

"Building Our Economic Future"

An Economic Development Strategy
for the Town of

WHITBY
ONTARIO • CANADA



Prepared by:

McSweeney & Associates
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

In association with:



TD Graham & Associates
MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS



“Building Our Economic Future”

Economic Development Strategy

Prepared for:



The Town of Whitby
Economic Development Division

by

McSweeney & Associates
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Mr. Peter LeBel
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March 31, 2010

Dear Peter:

On behalf of McSweeney & Associates and our project partners, GHK International (Canada) and TD Graham & Associates, I am pleased to submit "*Building Our Economic Future*" an Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Whitby.

In preparing the strategy, we have undertaken significant economic research and extensive stakeholder consultation. There was a high degree of consensus amongst stakeholders as to the issues to be addressed, and the strategies to be followed.

"*Building Our Economic Future*" provides a roadmap to quickly increase the competitiveness of Whitby as a profitable location for all businesses. It also points the way forward for Whitby to specialize in sectors in which it enjoys a particular competitive advantage.

Of course, I would be pleased to discuss any aspect of this report with you at your convenience.

Yours truly,

Eric McSweeney
President

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1. Executive Summary

Commencing in November, 2009 with a fairly intensive and very productive public consultation process, the Whitby Economic Development Strategy was completed in the first half of 2010. With input from approximately 130 individuals, the Strategy evolved through a process made up of three distinct phases:

- 1 The development of a Situation Analysis Report, documenting in detail the state of the local economy and changes that have occurred in recent years;
- 2 Comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement (a summary of which accompanies the Strategy document); and
- 3 The development of *"Building Our Economic Future"* – Whitby's Economic Development Strategy.

In general, it is recognized that this economic development strategy will help to increase the competitiveness of the Town of Whitby, while at the same time focus on key business initiatives and marketing plans for the next several years.

It is also important to keep in mind that while increased competitiveness is an overall goal of this strategy, there are important considerations emanating out of current economic development programs and economic conditions that must be taken into consideration. These conditions cannot be ignored, nor can new focused initiatives work to undermine their effectiveness. Rather, new initiatives must lever existing programs to achieve the enhanced competitiveness that the new economic development strategy demands.

Considering the preceding as the overall context for the economic development strategy for the Town of Whitby, *"Building Our Economic Future"* focuses on 8 key strategies aimed at growing, diversifying and sustaining Whitby's overall economy. More specifically, the strategies outlined include:

- Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business
- Streamline Development Approvals Processes
- Increase Competitiveness of Whitby
- Create a Unique Sense of Place
- Whitby – Community of Choice for Renewable Energy
- Whitby – Community of Choice for Creative People
- Downtown Whitby – The Creative & Cultural Heart
- Whitby: A Centre for Health and Medicine

Following are the Strategic Actions of *"Building Our Economic Future"*.

Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business

1. Update the 2003 employment lands study and include in the terms of reference a requirement to recommend industrial brownfield redevelopment policies and incentives.

2. Ensure that Official Plan and zoning provisions plan for, and protect the "West Whitby" lands in proximity to the extension of Highway 407, and the Lakeridge link to Highway 401 for:
 - a. Prestige industrial/office type uses
 - b. Meeting future demand for larger lot industrial land development
 - c. Additional opportunities for multi-tenant industrial spaces
 - d. Eliminating the possibility of these lands being used for retail type uses
 - e. And ensuring high quality developments and facades (especially facing the link) through the use of landscape and building design guidelines.
3. Encourage the development of multi-tenant industrial spaces as "infill" in some of the remaining industrial greenfield lots.
4. Encourage high density office development (potentially head office type development) in the Highway 401 corridor and in the vicinity of Highway 407/Lakeridge link.
5. Increased office development and density in Downtown Whitby, increasing the space available to accommodate smaller office users.
6. Through the current Official Plan Review, eliminate the potential for retail uses from occurring on currently undeveloped industrial lands.
7. Develop a business (office) attraction program in coordination with land owners/developers and the brokerage community that focuses on attracting offices from higher cost areas of the GTA to relocate or to expand to Whitby (also see sector strategy for creative people).

Streamline Development Approvals Processes

8. Initiate a review of the development approvals processes in Whitby. The review should include input from stakeholders such as the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and the development industry to:
 - a. Identify current issues in the process;
 - b. Identify targets for improvement;
 - c. At a future date, validate and report back on improvements made in the development approvals processes.
9. That the Town conduct a business process re-engineering for the development approvals processes. The result should be a quick, and easy to comply with process that is also being perceived as being integrated. The re-engineered processes may also involve greater use of delegated authority for approvals. The result should also be a "how can we help you make this work?" approach towards alternative solutions to achieve the applicant's and Whitby's desired outcomes.
10. The business process re-engineering is to set standards to match best-in-class responsiveness and turnaround times on the majority of planning and building related approvals.

