

**THE PRACTICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY  
AND COMMON SENSE:**

**The Application of Critical Theory in  
Community Economic Planning**

by  
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*A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of:*

**MASTER OF CITY PLANNING**

**Department of City Planning  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**April, 1995**

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ISBN 0-315-99089-9

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This thesis represents more than the many months of research contained in the pages of this project, much more. Entrenched are my life experiences, my home town of Fernie, British Columbia, the places that I have journeyed, and the people I have met along the way have moulded me into the person that I am today. Further, I would like to thank the staff and my fellow students in the Department of City Planning at the University of Manitoba for their insights and contributions to this project and throughout the course of my studies. Specifically, I would like to thank my Thesis Committee composed of: Dr. Mary Ellen Tyler, Dr. Mario Carvalho, and Mr. Mark Boreskie for their constructive criticisms, expert knowledge, and encouragement each provided in the course of completing this Thesis.*

*The completion of this Thesis marks the end of a long academic career, but by no means justifies the need to stop learning. The search for knowledge must continue as always while the search for remuneration must now be pursued.*

*Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support and interest in my life pursuits. In particular, I wish to thank my loving wife Camille and our newborn daughter Sarah Marie for being my guiding light.*

*David A. Bax*

## ABSTRACT

Presently, the bond between theory and practice has not been fully realized in the planning profession. The current "gap" in planning exists in the domains of communication and the planning process. Consequently, this thesis addresses the communication issue by outlining a eight critical community planning principles in a framework which can be used to evaluate a community's readiness to participate in a formal planning process.

In the context of a formal community planning process, a case study method was used to demonstrate how a critical theory framework could be applied to community planning practice. Although no definitive conclusions arose from the critique of the case studies, a deeper and informal meaning resulted.

In essence, communication is the cornerstone of critical theory. Since much of community planning involves the facilitation of mutual understanding, effective communication becomes paramount when a community is planning its future. This thesis does not propose a new formal community planning process geared to achieve a particular end, but rather introduces an informal set of principles which may help communities to build a greater understanding of themselves and ultimately achieve a degree of planning which meets the needs of all.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Abstract planning divorced from action becomes a cerebral activity of conjuring up a world that does not exist.**

**- Margaret Wheatley<sup>1</sup>**

This thesis is an exploration into a critical theory of planning which, I will argue, provides a superior abridgement between planning theory and practice than do contemporary approaches, specifically those based on principles of community economic planning (CEP). The fundamental intention of the thesis is to investigate the essence of critical theory in the context of: 1) the theory and philosophy intrinsic to it; 2) community economic planning; and, 3) its application to planning theory and practice. Secondly, the thesis identifies eight critical theory principles which, in my opinion, may be individually addressed but are not holistically applied in contemporary planning theory. Furthermore, I espouse the notion that critical theory provides an opportunity for planners working in conjunction with local government and local citizens to recognize, through effective communication and critical thinking, those criteria not addressed by contemporary community economic planning approaches. Finally, the thesis incorporates a practical component whereby a case study approach will be used to demonstrate how the theoretical predispositions of critical planning theory identify and

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret J. Wheatley. 1992. *Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe*. San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. p. 37.

evaluate a specific scenario through a set of performance criteria consistent with the operational definitions of the eight, aforementioned, critical planning principles.

To begin, we must delve into the very crux of economic development in order to understand why society and, more importantly, communities have apparently reached a threshold of accepted patterns of understanding. The result has been the inability of models, theories and traditional organizational structures to effectively deal with new challenges conceived in an atmosphere of sublime global change.

The goal of conventional models of economic development is to increasingly expand and specialize an existing economic base in order to promote the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. For the most part, this involves the reliance upon external market forces at macro scales that can lead local or meso economies towards increasing vulnerability of systematic failure. Economic dependence upon factors beyond the control of local communities are representative of the contemporary economic circumstances that exist in many municipalities.

E.F. Schumacher said it poignantly:

. . . with increasing affluence, economics has moved into the very centre of public concern, and economic performance, economic growth, economic expansion, and so forth have become the abiding interest, if not the obsession, of all modern societies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> E.F. Schumacher. 1989. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers; reprint (page references are to reprint edition). pp. 43-44.

David Suzuki, world renowned geneticist and environmental spokesman, adamantly argues that the:

Degradation of natural systems has become inevitable because of an economic system that is fatally flawed by its SPECIES CHAUVINISM. Economists appraise everything in the world on the basis of perceived utility for human beings alone - if we can use it, it has value, if not, it's worthless.

That might work if implicit in such a system was an understanding that our survival and quality of life depend on what we extract from the Earth - air, water, soil, biodiversity. Historically, it appears that isn't how it works.

Economists define those things - the very things that keep us alive - as EXTERNALITIES to the system they've invented! And therein is the basis of our destructiveness.<sup>3</sup>

The impetus of neo-classical economics stresses the paramount importance of profit through the market systems that predominate the global economy. This view has been negatively associated with recession, inflation, unemployment, the loss of both renewable and non-renewable resources, and a growing number of disenfranchised people who are struggling to attain the basic necessities of life - food, clothing, shelter, and adequate education and health care. But by the same token, institutional largesse and ideological redistributions of resources have increased standards of living but have failed to produce

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<sup>3</sup> David Suzuki. 1994. *The Illusion of Controlling Nature*. Syndicated column in Red Deer Advocate (September 10).



a utopian "Great Society."<sup>4</sup> Regardless, both conservative and liberal doctrine must begin to address the abstract speculation of economics and the unanticipated and unmanaged social and environmental consequences of economic growth identified by the Brundtland Commission in 1987.

The apparent inability of such neo-classical, or "*trickle-down*" economics to sustain and maintain populations and societies at local and continental scales has provoked increasing interest in alternative approaches to conventional economic development thinking. Such alternatives include community owned enterprises, business development corporations, non-profit community-based organizations, and voluntarism.

While "government" is assumed, in the North American tradition, responsible for assuring that its citizens and businesses have reasonable access to the resources necessary to pursue socio-economic opportunities, it does not have to be the exclusive supplier of those resources.<sup>5</sup> This ideological shift is a marked change from past government policies, whereby communities in economic difficulty would rely upon a distant, centralized, government agency or a multi-national corporation supported by government incentives to intervene and solve their problems. The end result has, more often than

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<sup>4</sup> This phrase was coined by Lyndon Baines Johnson, thirty-sixth president of the United States, in May of 1964. In his speech he promised the Great Society would provide an abundance of opportunity and liberty for all and put an end to poverty and injustice in America. However, the Vietnam war and the social unrest associated with it quickly terminated this policy.

<sup>5</sup> R.S. Fosler (ed.). 1991. *Local Economic Development: Strategies for a Changing Community*. Washington, D.C.: International City Management Association. p. 132.

not, been a community that is almost entirely dependent upon external, global or national market forces which remove far more resources than would be re-invested back into the community. To break this cycle, communities must abandon traditional methods of economic development and move towards more locally sustainable and self-reliant means of regional and community economic planning.

In Canada, economic development plays an important role in determining the future for large and small communities alike. Yet, economic development in large cities like Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver have less of an impact upon the economic health of the city than it has in the smaller communities. The reason being that most large cities have established strong and diverse economic foundations and have become major service and distribution centres for surrounding communities. On the one hand, the economy of a larger centre is very broad and a downturn in any one sector of its local economy will have a relatively insignificant impact upon the city as a whole.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, small communities usually have to rely upon one or two industries for their economic survival. Therefore, the economic foundation for many of these communities tends to be narrow and a change in a single sector will result in a substantial impact upon the local economy. Whether the impact is positive or negative, it will result in a new set of challenges for the community.

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<sup>6</sup> My intent here is not to suggest that larger cities (pop. > 100,000) do not experience major sectoral crises, such as the case in the automotive and oil industries, rather to illustrate the fact that larger urban areas are better equipped to absorb the negative consequences of a sectoral recession than a smaller urban municipality. It is also important to note that larger urban areas do not have a monopoly on economic diversity.

In communities characterized by sectoral dependency, the public sector has traditionally been compelled to intervene in the local economy. As a result, government, at all levels, has implemented economic development programs. For the most part, these programs are intended to encourage private sector investment in the community. However, too often the end result has been that public sector economic initiatives rather than private sector investment that has become an integral part of the local economy. It should be noted that public sector economic development programs also emulate conventional export based neo-classical models. The challenge for local governments is to re-assess both their conventional role and model and invite planners and the community to participate in the search for alternative approaches to local economic development.

My prescription for change is twofold. First, the route towards reform begins with an investigation into the normative philosophy of critical theory. To be critical is to be reflective, therefore it is through communicative discourse and "reflection-in-action"<sup>7</sup> that a change agent can be most effective. Second, the utilization of critical planning theory in economic development planning is key to identify the critical linkages between theory and practice that present community economic planning theories fail to

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**"Reflection-in-action" is a practical philosophy espoused by planning savant Donald Schon. For a comprehensive interpretation of this philosophy see Donald Schon. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think In Action*. The United States of America: Basic Books, Inc.**

address. In other words, the planning process associated with economic development planning ought to be explicitly identified and bridged with the critical epistemology espoused in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Without a clear understanding for change, we cannot expect to overcome the domination of institutionalized models and practices.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THESIS**

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduces a body of knowledge which encompasses the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, in general, and the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas, in particular. The remaining part of the chapter address the nexus of critical theory and planning by recapitulating the theoretical works of Johann Albrecht and John Forester.

Chapter Two examines the context in which community economic planning (CEP) has become perplexing and contradictory in relation to its fundamental philosophy. Meanwhile, Chapter Three discusses the multiplicity of CEP typologies espoused in the literature in order to establish a common basis of understanding.

Chapter Four attempts to reach beyond conventional research theory by exploring

the potential opportunities provided through communicative discourse and critical thinking. The chapter begins with the investigation of shifting institutional and world views culminating in the realization that new organizational structures can be achieved. The proposed formula for change is a critical epistemology consisting of eight critical theory principles. These principles will comprise the main evaluative component of Chapter Five. The chapter concludes with a discussion which revives the pluralistic roots of planning in light of contemporary and multi-faceted world views.

In Chapter Five the Province of Manitoba's Community Choices Program provides the source material for a case study approach. Specifically, the program demonstrates a contemporary community economic planning model which utilizes a round table format to promote discussions among community stakeholders. Consequently, it is the primary objective of this Chapter to demonstrate the perceived gap between community economic planning as a social process and as a specific sectoral interest (i.e. a strict economic perspective).

The round tables of Deloraine-Winchester and Roblin Manitoba were chosen participants for Chapter Five. The rationale for my choices are supported by the unpretentious approach of rural community planning as opposed to communities with more cosmopolitan attributes. Each case will comprise two phases; (1) situational circumstances and (2) a critique. The intent of Chapter Five is to examine the two case studies retrospectively and evaluate the satisficing potential of the Community Choices

Program as compared to the critical principles discussed in Chapter Four.

Without further delay, let us begin our journey into the practice of accountability and common sense.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Critical Theory and Its Application to Planning

The "scientization" of social science seems to have been accomplished by masking real social relationships - by representing the social relations between people and groups of people as relations between things. . . . Yet we seem to be at ease with the reifications and to accept them uncritically, even though the possibility exists that in doing so we destroy our capacity to understand, manage, control, and alter the social order in ways favourable to our individual or collective purposes.

- David Harvey<sup>1</sup>

In many domains of scholarship there is a perceived "gap" between theory (what "ought" to be) and practice (what "is"). This perceived "gap" exists because there are certain unpredictable circumstances that arise when theoretical frameworks are applied to practical situations. Characteristically, the planning profession has dealt with these unpredictable "externalities" in one of two ways. First, to reject all "externalities" because planning is a technical, problem-solving profession which has no room for personal values or moral beliefs. Second, human beings naturally exhibit personal bias and values, therefore planners should recognize and account for this fact in their decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> David Harvey. 1985. *On Planning the Ideology of Planning*. In *The Urbanization of Capital*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell. p. 167.

Presently, the bond between planning theory and practice has not been fully realized. In my opinion, the current "gap" in planning exists in the domains of communication and the planning process. The importance of which cannot be taken for granted, especially at a time when information technology is challenging existing institutional frameworks. The failure of planners to effectively recognize communicative indiscretions may eventually lead to misinformation, misinterpretation and potential conflict within the planning process. I believe that these potential conflicts could be averted by effectively linking eight critical theory criteria to community planning practice.

Chapter One strives to provide the foundation for a planning nexus through the communicative discourse of critical theory. In the context of planning, Jurgen Habermas's critical theory of society will be used to demonstrate the operationalization of the theoretical constructs of critical theory in planning practice. In addition, specific works of Johann Albrecht and John Forester will be explored to provide an overview of the application of critical theory to the field of community planning. Further, it is the synthesis of Habermas's critical theory to planning that can provide the foundation upon which an alternative perspective can be constructed.



## 1.0 WHAT IS CRITICAL THEORY?<sup>2</sup>

The dialectical foundations of critical theory arose in Germany during the 1920's and 1930's. Building upon the emancipatory writings of Karl Marx and others, an extraordinary variety of individuals, pre-eminently Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse, gravitated toward the newly formed Frankfurt Institute for Social Research in 1923 (from this point on referred to as the Frankfurt School).

The intent of the Frankfurt School was to provide an interdisciplinary program of study where scholars of various academic interests could be united under the auspices of a "critical theory of society". This approach took a non-traditional view of theory which questioned German idealism and the hegemonic views of positivism. With respect to the latter, Thomas McCarthy writes:

With positivism the theory of knowledge became the philosophy of science; reason became scientific reason; and the interest of reason was either denied or equated with the technical interest in prediction and control of objectified processes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of critical theory is very elusive. The purpose of this thesis is not to provide an exhaustive critique of the emancipatory works of critical philosophers. Instead, only a brief introduction to the salient aspects of critical theory are necessary. Consequently, in order to provide an economic introduction to the philosophical realm of critical theory, I have borrowed the interpretive wisdom of Johann Albrecht. 1985. *Planning as a Social Process: The use of critical theory*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang; Richard J. Bernstein. 1976. *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell; and Thomas McCarthy. 1978. *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

<sup>3</sup> T. McCarthy. 1978. p. 84.

In this light, positivism is equated with the empiricist and cognitive structure of natural science, or what is commonly referred to as instrumental rationality. As McCarthy states:

They [social-scientifically trained "experts"] see the rationality that came to prevail in modern society as an instrumental potential for extending our mastery over the physical and social worlds, a rationality of technique and calculation, of regulation and administration, in search of ever more effective forms of domination.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, the Frankfurt School has taken the position that a critical theory of society "is a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation."<sup>5</sup> Instead of reason centred around technology and science, the Frankfurt School champions reason in the name of "Enlightenment" to act as the vehicle for critical reflection and ultimately human emancipation from social repression.

In essence, critical theory contains four basic assumptions. First, people's ideas are products of their own social milieu. Second, there is a critical attitude which examines society devoid of the destruction between facts and values. Third, critical theory is directed at social change. Fourth, critical theory is the product of socially created knowledge. Consequently, the champions of critical theory reject a

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas McCarthy. 1991. *Ideals and Illusions: On reconstruction and deconstruction in contemporary critical theory*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Geuss. 1981. *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press. p. 2.

technologically dominated society because it produces a technocratic society whose ideology precludes human freedom.

As the Frankfurt School's most influential student, Jurgen Habermas has become world renowned for his innovative interpretations of critical theory. In contrast to the early Frankfurt School, grounded in the idealist tradition of the analysis of consciousness, Habermas anchors his interpretation of critical theory in the philosophy of language and communication.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1 THE CRITICAL THEORY OF JURGEN HABERMAS

The early works of Jurgen Habermas held a clear affiliation to the critique of ideology espoused by his mentors at the Frankfurt School.<sup>7</sup> As he became more and more intellectually independent, Habermas disengaged his philosophical attachment to the founding fathers of the Frankfurt School. By eliciting Marx's critique of ideology, Hegel's philosophy of mind, Freud's psychoanalysis and the Socratic model of self-knowledge, Habermas evolved a critical epistemology of the economic, social and

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<sup>6</sup> John B. Thompson and David Held, eds. 1982. *Habermas: Critical Debates*. London, England: MacMillan Press. p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> Habermas's early works include 1970a. *Toward a Rational Society*. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press; 1971. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press; 1973. *Theory and Practice*. Translated by John Viertel. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press; 1975. *Legitimation Crisis*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. Throughout these earlier works Habermas critiques the "progressive 'rationalization' of society" as it is bridged to the "institutionalization of scientific and technical development" (1970, 81).

cultural conditions of human interaction.

Human interaction anchored by communication became the keystone of Habermas's critical theory of society. The significance of this fact was clearly stated in the following passage by Habermas himself:

Communication is inherently oriented toward mutual understanding, and the standards that govern communication are therefore conditioned upon reaching mutual understanding and, ideally, rational consensus.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, we can pose the question: How can Habermas contend that communication oriented toward mutual understanding is the pathway to rational consensus?

To begin, Habermas believes that modern capitalist society based upon empirical science and technology can be rational only if human interactions are framed in an atmosphere free from coercion. In accordance with this conviction, Habermas has proceeded to develop his theory of communicative competence<sup>9</sup> to demonstrate how the process of "critique" could emancipate relations of power expressed in distorted communication. However, before we continue along these lines we must first understand

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<sup>8</sup> Jürgen Habermas. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> The theory of communicative competence is referred to by Habermas as "universal pragmatics". "Habermas's conception of a universal pragmatics rests on the contention that not only phonetic, syntactic, and semantic features of *sentences* but also certain pragmatic features of *utterances* - that is, not only language but speech, not only linguistic competence but "communicative competence" - admit of rational reconstruction in universal terms" (McCarthy 1978, 274). Johann Albrecht espouses this theory of communication as a theory of knowledge based on Habermas's concept of knowledge-constitutive interests (1985, 73).

