffic – hwy 3 expansion needed to draw business

D: How can we enhance the current business mix

- Nothing for adults to do in evening-entertainment (3)
- Grow brain business – make Leamington a WIFI hot spot (3)
- Establish a business retention committee and business information centre (3)
- Market and advertise to upcoming generation (3)
- Coordination of activities – strong leaders (2)

- Do a gap analysis – asset mapping of current inventory, sector analysis (1)
- Company visitations: R&D programs, savings, energy efficiency programs etc. (1)
- Focus group for generation interests – lifestyles, water sports (1)
- Film festival, cultural inventory (1)
- Access to info (1)
- Inventory current assets – raise local awareness of assets (1)
- Get people to think outside the box (1)
- Long terms and education commitment – not just lip service, need commitment from senior levels of government (1)
- Find a niche for our community (1)
- Leamington great place to work-entice people to follow companies here (1)
- Shop at home – positive effect on employment (1)
- Financial incentives (1)
- Take advantage of our location (1)
- Multi culture – village attractions, festivals (1)
- Innovative, creative education (1)

Other comments regarding enhancing the current business mix:

- Business retention program with local representation
- Reduce paperwork and restrictive regulations
- Tying various ethnic communities together
- More residential land
- More commercial land
- Enhanced and comprehensive communications strategy to let “outside” know about us
- Education and networking
- Change marketing strategy
- Lobby higher levels of government
- Need to capitalize on the fact that we are away from the city
- Emphasize the environment
- Bilingualism-French & Spanish (for call centres)
- Careful of development of future – make sure it’s to the best

E: What should Leamington look like ten years from now?

- Clean-green-clean in the sense of environmentally safe ((7)
- More attractive to young people – ask what they want ie: education, lifestyles-trails, link subdivisions, entertainment, services, child care, bike paths (3)
- Seniors communities (3)
- Demographics – senior generation; health care/recreation (3)

- Trolley/horse and buggy (2)
- Entertainment venues – promote local musicians, artists etc (2)
- International attraction for birders (2)
- Wineries and culinary tourism (2)
- More downtown hotspots (2)
- All of public infrastructure, buildings, public parks-uniformity ie. arts area, ethnic area-looks (2)
- Competitive stores (1)
- Look like a city? (1)
- Promote our own community with our own people (1)
- Increased public transportation – use solar friendly/alternatives to power it (1)
- Tie it (above) with wineries, Point Pelee, Kingsville etc. (1)
- Seacliff Park completed and accessible and clean (1)
- Develop waterfront for locals and tourists – floating fountain in harbour (1)
- More retail shops (1)
- Melding of the “have/have not” segments of societies (1)
- Green – picturesque –maintain a small town atmosphere (1)

Other comments on what Leamington should look like ten years from now:

- Expanded role as a regional centre
- Create an ambassador of Leamington
- “community pride”
- 4 lane hwy to Windsor
- More industrial land and industries employing local residents
- Population growth
- Festivals every weekend
- High employment
- High end restaurants
- Clean and beautiful city
- Tours of greenhouses
- First class theatre
- Green energy – clean air
- Eco tourism thriving
- More B&Bs etc.
- Maintain cultural heritage sites
- Healthy community – organics, wines, doctors
- More unique retail and boutiques
- More cultural heritage
- No truck routes downtown
- Smooth development process
- Waterfront developments and activities – bands, events etc.

- Preserve our beauty and charm
- Set standards
- Unified theme like Stratford
- Expand to surrounding
- New franchises and business start ups
- New bike trails and walk ways

F: How: How can we accomplish this?