Increase Competitiveness of Whitby

11. That for certain type of development (office, industrial) and/or geographic areas (such as downtown), Council consider relief from development charges and certain other charges (cash in lieu of parkland dedication, cash in lieu of parking). This could be on a permanent or temporary basis (to spur development over a two year period for example).
12. That consideration be given to maintaining or reducing the tax rate on industrial (occupied) properties to improve Whitby's/Durham's competitiveness relative to other municipal jurisdictions in the GTA.
13. That the Town undertake the steps necessary to make Whitby more "investment attraction ready" as noted in the recently completed assessments. Recommended actions include:
 - a. development of a stand alone economic development website;
 - b. utilizing an online property listings tool;
 - c. developing a standardized customizable package for responding to investment inquiries;
 - d. development of proforma costs for typical developments;
 - e. development of a flow chart and schedule of fees for development processes.
14. That Whitby participate in the next KPMG Competitive Alternatives review in 2012 to fully understand how Whitby compares competitively on location cost (and non-cost) factors compared to other cities.

Create a Unique Sense of Place

15. Embrace and support the idea that there are specific sectors of the local economy that it will work to develop, and that it will attempt to attract (in coordination with others) businesses and activities in those specific target sectors.
16. That for each specific target sector Whitby take actions required to; understand and track industry trends; understand the infrastructure and support needs; Whitby's competitive strengths and weaknesses with respect to the sector; initiate enhancements to Whitby's investment attraction potential to fulfill the needs of the target sector businesses and activities.
17. Working in cooperation with the Region and other levels of government, that Whitby take a lead role to support the attraction of businesses and activities for the specific sectors as outlined later in this strategy. Whitby needs to "stake its claim" and be more assertive in these sectors.
18. That Whitby take advantage of opportunities that arise to create one or more distinguishing features of Whitby. Examples could include the development of the former Cullen Gardens property, and the potential development of a performing arts and cultural centre in Downtown Whitby.

Whitby – Community of Choice for Renewable Energy

19. It is recommended that Whitby undertake the following actions:
 - a. understand the locational requirements of renewable energy related industries and companies
 - b. assess Whitby's competitive strengths and weaknesses and its "value proposition" to attract and retain renewable energy companies
 - c. identify and initiate actions that could enhance Whitby's competitiveness and "value proposition"
 - d. identify specific industries within the renewable energy sector that Whitby can best support.
20. Working with the Region of Durham and the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance, build and constantly update Whitby's value proposition geared to attracting and retaining designers, manufacturers, installers and maintenance of green energy components.
21. Undertake an assessment of the strengths and capacities of current businesses and industries located in Whitby to determine which companies could transition or diversify to add value to the wind, solar and smart grid design, manufacturing, installation and maintenance supply chain (ie. Information technology and engineering design of smart grid components, metal fabricators, etc).
22. Identify local companies and industries that could benefit from the programs offered at Durham College's Whitby Campus and the Skills Training Centre and ensure that these companies are aware of the local training programs.
23. Ensure Durham College is aware of the local industries who could benefit from their green energy research and programs, and what their needs are.
24. Work closely with, and support Durham Region on their renewable energy investment attraction program, strongly positioning Whitby as an excellent location for potential incoming investment in renewable energy. This will require the development of specific marketing collateral.

Whitby – Community of Choice for Creative People

25. Conduct further research to identify specific knowledge based businesses that will be targeted for attraction to Whitby based upon the presence of a large commuting labour force available both within Whitby and urban Durham, and a lower cost of doing business than downtown Toronto.
26. Ensure actions within the "Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business" section of this strategy are implemented.

27. Work with office developers and the office brokerage community to attract these businesses to re-locate to Whitby while ensuring that sufficient office space can be made available to accommodate these businesses in both the downtown and in the Highway 401 corridor.
28. Work with Durham College and UOIT with the objective of locating compatible educational facilities in Downtown Whitby.
29. That an Official Plan objective be established to support the development of Downtown Whitby as the arts and cultural centre of Whitby and area.
30. That other actions detailed in the "Downtown Whitby" section be supported.

Downtown Whitby – The Creative & Cultural Heart

31. That the current Whitby Intensification Strategy provides for a boost in the density potential of the Downtown, allowing for residential, office, and institutional intensification.
32. That the Town initiate a major downtown mixed use redevelopment project to serve as an anchor and major stimulus to signal confidence and to create an investment momentum. It could involve both the public and private sectors in its development, and should establish a leading architectural example of the density and quality of development expected in the Downtown, yet respects the heritage and history of Downtown. Uses could include private offices, arts/culture and performing arts centre, at grade retail, Whitby Town Hall administrative offices, and a faculty or department from both Durham College and UOIT.
33. That the Town examine the establishment of a heritage conservation district designation for Downtown Whitby.
34. With respect to design in Downtown Whitby:
 - a. The current design guidelines be reviewed with respect to their currency and effectiveness;
 - b. That once the Intensification Strategy has been approved, that an overall development guideline be developed for Downtown Whitby to plan for public spaces and pedestrian connections, and to illustrate sensitive design in higher density development.
35. That Council consider incentives for investment in Downtown as outlined in the IBI Group Report: "Financial Incentive Programs for Downtown Renewal in Whitby – January 2008".
36. Establish an arts/cultural committee to make recommendations on how to make Whitby, and particularly Downtown Whitby, the cultural core of Durham. The Committee could interface and have members in common with the Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee.