Habermas's concept of "knowledge-constitutive" interests.

Richard Bernstein provides an elucidatory view of knowledge-constitutive interests:

Habermas is developing a philosophical anthropology that singles out the distinctive characteristics of human social life that are the grounds of these basic knowledge-constitutive interests. He isolates three primary cognitive interests: the technical, practical, and emancipatory. Corresponding to these three non-reducible cognitive interests are three types of sciences or disciplines. "The approach of the empirical-analytic sciences incorporates a *technical* cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a *practical* one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the *emancipatory* cognitive interest" (KI, p. 308). Each of these cognitive interests is grounded in one dimension of human social existence: work<sup>10</sup>, interaction<sup>11</sup>, or power. Work corresponds to the technical interest which guides the empirical-analytic sciences; interaction, to the practical interest which guides the historical-hermeneutic disciplines; power, to the emancipatory interest which guides the critical disciplines - the critical social sciences (1976, 192-193).

Habermas is quite critical of technical and practical interests because of their specific and egocentric limitations. Technical cognitive interests governed by purposive-rational action are limited by empirical, value-neutral and objectified processes and do not include a self-reflective component. Similarly, Habermas criticizes the historical-

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<sup>10</sup> Habermas writes: "By "work" or *purposive-rational action* I understand either instrumental action or rational choice or their conjunction. Instrumental action is governed by *technical rules* based on empirical knowledge. . . . The conduct of rational choice is governed by *strategies* based on analytic knowledge." (1970a, 91-92)

<sup>11</sup> Habermas states: "By "interaction" . . . I understand *communicative action*, symbolic interaction. It is governed by binding *consensual norms*, which define reciprocal expectations about behaviour and which must be understood and recognized by at least two acting subjects." (1970a, 92)

hermeneutic disciplines on their claim to provide the most fundamental knowledge of man and the world. Notwithstanding their limitations, technical and practical interests remain very important in the overall production of knowledge, but we must be aware of their limitations and act accordingly.

Due to the inherent limitations of technical and practical interests, Habermas seeks to advocate the emancipatory cognitive interest. Planning theorist Johann Albrecht provides an exemplary insight:

The objective of synthesis in Habermas's theory of knowledge becomes obvious when we focus on the emancipatory cognitive interest. Habermas maintains that when we reflect on knowledge guided by technical and practical interest, the internal demand of reason for intellectual and material conditions which allow for free interaction and non-alienating work becomes evident. According to Hegel and the tradition of German idealism, reason possesses an inherent interest in becoming fully actualized - reason contains both will and consciousness. Reason means the will to reason; and in self-reflection, knowledge for the sake of knowledge becomes linked to an interest in autonomy and responsibility. Self-reflection is then determined by an emancipatory cognitive interest, and it is this interest that provides the epistemological understanding of critical theory (1985, 73-74).

Habermas views the critically oriented sciences as the best means to breach the suppression of latent human needs by technical rationality. The introduction of a self-reflecting component is believed to pave the road towards enlightenment, emancipation and autonomy of the human spirit.

Returning now to Habermas's theory of communicative competence we can appreciate the interrelatedness of the concept of knowledge-constitutive interests. Habermas's epistemology of universal pragmatics is centred around two fundamental features of critical discourse: communicative action<sup>12</sup> and communicative discourse.<sup>13</sup>

The task of universal pragmatics is to analyze communication, which presupposes background consensus, on the basis of four validity claims. Habermas elucidates:

The speaker has to select a *comprehensible* expression in order that the speaker and hearer can *understand one another*; the speaker has to have the intention of communicating a *true* propositional content in order that the hearer can *share the knowledge* of the speaker; the speaker has to want to express his intentions *truthfully* in order that the hearer can *believe in* the speaker's utterance (can trust him); finally, the speaker has to select an utterance that is *right* in the light of existing norms and values in order that the hearer can accept the utterance, so that both speaker and hearer can *agree with one another* in the utterance concerning a recognized normative background.<sup>14</sup>

In the normal occurrence of everyday communicative action the four validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, legitimacy and sincerity are not questioned. However, when the background consensus of communicative action breaks down in the face of conflict, communicative discourse becomes the only option to assess any of the

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<sup>12</sup> Communicative action "occurs when a "background consensus" is acknowledged or assumed" (Albrecht 1985, 76). According to Habermas: "In [communicative] actions, the factually raised claims to validity, which form the underlying consensus, are assumed naively" (1973, 18).

<sup>13</sup> Communicative discourse, in Habermas's view, "serves the justification of problematic claims to validity of opinions and norms" (1973, 18).

<sup>14</sup> K. O. Apel, ed. 1976. "Was heisst Universalpragmatik?" in *Sprachpragmatik und Philosophie*. Frankfurt. pp. 179-180. Taken from T. McCarthy. 1978. p. 288.

four validity claims. Bernstein states that "the aim of such discourse is to distinguish an accepted consensus . . . from a rational consensus" through a method of argumentative discourse (1976, 211). Yet, problems arise because there are no specific criteria of argumentation itself.

Habermas proposes that an "ideal speech act", which is both presupposed and anticipated in every act of normal speech, will provide the solution to this dilemma. Habermas believes that ". . . the *design* of an ideal speech situation is necessarily implied in the structure of potential speech, since all speech, even intentional deception, is oriented toward the idea of truth."<sup>15</sup> The pursuit of truth in an ideal speech act demands that the best argument should be accepted as a claim to truth. But does not this imply the potential misuse of power through coercion? No, because all participants are assured of an equal chance to select and employ speech acts and to assume universally interchangeable dialogue roles. In this capacity, "The power of ideal speech is the power of argumentation itself."<sup>16</sup>

The notion of the ideal speech act, forwarded by Habermas, requires the existence of an ideal community. One could even suggest that it is utopian. Even Habermas himself recognizes this fact by signifying that we can only anticipate the possibility. However, this appears to be the only possible way to critique communicative discourse

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<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Habermas. 1970b. Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence. *Inquiry*, Vol. 13. p.372.

<sup>16</sup> J. Albrecht. 1985. p. 80; R. Bernstein. 1976. p. 212.



and distorted communication.

## 1.2 CRITICAL THEORY AND PLANNING<sup>17</sup>

After exploring the dialectic foundations of critical theory, my initial reaction to Habermas's critical epistemology was one of bewilderment. However, upon further reflection I can begin to identify the linkages between critical theory and the community planning process in practice. To illustrate these linkages in a planning context, Johann Albrecht's (1985), *Planning as a Social Process*, and John Forester's (1989), *Planning in the Face of Power*, will be examined.

Albrecht takes a theoretical approach, while Forester addresses planning in the context of practice. In my opinion, these two treatises are quite complementary and provide a comprehensive context for critical planning theory and practice.

### 1.2.1 Planning as a Social Process

Johann Albrecht espouses planning as a social process dominated by two intellectual traditions: rationality and science; and reform movements. He suggests that this dualism in social science, generally, and planning, in particular, has always existed,

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<sup>17</sup> In this thesis the term "planning" is used in the broadest sense to denote the field of planning or the planning profession as a whole, as opposed to a specific type of planning such as land use planning or community planning, unless otherwise stated.

but contends that the pendulum of ideology has swung to favour technical rationality since the emergence of the City Beautiful and City Efficient movements. In Albrecht's opinion, "The planner became an efficiency expert."<sup>18</sup>

During the 1950's and 1960's, planning became dominated and greatly influenced by the operational, methodological, explanatory, and procedural theories and techniques of the social sciences. In these respects, science seeks to describe social knowledge while planning seeks to guide social knowledge or use social knowledge to guide social action. The strong influence of scientism on planning eventually moulded the field of planning into something alien to its reform heritage. It became dominated by a strictly rational, technical, objective, value-neutral and advisory process. As a result, planning became much more associated with rational decision making than with reform. Overall, planning was dominated by instrumental and positivist tendencies.

Historically, this has created significant intellectual and practical debate in the field of planning. On the one hand, there are those who espouse the apolitical, instrumental and techno-scientific role of planning; on the other hand, there are those who promote the political and value-laden role which champions the emancipation of the oppressed and the betterment of society. It is this latter view that Albrecht supports by stating ". . . when viewed as an activity of intervention, planning is defined as a social

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<sup>18</sup> J. Albrecht. 1985. p. 85.

process that determines objectives and not just the means necessary for reaching them."<sup>19</sup>

Albrecht proceeds to make the case that value-free planning is impossible by arguing that scientific and planning activities differ in the following ways:

- 1 the main goal of scientific activity is to increase descriptive knowledge, whereas the objective of planning activity is to guide the social world and, to this end, all knowledge is subordinate;
- 2 the body of knowledge of the social sciences consists of laws concerning behaviour, that of planning uses principles of guidance which are always oriented towards objectives and related to values;
- 3 planners do not halt action when satisfactory information is lacking, since they may apply intuition or work with fragmentary evidence, both of which are not permissible by scientists; and
- 4 planners use pragmatic criteria for validating planned action while scientists establish theoretical links that must be communicable, repeatable, and verifiable.<sup>20</sup>

As a result Albrecht concludes:

. . . the role of planning is related to the purpose of planning and that both are determined by the societal context in which planning operates. A definition of the role and purpose of planning can, thus, only be established by considering these relationships. Furthermore, it should be obvious that a dialogue concept capable of handling value-considerations is essential for planning if it wants to fulfil its proper role in society.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* p. 86.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* p. 89.

Albrecht found support in the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas.<sup>22</sup> Habermas's critical theory filled the social chasm of former planning theories by providing a suitable dialogue concept for the rational discussion of values. Ultimately, critical theory enables planners to incorporate technical, interpretive and critical knowledge for the solution of planning problems and thus to emancipate society.

### **1.2.2 Planning in the Face of Power**

Having explored the philosophical roots of critical theory and its implications for planning, it is necessary to make the transition from theory to practice. John Forester's<sup>23</sup> work, as noted in the above title, investigates the practice of planning in its many forms in the face of political realities. He takes a practical approach to planning by synthesizing the theoretical concepts of rationality, politics, incrementalism and radicalism, individual action and structural constraints, critical social theory and established power in the disorganized context of political inequality and economic exploitation.

Forester investigates what planning analysts do in the face of complex technical and political situations by addressing two conventional views of planning: planning as

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<sup>22</sup> I have covered the salient points of Habermas's work earlier in this chapter using Albrecht's interpretations along with a few others. I will not attempt to repeat them here.

<sup>23</sup> John Forester. 1989. *Planning in the Face of Power*. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

technical problem-solving, and planning as a means of processing information and feedback. Forester suggests that in the real world of planning practice, problems are not clearly defined and planning analysts must do much more than simply process feedback. Forester emphasizes that planners must understand the power structures within the bureaucratic system in order to survive. He cautions:

If planners ignore those in power, they assure their own powerlessness. Alternatively, if planners understand how relations of power shape the planning process, they can improve the quality of their analyses and empower citizen and community action. . . .

Whether or not power corrupts, the lack of power surely frustrates.<sup>24</sup>

Since we now live in a so-called information age, a critical way that planners can establish their legitimacy is to have the power to manage or control information. Due to the struggle for information, (i.e. power), the occurrence of misinformation and distorted communication become a problem for all actors in the decision making process. Planners must learn to recognize misinformation and counteract distorted communication by clarifying misunderstandings and becoming better informed. Forester suggests that planners are not immune from giving misinformation in order to achieve their own desired goals and warns that planners may, as a result, "exacerbate the problems caused by misinformation."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* pp. 41-42.

Forester parallels Jurgen Habermas's theory of knowledge-constitutive interests by exploring the technical, practical and critical views of planning organizations. He arrived at a conclusion similar to Habermas in stating that ". . . technical and practical organizational knowledge alone will not help planners come to grips with the problems of equity, the concentrated accumulation of wealth, and the perpetuation of widespread poverty and suffering."<sup>26</sup> By becoming more critical, planners can learn how to counteract these conditions and help to empower those in society who find themselves powerless.

Forester makes the transformation from theory to practice by utilizing practical examples of local land-use conflicts to illustrate how these strategies are applied in the real world and why it is difficult for practising planners to be objective and value-neutral in the face of land-use conflicts. Inevitably, in practice, the planner will alienate one interest group or another, either consciously or not. Therefore, Forester vigorously contends that communication and, especially, critical listening are skills that the practising planner cannot do without:

In listening critically, then, we can express concern and build relationships. We can pose problems to uncover interests, fears, and new possibilities. We can explore ambiguity rather than shun it. We can respect difference, and look for ways to go on together.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 112.

In essence, listening critically helps us to better understand one another, cut through the professional, 'expert', rhetoric, clarify possible misunderstandings, and move forward towards positive conflict resolution.

In Forester's view, a critical theory of planning should ". . . assess social and political-economic structures as systematic patterns of practical communicative interaction."<sup>28</sup>

In his analysis of planning practice, Forester draws heavily on the writings of Jurgen Habermas and interpreters of his work. In particular, Forester espouses Habermas's four validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, legitimacy, and sincerity and refers to them as "criteria of pragmatic communication." He bridges practical communicative action to planning by dividing them into two categories: content and context.

With respect to content, Forester believes that in order to communicate content effectively planners and their audience need to share a common language.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the category of the content of communicative action can be given as:

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* p. 139.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 145.

- (a) a factual claim;
- (b) a rhetorical (or comprehensibility) claim;<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, the context of what a planner communicates, according to Forester, "is defined by the historical, political, and social relations that provide the planner with a stage from which to speak in the first place."<sup>31</sup> Further, the context of communicative action is governed by:

- (c) a claim to legitimacy; and
- (d) an expressive claim.<sup>32</sup>

Forester, then, proceeds to address the crux of planner's distress, that is the communicative distortions both experienced and produced by planners. On this note, we can refer back to the pragmatic tenet of Habermas's theory of communicative competence whereby the power of communicative discourse is the power of argumentation itself. Forester believes that planning is inherently argumentative, thus critical theory provides an obvious theoretical foundation for eliminating communicative distortions in planning.

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid.* p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* pp. 145-146.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p. 146.



On this basis, Forester returns to the organizational problems and technical-political debate that planners face. The planner can no longer take the position of a politically inept technocrat, instead the planner must use all of the resources available.

In Forester's opinion:

It becomes clear now that problems will be solved not solely by technical experts, but also by pooling expertise and nonprofessional contributions too; not just by formal procedure, but also by informal consultation and involvement; not predominantly by strict reliance on data bases, but also by careful use of trusted resources, contacts, and friends; not mainly through formally rational management procedures, but through internal and external politics and the development of a working consensus; not by solving an engineering equation, but by complementing technical performance with political sophistication, support-building, liaison work - all this organizing - and, finally, intuition and luck.<sup>33</sup>

By seeking out a myriad of sources, the planner can become better informed, reduce communicative distortions and make legitimate, true, comprehensive and factual decisions. Anything less and the planner returns to the classic "leave it to us" attitude prevalent in mainstream public and private sector corporate planning.

The incorporation of a critical motif in planning theory and practice can greatly assist planners by regaining public accountability, legitimacy and trust that may have been abandoned in the pursuit of technical and instrumental processes. In most cases, the employment of basic common sense can suffice. Forester has proposed a list of

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 152.

eleven communicative strategies that planners can utilize to complement their technical work:

- 1 Cultivate community networks of liaisons and contacts, rather than depending on the power of documents, both to produce and to disseminate information;
- 2 Listen carefully to gauge the concerns and interests of all participants in the planning process to anticipate likely political obstacles, struggles, and opportunities;
- 3 Notify less-organized interests early in any planning process affecting them (the more organized groups whose business it is to have such information will hardly need the same attention);
- 4 Educate citizens and community organizations about the planning process and both formal and informal "rules of the game";
- 5 Supply technical and political information to citizens to enable informed, effective political participation and negotiation;
- 6 Work to see that community and neighbourhood non-professional organizations have ready access to public planning information, local codes, plans, notices of relevant meetings, and consultations with agency contacts, "specialists" supplementing their own "in-house" expertise;
- 7 Encourage community-based groups to press for open, full information about proposed projects and design possibilities;
- 8 Develop skills to work with groups and conflict situations, rather than expecting progress to stem mainly from isolated technical work or from elected officials;
- 9 Emphasize to community interests both the importance of building their own power even before negotiations begin and the importance of effective participation and negotiation in informal processes of project review; take steps to make expertise available to professionally unsophisticated groups in such project-review meetings;

- 10 Encourage independent, community-based project reviews and investigations; and
- 11 Anticipate external political-economic pressures shaping design and project decisions and compensate for them - soliciting "pressure we can use" (e.g., countering vested anti-public interests) rather than minimizing external pressure altogether.<sup>34</sup>

These communicative strategies may be viewed as nothing new and widely practised in the day-to-day work of planners. However, when addressed, through critical theory and in the context of systematically distorted communication, these strategies can be viewed in a new and emancipating light.

As Forester concludes:

" . . . a critical communicative account of planning practice seeks not only to integrate analysis of action and structure but also to combine empirical and interpretive research with normative and ethical arguments that help us counteract the obstacles to democratic and legitimate planning processes."<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3 IMPLICATIONS

As a theory, critical discourse incorporates knowledge and communication with the personal and societal values and beliefs at a time when information technology is challenging modernism and rationalism as exclusive institutional paradigms.

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* pp. 155-156. Also in J. Forester. 1980. *Critical Theory and Planning Practice*. APA Journal. Vol. 46, No. 3. (July) pp. 275-286.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p. 161.

As a practice, critical theory translates into a process of communicative competence based on the fundamental concepts of communicative action and communicative discourse. As previously outlined, Johann Albrecht and John Forester have attempted to integrate critical theory into planning practice and have produced a list of communicative strategies aimed at complementing the technical work of planners.