- Community design standards-bylaws (6)
- R&D (rob and duplicate)-take best practices and apply to us (4)
- Comprehensive plan for downtown/town and then have the stakeholders exhibit the intestinal fortitude to stick to the plan (4)
- Accelerated redevelopment of Seaciff Park (amphi theatre, this park is a jewel) (2)
- Gift card/tourism card – shop stay in Leamington/shop stay in Essex County (1)
- Every one sharing and contributing to the vision (1)
- \$ and human resources dedicating to creating our vision of the best community (1)
- Diversification of downtown business section eg. Specialty shops (1)
- Encourage a warm welcome to visitors (Leamington welcome) (1)
- Everyone on same page, going in same direction (1)
- Focus on common interest (1)

Other comments on how we can accomplish this:

- Zoning, zoning, zoning
- Forward thinking members of council
- Public/private funding partnerships – parks/recreation/tourism
- Engaged community
- Control redundant businesses
- Uptown standards
- Carousel of nations type event
- Focus on east side arterial
- Smooth development process – timelines, shorter studies, more decisions, cost help
- Developer incentives to develop seniors' lifestyle communities
- Water front focus group
- Communication of benefits and coordination
- More federal funding to improve docking facility
- Support groups/teamwork

## On Line Survey – Summary

### Stimulate Economic Growth:

- Build up the Mexican culture. Enhance the Mexican restaurants then advertise-similar to Detroit’s Mexican Village
- Develop the dock and the marina – could be a goldmine
- The amount of people moving here is a great opportunity, as well as the aging populations. The town could use them as a target market to improve business
- Agri-business and supporting industry
- Retirement centre
- Tourism, eco-tourism, wine and agri-tourism – small and medium sized service industries
- Tourism and retirement
- Pick a “topic” or description and then run with it. Ie: tourism location or retirement community
- Alternative energy production, alternative energy equipment design, hydrogen economy
- Retirement residences for snow birds with top quality service for these prospective new members of the community. Note: These “baby boomers” may be the last generation to out live their children and heirs. They will have a great deal of wealth.
- Greenhouse production
- Birding season, I worked at Point Pelee for 3 seasons and the biggest complaint I hear was that the stores downtown were not open after 6pm so they could not shop or spend money in the downtown area. They do not want wal-mart because they have that where they come from. They have lots of money to spend but no where to spend it.
- The diverse culture of the town, the marina and the many activities it could host, Point Pelee, the dock area
- A partnership with Windsor. We need a go-train type transportation to and from Windsor, even a bus could work.
- Retirement Mecca if you can provide health care.
- Tourism
- Alternative energy sources ie. solar power
- Point Pelee birding festival, butterfly festival and any other functions that draw people from all over the world to the park
- Attracting tourist and permanent residents will create increased opportunity for small business...the backbone of an economy. Large business places too many eggs in one basket.
- We need to get all our eggs out of one basket. Yes we have a marina but there is so much more of the surrounding area to be developed. Small shops along the waterfront as well as outdoor cafes that may be only open in the summer but draw attention to our hospitality.

- Downtown Leamington is a collection of unique shops with long time residents as owners and all have a story. The need to incorporate north to south is critical to our growth.
- Health care solution
- More manufacturing jobs with good pay. Lets keep our youth in our community instead of leaving for major cities ...it is the future of the town.
- Take advantage of our location on the lake...I don't mean the marina. I mean water events, etc. Seacliff Park could be vitally important – concerts in a band shell etc. Sun and surf as well as winter sports on the lake.
- As far as tourism I believe that for too many years we put emphasis on attracting the Americans and we need to move away from that because they are into a “secure border” mode and that won't get better for a while. I think our tourism dollars should go to attracting other Canadians and Europeans. I had a very nice man on vacation from Germany in the store. I asked him what brought him to Leamington and he said “they came to see Ontario”.
- We need a type of “school” or training centre. Could be in regard to agriculture (connect with U of Guelph) or a fire training centre. Let's face it, we need a new fire hall (with parking) so why not lobby the government to add a fire training facility. Gravenhurst is way too far away and cost municipalities a lot of money to send firefighters and every firefighter now has to have training by law. We have a perfect location for that too with water & ice rescue.
- We should continue to promote our tourist industry. We have several very unique areas.
- The waterfront. Take advantage of our beautiful shoreline to increase tourism.
- A year round service of ferry to USA to ship goods and develop tourism
- Diversity, right now all you have are greenhouses, farms, some wineries, fisheries, a little tourism, a little manufacturing...all on limited scale to limited markets.