Whitby: A Centre for Health and Medicine

37. Fully enumerate all health and medical companies and institutions located in Whitby and the Region and create marketing collateral outlining the nature of the services provided, health related products manufactured and distributed, directions in research and development.
38. Identify regional health related educational resources, expected modifications/ additions to programs as they related to the local health and medical sector.
39. Establish the Whitby Health and Medical Cluster Association (WHMCA) whose remit would be to:
 - a. Provide opportunities for communication and networking amongst Whitby and region based health and medical stakeholders.
 - b. Host events focused on technological developments in the health and medical sector.
 - c. Support Whitby in attracting health and medical companies.
 - d. Collectively promote the development of the UOIT curriculum to meet the needs of current employers and the requirements of future investors in the health and medical sector.
 - e. More specifically, the requirements of the WHMCA include:
 - The Identification a cluster champion(s) that can devote resources to facilitate the development of the network
 - That the WHMCA be resourced with data regarding the cluster's structure, products, markets and services
 - Function as the medium through which cluster knowledge (product, process, technology) would be exchanged amongst cluster members
 - Act as repository for social capital. i.e. undocumented cluster knowledge
 - Undertaking projects relevant to the needs of the cluster
 - Develop a program to improve inter-governmental relations on key issues.

2. Background

The Town of Whitby has experienced job losses during the most recent global economic downturn within the local industrial employment base. In addition, Whitby's manufacturing sector has specifically experienced dramatic financial and operational hardships. As a result several local companies have been forced to down-size or cease operations leaving behind over 1.3 million square feet of vacant industrial space. Whitby's community leaders, from both the private and public sectors, have recognized that this temporary downturn in their local economy has created several new opportunities to shape the future growth and well-being of their community in a sustainable fashion.

Although Whitby is strategically located within Durham Region and the GTA, and has several competitive advantages when compared to surrounding communities, it is without a plan to provide strategic economic development guidance. As such, the Town of Whitby, in partnership with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, have made the decision to create an Economic Competitiveness and Development Strategic Plan – or Economic Development Strategy.

The desired objectives of this Strategy are to:

- Attract higher value added quality employment opportunities;
- Achieve local economic stability; and,
- Build a diverse economic and employment base that will provide for a strong and prosperous community of the future.

By working together, the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Whitby have engaged their community in an exercise which has led to the development of Whitby's first Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy provides the required tools to help the Town develop its local employment base to position the community to move towards a more sustainable economic future.

2.1. Three Phase Process

The strategy started in November 2009, and was completed in the first half of 2010, and was comprised of distinct three phases in which some overlap occurred:

- 1 Development of a Situation Analysis Report, documenting in detail the state of the local economy and changes that have occurred in recent years.
- 2 Community and stakeholder engagement.
- 3 The development of the economic development strategy, the essence of this document.

3. A Brief Look at Our Current Economic Situation

This section provides a summary of the key points derived from an accompanying research report "Situational Analysis Report" developed as part of this process.

3.1. Demographic Analysis

- Whitby is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Durham Region, with an estimated population size of 121,571 in 2009.
- The Town of Whitby has a younger population than either Durham or Ontario in 2009, but through time, the age profile of Whitby is becoming more similar to both.
- Whitby has a smaller percentage of the population that is a visible minority than does Ontario. Black, South Asian and Chinese were the top three visible minorities in 2009.
- Average and median incomes in Whitby are rising, and are higher than Durham's and Ontario's. Whitby and Uxbridge have the highest average and median incomes in Durham Region.
- The percentage of the population that has attained a University Bachelors degree is the highest among all communities in Durham Region. This percentage appears to have risen and is higher than Durham's. Business, management and public administration was the largest field of postsecondary education for Whitby residents in 2009.
- People moving to Whitby tend to move from within Ontario rather than from outside Ontario.
- The majority of Whitby residents only speak English and less than 10% of residents are bilingual (English and French).

3.2. Labour Force Analysis

- In 2009, the employment rate in Whitby (65.4%) was higher than Durham's (63.6%) and Ontario's (61.2%), and the unemployment rate was lower (6.7% vs. 8.0% and 8.9% respectively).
- A higher percentage of the labour force worked in finance and insurance; professional, scientific & technical services; and educational services industries than in either Durham or Ontario in 2009.
- The size of the Whitby labour force working in almost all industry sectors greatly exceeds the number of jobs available in those industries. Similar to other Durham municipalities, the ratio of jobs to residents is low.

- The majority of the Whitby labour force commutes to work outside of Whitby, mostly to within the GTA area, and especially to Toronto, Oshawa, and Ajax. Whitby effectively "exports" more than 21,000 workers daily.
- Whitby residents who commute to work outside of Whitby, work in the following industries (in decreasing order based on the number of people):
 - Finance and insurance (3,280 in 2006);
 - Construction (2,460 in 2006);
 - Professional, scientific and technical services (2,250 in 2006).
- A similar pattern exists for "urban" Durham, meaning that there are very significant numbers of people in the above industries that are commuting out of Whitby and Durham to work every day. For example, more than 12,000 commuted to work in finance and insurance, while more than 8,000 commuted to work in professional, scientific and technical services. From the economic development point of view, this represents a potential opportunity to attract potential employers to take advantage of this currently commuting labour pool.