Given this background, the next chapter will explore the ancestral origins and meaning of "community". The purpose of which is to bridge the ideological roots of community planning to a growing area of planning practice commonly referred to as community economic planning (CEP).

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Community Economic Development Conundrum

**A town [community], like a flower, or a tree, or an animal, should, at each stage of its growth, possess unity, symmetry, completeness, and the effect of growth should never be to destroy that unity, but to give it greater purpose, nor to mar that symmetry, but to make it more symmetrical; . . .**

**- Ebenezer Howard<sup>1</sup>**

In recent years, community economic planning has emerged as an important facet of planning theory and practice. CEP has established its presence and has fast become the dominant planning tool in many communities across Canada. Relevant theorists and practitioners in this emerging field have stressed that CEP represents a collage of concepts, techniques and philosophies directed towards gaining local control over community resources. CEP has also strived to create appropriate, equitable and sustainable economic development based on self-sufficiency, accountability and legitimacy within communities.

The normative philosophy of critical theory and its application to planning practice outlined in the previous chapter represents the ideals and objectives which

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<sup>1</sup> Ebenezer Howard. 1951. *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. 3d ed. London, England: Faber and Faber Limited.

community economic planning strives to attain. Critical theory provides an alternative pathway and direction with which to approach community and economic planning. However, many people find themselves grappling with the inherent ambiguities in CEP terminology.

Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the myriad of interpretations and contradictions related to the fundamental philosophy of community economic planning.

## 2.0 IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY

The long established field of social research has painstakingly explored the paradoxical meaning of community.<sup>2</sup> Debate often centres around what community "is" and what researchers believe it "ought" to be. Richard Sennett states that "'Community' is a deceptive social term" that is open to many interpretations and is difficult to define in realistic terms.<sup>3</sup> Regardless, the fundamental contribution that social science has given to the knowledge of community has primarily centred around typologies.

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<sup>2</sup> Social researchers such as Ferdinand Toennies. 1935. *Community and Association*. 8th ed. Translated and supplemented by Charles P. Loomis. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited; Amos Hawley. 1950. *Human Ecology: A theory of community structure*. New York, New York: The Ronald Press Company; Marvin B. Sussman ed. 1959. *Community Structure and Analysis*. New York, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company; Talcott Parsons. 1960. *Structure and Process in Modern Societies*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press; and others.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Sennett. 1970. *The Uses of Disorder: Personal identity and city life*. New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. pp. 30-31.

Subsequently, the use of categories to explain the leitmotif of community provides a practical means for creating a common basis of understanding about the definition of community between researchers and the public.

Christen Jonassen suggests that there are problems of taxonomy because there is "a lack of consensus as to the nature of the community and the elements that comprise it."<sup>4</sup> If you asked a dozen different people "what is community?" I guarantee that you will receive a dozen different answers because everyone has their own preconceived notions based on their own knowledge and experiences. For some, community means the biosphere or a particular geographic location. For others, community denotes family, work, religion or culture. The seemingly infinite combinations and permutations surrounding the notion of community become incongruent and contradictory as one attempts to shape one's own view of community. Therefore, the only practical way of defining community is to use a generic meaning which refers to a comprehensive vision of community. Jonassen provides one such definition:

A community is a group integrated through a system of spatially contingent, interdependent biotic, cultural, [economic] and social relations and structures which have evolved in the process of mutual adjustment to environmental situations. It is a spatial group wherein the effects of interdependence and integration are made evident by the community's consciousness of unity and its ability to exercise adequate control over social, cultural, [economic] and biotic processes within its boundaries.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In M. Sussman ed. 1959. p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* p. 20.

Ferdinand Toennies in his treatise *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Association or Society) chronicles a sociological system of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* based on natural will and rational will, respectively. According to Toennies, *Gemeinschaft* (community) based on intimate human relationships is centred around characteristics of: family, village and town.

Family life is the general basis of life in *Gemeinschaft*. It subsists in village and town life. The village community and the town themselves can be considered as large families, the various clans and houses representing the elementary organisms of its body; guilds, corporations, and offices, the tissues and organs of the town. Here original kinship and inherited status remain an essential, or at least the most important, condition of participating fully in common property and other rights.<sup>6</sup>

While, *Gesellschaft* (society or association) comprises everything that community is not and is centred around: city, nation and metropolis.

The city is typical of *Gesellschaft* in general. It is essentially a commercial town and, in so far as commerce dominates its productive labor, a factory town. Its wealth is capital wealth which, in the form of trade, usury, or industrial capital, is used and multiplies. Capital is the means for the appropriation of products of labor or for the exploitation of workers. The city is also the centre of science and culture, which always go hand in hand with commerce and industry. Here the arts must make a living; they are exploited in a capitalistic way. Thoughts spread and change with astonishing rapidity. Speeches and books through mass distribution become stimuli of far reaching importance.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> F. Toennies. 1935. p. 267.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* p. 266.



In this respect, Toennies makes it very clear that capitalism arises at the expense of community. Further, he hypothesizes that this conflict will create a class struggle whereby civilization is transformed from a society dominated by capitalism to one fostering a new culture of community.<sup>8</sup> One can argue that this Marxian view is quite polarized and utopian. However, Toennies' typology of society provides a thought provoking dichotomy between village and city, family and nation, tradition and modernism from which contemporary community research can be based.

Planning, too, has exhaustively explored the origins and meaning of community.<sup>9</sup> Yet, in most instances investigations are made with respect to economic, social, political and environmental development issues in addition to community affairs. The notion of community is more than the sum of its parts; more than a definition; more than an abstract typology. It is a process of ". . . enabling people collectively to achieve goals and to influence actions together rather than as individuals."<sup>10</sup> But it appears that the vision of community has become overshadowed by fear mongering special interest groups and the insatiable consumerism of an expanding global economy. Marcia Nozick reflects

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* p. 270.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Jim Lotz. 1977. *Understanding Canada: Regional and community development in a new land.* Toronto, Ontario: NC Press Limited; Marcia Nozick. 1992. *No Place Like Home: Building sustainable communities.* Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Council on Social Development; M. Scott Peck. 1987. *The Different Drum: Community-making and peace.* New York, New York: Simon and Schuster; and Alex Sim. 1988. *Land & Community: Crisis in Canada's countryside.* Guelph, Ontario: The University of Guelph. Please note that this is not a definitive list of community planning literature.

<sup>10</sup> J. Lotz. 1977. p. 9.

on this dichotomy:

By "tuning in" to the Global Village and "tuning out" of our local communities, we have become willing and happy participants in the destruction of our own communities, communities which we depend on for our livelihood and security. Community cohesiveness, economic viability and local autonomy are undermined in the process. Indeed, the roots of communities have grown so shallow that we seem not even to remember what it is we have lost - the values of community, of attachment, commitment, mutual support, self-reliance, self-direction. Instead we fill the empty spaces of our lives by shopping across the American and international borders for more and cheaper consumer goods produced outside our communities, thus contributing to the drain of wealth from our local economies.

In Today's world "community" is fast becoming a thing of the past with urban neighbourhoods, small towns, whole regions and even third world countries being written off as bad investments, laid to waste in the economic restructuring of the world according to the dictates of global "economic efficiency." With all of the political attention and billions of dollars going to establish this "new world order" of corporate giantism, we seem to have forgotten our grassroots, the nonmonetary things that matter to people, and even people themselves, who are increasingly left out of the economic equation.<sup>11</sup>

In the face of this grim interpretation of the world in which we live, can community exist, survive and blossom? The answer to this question has been cast in doubt and fraught with scepticism. Over the last ten or fifteen years rural towns and villages have experienced a marked decline in population consisting largely of the younger generation who are eager to learn professions and trades associated with non-agricultural and metropolitan lifestyles. However, I believe that many well educated people of the hackneyed "X" generation have discovered that limited job opportunities

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<sup>11</sup> M. Nozick. 1992. p. 5.

and the high cost of living in megalopolis regions, such as the lower mainland of British Columbia and southern Ontario, do not provide a secure and comfortable living environment. With continuous improvements in national and global telecommunications, people both young and old are beginning to return to the countryside and smaller cities where new opportunities are available and genuine community living can be attained.

## **2.1 THE ENIGMATIC REALM OF CEP**

The fundamental imperative of community economic planning is for the community to gain local control over local resources in order to create appropriate, equitable and sustainable economic planning based on self-sufficiency, accountability and legitimacy. However, explorations regarding the fundamental philosophy of CEP have become paradoxical, contradictory and at times hypocritical when juxtaposed. There is an old adage that states "opinions are like noses, everyone has one." In the case of CEP, this maxim is representative.

The following is a thumbnail profile of current community economic development (CED) interpretations which exist in the contemporary planning literature.

Economic development is something much wider and deeper than economics, let alone econometrics. Its roots lie outside the economic sphere, in education, organisation, discipline and, beyond that, in political independence and a national consciousness of self-reliance. It cannot be "produced" by skilful grafting operations carried out by foreign technicians or an indigenous elite that has lost contact with the ordinary people. It can succeed only if it is carried forward as a broad, popular

"movement of reconstruction" with primary emphasis on the full utilisation of the drive, enthusiasm, intelligence, and labour power of everyone. Success cannot be obtained by some form of magic produced by scientists, technicians, or economic planners. It can come only through a process of growth involving the education, organisation, and discipline of the whole population. Anything less than this must end in failure.

- E.F. Schumacher<sup>12</sup>

Community development focuses on the *process* of enabling people collectively to achieve goals and to influence actions together, rather than as individuals.

- Jim Lotz<sup>13</sup>

Local economic development refers to the process in which local governments or community-based (neighborhood) organizations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment. The principal goal of local economic development is to develop local employment opportunities in sectors that improve the community using existing human, natural, and institutional resources.

- Edward Blakely<sup>14</sup>

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CED) is defined as a process that aims to improve the long term economic viability of geographic sub-areas of the province. It involves managing economic change to effectively meet an areas needs and objectives through emphasis on self-help, participation, partnership and control. It is based on a "bottom-up" philosophy that relies on using the communities own resources ... people, capital, management, creativity and pride ... to improve economic well being.

- EDAM Inc.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> E.F. Schumacher. 1989. p. 216.

<sup>13</sup> J. Lotz. 1977. p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Edward J. Blakely. 1989. *Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and practice*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Library of Social Research Publication No. 168. p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Economic Developers Association of Manitoba Inc. 1994. *94/95 Strategic Plan*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc. p. 1.

Community economic development is a "bottom-up" (community-controlled) process of local and regional revitalization. It is characterized by community-wide involvement, the mobilization of internal and external resources, human development, and long range planning. CED argues that the economic and social well-being of a community are too closely interconnected to be handled separately. To be improved effectively, both must be addressed at the same time.

- B.C./Yukon CFA<sup>16</sup>

If one wanted to define economic development in a single word, that word would be "improvisation." But infeasible improvisation is fruitless, so it would be more accurate to say that development is a process of continually improvising in a context that makes injecting improvisations into everyday economic life feasible.

- Jane Jacobs<sup>17</sup>

CED, as a small-scale, decentralized, grass-roots approach to development, is a counterforce to large-scale trans-national corporate economics, responsible for the burgeoning crisis in ecology, world poverty, and mass alienation through its systematic destruction of local culture. As a counter strategy, CED focuses on gaining local control over local resources in order to meet local needs and in the process create local wealth and strengthen community bonds.

- Marcia Nozick<sup>18</sup>

Local-community economic development means improvement of job opportunities, income levels, and other features of the economy, not only *on* Main Street but *by* Main Street.

- ECC<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> B.C./Yukon Community Futures Association. 1993. *Entrepreneurial Communities: A handbook for local action*. Vernon, B.C.: Westcoast Development Group. p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Jacobs. 1984. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of economic life*. New York, New York: Vintage Books. pp. 154-155.

<sup>18</sup> Marcia Nozick. 1990. *Community Economic Development: Four basic questions*. Research paper. Personal copy. Winnipeg, Manitoba. p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Economic Council of Canada. 1990. *From the Bottom Up: The community economic-development approach*. Ottawa, Ontario: Government of Canada. p. 3.

Simply defined, community economic development, in theory, comprises a development which is at once economic and social, and individual and societal in nature. It professes common principles based on a set of assumptions which belong to a new economic paradigm in contrast to the assumptions of conventional economics. . . . In practice, local economic development is the process by which people work collectively to improve their social and economic situation.

- Rod Nazewich<sup>20</sup>

Traditionally, community development has focused on social, recreational, cultural and educational projects, leaving economic development to business people and public planners; c.e.d. breaks with that tradition by placing economics at the centre of community development. It does not, however, diminish the importance of social and cultural development by doing so. This is what sets it apart from the regular business community and most economic planners.

- Wismer & Pell<sup>21</sup>

Although finite in its scope, the preceding assemblage of CED interpretations illustrate the potential for perplexity and discrepancy among CED theorists and practitioners alike. The perception of ambiguity, more often than not, is dependent upon the ideological bias, opinion or spin that the author applies, consciously or subconsciously, to their interpretation. This phenomenon perpetuates other related areas of interest, such as the environment, economics, social issues and, especially, politics.

From collectivism to *laissez-faire*, CEP addresses the entire spectrum of political ideology. To administrators of CEP it is only a matter of choosing the appropriate CEP

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<sup>20</sup> Rod Nazewich. 1990. *Reordering City Planning: Lessons from ced*. City Magazine. Vol. 11, Nos. 2 & 3 (Winter/Spring). p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Wismer and David Pell. 1981. *Community Profit: Community-based economic development in Canada*. Toronto, Ontario: Is Five Press. p. 6.

model to achieve the desired goals.

Chapter Three will attempt to clarify possible contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the CEP literature through a generalized tripartite typology.

## CHAPTER THREE: A General Typology Of CEP

**Planning must be subject to evaluation of its success or failure just like any other human activity; it cannot be undertaken or continued on faith alone.**

**- Ernest Alexander<sup>1</sup>**

There are three basic schools of thought which permeate the CEP literature: economic growth promotion, sustainable development and self-determination.<sup>2</sup> Each of these general categories focuses on one particular element of the community economic planning triad and will be explored in detail as this chapter progresses. Of course there are other alternative categories of classification but, in most cases, they can be pigeon-holed into one of the three general typologies espoused here.

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest R. Alexander. 1981. *If Planning Isn't Everything, Maybe It's Something*. Town Planning Review. Vol. 52, No. 2. p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Boothroyd and H. Craig Davis, professors in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, have created and promoted these three community economic development approaches. For a detailed account of their typology read P. Boothroyd and H.C. Davis. 1993. *Community Economic Development: Three approaches*. Journal of Planning Education and Research, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Spring). pp. 230-240; and P. Boothroyd and H.C. Davis. 1991. *The Meaning of Community Economic Development*. Discussion Paper #25. School of Community and Regional Planning. The University of British Columbia.



### 3.0 TYPOLOGY ONE: ECONOMIC GROWTH PROMOTION

Markets have existed for thousands of years but the evolution of the market system did not become rationalized and fully understood until the industrial revolution and the pre-eminent reifications of Adam Smith.<sup>3</sup> From the conceptualization of the market system by economic and social intellectuals to the mercantilists and industrialists which put that system into practice, a world based on infinite resources, infinite power and infinite growth had evolved.

It is the sole purpose of those public and private agencies, organizations or consortia that espouse the economic growth approach to seek out new markets and attract investment in order to increase the size and competitiveness of the local economy. To achieve these aims, communities have employed a number of strategies since the turn of the century, namely: boosterism, smokestack chasing and the export base model.

#### 3.0.1 Boosterism

It is important to note that the market system solidified its grip on humanity long

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<sup>3</sup> The notion of a market system was not conceivable until the existence of the basic factors of production - Land, Labour and Capital - were understood by the masses. It was not until social philosopher Adam Smith, in his 1776 publication *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, clarified the economic ways of the world which made sense to the remainder of society. Robert Heilbroner writes: ". . . markets, whether they be exchanges between primitive tribes where objects are casually dropped on the ground or the exciting travelling fairs of the Middle Ages, are not the same as the market system. For the market system is not just a means of exchanging goods; it is a mechanism for sustaining and maintaining an entire society" (1986. *he Worldly Philosophers: The lives, times, and ideas of the great economic thinkers*. 6th ed. New York, New York. Simon & Schuster, Inc. p. 27).

before the notions of CEP ever came into vogue. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the first formal conceptualizations of CEP were influenced through the promotion of economic growth. The roots to which lie in small town boosterism.<sup>4</sup> Alan Artibise describes boosterism in the context of the history of Canadian prairie towns:

Since progress was measured in material terms, prairie boosters directed their efforts toward encouraging rapid and sustained growth in their cities at the expense of virtually all other considerations. This meant, for example, that while all prairie boosters wanted the region to grow rapidly, they were even more concerned with the growth of their own communities. Despite the early prominence of Winnipeg, the boosters of other prairie communities optimistically envisioned their centre becoming the pre-eminent metropolis of the area. But western urban rivalry was more than a matter of community pride, although this was usually involved as well. It was a matter of self-preservation, with the losers, perhaps, dwindling to insignificance or even extinction. There was, as a result, virtually no cooperation among . . . cities in their dealings with the railways, eastern industry, the federal government, or almost any other "outside" force. Each centre zealously competed with the others for economic advantage and prestige. . . .

. . . Boosters saw themselves as community builders in mushrooming cities with unbounded hopes; an environment where personal and public growth, personal and public prosperity intermingled. . . . Advocates and supporters of boosterism were intent on creating a feeling of community spirit on the basis of voluntarism, without any basic revision of the system of economic inequality and social injustice that existed in the cities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In Canada, boosterism embodied the necessary civic pride that many villages, towns and cities needed to evolve and grow in prosperity, especially across the prairies. Community boosters were primarily local business people, politicians and the wealthy elite who used their power and influence to promote their own agendas of economic growth and material success. Boothroyd and Davis describe boosterism as "the planning of civic improvements and festivals to increase civic pride and local shopping and to bolster the town's "progressive" image in the eyes of governments and corporations who might invest in the town" (1991, p. 4).

