

Highlights of the CIP Survey Report

- * A total of 44 survey interviews were conducted with business owners and commercial property owners in the Community Improvement Plan study area.**
- * 97.7% of the respondents indicated that more needs to be done to encourage residents to make most of their purchases in Madoc.**
- * 81.8% of the respondents indicated that more needs to be done to encourage visitors to shop in Madoc.**
- * 82.9% of the respondents indicated that they thought that a CIP program could lead to increased business.**
- * 95.5% of the respondents thought that a CIP program could help develop even more pride in our community.**
- * 72.7% of the respondents thought that the idea of branding Madoc as a “Vintage Village” was appealing.**
- * Other suggestions for branding that were mentioned by more than one individual included "Gateway to the Gold Rush" or something based on a Recreational theme - title to be developed.**
- * Overall, the level of interest in participating in a CIP program was high with more than half (23 of 44) of the respondents indicating that they likely would apply for CIP funding, and another six respondents indicating that they were not sure if they would apply or not.**
- * Of the 25 respondents who answered question 8, regarding the minimum level of municipal contribution they would require before applying for a grant, 80% indicated that they would apply for grants if the municipal contribution was at least 50%.**
- * Most of the suggestions with respect to the use of funding "to encourage the revitalization of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated properties and buildings", related to improvements with respect to the vacant lots in the downtown core.**
- * Four respondents gave extended answers to question number 10, which was an invitation to provide any further comments they would like to make the CIP committee.**

Purpose of the Survey

This survey was conducted to provide the Community Improvement Plan ("CIP") Committee with direct input from business owners and commercial property owners in the designated study area.

The survey questions related to 1) current status factors that might recommend development of a CIP program, 2) expected effects, 3) ideas for branding to a theme, 4) anticipated levels of participation, 5) ratios of municipal investment which applicants would require before participating in the program, and 6) suggestions for the use of funds to encourage the revitalization of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated properties and buildings.

The Designated Study Area

The CIP Committee developed an initial proposal for the study area which was presented at a public meeting on November 10, 2011. At that time the study area was bounded by Prince Albert Street to the north, Davidson Street, Church Street, and Baldwin Street on the east side, Livingston Street on the South side, and a line North from Champlain Street on the west side.

On December 21, 2011 the CIP committee met again, reviewed submissions from the public related to defining the study area, and recommended to Council that the boundaries be extended to include properties fronting on Russel Street north to Highway 7, and properties fronting on Durham Street south to the Skatepark. This recommendation was accepted and approved by the Municipal Council.

Sample

Participants in the study consisted of a volunteer sample of business owners and commercial property owners in the study area. A total of 44 surveys were completed. Of these, 39 interviews were conducted in person with the participants, 4 interviews were conducted on the telephone, and one business owner based in Campbellford submitted a completed survey form via e-mail. In six cases interviews were conducted with more than one business partner present.

Requests for participation and a Letter of Introduction and Confirmation were delivered to all business owners and commercial property owners in the study area who could be identified. Business owners are generally very busy people, and the researcher attempted to revisit those businesses which had not responded, in one case going to the business

seven times before an interview was completed.

Some business owners and commercial property owners declined the invitation to participate, and others chose not to respond. Participation was lowest in those cases where services were being provided by agencies based outside of the municipality.

In spite of the fact that this was a volunteer sample and some business owners and commercial property owners chose not to participate, the researcher has confidence that the results obtained in the 44 interviews provide a comprehensive set of data for consideration by the committee.

Survey Results

Survey Questions 1 and 2: Current Status

The first two survey questions were designed to address the current status with respect to the marketing of local businesses and services to residents and visitors.

The first question dealt with the very real problem of a drift away from the historic practice of shopping locally, given that transportation costs are still relatively low and there is a high level of competition for purchases by local residents provided by the businesses and services in Belleville, a city located about 30 minutes away.

Question 1) *Do you think more needs to be done to encourage residents to make most of their purchases in Madoc?*

Results:

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
97.7%	0.00%	2.30%	0.0%

Of the 44 respondents to the survey, 43 indicated that more needs to be done to encourage residents to make most of their purchases in Madoc. One respondent indicated that he or she was not sure.