3.3. Economic Base Analysis

In examining the economic or employment base of Whitby, the source of data is Statistics Canada census data, which is now nearly four years old – but is the only source from which this data can be obtained. The reader is therefore cautioned that substantial changes have occurred in Whitby's local economy since that time, particularly with respect to manufacturing.

- Overall the economic base analysis indicated a very favourable pattern of high employment growth diversified across a large number of industry sectors (2001 – 2006).
- Employment is highly concentrated in the retail trade sector, manufacturing sector and educational services sector.
- In Whitby, the transportation equipment manufacturing sub-sector (motor vehicle parts manufacturing) industry was highly concentrated (in 2006).
- The chemical manufacturing sub-sector (especially in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing industry), primary metal manufacturing sub-sector (especially in iron and steel mills and ferro-alloy manufacturing industry) and local, municipal and regional public administration sub-sectors were also highly concentrated in terms of employment.
- Whitby experienced large job increases between 2001 to 2006 in manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, education, health care & social assistance, accommodation and food services, and public administration sectors. In fact, these sectors were growing at much faster rates than national growth within each of the industries.

3.4. Other Noteworthy Observations

Other important observations from the Situational Analysis Report include the following:

- Despite the fact that Whitby has a large labour force that commutes to work outside of Whitby in professional, scientific and technical services and the construction industries, Whitby had strong growth in the number of local businesses in these sectors between 2003 and 2007.
- Whitby, as well as other Durham municipalities, have amongst the highest municipal tax rates in the GTA.
- In terms of the cost of development, Oshawa has taken a major step forward in providing relief from development charges for industrial, downtown development, and office buildings over 25,000 square feet.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

As a part of the process to develop Whitby's Economic Competitiveness and Development Strategic Plan, several tools were used to engage and solicit input and feedback from the business community. These tools included:

- Conducting one-on-one interviews with stakeholders;
- Completing an online survey, one for business, and one for the general public;
- Utilizing a Mayor's Town Hall Open House to focus on this topic;
- Meetings with the Chamber of Commerce;
- Brooklin and Whitby Downtown Development Steering Committee meetings, and;
- Contacting McSweeney & Associates directly with any comments.

Approximately 130 individuals participated in or had direct input during the public consultation process.

A summary of how people participated follows:

Interviews

- 20 individuals were interviewed representing a broad range of local businesses
- 30 additional interviews with individuals representing downtown steering committees, government and community partners.

Online Survey

- 2 responses to the online public survey
- 3 responses to the online business survey

Focus Group Sessions

- 2 separate sessions with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce (38 participants)
- 1 separate session with Downtown Brooklin focus group (4 participants)
- 1 separate session with Downtown Whitby focus group (9 participants)

Open House

- Mayor's Town Hall Open House with 21 participants

Need for a Whitby Community Strategic Plan

It is important to note that many stakeholders addressed issues that are beyond the mandate of this strategy, many of which should be addressed as part of an overall community strategic plan. The consultation on the last community strategy started ten years ago, when many of the current residents did not live in Whitby. Many and substantial changes have occurred since then.

5. The General Context for the Economic Development Strategy in Whitby

It is recognized at a general level that this economic development strategy must help to increase the competitiveness of the Town of Whitby, and at the same time focus on key initiatives that will form the basis of annual business and marketing plans for the next several years.

It is also important to keep in mind that while increased competitiveness is an overall goal of the strategy, there are important considerations emanating out of current economic development programs and economic conditions that must be taken account of. These conditions cannot be ignored nor can new focused initiatives work to undermine them in any way. Rather, new initiatives must lever these to achieve the enhanced competitiveness that the new economic development strategy demands. The programs and conditions to be considered follow.

- The accompanying Situational Analysis Report shows the importance of the manufacturing sector to the Town of Whitby, Durham and the GTA. This is an important strength that needs to be maintained. Much of it occurs in the form of advanced manufacturing that cuts across several industries and is also a focus of both provincial and regional economic development strategies. This strategy seeks to reinforce and build on the strength of the advanced manufacturing sector through growth into new market segments for which there is substantial opportunity and capability.
- The Town and the Region are also home to a significant employment in professional services, and hosts head and regional offices of professional services firms. It is important that the economic development strategy recognizes this, and continues to work towards leveraging further growth in professional services. This will necessarily mean working towards ensuring that the supply of office space is enhanced going forward.
- The resident labour force is educated and skilled, yet is largely forced to seek employment outside of the Town. Creating new opportunities for business growth and attraction through the provision of new employment lands, and through the creation of working partnerships to enhance commercialization of research and development activity occurring at UOIT and Durham College, will create employment opportunities in Whitby for Whitby residents.
- At the same time, it should be recognized that skills requirements are ever changing. These changes require monitoring so that evolving requirements can be met through appropriate training - preferably at local educational institutions. To be able to do this will require the Durham Region Labour Training Board to continue the preparation of periodic labour readiness and adjustment plans.