<sup>5</sup> Alan F.J. Artibise. 1982. *In Pursuit of Growth: Municipal boosterism and urban development in the Canadian prairie west, 1871-1913*. In G.A. Stetler and A.F.J. Artibise, eds. *Shaping the Urban Landscape*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press. pp. 124-126.

In many respects the idea of boosterism has endured to remain the paragon of economic growth promotion. Although, the approach to economic prosperity has transmuted from an indiscriminate to a planned and calculated economic development strategy. This modern form of boosterism has become infamously known as "smokestack chasing."

### **3.0.2 Smokestack Chasing**

This form of traditional CEP reinforces the focus of the "E" in CEP. The principle motivating factor is the lure of large national or multinational corporations with promises of low property taxes, a highly skilled and readily available labour force, fully serviced industrial land or commercial buildings, a cooperative and fairly predictable council, little or no environmental regulations and more amenities than the prairies have gophers. All in exchange for jobs. All three levels of government have at one time or another employed the smokestack chasing type of economic improvement strategy to kickstart local or regional economies, but at what cost?

In dollar terms, the hiring of high priced consultants to research and produce a multitude of glossy brochures, information packages and computer generated, multi-media, interactive, user-friendly, virtual reality, advertising gimmicks is only the beginning. Of course, no list would be complete without mentioning the throng of promotional buttons, bumper stickers and other novelties with the city's logo and "snappy" slogan which the

local "schmoozers" can distribute at regional, national and international trade shows. All of this expense before one tourist or company executive knows where the "Town of Hardknox" is located. Finally, if and when there ever is any interest, the company executives have to visit the new site and be "wined and dined" by the town's elite to make the hard sell more palatable.

With respect to the community at large, there is no real consideration for the social equity, environmental stewardship or quality of work conditions. What becomes important is the community's competitive advantage in the larger global economy and over neighbouring communities.

The Manitoba community of Swan River is regarded in the context of this argument as representative of the classic smokestack chasing phenomenon.<sup>6</sup> The economic development council in this agriculturally based community of 4,000 people sought ways and means to diversify its local economy. The community answered an advertisement in a forestry magazine whereby the American lumber company Louisiana-Pacific (L-P) was looking for potential expansion sites for its wafer-board processing operations.

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<sup>6</sup> The information contained here was gathered from a newspaper story by Paul Samyn *Walking Forestry's Fine Line* in the Winnipeg Free Press, dated June 11, 1994.

To the council and Chamber of Commerce of Swan River and the Manitoba Provincial government, the construction of an \$80 million wafer-board plant and the lure of 450 jobs with an annual \$26 million injection to the provincial economy was too good to be true. In exchange, the province would permit L-P access to thousands of acres of aspen as raw material for their product.

It was also learned that L-P was fined \$11.1 million by the United States Environmental Protection Agency the year before. This triggered a plethora of environmentalist backlash suggesting that the proposed operation would produce toxic emissions, that clear-cut logging interferes greatly with re-growth and destroys irreplaceable animal habitat. The company responded with the predictable rhetoric and innuendo about the company being a strong supporter of sustainable development and a good corporate citizen.

As of June, 1994, it appears the approval or denial of the proposed operation will be a matter for the courts to decide. In the mean time, many of the residents of Swan River are left with the realities of a depressed agricultural sector and high unemployment. For the community, their "white knight" may or may not have arrived.

What is alarming about this scenario is a devout belief by many people that the means justify the ends. When, in actual practice:

. . . the locational decision for firms or businesses follows a distinct economic logic. A firm or business will locate where it expects to earn a profit. Quality of life, climate, availability of restaurants, cultural and health care facilities, cheaper housing, and other amenities are likely to be important only if they affect the profit position of the firm or if the expected profit is estimated to be similar in two (or more) communities. Otherwise, expenditures on developing and promoting amenities are simply wasted. Local government expenditures on amenities designed to attract new business can be justified on allocative efficiency grounds as long as the direct recipients (business or local citizens who benefit from them) bear the costs of providing these amenities. To the extent that the amenities are funded from revenues collected from people who do not incur their benefits, a misallocation of resources occurs.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.0.3 The Export Base Model

Another spin on the economic growth promotion strategy is the incorporation of "economic base theory", also known as the "export base model", as the primary theoretical framework for traditional economic development practices. The economic base of a community is assumed to be comprised of those activities that provide employment and income on which the rest of the local economy depends. Since communities are seldom self-sufficient, they must export and import goods and services to and from other communities, regions and countries. Consequently, the degree to which a community is "successful", in a neo-classical economic context, depends largely on how effective it is at exporting its goods and services. However, such an input-output or throughput model is not an entirely closed system. Ideas, materials, labour, information, leak from the system when visitors travel through or when local citizens move away to another

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<sup>7</sup> Harry M. Kitchen. 1985. *The Role for Local Governments in Economic Development*. Toronto, Ontario: Ontario Economic Council. p. 31.

community. Bryant *et al.*, provide the following poignant description of the export base model:

In its simplest form, the economic base approach to the explanation of the local economy states that the reason both for the existence and for the growth of a city or region lies in the goods and services that it produces and sells beyond its borders. In short, trade or die. The greater the volume of exports, the greater the local return, the greater the local investment, and the greater local stability and growth.<sup>8</sup>

Intertwined with the mechanisms of smokestack chasing, this theory requires the audit of all goods and services produced in a region or community for the purposes of export and local consumption, exclusively. The export market sector is referred to as "basic" economic activity, the domestic market sector is referred to as "non-basic" economic activity and the ratio between these two activities is called the "basic/non-basic ratio" (B/NB).

The foundation of the economic base approach is represented by the following formula:

$$TA = B + NB$$

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<sup>8</sup> C.R. Bryant, R.E. Preston and D.J. Dudycha. 1990. *Economic Development Bulletin Number 8: Explaining the economic base of the local economy*. Waterloo, Ontario: The University of Waterloo. p. 3.

Where,

TA = total economic activity

B = total basic activity

NB = total non-basic activity

The infrastructure of economic base theory is established upon the B/NB ratio. For those people who champion economic growth promotion, a B/NB ratio greater than or equal to one represents a favourable economic climate. On the other hand, a B/NB ratio less than one represents an economic decline. In other words, the success of the local economy depends upon the non-local demand for goods and services produced in the export sector. Therefore, any fluctuations in export demand will greatly effect levels of income and employment. Since practically nothing can be done to influence demand, strategies for growth focus on diversifying the export sector.

In reality, complications arise in the application of the export base model when the distinction between basic and non-basic sectors of the economy are unclear. The reasons for the lack of clarity between basic and non-basic sectors are twofold.<sup>9</sup> First, most firms operate in a mixed market economy, that is, they do not sell their goods and services exclusively to either the export or local markets. They sell to both. Second, comprehensive data availability and collection may be limited due to imperfect information or short cuts taken because of the costs involved with performing a local

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<sup>9</sup> Bryant *et al.* 1990. pp. 4-5.



economic audit.

Given these realities, it is also important to note that the information derived from an economic base study can be very useful. Economic base studies can provide an understanding of current sources of income and employment, pinpoint weaknesses in the local economy, be used as an effective forecasting tool and can assist in making better informed local government decisions.<sup>10</sup> But we must also be aware that the world is in perpetual motion and any study, scientific or otherwise, is a "snapshot" of time. Thus, adjustments must be made to reflect present and future conditions.

Unfortunately, boosterism, smokestack chasing and economic base theory, have traditionally dominated and defined economic development at the community level entirely on the presumption of growth expressed in terms of employment, income and increased production. Meanwhile, there is little or no incentive to dedicate resources to alternative economic strategies geared towards diversifying the economic base. In effect, the explicit strategies and actions taken on behalf of public and private agencies to attract investment from outside sources represents a game of chance in which the rewards may be lucrative but few and far between and accessible only by a limited number of communities.

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<sup>10</sup> C.M. Tiebout. 1962. *The Community Economic Base Study*. Supplementary Paper No. 16. New York, New York: The Committee for Economic Development. pp. 15-16.

### 3.1 TYPOLOGY TWO: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Born out of environmental concerns and the limitations of a "throughput growth model"<sup>11</sup>, the term sustainable development has become an institutional policy of the 1990's. Although sustainable development is not an entirely new phenomenon, it builds upon the adage "consume what you produce" by including a global ecological perspective to community economic development. The emphasis has diverged from the notions and techniques of economic growth to encompass a more holistic view of the world.<sup>12</sup>

In 1987, the United Nations' sponsored World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published a report titled *Our Common Future* which examined the critical environment and development problems on the planet and formulated realistic proposals to solve them. The WCED report made popular the phrase "sustainable development" both in terms of providing a definitive interpretation and in the controversy generated, with respect to that interpretation, among intellectual, government and business circles. The WCED defined sustainable development as development which:

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<sup>11</sup> The throughput growth model is the approach to economic development espoused by the CEP strategies outlined in typology one. In essence, throughput represents the cycle of goods and services produced in an economy whereby the process begins with depletion, followed by production, depreciation, and finally pollution as wastes are returned to the environment. In growth-oriented economies there are no limits to the scale of development. Consequently, the economy operates beyond the regenerative and assimilative capacities of the ecosystem.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Ekins calls this the New Economics which is "rooted in the recognition that human life and economic activity are an interdependent part of the wider ecological processes that sustain life on earth and will either operate sustainably within those processes or bring about their own demise" (Paul Ekins ed. 1986. *The Living Economy: A new economics in the making*. New York, New York: Routledge & Keagan Paul. p. 9).

. . . meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>13</sup>

Further, the WCED qualified and expanded this definition to suggest that:

. . . sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs.<sup>14</sup>

Although this definition has been criticized for its vagueness, generality and lack of practicality, it does, however, identify a conservation ethic which recognizes that the old paradigms of science, prediction, growth and order no longer determine what is acceptable in today's complex world. The notion of sustainable development provides a new meta-disciplinary field of inquiry which attempts to understand, holistically, the complex interrelationships of both natural and artificial environments.

In contrast to the aforementioned economic growth promotion strategies, the sustainable approach is concerned more with the **process** of development rather than the end product, that being steady and infinite economic growth. Thus, a sustainable approach incorporates the ideas and principles of sustainable development which promote quality over quantity, ecological and economic diversity, integration and empowerment, and strives to sustain the ecological systems that sustain us. In other words, development

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<sup>13</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Chairperson. New York, New York: Oxford University Press. p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> WCED. 1987. p. 9.

without growth.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of community economic planning, communities have adhered to this dictum by pooling their resources in order to take control of the local economy away from the inadequate public sector management of social and economic crises. The real and perceived inadequacies of conventional economic growth promotion strategies have fuelled people's desire to search for new alternatives which envision a local economy with quality rather than quantity of growth in mind. A community with a broader vision, one that incorporates the needs of all citizens culturally, socially and economically, is championed.

The process of sustainability explores any and all options for stimulating the local economy. They may include a myriad of strategies and techniques ranging from traditional industrial recruitment to community owned enterprises. However, it is the pursuit of community owned enterprises, such as credit unions, community development corporations, community land trusts, and producer, consumer and housing cooperatives.

Historically, the grassroots establishment of cooperatives and credit unions blossomed during the 1920's and 1930's when provincial and national economies were threatened with total collapse. During this period in Canada, the modern cooperative

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<sup>15</sup> Herman Daly, speaking at The Other Economic Summit (TOES) in 1984, calls development without growth a steady-state economy which develops qualitatively, instead of quantitatively, through advances in knowledge and technology. A steady-state economy must also be limited in scale so as to remain within the regenerative and assimilative capacities of the ecosystem. In Paul Ekins ed. 1986. pp. 13-14.

movement, as it is popularized, began in the small eastern Nova Scotia town of Antigonish. It was here that Father Jimmy Tomkins and later Father Moses Michael Coady championed a program of social action, adult education, self-help and cooperation. There were no committees established to engineer a cleverly crafted advertising and promotional campaign designed to attract tourists and outside industries. According to Jim Lotz:

The modern co-operative movement arose as a reaction to industrialization and oppression. It began as a way of getting people together to buy what they needed at less cost, and to retain some degree of social cohesion and control in the face of fragmentation and depersonalization that came with industrial life in cities.<sup>16</sup>

Following the post-war prosperity and rapid growth of cities, people began to favour Keynesian macro-economic growth policies over the localized stability of worker and producer cooperatives. In essence, the notion of community ceased to be the agent of planning and simply became a place for the retrieval of primary resources or the production of various commodities.<sup>17</sup> However, the social upheaval of the 1960's; the political instability of the 1970's; the global economic restructuring of the 1980's; and the environmental awareness of the 1990's have created ample opportunities for communities to explore new alternatives.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J. Lotz. 1977. p. 102.

<sup>17</sup> P. Boothroyd and H.C. Davis. 1991. p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Rod Nasewich states that the essential driving force behind the initial commitment, participation and start up of alternative economic development is crisis (1989. *Knowledge and Action: Bridging community economic development and planning*. Unpublished Masters Thesis in City Planning. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The University of Manitoba. p. 77). I would concur and also add that the

To conclude this section on sustainable development I would like to pose the following question. If people have discovered that a "New World Order" dictated by a global economy based on international free trade zones, such as NAFTA and the EEC, has destroyed many of their traditional conceptions of community, then what alternative strategies have communities ventured to achieve local economic stability and sustainability?

In the area of sustainability there are many growth without development prescriptions espoused by planners in the community economic planning literature. The following three examples contain popular suggested strategies for achieving sound community-based economic planning.

First, Boothroyd and Davis outline four strategies that communities have used to achieve structural change. They comprise:

- 1 reducing dependence on external investment by increasing local ownership, e.g. through employee buy-outs, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and the establishment of community owned enterprises;
- 2 reducing dependence on outside decision-makers by increasing local control over resource management, e.g. co- management;
- 3 reducing dependence on traditional export markets through diversification of the local economy; and
- 4 strengthening the local non-cash economy, e.g. voluntarism and a

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impetus to pursue community economic development strategies, of all types, is entirely dependent upon the existence of political, social, economic and environmental crisis.

local exchange trading system (LETS).<sup>19</sup>

The second and third examples of sustainable strategies are combined because they are similar in both their philosophy and structure. They are approaches derived by the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation and revived by Marcia Nozick. They are as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | need-oriented                                     |
| 2 | endogenous  |
| 3 | self-reliant                                      |
| 4 | ecologically sound                                |
| 5 | based on structural transformations <sup>20</sup> |
|   |   |
| 1 | working toward self-reliance                      |
| 2 | harmonizing with nature                           |
| 3 | attaining community control                       |
| 4 | meeting individual needs                          |
| 5 | building a community culture <sup>21</sup>        |

### 3.2 TYPOLOGY THREE: SELF-DETERMINATION

Community is the focus of the third spire of the CEP triad. The emphasis upon the 'C' in CEP shifts to notions of self-determination, social justice and social equity as opposed to economic growth and sustainability. I refer to this typology as self-determination because it focuses upon the community's collective abilities to include all

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<sup>19</sup> P. Boothroyd and H.C. Davis. 1991. pp. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup> Dag Hammarskjold Foundation. 1977. *Another Development: Approaches and strategies*. In P. Ekins ed. 1986. p. 44.

<sup>21</sup> M. Nozick. 1992. p. 10.

citizens, especially those who have been marginalized by other CEP approaches, in decision making. Further, a self-determinant posture attempts to fully integrate social and economic development initiatives into the philosophy of social equity.

Boothroyd and Davis propound that the self-determination, which they refer to as communalization, approach differs from sustainable development strategies in three main categories.<sup>22</sup> First, CEP practitioners can vigorously lobby government to establish equitable distributions of community services in order to eliminate the marginalization of the less affluent people in the community. Second, in an institutional context where worker and producer cooperatives, land trusts and community development corporations proceed a step further than previous strategies by structuring their organizations in ways that meet the requirements of those in most need. The extension of institutional mandates to encompass the promotion of social equity and justice for the entire community, instead of their individual membership, marks a major difference between self-determination and sustainable development approaches. The third distinguishing agent of typology three is the strengthening of the informal economy and voluntarism in order to improve and advance the ideals of self-determination.

The support of self-determination strategies is considered to be a more radical approach to acquiring local control and establishing long term stability in a community. Advocates of self-determination often find themselves to be in the minority because their

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<sup>22</sup> P. Boothroyd and H.C. Davis. 1993. p. 236.



proposals appear to be so far removed from mainstream views which are weighted heavily towards conventional economic policies.

Now that a common basis of understanding has been achieved with respect to current community economic planning, it is time to proceed with the principal intention of the thesis.

## CHAPTER FOUR To Boldly Go . . .

The well being of our cities, indeed their very lives, requires a change in our supposedly progressive attitudes and beliefs. In particular, our faith in unlimited mechanization as a substitute for intelligent, disciplined humanization in the fashion that the great cities of the past exemplified. If both city and country are to keep their character, we can no longer, it seems to me, treat land as a commodity to be bought and sold in the ordinary market sense. Land is limited, irreplaceable and immoveable, particularly, in cities and around them. Its value depends on the collective efforts and expenditures of all citizens, far more than on those of the man who may own it. To conserve the resources all communities need, land should be controlled in the public interest. Even private land has public responsibilities. More than this, we must question the notion that the expansion and congestion of our cities is inevitable and beneficial. Urban growth has been automatic only because we believe more in automatic processes than in available human means for controlling them. Beyond a certain stage, mere size reduces the efficiency, vigour and attractiveness of a city. The living hearts of London, Paris, New York and Montreal were more vital before they were overburdened by their clogged arteries and their paralysed extremities.