#### Obstacles:

- Too much focus and dependence on animal cruelty (rodeos and circuses) as a form of entertainment. Turns the stomachs of professionals and educated and conscientious people and parents.
- Some of the biggest problems noticed by residents is the state of most of our roads, especially Erie St. S. Another would be how wide the roads are as well, Oak Street East in particular.
- Doctor shortage
- High Canadian dollar
- Border issues
- Completion of the by-pass
- Additional low cost housing
- Keep US dollar low
- Improving uptown-immaculate and clean
- Improve traffic flow through town

- Assured access to Lake Erie water
- The drain on the municipalities ability to finance capital projects caused by the sewer separation requirements in the town core
- Completion of hwy 3 widening and the eastern arterial road
- Overcoming the “border identification” problem ie passport requirements etc.
- Capacity at the Union Water system
- The effect of the provincial policy statement on various development matters
- Lack of local and regional public transportation
- Out with the old and in with the new
- Not enough use of downtown other than small boutique shops, biased or ignorant treatment of migrant workers...they are paying customers as well to the town when they are here
- Not enough advertising to areas outside Leamington area (seek more American customer base)
- The amount of reliance on vehicles, our roads are too narrow for the amount of cars. A more reliable bus service is needed.
- Restaurants are lacking in quality and there is little night entertainment
- Attitude of some councillors and business hours in downtown core. Let some young minds into the town council
- Perceived unhealthy living environment.
- There are so many rules. There always seems to be something that stops a new idea from becoming a reality. Big Box stores are a definite draw but the entrepreneur has a lot to add and there always seems to be some bylaw that stands between them and an idea. There is not an allowance for a new idea that may be fresh and just may add to the uniqueness of the area.
- Make room for independent business to start and grow by limiting the big box businesses.
- Jobs, infrastructure, taxes
- Our education levels are way too low and our kids that attain a higher education don't come back because there are no employment opportunities here. The second part of this problem is that we are attracting more and more undereducated people which is going to make the problem worse in years to come.
- Leamington comes across as old and a bit too conservative
- Trying to grow in the shadow of Windsor and transit through Detroit which act as a psychological barrier to discourage tourism
- Red tape of setting up and doing business
- Small population base from which to get skilled workers
- Distance from Windsor
- Lack of advanced educational training institutions

#### Generate Economic Investment

- Tear down the dock restaurant and make it into a “harbour village” of trendy shops and restaurants of all types

- Have more people move here in the future by creating more tourism hotspots, or having more jobs from companies that situate themselves in the community so we aren't a "bedroom" community
- Good infrastructure
- High quality of life
- Tax breaks for NEW business
- Measured infrastructure improvements that do not cause tax increases
- Support for hospital and local health care provision
- Completion of the "Arts Centre" to be a crown jewel along with the Sherk Centre
- Make quality of life for the locals a priority, not tourism. A local seasonal resident adds much more to the economy than a tourist as most tourist spending can be quite narrow in scope. None the less, tourism is an important economy builder.
- Revamp everything for the younger generation
- Turn downtown Leamington into a mainly restaurant area featuring the different cultures and their food offerings.
- Make use of the diverse ethnic community and incorporate that into the town to welcome people of all creeds to the area. Also, have an open air market on weekends for all to enjoy, closing the one-way street by Gabriele's to host different music acts, family activities, group events.
- A Go-train link to Windsor and other places in county
- Access and tax deferrals for start ups.
- The politically hot topic of greening
- Access to timely health care for the workers and families
- More younger minded business people on council
- Less greenhouse industry
- Increased greening of the town and additional green spaces. Concrete, pavement, and bricks give the illusion of an unhealthy town. The town is slowly moving in the right direction with the addition of walking trails. A town this size could use another larger part closer to the town core, or perhaps near the hospital or further north.
- Work with what we have. Seacliff Park is a buried treasure. When I was a teenager it was standing room only on the beach on Sunday. Cars were parked for kms up hwy 18. They came from all over Essex and Kent County to sun there. The little restaurant and the arcade were great. What happened? Investors want to invest in a hot spot and Seacliff Park with its beach is just that.
- Put a new face on the front of the hospital.
- Clean up the larger eye sores on the main streets
- Repave Erie St. S.
- Jobs, decrease in taxes
- Constantly inviting potential investor to visit our town.
- We need to work on getting more people living in the downtown area as well
- We need much more attention to advertising our town, as a lot of the residents have a poor opinion of the area, and we need to broadcast the word that it's a