Question 1) Follow up: *What suggestions do you have as to how this could be done?*

Survey respondents provided a rich variety of suggestions with respect to how changes

could be made to attract more use of local businesses and services. Not all of them relate to the mandate for the Community Improvement Plan, but they are included here as a source of advice and guidance from our business owners and commercial property owners.

Note: For this question and those that follow, responses have been listed according to the frequency of reference which is shown in square brackets. Comments that do not have a frequency in square brackets were made only once.

- some stores offer prices competitive with Belleville, but all need to do so [7]
- we need a "Buy Locally/Shop Locally" initiative [5]
- we need an anchor store [4]
- stores need to expand range of products [4]
- signage is needed on Hwy 7 advertising village businesses and services [3]
- better infrastructure, sidewalks [2]
- better infrastructure, buried hydro lines [2]
- we need more stores [2]
- stores need to be open more days and have extended hours as required [2]
- business owners need to communicate that they can quickly order items not stocked [2]
- we need to make the village more pedestrian friendly
- prices need to be lower than those in Belleville
- business owners need to buy locally
- need unique stores
- it's hard for local stores to compete on price with large Belleville stores
- it's hard to cut prices due to the costs of taxes and overhead
- we need more local advertising
- more support for the Chamber of Commerce is needed
- upper floors of the buildings need to be refurbished for use
- sustainable policies are required
- the streets need to be cleaner
- snow needs to be cleared better in the winter
- window cleaning should be done regularly at municipal cost
- insurance costs for buildings owners are an impediment to occupancy
- students need to stop littering
- there need to be more functions and events to draw people in
- appearance and presentation of the downtown core needs to be improved
- emphasize that it costs money and takes extra time to go to Belleville
- keep up with the flowers and garbage boxes
- we need more sidewalk sales
- we need more attractions downtown

- we need more preplanned activities for seniors
- stores need to offer discounts

Question 2) Do you think more needs to be done to encourage visitors to shop in Madoc?

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
81.8%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%

Of the 44 respondents to the survey, 36 indicated that more needs to be done to encourage visitors to shop in Madoc. Four (4) respondents indicated that we do not need to do more to encourage visitors to shop Madoc, and 4 other respondents indicated that they were not sure.

Question 2) Follow up: What suggestions do you have as to how this could be done?

Again, the survey respondents provided a rich variety of suggestions with respect to how changes could be made to encourage visitors to shop in Madoc. Response frequencies are shown in square brackets for those comments that were made more than once. Some comments do not relate to the mandate for the Community Improvement Plan.

There was a great deal of overlap with respect to the comments made for the follow-up in this question and in Question 1. This is to be expected because, often, things that might be done to make the Highway 62 corridor businesses and services more attractive for visitors would also make them more attractive for local residents.

- the Farmer's Market needs to offer produce, not just crafts [6]
("The Farmer's Market should be a *Farmer's Market*.")
- signage is needed on Hwy 7 advertising village businesses and services [4]
- collateral advertising is needed in the major attraction areas * [3]
(Note: Please see the comments by Shannon Lee-Barrett in Question 10 for details.)
- we need more unique, specialized shops and boutiques [3]
- signage needs to be improved [3]
- hours of operation need to be longer and consistent for most stores [2]
- we need more events (street dances, ballgames, sidewalk sales etc.) [2]
- we need a "Buy Locally/Shop Locally" initiative [2]
- we need more parking and convenient parking [2]
- businesses need to offer a larger selection of goods [2]
- the streetscape needs to be attractive with attractive storefronts [2]
- the Skatepark LED sign is not effective; drivers see little information as they pass

- there need to be more shops featuring the work of local artisans
- we need new businesses
- we need a variety of retail shops
- businesses need to offer competitive pricing
- stores need to be open hours needed for residents and tourists
- Farmers Market is a plus
- the Farmer's Market should be on Friday and Saturday
- the entrance to the Farmer's Market needs to be more obvious with better signage
- the Christmas lights were good
- we need to think specifically about what we are offering tourists
- summer people need to know where they can get products and services
- we need a music festival
- we need more accommodations for visitors
- the jumble of wires doesn't help; we need underground Hydro
- visitors may expect to pay more in small villages, but some prices are too high
- signage on Highway 7 for local businesses and services is required
- business taxes are too high and are not scaled to level of traffic
- we need a program to help small businesses
- the Boat Launch project will help
- we need a second grocery store
- the drugstore needs to be open seven days a week
- we need an arts festival
- we need more cultural entertainment
- the Farmers Market is badly-operated
- McDonald's will help
- everything needs to be kept cleaner
- the planters and waste boxes need to be kept up
- develop rapport, respondent has regular customers from Bancroft and Kingston
- we need new seasonal flags and decor
- washrooms need to be available and open in the downtown core
- the lights at the Four Corners are a pedestrian hazard
- the sidewalks need to be improved
- we need more benches and planters