- Lewis Mumford<sup>1</sup>

### 4.0 PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY

Traditionally, community economic planning has been a top-down process

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Mumford. 1963. *The City and Its Region* (motion picture). The National Film Board of Canada. Lewis Mumford on the city Series, part 3. Based on the book *The City In History* by Lewis Mumford. 1961.

emphasizing competition for limited resources. Given current National economic conditions, this struggle has not diminished, in fact it has become even more stringent. The growing accumulation of government debt has created an atmosphere of economic uncertainty whereby the tried and true solutions of the past are no longer effective at providing remedies for the present. The result has been a growing search for alternative pathways to meet local socio-economic needs.

Regardless of the preceding three typologies, we must ask ourselves what the process of community economic planning really means? Is it technical or political, formal or informal, future oriented or "by the seat of your pants"? Effective and responsible planning requires the practising planner to explore all avenues in problem solving (as suggested in critical theory). For it is information, gathered and communicated in cooperation with all interested parties, which allows for directions and decisions to be taken.

Planning for community development or redevelopment whether economic or social involves participation from all stakeholders, both inside and outside the community, to some degree. Since each community is unique, the presence or absence of particular stakeholders can affect the quality and the level of participation of planning in the community. Therefore, a community economic planning approach must be flexible enough to accommodate the high level of diversity among communities.

If one is planning for "community", one is approaching planning in terms of the public interest. Consequently, a planning process which emphasizes a cooperative and consultative mandate (both internally and externally) should be practised. This position is supported by Gerald Hodge, who writes:

Planning for a community requires collective decision-making processes, usually within the framework of local government. There are a number of procedures, both formal and informal, often interwoven, that condition the process of decision making. These involve a wide range of participants whose values, roles, and behaviour must be understood. Community planning does not operate independently from either the political arena or the economic marketplace. Reconciling these positions makes community planning a process of community cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, collective decision-making, interdependence and social cooperation are the essence of the community planning process. Above all else, the success of community planning depends upon effective, two-way, cooperation and communication (as advocated by critical theory) between the public, politicians and planners.

It appears that we have reached a crossroads in terms of society's ability to contend with the plethora of complex and interrelated problems. According to City of

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**2** Gerald Hodge. 1989. *Planning Canadian Communities: An Introduction to the Principles, Practice and Participants*. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada. Originally published in 1986 by Methuen Publications. (page references refer to 1989 edition). p. 314.

Winnipeg planners Jeff Fielding and Gerry Couture, planning must regain its responsibility, leadership and power to command change in society. They propose that the planning profession must concentrate on opportunities rather than problems and adopt a systems philosophy if planners are to effectively engage in public debate and produce fully developed opportunities for improvement.<sup>3</sup> I agree with the need for reform in the planning profession but the recommendations made by Fielding and Couture indicate a shift back to the autocratic tendencies of traditional planning. Instead, I believe that planning must mobilize all available resources in order to achieve its desired ends. Take for example, the resurgence of grassroots community economic planning and its bureaucratic antithesis as two avenues in which planners and community leaders have explored new approaches to public participation.

As one piece in a larger puzzle, I propose a thesis whereby a critical planning theory provides an opportunity for planners working in conjunction with local government and local citizens to recognize, through effective communication and critical thinking, unpredictable externalities **not** addressed by contemporary CEP approaches.

If the application of critical theory results in an identification of previously unanticipated or unpredictable externalities that conventional approaches fail to diagnose, then, what are these new variables or externalities that must be addressed in practice?

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<sup>3</sup> Jeff Fielding and Gerry Couture. 1994. *Reflections on the Profession*. Plan Canada Special 75th Anniversary Edition (July). pp. 150-151.

#### **4.1 PERFUNCTORY GOVERNMENT VERSUS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

Traditionally, bureaucracies have failed to recognize the critical social and political interrelationships that exist in local communities. Instead, program regulations are uniformly imposed upon communities with little or no regard for the community's unique social dynamics or specific needs. This process creates both conflict and inefficiency when there is a lack of "fit" between government programs and the people who have to live with the consequences.

As a result, formal public meetings or, carefully orchestrated "informal" strategic planning seminars conducted by outside consultants do not achieve the government's anticipated goals because of poor community attendance and participation. This lack of success is in large part because such activities are externally directed and impersonal. Bureaucrats need to recognize that local coffee shops, taverns, bingo parlours and hockey rinks are just some of the informal places where "real" community business is discussed and decisions are made. Although a large portion of these discussions could be considered gossip and conjecture, if you really listen to what people are saying about community issues, you can get a sense of the community's disposition and development concerns.

However, the "gap" between informal community process and government imposed solutions has been recognized in recent years. In an effort to streamline its

operations, the public sector has explored options which provide opportunities for more open and decentralized forms of governance. Although much of the impetus for this change has occurred primarily through fiscal necessity, government agencies are recognizing that genuine community controlled consultation can greatly improve government/community relations. Communities must also learn to communicate more effectively and understand the administrative framework within which the public sector functions on a day-to-day basis.

City planner and community activist Kent Gereke once wrote that "power is at the centre of empowerment."<sup>4</sup> This struggle for power, whether personal, political or economic, will continue to be a factor in the future. Given this reality, empowerment in general, and community empowerment in particular, becomes a phenomenon that is directed towards the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental circumstances. It is something that must be experienced by individuals and communities in spontaneous and voluntary ways.

#### **4.2 A CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY**

The next paradigm in planning must take advantage of its multi-disciplinary history. Since planning is ultimately about the future, I have proposed a normative approach that incorporates the emancipatory philosophy of critical theory with its

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<sup>4</sup> Kent Gereke. 1987. *Empowerment, Architecture, and City Planning*. City Magazine. Vol. 9, No. 3 (Fall). p. 10.

practical application to planning.

Within the realm of conventional research theory, I have selected community economic planning (CEP) as the specific vehicle for criticism. Chapter two outlined the history, philosophy and at times contradictory nature of CEP. While, Chapter Three explored three general typologies which demonstrated that it was not necessarily the process of CEP that was the main focus, but rather the anticipated end-state which would resolve the perceived crisis. I believe it is in the dominions of communication and the planning process where both past and present CEP theories fall short of achieving a holistic planning experience.

In planning when we refer to process we have to include the myriad of professionals, politicians, special interest groups, concerned citizens and other stakeholders that may be involved in a particular planning scenario. Inherently, we unconsciously refer to communication because it is often a lack of communication which is cited for a breakdown in the planning process, regardless of theory. Whether the process is bureaucratic or grassroots is inconsequential.

My thesis proposes a critical planning theory that addresses the unpredictable externalities which conventional research theory fails to identify. In my view, a critical theory of planning (see Chapter One) must consider the following critical principles, as abstracted from planning literature:



- 1 **communicative competence** (Jurgen Habermas, John Forester)
- 2 **fact and value** (Richard Klosterman, Paul Davidoff)
- 3 **innovation and entrepreneurship** (Peter Drucker)
- 4 **a systems approach** (Fritjof Capra, Paul Ekins)
- 5 **choice**
- 6 **leadership** (Floyd Dykeman, Jerry Robinson, Jr. and Roy Clifford)
- 7 **self-reliance** (Marcia Nozick, Kent Gerecke)
- 8 **future-oriented scenarios** ( John Dakin, William Perks and David Van Vliet)

#### 4.2.1 Communicative Competence

Communication is the quintessential component of critical planning theory. In terms of both language and speech, communication is conditioned upon mutual understanding and rational consensus. When either of the four validity claims<sup>5</sup> of everyday communicative action break down in the face of conflict, it is the pursuit of truth through argumentative discourse which will, ideally, reclaim a mutual and rational understanding.

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<sup>5</sup> Recall from chapter one, Habermas's theory of communicative competence which presupposes background consensus on the basis of four validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, legitimacy and sincerity.

#### 4.2.2 Fact and Value

The notion of settling our differences through argumentative discourse has been a contentious issue in planning. The source of this belligerent behaviour centres around the debate between empirical and normative; is and ought; fact and value.

In planning it was always assumed that there was a definite division between professional expertise, based on scientifically verifiable statements of fact, and non-verifiable conjecture. It was believed that professional planners could dissociate themselves completely from dealing with questions of value and focus exclusively on questions of fact. For Habermas, the realm of technical rationality lacked a self-reflective component which only enhanced its egocentric limitations. But he does not totally discount the knowledge producing capacities of empirical interests. Instead, Habermas suggests that we must be aware of the limitations of science and include value-laden argumentative structures which allow for the continued pursuit of truth.

Over the course of its relatively short history, planning has explored the existence of value in decision making and has concluded that by virtue of being human we are not immune from interjecting our own values and bias in the decisions we make. Similarly, Klosterman concludes:

Human action in the social sphere does not consist of two distinct aspects: externally observable objective facts, and subjective mental attitudes, values, and beliefs. Rather it is made up of social facts, practices, and institutions whose meaning for the actors involved is shaped by the shared rules, norms, and conventions which define their behaviour, motives, intentions, and reasons for acting.<sup>6</sup>

This point of view is similar to the advocacy theories of the 1960's which support the thesis that "appropriate planning action cannot be prescribed from a position of value neutrality. . . ." <sup>7</sup> However, a critical theory of planning ranges beyond the notion that values are nothing more than statements of personal choice by advocating the embodiment of fact and value judgements through verifiable argumentative discourse. The criteria for verification being the ideal speech act. Therefore, a critical theory of planning must incorporate empirical, moral and ethical principles if it is to maintain a holistic perspective.

#### 4.2.3 Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Innovation and entrepreneurship are two interrelated concepts that are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing.<sup>8</sup> However, in terms of producing structural

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<sup>6</sup> Richard E. Klosterman. 1983. *Fact and Value in Planning*. APA Journal. Vol. 49. p. 219.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Davidoff. 1965. *Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning*. JAIP. Vol. 31, No. 4. p. 331.

<sup>8</sup> Management guru Peter F. Drucker defines innovation, on the one hand, as the application of knowledge to produce new knowledge (1993. *Post-Capitalist Society*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers. p. 190.) and, on the other hand, entrepreneurship as searching for change, responding to it, and exploiting it as an opportunity (1985. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Practice and principles*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers. p. 28.).

change within a system of social relations, innovation stands alone with respect to paradigm change. We often turn to our institutions for change, but it is the reform or outright abandonment of our institutional structures which provide the impetus for bona fide innovation.

While it is possible for entrepreneurs to be innovative, innovation must precede the materialization of entrepreneurship. For example, the invention of the internal combustion engine resulted from a number of innovations: namely, Robert Boyle's and Denis Papin's "gunpowder engine"; Thomas Newcomen's steam engine; the knowledge of how to ream a smooth cylinder and the invention of the condenser; all of which led James Watt to develop a working combustion engine. Consequently, entrepreneur Henry Ford used this new knowledge to exploit the opportunity of the horseless carriage. Yet, at the same time Ford became an innovator by introducing the notion of mass production for which other entrepreneurs utilized to meet their own needs. Perplexing indeed!

In my opinion, planners, citizens and governments often apply the term entrepreneurship indiscriminately to CEP strategies. Statements like "the people of this community must embrace an "entrepreneurial spirit" if it is going to survive in the long term" or "the youth of our town should be learning about entrepreneurship". Innovation and entrepreneurship imply doing something different rather than doing better what is already being done. Yet, it is often the improvement of existing methods which entrepreneurship is promoted. Instead, people need to understand the principles and

practice of both innovation and entrepreneurship if new knowledge and the economic opportunities that accompany that new knowledge are to be achieved.

#### 4.2.4 A Systems Approach

In the past, society's conception of a system was based on the reductionist tendencies of mechanistic scientism. The abstract form of a system was reduced to encompass the inputs from the external environment, the process of transforming those inputs, the resulting outputs, and feedback from the environment about the quality or quantity of the output. Meanwhile, the interactions between systems were considered too complex and chaotic to be of any real value to science.

As perceptions towards scientism began to change, classical traditions, primarily in the area of ecology, were revived and modified to reflect contemporary praxis. The study of systems had shifted from well ordered mechanistic models to chaotic natural living entities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Fritjof Capra maintains that "the systems view looks at the world in terms of relationships and integration. Systems are integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units. Instead of concentrating on basic building blocks . . . the systems approach emphasizes basic principles of organization" (1982. p. 266). Yet, Capra makes it very clear that mechanistic operations are present throughout natural systems and should be used in proper balance with ecological operations in order to obtain a deeper knowledge of life (1982. pp. 267-268).

Current planning thought proposes a systems approach where issues are dealt with interactively between all interested stakeholders, not in isolation. However, it is not yet clear how such a systemic process will be achieved. I believe that a systemic planning model should comprise both systems of use and systems of people.

Systems of use include natural and artificial processes, such as ecology, land development and economics. Systems of use is one area which planners have overwhelmingly concentrated their efforts. But we must not forget to include systems of people as a key element in a holistic world view through the realization that people comprise societies, cultures, communities, and integral communicative relationships. Without these social and communicative frameworks the chances for paradigm shift are slim.

Therefore, a systems approach in planning needs to link social, economic and environmental concerns by identifying the critical interrelationships between systems of use and systems of people. It requires a new approach and a new vision of the future. A step that planners must be willing to take.

#### **4.2.5 Choice**

The prospects of choice in planning have often centred around who has the power

to make decisions. In the past, planners and public administrators, shielded behind the facade of technique and expertise, were the gatekeepers of power and choice. Acting in the public interest, they exercised their professional judgement as to which alternative choices should be considered. Meanwhile, those most affected by planning decisions were given only token degrees of participation.<sup>10</sup>

Increasingly, the decision making power of planners and bureaucrats has been challenged by vociferous groups of highly informed and organized citizens. The struggle for shared power marks the beginning of a decentralized, grassroots, form of democracy. No longer do people want big government controlling what they can or cannot do. Instead, people are demanding the choice to control their own destiny.<sup>11</sup>

This wave of change has caused planning to alter its philosophy in ways that embrace a new environmental awareness which has permeated society since the late 1980's. Previously, engineers, planners and city administrators offered narrow choices by instituting standards, rules and regulations which promoted the separation of land uses and forced people to rely heavily on the automobile. Today, planners and designers are responding to a growing demand for sustainable living by providing a much wider range of choice to the environmentally conscious consumer.

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<sup>10</sup> For a complete description of this and other degrees of public participation consult Sherry Arnstein. 1969. *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*. JAIP. Vol. xxxv, No. 4 (July).

<sup>11</sup> I will explore this aspect further when I discuss the notion of self-reliance later in this chapter.

In the future, I believe that the continued shift in people's ideas, attitudes and perceptions towards sustainable living will constitute a change in the planning process as well. No longer will a planner sit down with a developer and negotiate a plan of subdivision which meets existing market demand. Instead of housing choices dictated by developers, prospective residents would meet with the contractors, architects and planners to plan and build communities which meet the requirements of work, affordability, education, agriculture, residency, and ecologically-functional design.

At present, choice in the planning process and urban design is being practised successfully in Europe and parts of North America. Ultimately, it is the professional's responsibility to provide and the public's responsibility to demand and contribute to ecologically sound choices.

#### **4.2.6 Leadership**

Guiding visions, strong values, organizational beliefs, charisma - these are just a few of the governing principles that leaders are said to embody. The common belief that leadership is a natural quality based on charisma and the unique ability to inspire people to heights and accomplishments they otherwise would not attain no longer represents the majority of leadership roles in society. We must explore beyond



McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y<sup>12</sup> in order to discover a cornucopia of leadership styles.

There are a number of leadership styles using imaginative rhetoric to describe, basically, a continuum ranging from autocracy to democracy and emphasizing flexible to rigid behaviour. I prefer a leadership community action module designed at the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign because it focuses on the communication networks associated with behavioral styles of leadership.<sup>13</sup> This approach also complements contemporary planning philosophy which supports the idea that planners, in their relations with communities, should utilize a number of leadership styles at different stages of the community planning process.<sup>14</sup>

In the endless pursuit of knowledge I happened upon a reprinted newspaper excerpt commenting on the concept of leadership. It meshes amicably to community

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<sup>12</sup> Douglas McGregor (1960. *The Human Side of Enterprise*. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill) espoused that there were two views of human nature which influence the way leaders behave and which impact the degree to which workers in an organization are motivated. He termed these two positions Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X assumed that: (1) people are essentially lazy, (2) they avoid responsibility, (3) unless coerced they will do nothing, and (4) the leader bears the burden of the performance of his or her followers. Theory Y assumed that: (1) work is as natural as rest and play, (2) people have a desire to use their potential, and (3) if people understand and accept objectives they will exercise self-direction and self control in achieving those objectives.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed account of this community action module refer to Jerry W. Robinson, Jr. and Roy A. Clifford. 1991. *Leadership Roles in Community Groups*. Part of the Helping Rural Communities Prepare For Economic Development Series. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

<sup>14</sup> Floyd Dykeman. 1992. *Leadership and Community Renewal: Exploring the planner's role*. Plan Canada (September). p. 11.

planning and I thought it would be beneficial to share it with you. Reporter Jim Gannon (1987) of the Detroit News writes:

. . . I do not believe that the fate of any given small town will be decided by its location in the state, or its access to water or highways or resources, or other objective characteristics. These factors can help or hurt economic survival.

But the essential ingredient is something human, unpredictable, and immeasurable. It is that elusive thing we call leadership.

Leadership is vision - some notion of where the future lies and how to get there. Leadership is guts - the willingness to step up to hard decisions, take risks, step on toes, and maybe fall flat on your face in trying. Leadership is energy - the determination to keep going when everyone tells you it's a lost cause. Leadership is looking into the mirror and saying "It's up to me". . .