great place, it might be heard by outsiders, but even the residents might start to pay attention

- Even seasonal businesses like a surf/diving shop, artisans shops, themed mini golf, water park, eco-tourism cruises and tours etc.
- Access, access, access-a safe/direct service to USA as transportation is always the main issue
- Pick a specific niche and go for it like providing products and services that cater to the needs of the aging population or retirees who have the most disposable income

#### Enhance Business Mix:

- Continue to attract more people to our community, encourage people from other cultures to move here, eventually creating a diverse community
- Coordinate and work with BIA/chamber of commerce.
- Encourage an economic development plan with buy-in from property owners, developers and business operators
- Promote Leamington for both its manufacturing and agricultural industries
- Be careful with zoning, but remain open minded
- Support the downtown core business district. Big box retailers are great but they are economy sapping. What sets Leamington apart is the retail availability in the core. For instance: virtually every town of Leamington's size has Wal-mart, very few have something like Jackson's
- Better "way fare" signage through out the community
- Cheaper downtown rental space, accessible parking
- Need to have new products. Solar energy would be a good one for an area called Sun Parlour. It's more cost effective and less invasive than wind power
- Get rid of some of the gyms in town, we don't need 5 or 6 different ones
- More functions for teens
- Encourage additional town apt structures in designated areas. More people in less space. More people...more business opportunities
- Stimulate business in the downtown area. It has become so depressed. It is a sidewalk hangout. I wouldn't walk the sidewalks with my children and I don't speak just for myself. We need to take control of downtown or the current merchants don't have a change and future merchants won't consider the area.
- Research other successful communities
- Business to stay open longer and more convenience for their customers
- We certainly need more attention paid to the downtown core. We need to search for a mix of business to locate in the downtown.
- Have councillors visit towns like Grand Bend or Hunstville to see how they have combined year round business with seasonal
- That's the problem. You can't because they are already limited. The wineries are maxed out. You can only fish so much. You can only produce so many tomatoes and cucumbers in the greenhouses. The manufacturing facilities that exist are all tied into a crumbling automotive market. Tourism is dying.

10 years from now:

- Same size but with a more coherent look. Signs and advertising are discordant, trashy.
- Look bigger and stronger, more developed along hwy 3 all the way down the proposed arterial road
- Gradual, well planned growth; family, residential, retirement community, agri-business and small industrial and service businesses – full range of cultural and recreational facilities
- A clean, environmentally friendly town that is attractive to both business and retirement
- Tourism hot spot...the place to be
- City like conveniences, small town friendliness
- The very best farmland is under great housing pressures and or being sought by organizations for other purposes ie soccer fields or ERCA's environmental corridor. Leamington has to be careful not to create the situation where Heinz, SunBrite and other food production facilities cannot get enough local acreage to support themselves. Leamington does not need to expand its urban borders in order to be a great community.
- Clean, neat and fresh. It should sparkle.
- Even more tourism attractions to outsiders, making use of the downtown core instead of pushing big box store down towards the lake and outskirts of town. People want to walk and enjoy the outdoors, make things accessible to all
- Sustainable, still green, with not too many cars and pollution
- Leader in greening of Ontario. Also a leader in providing health care to its constituents
- Colourful and vibrant
- Greener for a start, but taller, perhaps near the centre strip. The town appears to be slowly dying in the centre and sprawling everywhere else. Many financially healthy small towns have a hook...St. Jacob's – antiques, Kingsville boasting the old home theme/quiet town etc. Leamington...tomatoes??
- Seacliff Park with join the marina. The walk from the parking lot of the marina down the maintained beach and up the hill only to be welcomed by a sports game, water activities, a few concession stands and some small booths with merchants selling their unique items. Downtown would be an array of vendors showcasing their wares both inside and out. Small markets would be selling Leamington's best product. Different cafes that serve all of the dishes that make up our ethnic background. Somewhere for the youth to go and enjoy themselves on the weekends so they are close to home and they spend their money here instead of running to Windsor. Then of course there are the 40-60 year olds who no longer fit with the young crowd but are not ready to retire. They need a place to go and listen to music and maybe dance a little.
- Leamington should be an inviting and safe place to shop and exercise out doors
- More like a little city instead of a small farming town