- It is commonly accepted that a large portion of business growth and job creation is from within the existing businesses in any community. Therefore there is a need for continued business retention and expansion efforts. In addition to regular business visits, other activities that should be considered include:
 - The development of a business database (i.e. relevant company and organization information which could include the articulation of local success stories and testimonials and ensuring that it is made public in a regular and timely fashion to key stakeholders);
 - Working closely and align activities with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and other organizations involved in economic development such as the GTMA, DSEA, etc., to build capacity for local economic development efforts;
 - Work closely with the Region supporting activities related to agriculture (including food processing and bio-fuel) and tourism and sport marketing, specifically as it relates to enhancing Whitby's position in these sectors.
- Given that substantial business growth occurs from within - and the importance of that growth continuing, a substantial portion of this strategy addresses issues that can improve the competitiveness of the Whitby business climate for all businesses

Considering the preceding as the overall context for the economic development strategy for the Town of Whitby, the following section focuses on outlining strategies to improve Whitby's business climate including:

- Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business
- Streamline Development Approvals Processes
- Increase Competitiveness of Whitby
- Create a Unique Sense of Place

In addition, it provides a set of strategies focused on specific sectors including:

- Whitby – Community of Choice for Renewable Energy
- Whitby – Community of Choice for Creative People
- Downtown Whitby – The Creative & Cultural Heart
- Whitby: A Centre for Health and Medicine

The strategies outlined are informed by the overall context outlined above and most importantly by inputs provided by all of the stakeholders consulted.

6. Strategies to Improve Whitby's Business Climate

6.1. Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business

Current Situation

Presently there is a demand for both industrial and office space in the Town that is not fully being met due to limited serviced land available for prestige industrial/office employment and industrial uses.

The 2003 Hemson Consulting Report on Long Term Residential and Employment Land Needs predicted a possible shortage of serviced employment land by 2010. The report indicated that up to 240 additional hectares of land would need to be designated. While the industrial land has not been completely depleted, there has been a significant quantity of employment land consumed for both industrial and retail land uses. Further lands for employment uses have yet to be designated.

The Official Plan and zoning provisions of some industrial areas have permitted the infiltration and use of industrial lands for lower economic order retail uses, seriously eroding the capacity of Whitby to accommodate land extensive employment uses originally intended for industrial areas.

This is despite Official Plan policy to maintain a five year supply of serviced industrial land and also to create the potential to attract larger floor plate class "A" office uses to high visibility high traffic volume areas. More specifically, the current situation with respect to serviced and available employment lands is characterized by:

- Unmet current demand for multi-tenant type small industrial spaces (lease or condo);
- Limited availability of (large and small) lots for development of prestige industrial and/or business uses;
- Unmet current demand for small offices;
- Until recently, unmet demand for downtown office space; and
- No speculative (or build to suit) class "A" large floor plate office space has been built.

With respect to Whitby being a community of choice for prestige industrial/businesses park development, or suburban office development, there is also a perception issue. Currently people not familiar with Whitby and Durham have a very limited perception of Whitby – and that is limited to what a person can view from Highway 401 as they pass through Whitby.

Desirable Future State

The extension of Highway 407, and the Lakeridge link to Highway 401, will present a "new public face" for Whitby, one which speaks to the quality development and the type of community that Whitby is. This is essentially one of the few remaining opportunities for

Whitby to create a distinctive impression of being a community of choice for businesses wishing a prestigious presence in Whitby.

The new public "business face" of Whitby as an esteemed business address includes:

- "West Whitby" lands (along high visibility Highway 407 and Lakeridge link) that are preserved for prestige industrial/office type uses, and provide a sufficient longer term supply of larger lots for light industrial land development
- Additional opportunities for multi-tenant industrial spaces
- High density class A office development in the Highway 401 corridor
- Increased office development in Downtown Whitby, increasing the space available to accommodate smaller office users
- A sufficient supply of multi-tenant industrial spaces.

Strategic Actions

1. Update the 2003 employment lands study and include in the terms of reference a requirement to recommend industrial brownfield redevelopment policies and incentives.
2. Ensure that Official Plan and zoning provisions plan for, and protect the "West Whitby" lands in proximity to the extension of Highway 407, and the Lakeridge link to Highway 401 for:
 - a. Prestige industrial/office type uses
 - b. Meeting future demand for larger lot industrial land development
 - c. Additional opportunities for multi-tenant industrial spaces
 - d. While eliminating the possibility of these lands being used for retail type uses
 - e. And ensuring high quality developments and facades (especially facing the link) through the use of landscape and building design guidelines.
3. Encourage the development of multi-tenant industrial spaces as "infill" in some of the remaining industrial greenfield lots.
4. Encourage high density office development (potentially head office type development) in the Highway 401 corridor and in the vicinity of Highway 407/Lakeridge link.
5. Increased office development and density in Downtown Whitby, increasing the space available to accommodate smaller office users.
6. Through the current Official Plan Review, eliminate the potential for retail uses from occurring on currently undeveloped industrial lands.
7. Develop a business (office) attraction program in coordination with land owners/developers and the brokerage community that focuses on attracting offices from higher cost areas of the GTA to relocate or to expand to Whitby (also see sector strategy for creative people).