. . . You do not have to be elected to be a leader. You just have to care and decide to do something, and to enlist like minded people in the doing. In my view, that's what small towns need to survive; the spark of leadership by committed local people willing to risk failure to reach for success. . .

#### **4.2.7 Self-Reliance**

The growing movement towards stewardship, cooperative living and community-based solutions to social, environmental, and economic difficulties suggest that the quality of life has been more important than the quantity of our possessions. It is anticipated that this self-reliant phenomenon will provide a better response to our environmental, social and economic needs than present institutional processes.

The principles of self-reliance begin with the fundamental tenet of producing the

items you need locally rather than obtaining such items from external sources.

According to Marcia Nozick:

The goal of a self-reliant community is to enhance the pool of local wealth through discovery and development of a community's existing resource base.<sup>15</sup>

To achieve these ends Nozick suggests that local wealth can be created through:

- 1) recycling;
- 2) conservation and preservation;
- 3) import replacement; and,
- 4) invention.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, community planners will play an important role in helping communities to realize the potential opportunities that a self-reliant approach espouses. Community planners will not necessarily direct the community as to the ways and means of achieving self-reliance but rather by empowering people in regards to the possibilities of a locally-based community planning approach.

#### 4.2.8 Future-Oriented Scenarios

If planners are social interventionists intent on planning the future, where are

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15 Marcia Nozick. 1990. *Principles of Community Economic Development*. City Magazine. Vol. 11, No. 4. p. 16.

16 Ibid. p. 16.

innovative conceptual ideas going to originate? Scenarios are one way in which new knowledge can be created. According to John Dakin:

Scenarios should not be thought of as cast-iron futures, but chiefly as tools for thinking about the future shape of things.<sup>17</sup>

As a planning tool, scenarios can unlock the mind from the chains of technical rationality and help identify the critical interrelationships necessary for a sustainable future.<sup>18</sup> Scenarios enhance planning's normative traditions by providing the opportunity to "test" what "ought" to be. They afford us the opportunity to think critically, incorporating logic, experience, personal values, analogies, theories, conceptual frameworks, etc., *en route* to discovering critical representational structures.

The fact that planning is a multi-disciplinary profession means that it is not locked-in to any one ideology. Consequently, planners are open to explore alternative future strategies and possibly evoke social change.

### 4.3 CRITICAL PLANNING THEORY: PLURALISM WITHOUT ADVOCACY

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<sup>17</sup> John Dakin. 1986. *Futures: The planner as thinker for society*. Plan Canada. Vol. 26, No. 8 (November). p. 202.

<sup>18</sup> For an excellent example of a future-oriented scenario consult William T. Perks and David R. Van Vliet. 1992. *Sustainable Canadian City in the Year 2020: A history of beginnings at Willmore and Calgary*. The University of Calgary Faculty of Environmental Design. Produced for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Centre for Future Studies. Ottawa, Ontario.

While mainstream planning literature upholds the status quo, critical planning theory identifies three key elements which dissociate it from traditional forms of planning theory. First, planning is a moral activity; second, planners are essentially communicators; and third, planners use language to better understand the intricacies of human action. As Forester states:

Critical theory gives us a new way of understanding action, or what a planner does, as attention-shaping (communicative action), rather than more narrowly as a means to a particular end (instrumental action).<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, Bolan emphasizes that "language is the core instrument of the professional episode."<sup>20</sup> In these innovative ways critical planning theory contains empirical, normative and practical aspects which no other planning theory can substantiate.

In 1965, planning theorist Paul Davidoff wrote about "*Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning*" in which he envisioned the planner as an advocate who acted on behalf of the interests of the client. In the almost thirty years since, I believe society has moved towards greater specialization, not generalization. For instance, special interest groups have become more sophisticated and have evolved to dominate public policy agendas. Planning, too, has become more specialized. Graduate schools have tailored their programs to churn out consultants instead of planners. Even the planner's journal, *Plan Canada*, has buckled under the pressure of specialization by focusing each issue on one

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<sup>19</sup> J. Forester. 1980. p. 275.

<sup>20</sup> Richard S. Bolan. 1980. *The Practitioner as Theorist: The phenomenology of the professional episode*. *APA Journal*. Vol. 46, No. 3 (July). p. 266.

particular interest in planning.

Davidoff conceived the urban community as "a system comprised of interrelated elements. . ." <sup>21</sup> which could only be managed by the rubric of pluralism. I concur with Davidoff's analysis and would further suggest that specialization leads only to conflicting interests and narrow points of view. Take for example a city council meeting where politicians, a transportation engineer, an economic development officer, and a neighbourhood association are debating a measure to widen a major thoroughfare in the city. The transportation engineer supports the measure based on projected traffic flows for the area, the neighbourhood association is opposed because houses, some of them historical, on either side of the proposed expansion will have to be destroyed, the economic development officer suggesting that the addition of turn lanes will provide better access to adjacent businesses, and the politicians are "sitting on the fence" waiting to hear all the arguments before making a decision. Instead of communicating effectively and working with the entire community in mind, each person or group has their own specific agenda and will fight "like cats and dogs" to have their views accepted.

In the above example, a planner utilizing a critical planning approach would be best equipped, intellectually, to facilitate the situation. Instead of advocating the interests of one particular group, as maintained by Davidoff, the planner could enlighten the

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<sup>21</sup> P. Davidoff. 1965. p. 337.

participants to incorporate the common sense foundations of pragmatic communication.<sup>22</sup> Through effective argumentative discourse, it is possible to achieve a common basis of understanding and reach a decision that satisfies everyone's concerns.

The fact that planning situations are both technical and communicative reinforces the pluralistic nature of planning. This requires that planners become multi-faceted in their knowledge of planning and, preferably, other disciplines.

It is my sincere belief that the critical epistemology outlined in this chapter can assist planners and complement their technical expertise in providing innovative community action measures and help mitigate unnecessary conflicts in the planning process. Critical planning theory, as envisioned in this chapter, aspires to provide a planning framework that is communicatively competent, innovative, ecologically aware, socially relevant and focused on dynamic human interrelationships.

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<sup>22</sup> The normative foundations of pragmatic communication expect people to communicate comprehensibly, sincerely, legitimately, and truthfully. Forester warns that pragmatic communication is never guaranteed, but instead serves as a guide to effective communicative discourse (Forester. 1980. p. 279).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Need For Critical Theory: Two Case Studies

**Although we have a plethora of governmental frameworks and legislative means in Canada to facilitate community planning, all this does not tell *why* a community needs planning. . . . The need of community planning does not arise because of the formal structures we erect in regard to planning. Rather, it arises because people wish to improve their environment. . . .**

- Gerald Hodge<sup>1</sup>

This chapter embodies a case study approach. The purpose of which is to juxtapose the eight critical theory criteria derived in Chapter Four with a practical community planning strategy. Specifically, two case studies were garnered from The Manitoba Community Choices Program. The first case study chosen was the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table while the second involved the Roblin Community Round Table.

The Manitoba Community Choices Program introduces a Round Table format in which participating towns, villages and rural municipalities create a broad-based, holistic and sustainable approach to future community planning. I chose this program because it was contemporary in its approach and I have researched the program and reviewed many of its Round Table Vision Statements. It is unfortunate that I did not have the opportunity to participate directly in the

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<sup>1</sup> Gerald Hodge. 1989. p. 3.



Community Round Table process of the aforementioned communities. However, I did have the opportunity to talk to the chairperson of each Round Table Committee and glean a first hand account of their community planning experience.

I purposely chose communities that were outside the spheres of influence of major urban centres, namely Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage La Prairie. The reason being that municipalities situated within reasonable commuting distances were, in effect, bedroom communities and would adversely influence the traditional "rural" setting with strong "urban" preponderances. Since the comparative variables involved in the case studies consist of a subjective nature, the critique of these two case studies will consist of a review of how the program "satisfied" the individual theoretical criteria derived in Chapter Four.

Each case comprises two phases. Phase One outlines, in a factual manner, the events and organizational circumstances surrounding the particular case. While, Phase Two involves a critique of how each case study does or does not employ the critical epistemology assembled in Chapter Four.

## **5.0 THE MANITOBA COMMUNITY CHOICES PROGRAM**

### **5.0.1 Background**

Rural communities in Canada have witnessed many changes and experienced difficult

times over the last decade. Increasing economic, social and environmental stress has made rural areas susceptible to global fluctuations in commodity markets and dependent on government. In addition, the rural to urban exodus of population compounded by high tech, less labour intensive, agricultural equipment and practices have put a great strain on rural communities, in general, and rural governments, in particular. In recent years the situation has not become easier. Increasing global competition, the restructuring of industry, high unemployment and an ever increasing strain on our natural resources have caused people to change their traditional approaches to solving the complexities of society. Governments have recognized through public pressure that we can no longer afford to live in the manner in which we have become so comfortably accustomed. Rural communities have known this for some time and have persevered in the face of adversity through community self-reliance and stewardship.

Prior to 1988, the Manitoba Department of Municipal Affairs administered planning for rural Manitoba. It reviewed subdivision applications, zoning by-laws, master plans and conducted various background studies for rural communities. The Department did not have the mandate to provide services in the area of economic development. Instead, the Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism (ITT) specifically dealt with economic development planning. Yet, ITT focused its efforts primarily on the industrial sector and specifically on the City of Winnipeg. Limited attention was given to rural municipalities with respect to economic development planning.

As economic development planning issues became prominent, rural communities sought the need to explore other available opportunities. One such opportunity was the Community Futures Program administered through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. This program was concerned specifically with economic development and offered rural communities the opportunity to diversify and expand their local economic bases. Another avenue of opportunity available to rural municipalities was a program known as Healthy Communities. Healthy Communities is set up as a not-for-profit organization which specifically targets areas of health and wellness in communities. The program is administered by a local board comprised of health care representatives who have no direct ties to government. Other opportunities were also explored, but a comprehensive and holistic form of community planning had not been pursued.

In 1988, there was a provincial election in which the Conservative Party of Manitoba was victorious. Under the leadership of Premier Gary Filmon, the Manitoba Government was committed to addressing issues related to rural Manitoba. Responding to these realities, the Government instituted a restructuring scheme in order to streamline its organizational framework. The result was the elimination of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the formation of the Department of Rural Development.

Shortly after its formation, Rural Development established a program committee to address the needs of rural Manitoba. It was identified that existing programs like Community Futures and Healthy Communities often addressed specific aspects of community development, but failed

to address the larger issue of sustainable development. Therefore, what was needed was an umbrella program that would promote a broad-based, holistic and sustainable approach to community development in rural Manitoba. A sub-committee was formed to outline the details of such a program. The result was the creation of Community Choices: A Sustainable Communities Program for Manitoba. The program was instituted in early 1991.

To entice rural municipalities and local government districts to participate in the program a carrot in the form of a funding program was established to encourage communities to form Round Tables. The Town of Deloraine and the Rural Municipality of Winchester was the first Round Table to form in the Province. The grant application for the Del-Win Community Round Table was received by Rural Development on March 18, 1991, and funding was approved June 15, 1991. As of March 17, 1994, there were 58 active Community Round Tables in the Province of Manitoba which included a total of 101 participating municipalities. Since 1991, there has been a total of \$173,750 in Round Table grants issued by the Province.

### **5.0.2 Community Choices Mandate**

In essence, the Manitoba Community Choices Program is a process of grassroots community development emphasizing holistic planning through sustainable development principles and guidelines.<sup>2</sup> It is a program developed by the Manitoba Department of Rural Development intended to support the formation of community Round Tables. Further, local initiatives derived

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<sup>2</sup> **The Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy using a broad-based public consultation process drafted principles and guidelines of sustainable development in Manitoba.**

from community Round Table discussions can help to direct government in providing support for specific actions. On February 25, 1991, Jim Downey, then Rural Development Minister, announced the start of Community Choices: A Sustainable Communities Program in a Manitoba Government News Release, stating:

By taking action today, those living in our rural areas can help determine the future of their hometowns and provide a legacy of economic growth for their children. . . .

The program provides a process through which people representing a broad spectrum of community interests get together in a round table setting to take a realistic look at their community, draw up a plan for its future . . . and develop plans of action.

The program is directed to all Manitoba communities and is guided by the following principles:

- a it supports local initiation, control and implementation of development planning;
- b it seeks community consensus building through an open public process;
- c it supports the transfer of skills and information to community groups;
- d it supports the functioning of elected governmental bodies and their effective interaction with community groups;
- e it supports the functioning of vision planning by communities; and
- f it promotes the integration of economic and environmental concerns.

### **5.0.3 The "Community Choices" Planning Process**

The Community Choices process consists of four components: 1) Community Round Tables, 2) A Round Table Team Building Seminar, 3) Developing A Community Vision, and 4) Implementing the Vision. The intent of this process is for participating communities to take an active approach towards sustainable community planning. Through this bottom-up process, communities can identify opportunities and take greater advantage of Federal and Provincial programs that offer financial assistance in areas of economic development, tourism, recreation, culture, etc..

#### **5.0.3.1 Community Round Tables**

The decision to establish a local Round Table and take advantage of the Community Choices Program must come from local people. The process begins by interested parties contacting active community organizations and individuals who would be willing to participate in a community Round Table. If the response is positive, the process can proceed. If negative, there is no point in continuing. Without the active participation of local people, community Round Tables will not be successful. Given a positive response, the next step is to define the community. It is important to note that the Province encourages a regional perspective because there are social, economic and environmental linkages between towns, villages and surrounding areas.

Once the community has defined its contextual area of interest, a Round Table can be formed. It is suggested that participants of the Round Table be individuals who are the "movers and shakers" in the community, people from specific organizations, i.e. Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc., and concerned citizens. Further, steps should be taken to ensure that the Round Table does not become too large because it may lose its effectiveness. The Department of Rural Development has suggested that the major role of Round Tables should be "to develop a long-term strategy for sustainable development"<sup>3</sup> in community, as defined by the Round Table.

Subsequently, a Round Table chairperson should be chosen, organize for action and can apply to Manitoba Rural Development for a funding grant. The Province has agreed to provide a one time grant to Round Tables. A grant of \$1,000 for municipalities with a population less than 500, \$1,500 between 500 and 1,500 people and \$2,000 for municipalities with a population over 1,500. The Provincial grants must be matched by the community with an additional \$500 per municipality for those joining together to form a Round Table. There is no requirement for the community to match the additional grant.

#### **5.0.3.2 Round Table Team Building Seminar**

As a means to more fully develop the potential of Round Tables, the Department of Rural Development greatly encourages participating communities to take part in a one-and-one-half-day Team Building Seminar. Qualified instructors are available to deliver the seminar to Round

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<sup>3</sup> Manitoba Department of Rural Development. no date. *Community Choices: A guide for the formation and effective use of community round tables*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Government of Manitoba. p. 4.

Tables. The purpose of the Team Building Seminar is to define the role of the Round Table, clarify its relationship to other community groups, deal with group dynamics, meetings and leadership skills, focus on the planning process, understand the visioning process, and develop action plans.

### **5.0.3.3 Developing A Community Vision**

To establish a vision for the future, four criteria should be explored. The first is to identify the concerns, problems and issues present in the community. This will help to get people thinking about their community and begin the process of deriving solutions to identified priorities.

Secondly, it is important for everyone involved to get a clear picture of the community. This is generally achieved through a community profile. Community history, population statistics, an inventory of businesses and services, local resources and future trends comprise a profile of the community at the present time. Information can be provided by Provincial Departments, research, surveys, personal interviews and other relevant sources.

The third criteria should involve a strategic planning component known as a SWOT analysis. From the information gathered from the community profile, a SWOT analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats present or perceived in the community. This information should be as specific as possible because the results of the analysis are key to establish the community vision statement and local sustainable strategies.



Finally, the Round Table is ready to develop its vision statement. Vision statements will be different for every community, but it is important that each vision include a broad description of the present state of the community, what the community would like to be in the future, and a list of objectives in the form of community projects and programs. It may be difficult for the Round Table to reach consensus regarding the community vision. If this is the case, it is critical to keep people interested in the process and not get wrapped up in semantics. The Round Table may wish to hire a facilitator to help them through this process.

#### **5.0.3.4 Implementing The Vision**

The implementation of the vision statement is the most important part of the process. Round Tables do not have legislative authority to enact the means necessary to implement action plans. Therefore, the Round Table will have to inform and motivate those groups with the appropriate mandates to take action on the identified priorities. Round Table representatives should meet with Council(s) and community organizations to provide an understanding of the purpose and methods of the Round Table and the content of the community vision statement. The more people that understand and feel a part of the community vision, the easier it will be to rally support for potential community projects and programs.

Each vision is a statement of local needs. They offer a gauge against which Provincial policies and priorities on rural development can be measured and adjusted. More specifically, they offer each government department and program a local "business plan" in which Provincial

participation can be re-evaluated and become focused on the needs of rural Manitoba.

## **5.1 PHASE ONE: CASE STUDIES**

### **5.1.1 Case One: The Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table<sup>4</sup>**

The Town of Deloraine and the Rural Municipality of Winchester are located along the Canada-U.S. boundary in the south-central portion of the Westman Region of southern Manitoba. The area has a 1991 population of 1,790 and was one of the first Round Tables to form in the Province of Manitoba.

Community representatives from the Town of Deloraine and the Rural Municipality of Winchester joined forces in 1991 to participate in the Province of Manitoba's Community Choices program. As the Round Table materialized it became known as the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table. The grant application for the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table was received by the Manitoba Department of Rural Development on March 18, 1991, and funding was approved June 15, 1991.