Survey Questions 3 and 4: Anticipated Benefits of a CIP Initiative

Survey Questions 3 and 4 dealt with the anticipated benefits of a Community Improvement Plan, both with respect to the effect it might have on businesses and the way in which it might contribute to community pride.

Question 3) *Do you think that a CIP program could lead to increased business?*

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
82.9%	10.2%	6.8%	0.0%

Of the 44 respondents, 36 indicated that they thought a CIP program could lead to increased business. Four respondents indicated that they did not think it would lead to increased business, and three were not sure. One respondent provided a split vote, indicating that she felt the CIP program could lead to increased business with visitors, but it would not likely lead to increased business with local residents.

Respondents were not specifically asked for qualifying comments with respect to this question, but some were provided. All of these comments were individual instances.

- it needs to be a continuing program not a one-time "band-aid" solution
- results might take time but it should increase business in the long run
- tax dollars are not needed for this; business owners just need to improve the appearances of their own businesses
- this will only work if it's part of a comprehensive plan (see the appended comments for named respondent, Tony Long)
- CIP might help, but parking is still a big issue
- mostly, businesses just need to clean up their appearance
- business owners need to walk across the street and look at their business from the outside, then asked themselves, if they were a customer, would they go in there?
- the empty lots will still be a problem
- it could make the stores look more inviting
- community involvement is key if this is going to work
- there must be a consistent theme
- "marginally"

Question 4) *Do you think that a CIP program could help develop even more pride in our community?*

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
95.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%

There was strong support for the idea that a more attractive appearance for the businesses and services in the CIP area would lead to an increase in community pride. Of the 44 respondents, 42 indicated that they thought it would help with community pride, and only 2 respondents indicated that they thought it would not.

Again, respondents were not specifically asked to provide qualifying comments for this question, but those that were made were recorded and are listed below.

- we all need to work together; this needs community involvement [2]
- we need more activities for young people [2]
- this needs a long-term plan and visible leadership
- there need to be plans in place for continuing this in the future
- we need more performing arts
- of course improving the appearance would help - it's like the increased pride you have when you fix up your own home
- this needs to be about taking care of the area, not just storefronts
- we need more sidewalk sales
- the planter boxes are a good idea
- we need an active seniors centre

Survey Questions 5 and 6: Establishing a Common Theme for Branding

Survey Question 5 assessed the level of support for branding the village with a "Vintage Village" theme for the CIP initiative, and Survey Question 6 asked for alternative themes that could be used for branding.

Question 5) *Do you find the idea of branding Madoc as a "Vintage Village" appealing?*

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
72.7%	13.6%	13.6%	0.0%

It is important to note that, given the order of the questions on the interview schedule, this question asked for a standalone opinion of the appeal of the "Vintage Village" branding concept. It was not being compared to any other alternative.

Of the 44 respondents, 32 indicated that they found the idea of branding the village as a "Vintage Village" appealing. Six respondents indicated that they did not find that

branding concept appealing, and six others indicated that they were not sure. Some respondents who indicated that they liked the "Vintage Village" theme, suggested that it needed to be modified in various ways. These suggestions are included in the answer to question 6.

Question 6) *Are there other suggestions you have for themes or approaches that take into account all that this municipality and village have to offer?*

The most common response to this question, which provided an opportunity to suggest alternative themes, was that it was difficult to think of anything on the spur of the moment. In such cases the researcher left a municipal business card providing direct cell phone access along with a request to call if any ideas came to mind. In some cases, the researcher was asked what ideas had been suggested by other respondents, and then those that were listed below were mentioned. Positive responses to these branding ideas were noted and included in the tally of respondent support for each idea.