6.2. Streamline Development Approvals Processes

Current Situation

- The current development approvals processes for business related properties can be cumbersome and difficult to navigate.
- Some neighbouring municipalities are attracting new development as a result of easier, faster, and potentially less expensive development approvals processes
- From the business perspective, Town development approvals staff must present an "open for business" or "how can we help you make this work?" approach to doing business. This can be complicated by multiple approval agencies which are also not perceived as bringing an "open for business" attitude to the process. This is despite the awareness and existence of the Development Application Review Team

Desirable Future State

- That the development approvals processes in Whitby are very competitive in terms of ease of development, administrative and time burden as well as costs, resulting in a reputation that Whitby is "The Community in Durham Region that is Open for Business".

Strategic Actions

8. Initiate a review of the development approvals processes in Whitby. The review should include input from stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce and the development industry to:
 - a. Identify current issues in the process;
 - b. Identify targets for improvement;
 - c. At a future date, validate and report back on improvements made in the development approvals processes.
9. That the Town conduct a business process re-engineering for the development approvals processes. The result should be a quick, and easy to comply with process that is also being perceived as being integrated. The re-engineered processes may also involve greater use of delegated authority for approvals. The result should also be a "how can we help you make this work?" approach towards alternative solutions to achieve the applicant's and Whitby's desired outcomes.
10. The business process re-engineering is to set standards to match best-in-class responsiveness and turnaround times on the majority of planning and building related approvals.

6.3. Increase Competitiveness of Whitby

Current Situation

- The cost of doing business from the property tax perspective is high in Durham compared to the remainder of the GTA (except Toronto), and Whitby is no exception.
- The total costs of development are being reported by stakeholders as discouraging of development, and in some cases - inhibitive, meanwhile some municipalities are

providing relief from development charges for industrial, downtown development, and office buildings over 25,000 square feet.

- There are a number of matters that can be addressed to enhance Whitby's ability to attract and retain investment.

Desirable Future State

- Whitby provides a very competitive environment in which to do business, and has a high degree of success in attracting businesses.

Strategic Actions

11. That for certain type of development (office, industrial) and/or geographic areas (such as downtown), Council consider relief from development charges and certain other charges (cash in lieu of parkland dedication, cash in lieu of parking). This could be on a permanent or temporary basis (to spur development over a two year period for example).
12. That consideration be given to maintaining or reducing the tax rate on industrial (occupied) properties to improve Whitby's/Durham's competitiveness relative to other municipal jurisdictions in the GTA.
13. That the Town undertake the steps necessary to make Whitby more "investment attraction ready". Recommended actions include:
 - a. development of a stand alone economic development website;
 - b. utilizing an online property listings tool;
 - c. developing a standardized customizable package for responding to investment inquiries;
 - d. development of proforma costs for typical developments;
 - e. development of a flow chart and schedule of fees for development processes.
14. That Whitby participate in the next KPMG Competitive Alternatives review in 2012 to fully understand how Whitby compares competitively on location cost (and non-cost) factors compared to other cities.

6.4. Create a Unique Sense of Place

Current Situation

- People that are not familiar with Whitby or the Durham Region have difficulty distinguishing between the four larger urban municipalities of Durham, and their perceptions are usually limited to what they see from Highway 401 as they pass through Whitby.
- Many investment leads come from senior government. Some senior government officials involved in economic development would have difficulty describing how Whitby is unique, or its key competitive advantages.
- From the business point of view, Whitby has a very balanced economy (which is very positive) but on the other hand, there are no specific investment attraction targets, and no industry concentrations that distinguish Whitby from other municipalities.
- Within Whitby, people have a sense of how Whitby is unique, but can have difficulty sometimes articulating it.

Desirable Future State

- Whitby's unique sense of place can easily be recognized and articulated by residents as well as visitors and senior government officials. Distinguishing features that collectively define Whitby's unique sense of place may be found in the business, cultural, social, recreational, and residential aspects of Whitby.

Strategic Actions

15. That Whitby Council and administration embrace and support the idea that there are specific sectors of the local economy that it will work to develop, and that it will attempt to attract (in coordination with others) businesses and activities in those specific target sectors.
16. That for each specific target sector Whitby take actions required to; understand and track industry trends; understand the infrastructure and support needs; Whitby's competitive strengths and weaknesses with respect to the sector; initiate enhancements to Whitby's investment attraction potential to fulfill the needs of the target sector businesses and activities.
17. Working in cooperation with the Region and other levels of government, that Whitby take a lead role to support the attraction of businesses and activities for the specific sectors as outlined later in this strategy. Whitby needs to "stake its claim" and be more assertive in these sectors.
18. That Whitby take advantage of opportunities that arise to create one or more distinguishing features of Whitby. Examples could include the development of the former Cullen Gardens property, and the potential development of a performing arts and cultural centre in Downtown Whitby.