In order to gauge the community's attitudes and perceptions regarding the present and

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<sup>4</sup> Information regarding phase one of this case study was provided by Mr. Terry Brown, manager of the Deloraine Regional Office of Manitoba Rural Development, Mr. Lionel Laval, the Del-Win Community Round Table Chairperson, and the Del-Win Round Table. 1993. *Vision Statement and Action Plan Guideline & Working Paper*. Co-Sponsored by the Deloraine Area Economic Development Board (see Appendix D).

future state of the area, a seven part survey was conducted in the spring of 1992 and marked the beginning of the visioning exercise. Notably, the survey involved high school students from Deloraine Collegiate Institute in its design, execution and analysis. The survey was categorized into a general survey, seasoned citizens, youth, business people, outlying areas, professionals and farmers.

With respect to the general survey, almost two-thirds of the 197 respondents suggested that the Deloraine area was underdeveloped compared to surrounding areas while the remaining one-third said development was just right. According to the survey, factors limiting development were:

- lack of citizen support;
- lack of business support;
- too few businesses (no variety);
- cross-border shopping;
- loss of population; and
- poor business attitude.

On the other hand, positive viewpoints included:

- good attitude toward the youth of the community;
- people perceive community services to be excellent;
- government funds are being well allocated; and
- businesses are price competitive.

The survey identified several issues for various levels of government to address:

- Local: reduce taxes; support new business; and create jobs;
- Provincial: support rural communities; provide funding; and create jobs;

- Federal: provide funding; cut the GST; and support Westerners.

In addition to these highlights, the remaining sectoral surveys echoed these sentiments and provided a few more. For example, the area's seasoned citizens indicated that transportation and public services were adequate but suggested that independent living with home health care was desirable. Youth favoured improved shopping, education, entertainment and employment opportunities.

Local businesses specified the attraction of new business and industry, an intensive marketing campaign for existing businesses and attract more tourists to the area. Business courses and seminars focusing on computers, accounting and product pricing, promotion and distribution would be welcomed assets.

Non-farm rural residents desired improvements in product selection, business attitudes, prices and accommodations. On the other hand, professionals in the area indicated that the rural lifestyle and recreational and service amenities were the main reasons for living in the Deloraine area.

Finally, farmers enjoyed the pride and harmony people have in their community and the variety of clubs and organizations available. In the area of improvement, farmers indicated that housing, especially seniors housing, needed to be more available. Also, the availability of automobile and farm machinery parts and furniture and appliances related businesses were lacking

or non-existent. In order to maintain a thriving and growing community the farm sector suggested that mechanisms should be in place to assist young farmers, work to improve commodity prices and reform the present tax system.

The Round Table also conducted two brainstorming sessions which generated over seventy ideas or suggestions to build on community strengths or neutralize its weaknesses. The visioning exercise results were compiled into a vision statement and eight action plans. In order of priority the action plans comprise:

- 1 maintain and diversify recreation, tourism and hospitality opportunities for Deloraine and area;
- 2 promote Deloraine's history of ethnic cooperation and a friendly caring community;
- 3 diversify and promote Deloraine's health and education facilities for southwestern Manitoba;
- 4 maintain and promote the physical setting of Deloraine and area;
- 5 develop a diversified local economy for Deloraine and area;
- 6 maintain and enhance the quality of life in Deloraine and area;
- 7 develop and maintain agricultural opportunities in the area; and
- 8 maintain a manageable growth for Deloraine and area.

On January 5, 1994, the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table sponsored a one day community-building workshop directed and facilitated by consultant Bill Finley Punnett of Amherst, Nova Scotia. In attendance were the R.M. of Winchester council, mayor of the Town of Deloraine, students from the Deloraine high school, members of various local organizations

and interested citizens. The workshop focused on the need for a community coordinator to manage volunteer efforts within the community, to stop the flow of youth, business, money, etc. out of the community, promote tourism and hospitality and develop ways to retain the youth in the area.

Following the completion of the visioning exercise, the contents of the report were distributed to all community organizations. Since that time, a few of the ideas expressed by the Del-Win Community Round Table have been implemented. For example, one idea identified through the Round Table process resulted in the formation of a new local festival celebrating the area's Belgian heritage. Another idea addressed the need for new recreational opportunities which involve the construction of walking trails and a downtown park. As well, the Deloraine Area Economic Development Board has taken actions on a number of business opportunities identified in the Round Table report. The establishment of a mini-mall in support of new business ventures is in the works.

The implementation of these and hopefully other opportunities has created an air of success around the work of the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table. Reasons for this success has been attributed to the leadership of community members and organizations involved in the planning process undertaken by the Round Table, the enthusiastic involvement of the community's youth, and people's willingness to change.

### 5.1.2 Case Two: The Roblin Community Round Table<sup>5</sup>

The Town of Roblin, the Rural Municipality of Shell River and the Local Government District of Park are located along the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border in the south-western portion of the Parkland West Region of southern Manitoba. The area has a 1991 population of 4,333.

The Roblin Community Round Table (RCRT) was initiated by Roblin Economic Development, a committee of volunteers funded by the Town of Roblin and the R.M. of Shell River. Planning commenced in June, 1991, and a grant application was filed with the Manitoba Department of Rural Development later that same year. Grant funding was received from the Province in April, 1992, at which time the RCRT began operations.

To begin, the RCRT sent letters to every organization and interest group in the community inviting them to participate in the round table by sending at least one representative to the initial meeting. Organizers were somewhat surprised when 40 people arrived for the first meeting (they were expecting only about 20 people), some of whom were representing more than one organization. At this initial meeting a chairperson and a facilitator to lead the team building seminar were selected.

At the team building seminar the RCRT members had to first deal with negative attitudes

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<sup>5</sup> Information regarding phase one of the Roblin case study was provided by Mr. Lloyd Pierce, of the Roblin Economic Development Office and chairman of the Roblin Community Round Table, and The Roblin Round Table. no date. *Roblin Community Round Table Handbook*. Roblin Economic Development (see Appendix II).

associated with past failures of similar processes. Once this hurdle was overcome, constructive discussions began. The RCRT identified their community as including the Town of Roblin as well as the surrounding municipalities and made certain to have representation from area councils on their team.

The next step in the process was to identify the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The round table discovered that many of the perceived threats and weaknesses provided opportunities which had never been considered in the past.

A number of action plans encompassing six action categories were derived from the SWOT analysis. In no particular order they comprise:

#### Research

- 1 tourism opportunities;
- 2 a study to discover existing skills of present area population and the needed skills in the next 10 years;
- 3 economic development;
- 4 primary value-added products and opportunities; and
- 5 investigate four seasons resort at the Lake of the Prairies.

#### Economic Development

- 1 full-time employee responsible for the promotion of business development and management;
- 2 develop business skills courses at Goose Lake High School;



- 3 lobby government and government departments for timely economic development for Roblin;
- 4 encourage government investment in Roblin and area; and
- 5 attract seminars - business related, self-improvement, agriculture, waste management, etc..

#### Tourism and Recreation

- 1 multipurpose facility in the Town of Roblin;
- 2 promote eco-tourism in the immediate area;
- 3 bed and breakfast system; and
- 4 develop a festival to bring people into the area.

#### Communication

- 1 complete the Town of Roblin's strategic plan;
- 2 increase communication at all levels of interaction in order to obtain a better informed and more open-minded community; and
- 3 develop a media communication strategy.

#### Waste Management

- 1 development of a recycling and waste management program.

#### Health Care

- 1 develop specialized medical care. For example become the acupuncture centre of Canada.

Throughout the round table process one thing was obvious to the round table committee, the absence of the community's youth. Discussions with several students revealed that they stayed away because they did not feel their input would be considered and there was a perception among the youth that the older generation did not care about them or their future. The RCRT

ensured the students that this was not the case by explaining that the youth are, in fact, the future of the community. Therefore, their input was vitally important because they knew better than the committee what they wanted to see accomplished.

Based on these discussions the RCRT contacted the local high school to obtain authorization to conduct round table workshops with the students. The response was overwhelming and the students had some valuable insight into the condition of the community and offered some excellent recommendations. Roblin was the first community in Manitoba to conduct round table workshops in school and as a result prompted a CBC Radio interview. In the period since, several towns have followed Roblin's example.

The students at Goose Lake High School identified seven areas of action following their own SWOT analysis. They include:

- 1 promote and improve a thriving business community;
- 2 improve recreation opportunities and services;
- 3 improve hospital services;
- 4 revive the "Moonshine Daze" festival;
- 5 improve education;
- 6 promote town beautification; and
- 7 promote agricultural diversity and opportunities.

While many of the issues raised in the Roblin Community Round Table (RCRT) were also

raised in the Goose Lake High School Round Table (GLHSRT), there were some marked differences. First, the GLHSRT identified seniors as a weakness and a threat to the community due to their perception that a disproportionate amount of the community's resources are going to the senior population. Second, with respect to recreation and tourism, the RCRT focused on ideas that would satisfy the needs of outsiders while the GLHSRT focused more on meeting the needs of the people who currently reside in the community. Third, similar viewpoints were directed towards the area of economic development.

Presently, the RCRT is reviewing its action plans to determine if there is a need to change any goals or action plans.

During my discussions with the chairman of the RCRT, he noted, in retrospect, if he could start the round table process over he would do one thing differently. That being, before formally making the round table public he would make sure that the majority of the population was aware of the round table's plans ahead of time by utilizing the local "grapevine" which is still the best way to spread news in Roblin.

## **5.2 PHASE TWO: A CRITIQUE OF THE CASES**

A critique of the preceding case studies will demonstrate the theoretical predispositions

of critical planning theory. Each case study will be critiqued with respect to a particular set of performance criteria consistent with the operational definitions of the eight critical planning criteria profiled in Chapter Four. In essence, the extent to which critical planning theory is being utilized in the case material will be investigated.

To summarize, Chapter Four identified eight critical community planning principles which comprise:

**1        communicative competence**

- refers to mutual and rational understanding based on Habermas's theory of communicative competence which presupposes background consensus on the basis of four validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, legitimacy and sincerity.

**2        fact and value**

- critical planning theory suggests that planners should not totally discount the knowledge producing capacities of empirical science but must be aware of its limitations and include value-laden argumentative structures which allow for the continued pursuit of truth.

**3        innovation and entrepreneurship**

- means doing something different rather than doing better what is already being done.

**4        a systems approach**

- The linking of social, economic and environmental concerns by identifying the critical interrelationships between systems of use and systems of people.

**5 choice**

- attempt to maximize choice by planning and building communities which meet the requirements of work, affordability, education, residency, and ecologically-functional design.

**6 leadership**

- supports the idea that planners, in their relations with communities, should utilize a number of leadership styles at different stages of the planning process.

**7 self-reliance**

- a deregulated organizing phenomenon which transfers decision-making power to those organizations and/or people who are directly involved. Fundamentally, it supports the notion to produce what you need locally rather than through external sources.

**8 future-oriented scenarios**

- an exercise used to explore alternative strategies using future-oriented visioning techniques.

**5.2.1 Case One: The Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table**

The Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table utilized three main strategies for gathering and disseminating information. The first was the seven part public opinion survey. This was used to gauge the community's attitudes and perceptions regarding the present and future state of the area. The second comprised two brainstorming or visioning sessions that generated action plans which complemented the area's strengths and helped to neutralize its

weaknesses. Finally, a one day community-building workshop directed and facilitated by an outside consultant was used to motivate and give positive reinforcement to the community planning efforts underway in the Deloraine and Winchester area.

A community planning exercise of this scope requires the active involvement of a wide variety of stakeholders who can communicate effectively. Obviously, they are not strictly adhering to Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative competence. However, the people of the Deloraine-Winchester area did effectively communicate a set of goals, priorities and action plans which were mutually satisfactory to most participants.

With respect to the fact and value criteria, the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table did employ value considerations, particularly in the public opinion survey and visioning exercises, but I do not believe the round table cross referenced that value-laden data with empirical data such as a community profile. A balance of fact and personal bias could better reflect the community's pragmatic needs.

I could not identify proposed strategies that would indicate satisfactory innovative and entrepreneurial approaches. In terms of community planning, the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table has forwarded action plans which reflect "Typology One" community economic planning characteristics. These strategies have been duplicated time and again, often with detrimental results to the local community.

In light of the proposed action plans, the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table automatically discounted using a systems approach. However, the round table vision statement did mention the intention to "recognize principles of sustainable development through manageable growth." Yet, it is uncertain whether or not the principles of sustainable development are fully understood by the responsible leaders of Deloraine and the surrounding area. Consequently, there is a need to open the lines of communication between the gatekeepers of knowledge and those who can utilize that knowledge to achieve practical ends.

In principal, I believe that the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table generated a wide variety of planning choices which ultimately resulted in a diverse set of priorities and action plans. I believe that each stage of the Deloraine-Winchester community planning process gave participants the opportunity to document their views which added to the growing pool of alternatives.

Leadership appears to have made a difference, especially in terms of organization and transferring visions into reality. In my communication with Mr. Laval, he noted that strong leadership demonstrated by the round table members was essential to first access the "Community Choices" program and second to motivate local community groups to become involved in the planning process undertaken by the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table.

Initially, the organizing principles put forward by the "Community Choices" planning process were intended as a starting point for communities which had difficulties directing the

planning process themselves. In the case of the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table, the strong leadership presence transformed those general guidelines into a planning process which addressed the area's particular style and needs. Therefore, in my opinion the Del-Win Community Round Table exhibited a satisfactory degree of self-reliance.

Visioning was definitely a major factor in the Deloraine-Winchester community planning process. It gave people the freedom to be creative and imaginative. Yet, at the same time incorporated the particular needs of seven distinct but interrelated socio-economic groups.

### **5.2.2 Case Two: The Roblin Community Round Table**

The Roblin Community Round Table adhered closely to the "Community Choices" planning process. Communication networks were reasonable but were strained in the beginning because the Round Table committee had to overcome many apathetic attitudes towards the community planning process. In addition, it came to the attention of the Round Table committee that there were no young people included in the round table strategy. However, the Roblin Community Round Table did an admirable job of "backpeddling" to include the youth of the community by setting up the Goose Lake High School Round Table. Consequently, the communicative competence of the Roblin Community Round Table was less than satisfactory. The Round Table chairperson indicated that in retrospect he would have utilized a wider range of communication approaches, primarily in the area of informal networks.



The Roblin Community Round Table used both fact and value considerations well. A community profile was used to provide solid background information about the community. On the basis of the community profile several brainstorming sessions were used to elucidate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the community.

The formation of the Goose Lake High School Round Table was an innovative approach to including a very important sector of the Roblin community. In fact, Roblin was the first community in Manitoba to specifically integrate round table workshops in the classroom. The idea was innovative enough for other communities to adopt Roblin's example.

A systems view not really promoted in the Roblin's vision statement and action plans. Instead, the Roblin Community Round Table used a more compartmentalized and conventional strategic planning approach.

As with the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table, it was evident that the Roblin Community Round Table derived action plans based on a multitude of choices made by the Round Table participants.

The demands bestowed upon the leaders of the Roblin Community Round Table were evident from the beginning of the community planning process. The Round Table enlisted the assistance of a team-building seminar to overcome the negative attitudes associated with past community planning efforts. It took strong leadership on the part of the Round Table committee

to assemble individual organizations which contained differing and conflicting mandates and establish a community vision with a common set of goals in mind.

The Roblin Community Round Table did not really utilize a self-reliant approach. Instead, They adhered to the formalized strategies outlined by the "Community Choices" planning process.

Similar to the Deloraine-Winchester Round Table, the Roblin Community Round Table used visioning to imagine a community that its citizens would aspire to live, work and recreate.

## CONCLUSION

Communication is the cornerstone of critical theory. Since much of community planning is argumentative, effective communication becomes paramount when a community is planning its future. Consequently, I concur with Forester's assertion that:

A critical theory of planning helps us to understand what planners do as attention-shaping, communicative action rather than as instrumental action, as means to particular ends.<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion, the Manitoba Community Choices Program introduces a comprehensive planning process. A round table format brings together a variety of interests into an atmosphere of potentially open and honest communication. The program also provides the option for participating communities to take part in a team-building seminar. Qualified instructors provide helpful information relating to group dynamics, leadership skills, the round table process, and how to develop action plans. However, the team-building seminar is not a required component of the "Community Choices" program. Therefore, if a community round table chooses not to participate in the team-building seminar they may forego the opportunity to gain important knowledge critical to an effective community planning exercise. Consequently, the "Community Choices" program should make the team-building seminar a mandatory part of the program because I believe the benefits of such an exercise should not be omitted from the community planning process.

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<sup>1</sup> Forester. 1989. p. 138.

The Deloraine-Winchester and Roblin case studies reflect a common theme in community economic planning. That being, they fail to sufficiently link community planning theory and practice because they focus upon one or two aspects of the community planning process. To alleviate the weaknesses of contemporary community planning approaches, this thesis incorporated the theoretical constructs of critical theory to formulate an eight step framework for community economic planning. When this framework was juxtaposed with the two case studies garnered from the Manitoba Community Choices Program, the inconsistencies became readily apparent.

To satisfy the absent characteristics of the eight critical principles, the Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table could have initially participated in the team-building seminar. Issues could have been addressed and potential problems could have been avoided through constructive communicative discourse. The importance of using a community profile to provide factual background information could have been used to temper personal opinions. The team-building seminar could also include aspects of innovation, entrepreneurship and a systems approach to community economic planning.

On the other hand, the Roblin Community Round Table did participate in the team-building seminar. Although the seminar helped to overcome some negative attitudes associated with past community planning failures, I believe the case study demonstrated a breakdown in communication and self-organization. This can likely be attributed to the internal tensions persistent within the community and not particularly with the

"Community Choices" program. However, avenues were available for the members of the Roblin Community Round Table to access. They could have revisited another team-building seminar to address the lingering issues which were causing a rift in the community planning process.