Since not every respondent was given the opportunity to comment on the attractiveness of each alternative suggested by the participants, the researcher would recommend that the CIP committee consider narrowing the selection to three or four alternatives, presenting them and asking for public feedback with respect to which branding theme might be viewed most positively. As noted in Conclusions section on Page 15 below, some consideration should be given to the idea of consulting a broader base of residents, not just commercial property owners and business owners, because, ultimately, is the appeal to the consumer that is most important in generating increased business.

Answers to Question 5 generally fell into two categories - modifications of the "Vintage Village" theme, and alternative branding suggestions.

Alternative suggestions for branding were:

1) "Gateway to the Goldrush"

This alternative was positively commented upon by 7 respondents. They pointed out that, while this theme could be complementary to the "Vintage Village" theme, the "Vintage Village" theme itself seems to be used quite commonly at many locations in Ontario, but the founding of Madoc as a direct result of the first gold rush in Ontario (in Eldorado), provides a unique position for branding.

Additional comments:

- there should be panning for gold (suggested as an activity at events)

- put in a blacksmith's shop
- link to O'Haras Mill

2) A Recreational Theme

This alternative was positively commented upon by 5 respondents. The value of the Skatepark as an asset that is already drawing visitors, as well as the boat launch project, the facilities at Whytock Park, local golfing and many other local recreational opportunities were all mentioned in support of the theme.

Comments:

- it should be on the recreational side, more progressive
- "Madoc the Mighty: Best Playground in the County"

3) The Madoc Meteorite

Recommended as an unique theme by one respondent

Comments related to a modification of the "Vintage Village" theme included:

- a "Vintage Village" but with modern services.
- use "Vintage Village" to incorporate OHaras Mill, the historical features of the village, such as mining, logging, historical sites and homes
- a "Bijoux" village. Not particularly historic, but comfortable and enjoyable with lots of interesting shops.
- this only works if you have the proper stores

Comments that did not relate to a specific theme for branding, made in response to this question, include:

- we need other events including street dances
- we need to develop a tourist focus
- this has to be long-term, 10 years at least
- we need more accommodations for tourists.
- we need more events like Motocross
- the colour scheme of all the shops should be more similar
- something to go with the TAMC

There was also a comment about the level of conformity that might be required or considered desirable if a brand is selected, indicating that there needs to be some flexibility in terms of branding requirements. For example, corporate branding may be set by the company and not easily changed to fit a theme.

Survey Questions 7 and 8: Gauging the level of participation, and the ratio of support that would be acceptable to most business owners and commercial property owners in the CIP area.

Question 7) *Would you be interested in applying for a municipal grant for renovations to your property or business that would be eligible for CIP funding?*

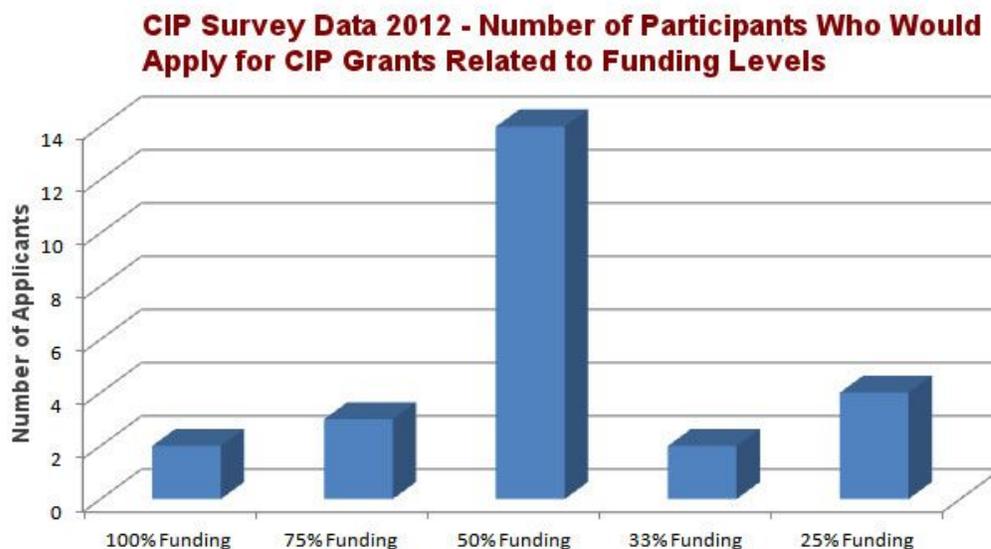
The most common reason why respondents would not apply for CIP funding was the the business was located in a newer building, like the Tri-Area Medical Centre, or another building which would not be suitable for modification. One respondent indicated that she would not apply for funding because she felt that municipal tax resources should not be used for this purpose.