7. Sector Specific Strategies

7.1. Whitby – Community of Choice for Renewable Energy

Current Situation

- The Green Energy and Green Economy Act has set the stage for companies located (or considering locating) in Ontario to begin reaping the benefits of green energy production. This includes benefits from both the perspective of actual generation of energy from green sources but more importantly for Whitby, the manufacturing of components used in the generation of green energy (ie. solar panels, wind turbines, smart grid components).
- Durham Region is positioning itself as Ontario's Energy Capital. Whitby is the geographic and business centre of Durham Region, has a strategic location along North America's busiest highway, and possesses some key attributes to put it in a position of strength to attract green energy components manufacturers and installers.
- Whitby boasts Durham College's and the Skills Training Centre which offers maintenance and installation courses on green and renewable energy. The Training Centre itself is also a living lab demonstrating actual green technologies (wind, solar, geo-thermal).
- Whitby has strong roots in advanced manufacturing, engineering, and information technologies to support component manufacturing for green energy generation/products (more specifically renewable energy research, development and maintenance at UOIT and Durham College; design and process engineering; electrical, power, and energy related engineering; advanced manufacturing capability and capacity; IT; logistics, etc.).

Desirable Future State

- Whitby is a focal point of research, innovation, commercialization and manufacturing of green energy technologies.
- Whitby is the community of choice for Ontario's practical learning, training, and technical support for green energy generation and components manufacturing, installation and maintenance.
- Whitby is home to companies that design, manufacture, install, and maintain green energy components for the wind, solar and the smart grid sectors.

Strategic Actions

19. It is recommended that Whitby undertake the following actions:
 - a. understand the locational requirements of renewable energy related industries and companies
 - b. assess Whitby's competitive strengths and weaknesses and its "value proposition" to attract and retain renewable energy companies
 - c. identify and initiate actions that could enhance Whitby's competitiveness and "value proposition"
 - d. identify specific industries within the renewable energy sector that Whitby can best support.
20. Working closely with the Region of Durham and the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance, build and constantly update Whitby's value proposition geared to attracting and retaining designers, manufacturers, installers and maintenance of green energy components.
21. Undertake an assessment of the strengths and capacities of current businesses and industries located in Whitby to determine which companies could transition or diversify to add value to the wind, solar and smart grid design, manufacturing, installation and maintenance supply chain (ie. Information technology and engineering design of smart grid components, metal fabricators, etc).
22. Identify local companies and industries who could benefit from the programs offered at Durham College's Whitby Campus and the Skills Training Centre and ensure that these companies are aware of the local training programs.
23. Ensure Durham College is aware of the local industries that could benefit from their green energy research and programs, and what their needs are.
24. Work closely with, and support Durham Region on their renewable energy investment attraction program, strongly positioning Whitby as an excellent location for potential incoming investment in renewable energy. This will require the development of specific marketing collateral.

7.2. Whitby – Community of Choice for Creative People

Current Situation

- Currently there is no definitive focal point within Durham for arts, culture, and occupations related to the creative and knowledge based economy.
- Due to its close proximity to Toronto, it is likely that Durham is currently under-served in terms of arts and cultural activities, events and venues in comparison to its population base which has been rapidly growing.
- Whitby's population has higher educational attainment levels than the population of Durham.
- Generally, a higher percentage of Whitby's labour force works in creative/knowledge based/white collar type occupations, and a smaller percentage of the labour force is engaged in blue collar, sales and service occupations.
- Family, household and individual incomes are higher in Whitby than either Durham or Ontario.
- The percentage of businesses involved in professional, scientific and technical services is growing more quickly than any other sector in Whitby.

Desirable Future State

- Whitby boasts a concentration of creative and knowledge based workers and jobs within Durham, and is the focal point for a burgeoning arts and cultural scene within Durham.

Strategic Actions

25. Conduct further research to identify specific knowledge based businesses that will be targeted for attraction to Whitby based upon the presence of a large commuting labour force available both within Whitby and urban Durham, and a lower cost of doing business than downtown Toronto.
26. Ensure actions within the "Increase Whitby's Ability to Accommodate Business" section of this strategy are implemented.
27. Work with office developers and the office brokerage community to attract these businesses to re-locate to Whitby while ensuring that sufficient office space can be made available to accommodate these businesses in both the downtown and in the Highway 401 corridor.
28. Work with Durham College and UOIT with the objective of locating compatible educational facilities in Downtown Whitby.
29. That an Official Plan objective be established to support the development of Downtown Whitby as the arts and cultural centre of Whitby and area.
30. That other actions detailed in the "Downtown Whitby" section be supported.