- Would you want to drive through a dark and deserted area on your way to a big box store? We need to continue the work on the downtown core. The parking situation and the lighting have been giant steps in the right direction, but we need to work more on cleanliness. We really should take a look at angle parking on one side of Mill and on one side of Queen Street. This angle parking would make downtown look much prettier and inviting and perhaps provide more parking spots. We could have a few more trees. Leamington should be famous for its trees.
- In the summer the town should be crowded with tourists
- A safe and comfortable place for US tourists
- Maybe a retirement haven

#### How to Accomplish this:

- Encourage theme decors
- By attracting more residents to the community by offering many educational and health opportunities. Also fire protection and police security are major aspects to attracting people here
- Long-term planning with reasonable, viable timelines and goals
- Focus and commitment
- Careful, measured progress, with lots of public consultation. Keep the processes local as possible. Outside consultants are not always the way to go. They cost money that leaves the community usually forever.
- Get new young blood in town council, get rid of the old guys with their old ideas and stop micromanaging. Time to let someone else take over. Also, don't just include things for the few with money, have people from all backgrounds in town council.
- Promoting greening incentives. Blue box give a-ways and alternative energy sources
- Re-vamp the store fronts, the town should be a little more open minded about entrepreneurship
- Greener...property purchases...corporate sponsorship to develop the part...give them lots of recognition, which will encourage the "band wagon" effect. Allow tax incentives to developers of multi story complexes, but maintain height restriction to X number of stories to preserve the small town atmosphere.
- Focus groups named at all age groups. Let the teenagers tell you what they are looking for, let the baby boomers tell you what's important to them and of course the seniors need to have input
- With properly placed paths for walkers and bikes
- Think like a big city rather than a small town in promoting this area, but keeping in mind the small town expense of doing business here
- Encourage more interesting and diverse businesses to locate here
- There is a huge market of US senior citizens/baby boomers/families that want to visit southwestern Ontario as it is regarded as a safe place to vacation/visit but do not want to take the chance of being stuck in downtown Detroit (2<sup>nd</sup> most dangerous city in North America) or delayed on the bridge

- Start developing retirement communities, retirement homes, that cater to easy, simple life

EDO focus:

- Increasing traffic flow to and from Windsor and Kingsville. Maybe even adding a rail service for commuters to Windsor from Leamington.
- Housing development, adding more apartment complexes in the town to save much needed space
- Focus on broadening and expanding the existing agri-business and developing supporting and spin-off industries
- Target retirement based growth both residential and commercial and retail
- Help support the tourism industry
- More advertising focusing on everything Leamington has to offer.
- Lots of jobs available in the agriculture industry
- Keep uptown immaculate and clean
- New fresh signage for roads, markers, parking spaced etc.
- Business owners and the municipality should ensure that their properties and surrounding areas are kept in excellent condition (new paint as necessary, weeds pulled from cracks in asphalt/concrete, displays kept up to date, signage in good order etc. Have the municipality replace the lighting at the hospital crosswalk
- Upon entering the town from any direction, there should be colourful, helpful signage and immaculate landscaping
- Advertise and promote the communities “heritage” homes and businesses. A good place to look at is the Town of Sydney, Vancouver Island. Very well kept community.
- Fill out the Iroquois business par.
- Support Anthony Cervini’s work on the new WECDC
- More things for young people to do. Use the arena for more than just hockey. We have lots of space and could have some amazing concerts but now one has ever bothered to use it.
- Offer incentives to small business to start up.
- Show public how to get government assistance to open a business, give seminars open to the public, some people don’t know where to begin
- Greening and environmental issues. Be proactive and lobby government for tax incentives to develop solar energy
- We have a beautiful park in our backyard. Why aren’t we promoting that? Why is Leamington not standing behind them for functions. The amount of people that go through that park every summer is outstanding but the down does not welcome visitors. Go up north around Lindsay and see how they operate and bring some of that back here. Welcome visitors and accommodate them. It’s time to bend over backwards for the tourism industry
- I think you need to first find out what’s important to the residents. They are the bread and butter of Leamington. Impress them and everyone you want to attract will be impressed too.

- Spending some money in our downtown and promoting our downtown as a viable place to do business in. Getting more corporate businesses to locate downtown rather than locating in malls or plazas. Making our downtown more of an outdoor mall.
- Water events/eco-tourism
- Attract businesses associated with water and a better mix of business – moving away from automotive. We also have enough big box stores – pay terrible and keep our income low.
- Somehow attract business to do with technology
- Focus tourism dollars on Canadian and European (Japan?) markets
- Ecotourism, waterfront based or themed businesses.
- Securing sage/independent year round link to the USA markets
- Get higher education facilities out here
- Look for diversity and try to find/develop new businesses that cater to new niche markets
- Don't sit on your laurels, just because you made #1 in a magazine doesn't mean people are going to be beating on your doorstep, you have to promote yourself continuously and educate the public that they should consider you.
- Full service Swiss Chalet – other one was cold, paper plates etc. Get Harvey's back too
- Bob Evans or other family style restaurant
- Keep Wal-Mart where it is-too far to go if they move out of town for seniors to get to
- Winners
- Repaint line markers on roads during the summer-too hard to see

The following (modified slightly to maintain anonymity) was a comment received by a local business owner (did not respond to survey but voiced an opinion non-the-less)

First off: XL idea having this meeting (too bad it is on father's day weekend, too busy)

I think that the Leamington/South Shore area of Essex County can be as prosperous as the Niagara region. But there are a number of things that need to change.

We as a county would benefit tremendously from a much more liberal liquor laws enabling retailers, wineries, the hospitality industry to pour wine without having to worry about another ancient law. Why is it that this is possible in Europe and we are still stuck in a conservative Calvinistic approach? The simple fact that as a B&B owner I can not serve or even give away a complimentary small bottle of wine is ridiculous. Apparently we need to be protected from this by our government who holds all the wisdom.

The B&B industry in Niagara region is huge. It is huge because it works together with the wineries. In Essex it needs to be stimulated, with much more relaxed development laws. It will create a second (upscale) quality tier of hospitality that brings in much needed economic activity.

When asking the Provincial Government for funding for good projects think of this: we are the proud owners of a beautiful marina complex. That project is done now and behind us. Let's not dwell on it anymore...we know it's good! NOW, the next step: make that walk twice as big, have it developed into a complete nice water front.

Last but not least...How much good is it going to do the town if Wal-Mart relocates? Taking my age into consideration personally it does not affect me. Do not assume that I am voicing this opinion because of where my business is. Eire South will remain a vibrant area. I simply believe that the last thing Leamington needs is a Super Wal-Mart on the outskirts of town.

Thank God our downtown is hanging on by its fingertips to stay vibrant, let's keep it that way. There are only so many dollars to go around and Wal-Mart wants them all. Please say NO!

So here is my 5 cents. Hopefully it goes somewhere.