Yes	No	Not Sure	No Response
52.3%	34.1%	13.6%	0.0%

Overall, the level of interest in participation was high with more than half (23 of 44) of the respondents indicating that they likely would apply for CIP funding, and another six respondents indicating that they were not sure.

Question 8) *If your answer to Question 7 is “Yes”, please check off all the levels of municipal funding below that would be high enough that you would still want to submit an application.*

In the interviews, the researcher explained that the purpose of this question was to advise the committee on the most effective way of using any funds that might be allocated for use in the CIP program. Respondents were asked to select from options of 100%, 75%, 50%, 33% or, 25% and indicate the lowest funding level which would prove to be an incentive for them to apply for funding.



All of the respondents who indicated that they would be interested in applying for funding responded to this question, as well as two of the respondents who indicated that they were not sure if they would apply. The total number responses was 25. Of these, two respondents indicated that they would only accept funding at the 100% level, one of whom was a landlord who said she simply did not have any money left to put into improving the building. Three respondents indicated that they would need a grant of 75% before they would become involved in applying for funding. 14 of the respondents indicated that they would accept an equal partnership at 50% funding, while 2 respondents indicated that they would accept 33% as the funding level, and 4 more respondents indicated that they would accept 25% as the funding level and would still apply for CIP funding.

If the responses at the 50%, 33% and 25% levels are added together, the result is that 80% (20 of 25) of the respondents who might apply for CP grants would be willing to do so if the level of assistance was 50% of the cost of improvements related to the CIP initiative.

Question 9) *A CIP Program might also provide funding to encourage the revitalization of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated properties and buildings. Would this apply to any property that you own, or near your property, and do you see any prospects for the involvement of the CIP planning in improving those properties?*

Funding for this purpose is not related to anything in the preceding questions on the survey, so, in the interview process the first sentence in this question was usually discussed in detail with the respondent. Respondents were then asked identify any areas of concern which they thought might be high priorities for the use of funding in this way. In the list below, square brackets are used to indicate the number of responses in those cases where a property was identified more than once.

- Improvements to the empty lot beside the drugstore [6]
- improvements to the empty lot beside the Doughbox [5]
- lot next to the funeral home should be developed for parking [2]
- contaminated soil at the Petro-Canada station
- box factory property
- side wall at the Farmer's Market

There were additional comments directed to the committee and the municipal Council, in response to this question:

- please enforce property standards if owners will not voluntarily fairly cleanup.

- we need more enforceable by-laws
- we need more enforcement of local bylaws and standards
- no grants to those who do not maintain their property.
- not with municipal funds
- is that fair to taxpayers? We need bylaw enforcement. Be cautious how you spend taxpayer's money

Question 10) *If you have any further comments you would like to make to the CIP Committee, please do so on the back of this page.*

This section really was not a question, but an opportunity for respondents to make comments that would be communicated directly to the CIP committee.

By default, respondents to this survey were promised anonymity. In some cases, however, the researcher has asked respondents for permission to have them named in the report, simply because their answers were far more comprehensive than what could fit into the framework of the questions provided in the survey, and it may be of some value to the committee to be able to contact these specific people for further discussion.

Cheryl and Brad Freeman of the Hidden GoldMine Bakery submitted a lengthy and very positive review of factors that could lead to success with a cooperative effort between village merchants. The first section deals with village merchants taking action themselves with pride, confidence and ownership to encourage shoppers with a cohesive presentation based on the theme, as well as a commitment to competitive pricing, offering a greater variety and selection of goods, and offering hours of operation that accommodate a commuting working population, tourists, and cottagers. The second section recommends that village merchants actively encourage new businesses by mentoring young entrepreneurs, and the third section deals with specific improvements could be made in terms of the presentation of buildings. The comments submitted were not intended for direct publication, but further details would be available through discussion with these business owners.