7.3. Downtown Whitby¹ – The Creative & Cultural Heart

Current Situation

- The nature of the economic activities that make up successful downtowns has significantly changed in the past several decades. Successful downtowns have evolved from being the core shopping area in the past to becoming the primary centre for: entertainment; arts, cultural and culinary experiences; niche/specialty retailing and personal services; offices; civic activities; medium to high density living; and more. The delight and draw of downtowns lies in the eclectic mix of dense land uses, buildings, spaces, and people, usually with architectural and historical relief from the ubiquitous power centres and big box retailing.
- Some of the current uses in the Downtown are towards the bottom of the scale in terms of desirability.
- While there have been some façade improvements, ownership is highly fractured in many cases, and many more properties are need of significant re-investment or redevelopment.
- A clear definition of the boundaries of Downtown is not shared by everyone.
- While revitalization efforts with positive but small results have been ongoing for at least two decades, Downtown Whitby is still only part-way through this evolution.
- In the opinion of consulted stakeholders, it is now time for a "significant shot in the arm". Without significant investment in the near future, Downtown Whitby risks losing the opportunity of capturing the critical components required to craft the creative and cultural heart of Whitby and Durham - to other more aggressive centres. There is an urgency to act.
- Substantial change and improvement is highly unlikely without significant intensification of both residential and non-residential land uses in the Downtown.

Desirable Future State

- Downtown Whitby is commonly and easily recognised as the "creative and cultural heart" of Durham – reflecting the traditional heritage of an Ontario downtown - where people go for arts, cultural and culinary experiences; niche/specialty retailing and services; educational and civic activities.
- Residents, workers, and visitors come to experience the historical charm and appealing urban spaces, as well as the interesting experiences within and between them.
- Downtown Whitby offers the opportunity to live, work, play, and shop in one developed "neighbourhood".

¹ We also carefully examined Downtown Brooklin, conducted interviews, and held a focus group on Downtown Brooklin. We have no recommendations to make, other than to support current directions and plans for the area.

- Many specialty and niche businesses find it desirable to locate in Downtown where profitability stimulates investment.
- Downtown Whitby is a built-up area of Whitby, supporting a significant daytime and night-time population living and/or working there.
- Downtown Whitby contributes significantly to the identity and sense of place that is uniquely Whitby, reinforcing Whitby as a community of choice.

Strategic Actions

31. That the current Whitby Intensification Strategy provides for a boost in the density potential of the Downtown, allowing for residential, office, and institutional intensification.
32. That the Town initiate a major downtown mixed use redevelopment project to serve as an anchor and major stimulus to signal confidence and to create an investment momentum. It could involve both the public and private sectors in its development, and should establish a leading architectural example of the density and quality of development expected in the Downtown, yet respects the heritage and history of Downtown. Uses could include private offices, arts/culture and performing arts centre, at grade retail, Whitby Town Hall administrative offices, and hopefully a faculty or department from both Durham College and UOIT.
33. That the Town examine the establishment of a heritage conservation district designation for Downtown Whitby.
34. With respect to design in Downtown Whitby:
 - a. The current design guidelines should be reviewed with respect to their currency and effectiveness;
 - b. That once the Intensification Strategy has been approved, that an overall development guideline be developed for Downtown Whitby to plan for public spaces and pedestrian connections, and to illustrate sensitive design in higher density development.
35. That Council consider incentives for investment in Downtown as outlined in the IBI Group Report: "Financial Incentive Programs for Downtown Renewal in Whitby – January 2008".
36. Establish an arts/cultural committee to make recommendations on how to make Whitby, and particularly Downtown Whitby, the cultural core of Durham. The Committee could interface and have members in common with the Downtown Whitby Development Steering Committee.

7.4. Whitby: A Centre for Health and Medicine

Current Situation

- Whitby is at the centre of Durham's medical and pharmaceutical industry that consists of manufacturers and distributors of medical instruments, diagnostic equipment,

pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical delivery systems. Research and development in these areas is also conducted in Whitby based establishments

- Whitby is also home to important health care service delivery institutions particularly related to mental health and oncology
- There is no mechanism in place currently that helps facilitate discussion amongst Whitby's health and medical industries and service providers either to act as a base for knowledge exchange or to establish consensus on common commercial and/or service delivery concerns
- Companies are approaching UOIT individually to establish courses/programmes that are designed to meet their specific skill requirements

Desirable Future State

- Whitby is recognized as the centre for Health and Medicine in the Region and is host to companies and institutions on the forefront of health research, service delivery, the production of health related goods, and a centre for health education

Strategic Actions

37. Fully enumerate all health and medical companies and institutions located in Whitby and the Region and create marketing collateral outlining the nature of the services provided, health related products manufactured and distributed, directions in research and development.
38. Identify regional health related educational resources, expected modifications/additions to programs as they related to the local health and medical sector.
39. Establish the Whitby Health and Medical Cluster Association (WHMCA) whose remit would be to:
 - a. Provide opportunities for communication and networking amongst Whitby and region based health and medical stakeholders.
 - b. Host events focused on technological developments in the health and medical sector.
 - c. Support Whitby in attracting health and medical companies.
 - d. Collectively promote the development of the UOIT curriculum to meet the needs of current employers and the requirements of future investors in the health and medical sector.
 - e. More specifically, the requirements of the WHMCA include:
 - The Identification of a cluster champion(s) that can devote resources to facilitate the development of the network
 - That the WHMCA be resourced with data regarding the cluster's structure, products, markets and services

- Function as the medium through which cluster knowledge (product, process, technology) would be exchanged amongst cluster members
- Act as repository for social capital. i.e. undocumented cluster knowledge
- Undertaking projects relevant to the needs of the cluster
- Develop a program to improve inter-governmental relations on key issues.