Shannon Lee-Barrett of Employment Ontario made a significant contribution to the discussion about encouraging tourism by pointing out that there are several local venues that attract tourists - the boat launch, the Skatepark complex, the downtown core and Farmer's Market, and O'Hara's Mill being a few examples - but that is quite possible to be in any one of those locations and to be totally unaware of what might be offered in the others. She recommended that points of interest be linked with collateral signage arrangements where tourists at any one of the sites would become aware of what is

offered at the others. For example if you were at the boat launch, there might be display that says, "While you are visiting this area, you might also like to see ...", providing pictures and descriptions of the other points of interest. Related to this idea, it should also be noted that some respondents felt that the Tourist Information booth at the Skatepark could be used much more effectively.

Nic Carey, of Hastings County Optical, has a background in architecture, and he described his vision for the use of renovated areas of the village core, including the second-floor apartments, in an attempt to revitalize downtown Madoc. He also pointed to the value of having an Economic Development Officer who would be responsible for developing a comprehensive plan to encourage and support new business development. He suggested that, if the municipality could not afford to have a staff member dedicated to this role, it might be possible to share a Economic Development Officer with other municipalities.

Tony Long, of Amazing Coffee, also provided a comprehensive written response which is transcribed below.

“ If you don’t know where you are going... any road will take you there.”

It seems to me that we have here a number of tactical projects without either strategies to guide the establishment of priorities or investment parameters to provide benchmarks for effectiveness measurement of different possible programme / project investments.

Before any decisions are made, the Municipality of Centre Hastings should have a proper strategic plan for Economic Development that clearly defines:

- Measurable objectives
- Assessment of the competitive environment
- Definition and prioritization of target market segments
- Business strategies
- Investment parameters and return-on-Investment expectations.

Once this plan has been defined, ***and agreed-to by those people who will ultimately approve programme recommendations***, the process of identifying and selecting initiatives for investment can begin. If the Municipality does not have this process, or a structured planning process similar to it, in place there is a strong likelihood of wheel spinning and a significant waste of resources and taxpayer money.

Conclusions

By their very nature, surveys depend upon the voluntary efforts of those who choose to participate in them, and so the results of this study may be skewed somewhat by the fact that this is a voluntary sample, and that people who have enough interest in community improvement to participate in the survey may be somewhat more enthusiastic about bringing about change than those who had no interest in participating.

The results of the first two questions indicate that business owners and commercial property owners strongly believe that more needs to be done to encourage residents and visitors to make more their purchases of goods and services in Madoc.

More than 80% of the respondents believe that investment in a CIP program could benefit businesses and services in the village, and more than 95% of the respondents believe that it would also boost community pride.

More than 70% of the respondents have indicated that they find the idea branding Madoc as a "Vintage Village" appealing, but other ideas have been suggested as well, and it may be worthwhile for the committee to select some method for presenting a number of alternatives to the public to determine which one would have the most support. A web-based survey is one method that could be used to gauge the relative support for different themes. Focus groups and/or community meetings could also be used to present ideas directly and gain feedback from constituents. Consulting a broader base of residents, not just commercial property owners and business owners, is recommended because, ultimately, is the appeal to the consumer that is most important in generating increased business.

There is a substantial degree of interest in the business community with respect to the CIP program, with 25 respondents indicating that they would be interested in applying for municipal grant. Of these, 80% have indicated that they would still apply even if the funding level was no more than 50%. All indications are that, if the Municipal Council decides to implement this program, it should receive a high level of interest and participation.

Feedback with respect to the idea of using CIP funding to encourage the revitalization of vacant, underutilized and/or contaminated properties and buildings, focused primarily on improving the vacant lots in the downtown core.

Some suggestions, linked to previously identified respondents, warrant repetition in this section on Conclusions.

Any CIP program, to be effective, will need to be part of a planned, long-term strategy for economic development.

Points of interest in and around the municipality should have signage intended to make visitors aware of each of the other points of interest.

Signage should be developed along the Highway 7 corridor to make travellers aware of the businesses and services offered in Madoc.

While CIP funding may go to specific businesses, the success of any branding effort really relies on the cooperative action of the entire business community.

This document was presented to the Community Improvement Plan Committee of the Municipality of Centre Hastings by Researcher, Bob Foster, on March 21, 2012.