Although the Manitoba Community Choices Program promotes a broad-based, holistic and sustainable approach to community planning, it appears that either participating communities do not fully understand the principles involved with a sustainable approach or the Program does not take responsibility to ensure that communities become informed about alternative community planning options. Yet, there is a fine line between providing information and professional advice and dictating how a community should plan for its future. The chances for resentment are possible, but the careful communication of purpose and intent on the part of a higher authority should significantly reduce the potential for negative community repercussions.

Overall, this thesis attempted to address the communication issue present in community economic planning by outlining a critical theory framework which could be used to evaluate a community's readiness to participate in a formal community planning process. Since much of community planning involves the facilitation of mutual understanding, effective communication becomes paramount when a community is planning its future.

This thesis does not propose a new formal community planning model geared towards the achievement of a particular end but rather introduces an informal framework which may help communities to build a greater understanding of themselves and ultimately achieve a degree of planning which meets the needs of all.

In essence, good community economic planning involves a critical epistemology which effectively bridges community planning theory and practice. In my opinion, it provides a common sense strategy which gives all participants a sense of accountability to each other and to the community planning process.

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**APPENDIX I**

The Deloraine-Winchester Community Round Table  
Vision Statement and Action Plan

Deloraine Local

**R**ound Table

# VISION STATEMENT

AND

# ACTION PLAN

*Co-Sponsored  
by the*



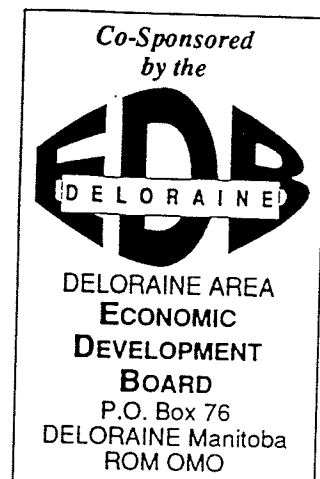
DELORAINÉ AREA  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
BOARD

P.O. Box 76  
DELORAINÉ Manitoba  
R0M 0M0

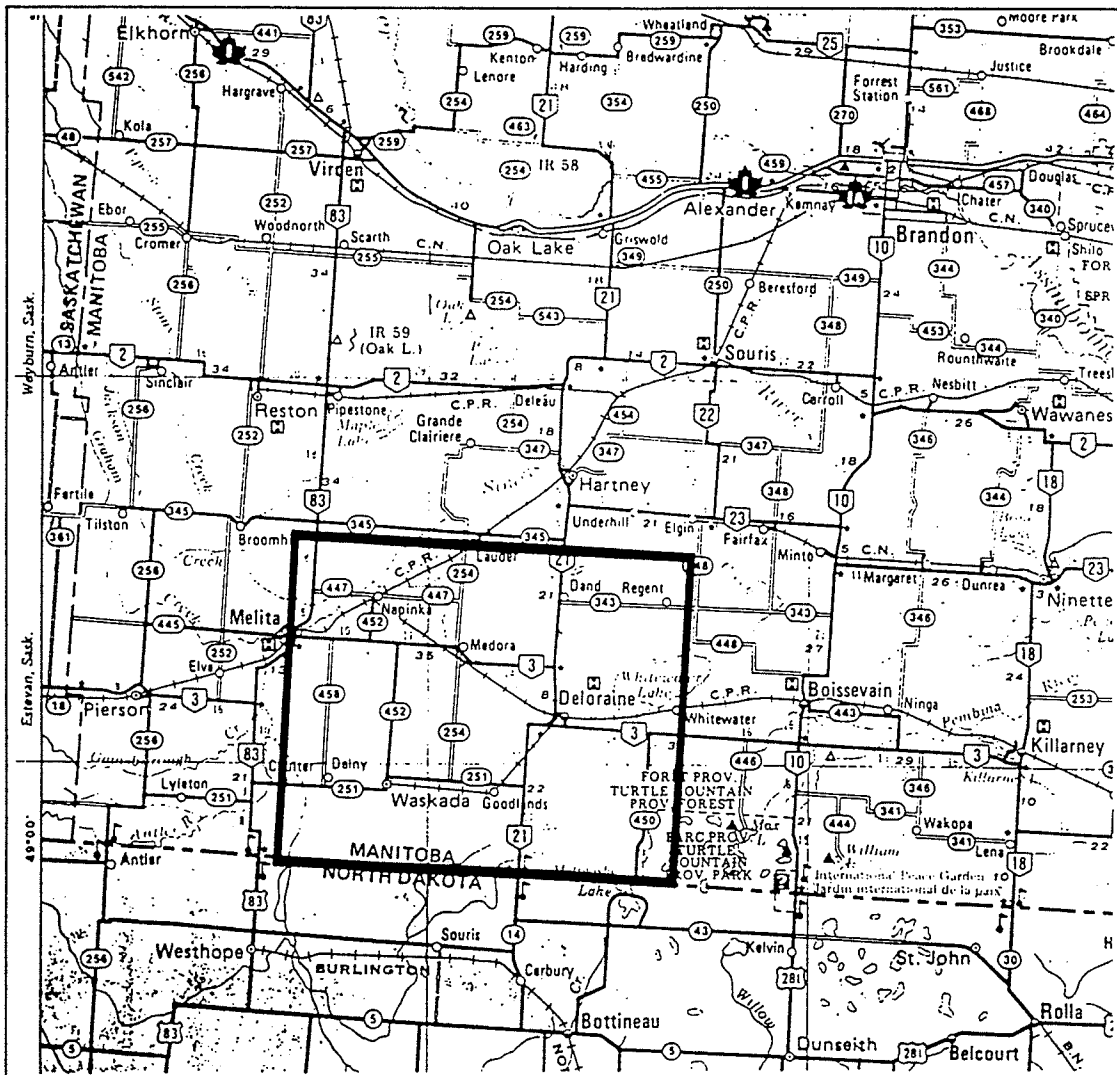
Deloraine Local  
**R**ound Table

# VISION STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Guideline & Working Paper  
— Fall 1993 —



## Local Orientation



The area outlined above includes . . .

	AREA Km <sup>2</sup>	POPULATION 1986 Census		POPULATION 1991	
Town of Deloraine	2.55	1,134	} 48% Urban	1,130	} 50% Urban
Village of Waskada	0.70	349		310	
RM of Brenda	744.81	906	} 52% Rural	750	} 50% Rural
RM of Winchester	704.45	718		660	
Total	1,452.51	3,107		2,850	





Deloraine Local

# Round Table

## VISION STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

### Table of Contents

Community STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES .. Pages 2, 3



SECTORS FOR DEVELOPMENT ..... Page 4



Key Players ..... Page 5

Brainstorm Results: Ideas for Development ..... Pages 6, 7



VISION PLAN — VISION STATEMENT ..... Page 8

Summary of Goals ..... Page 9

Eight Goals ..... Pages 10 - 13



PRIORITIES & ACTION PLANS ..... Pages 14 -23



Appendix: Newspaper Reports on the 1992 Survey ..... Pages 24 - 28

Deloraine Local

# Round Table

## STRENGTHS

*(In Random Order)*

- ♥ High Level of Education.
- ♥ People Like to Live Here.
- ♥ Active and Involved Citizens.
- ♥ Times and Star.
- ♥ Historical Sites.
- ♡ Schools.
- ♥ Service Clubs.
- ♥ Town Services:  
    Water, RCMP, etc.
- ♥ Churches.
- ♥ Health Facilities.
- ♡ Large Amount of Money  
    in community  
    (wealthy community).

- ♥ Physical Setting:  
    Turtle Mountain  
    Whitewater Lake  
    Appearance of Town  
    Prairie Landscape.
- ♥ Recreational Facilities:  
    Skiing  
    Boating  
    Festival  
    Hunting.
- ♡ Ethnic Diversity.
- ♥ Proximity to U.S.A.
- ♥ Youth Want to Stay  
    in community.

♡ Denotes ideas brought forward during the January 28/93 meeting

# WEAKNESSES

*(In Random Order)*

- ♠ Cross-border Shopping.
- ♠ Lack of Citizen Support.
- ♠ Lack of Community Director.
- ♠ Lack of Business Development.
- ♠ Population Decline.
- ♠ Lack of Job Opportunities.
- ♠ Poor Business Attitude.
- ♠ Lack of Farm Machinery Service.

Deloraine Local  
Round Table

# SECTORS

From the Strengths and Weaknesses  
the Deloraine Local Round Table (DLRT) indentified

## SIX MAJOR AREAS

FOR

DEVELOPMENT

Culture  
& Heritage

Physical  
Setting

Health  
& Education

Business

Recreation  
& Tourism

Agri-Business

# PLAYERS

The DLRT then indentified  
**POSSIBLE KEY PLAYERS**

for each area, as shown below:

## **Culture & Heritage**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
School Divisions.  
Service Clubs.  
MLAs and MPs.  
Boundary Commission Trail.  
Prairie Skills Inc.  
WEDA (Westman Economic  
Development Association).

## **Physical Setting**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
WEDA.  
Horticultural Groups.

## **Health & Education**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
School Divisions.  
Service Clubs.  
MLAs and MPs.  
SW Health District.  
Seniors Centre.

## **Business**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
WEDA.  
Economic Development Board.  
Chamber of Commerce.  
Town of Deloraine.

## **Recreation & Tourism**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
School Divisions.  
Service Clubs.  
MLAs and MPs.  
Seniors Centre.  
WEDA.  
Boundary Commission Trail.

## **Agri-Business**

Local and Provincial Governments.  
Conservation District.  
WEDA.  
Town of Deloraine.  
Chamber of Commerce.  
Economic Development Board.

# BRAINSTORM

Once the DLRT had established its strengths and weaknesses, 6 broad program areas and possible cooperating organizations, a "brain-storming session" was held. This session generated

## OVER 70 SUGGESTIONS

to help build on the community's strengths and eliminate or "neutralize" its weaknesses.

### Business

1. Large volume hardware store (well stocked).
2. Millionaires club for students  
(provide entrepreneurial training).
3. Glass blowing and recycling.
4. Belgian cookie factory.
5. Deloraine "symbol" (Belgian cookie).
6. Promote town for elderly people  
(e.g. Toronto).
- 7 Small or large brewery: wine, chokecherry.
8. Consignment craft shop.
9. National promotion of local crafts,  
arts, people.
10. More bed-and-breakfasts.
11. Attract foreign dollars (e.g. English  
lessons for Japanese; golf tours).
12. Re-establish old coal mines.
13. Re-establish old brick mines.
14. Look for ceramic clay.
15. Shoe store (sell and repair).
16. Local veterinarian.
17. Engineering firm.
18. Cutting fieldstone for veneer.
19. Jewellery factory.
20. Natural gas production.
21. Recycling product centre.

22. Promote local Credit Union.
23. Encourage Credit Union development.
24. Dog breeders.
25. Investment club.
26. Flying training school.

### Health & Education

1. Community college.
2. Private school.
3. Interactive TV.
4. Video production studio.
5. Charter bus corporation.
6. Fine arts school.
7. Specialized hospital equipment.
8. Psychiatric hospital.

### Agri-Business

1. Special farm day in conjunction with  
local races.
2. Community enticement for farm dealership.

*Continued Next Page . . .*

**Ideas and Suggestions**  
brought forward in a random "free-for-all"  
at a dinner meeting of interested citizens  
on January 28, 1993.

3. Specialized forest products.
4. Tree nursery.
5. Heating devices (e.g. wood pellets; wheat).
6. Specialized crops processing plants.
7. Christmas tree production.
8. Demonstration zero-till farm.
9. Commercial growing and canning of wild fruit.
10. Horse training and riding clinics.
11. Colt feedlot business.

### **Culture & Heritage**

1. Cultural restaurant (e.g. Belgian).
2. Pioneer Days at Old Deloraine.
3. Museum.
4. Recording pioneer stories.
5. Invite Stuart McLean to write about Deloraine.
6. Archeological dig for amateurs.

### **Recreation & Tourism**

1. Holiday Inn (convention hotel).
2. Expanded use of recreational facilities.
3. "Be a Canadian for a Day" Festival (for U.S. citizens).
4. Skidoo trail from U.S. to Delroaine.
5. RV weekend.

6. Hunting club (cooperative).
7. Deloraine walking trail.
8. Recreation director.
9. Community winter carnival (spirit week).
10. Theme festival (Belgium days).
11. Open-air theatre.
12. Rock or country music festival.
13. Line dancing.
14. Canoe route (re: Marg Whetter) and in Turtle Mountain.
15. Allow horses to ride through town (e.g. routes, hitching posts).
16. Allow skidoos to ride in town so that U.S. citizens may ride to town for meals, etc.
17. Zoo.
18. High school hockey team.
19. Black-powder shoot.

### **Physical Setting**

1. Moose observation tower.
2. Ski and/or toboggan hill.
3. Cross-country ski trails.
4. Bird-watching society and observation towers, etc.
5. Regional tourism trail.

Deloraine Local

**R**ound Table

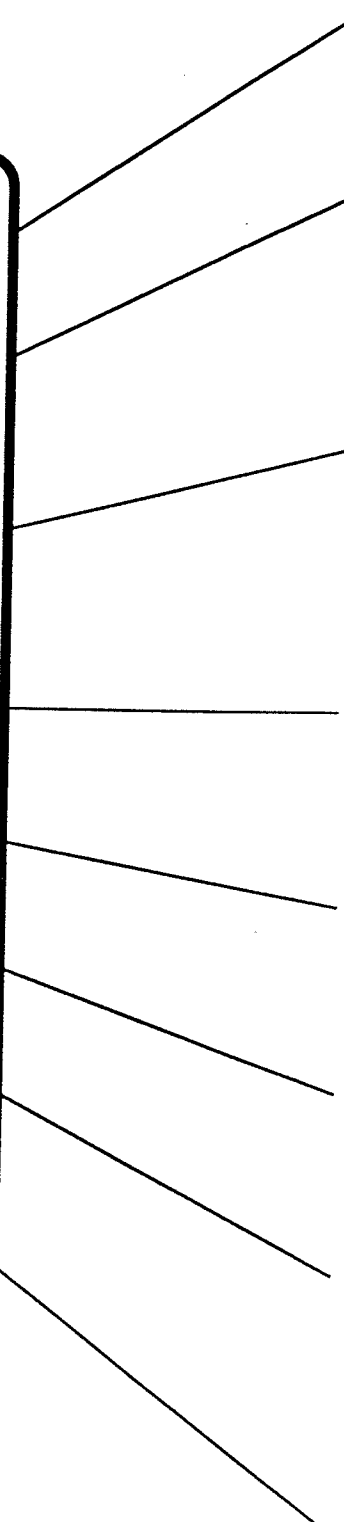
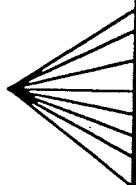
# VISION

## **VISION STATEMENT**

*DEVELOP a diversified  
local economy  
based on a history  
of ethnic cooperation  
in an inviting  
prairie setting . . .*

*RECOGNIZE  
the principles of  
sustainable development  
through  
manageable growth . . .*

*UTILIZE a  
unified community spirit  
to enhance the future  
of a friendly,  
caring community.*





The community surveys  
— in capsule form — suggested clear  
**TARGETS FOR ACTION.**

## GOALS

- ① Develop a diversified local economy for Deloraine and area.
- ② Promote Deloraine's history of ethnic cooperation and a friendly caring community.
- ③ Diversify and promote Deloraine's health and education facilities for southwestern Manitoba.
- ④ Maintain a manageable growth for Deloraine and area.
- ⑤ Maintain and promote the physical setting of Deloraine and area.
- ⑥ Maintain and enhance the quality of life in Deloraine and area.
- ⑦ Maintain and diversify recreation, tourism and hospitality opportunities for Deloraine and area.
- ⑧ Develop and maintain agricultural opportunities in the area.

# GOAL 1

Develop a diversified local economy for Deloraine and area.

## Objective A



Identify the opportunity for new retail businesses to locate in the region.

### KEY IDEAS:

Large volume hardware store.  
Brewery (beer;  
native berries; etc.)  
Consignment craft sale; arts.  
Shoe store.  
Local veterinarian.

Jewelry factory.  
Flying training school.  
Cutting fieldstone for veneer.  
Investment club.  
Natural gas distribution.  
Engineering firm.  
Video production studio.

## Objective B



Expand existing retail and service sectors of the local economy.

### KEY IDEAS:

Develop a day course on  
"How to be a better host".

# GOAL 2

Promote Deloraine's history of ethnic cooperation and a friendly caring community.

## Objective A



Encourage promotion and development of cultural and heritage events and sites.

### KEY IDEAS:

Pioneer Days at Old Deloraine.  
Develop Boundary  
Commission site.  
Black powder shoot.  
Re-establish old brick factory.

Develop a museum  
and archives.  
Archeological dig.  
Interpretive centre for  
heritage sites (coal mines,  
Indian burial grounds).

## Objective B



Market Deloraine and area's ethnic diversity.

### KEY IDEAS:

Deloraine symbol  
(Belgian Cookie).

Invite author to record history  
(e.g. Stuart McLean).

## Objective C



Develop cultural/heritage businesses.

### KEY IDEAS:

Cultural restaurant.  
Belgian Festival, Belgian  
bowling.

# GOAL 3

Diversify and promote Deloraine's health and education facilities for southwestern Manitoba.

## Objective A



Reinforce and expand the role of education through increased awareness.

### KEY IDEAS:

Promote the Prairie Skills Centre.

## Objective B



Enhance and expand the training facilities in our community.

### KEY IDEAS:

Fine arts school.  
Develop an educational wing of Brandon University and/or Assiniboine Community College.

Develop a private school.  
Support the maintenance and expansion of the Antler River School Division for Deloraine and area.

## Objective C



Maintain and diversify Deloraine's health facilities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Support the maintenance and expansion of health care

services in the South West Health District.

# GOAL 4

Maintain a manageable growth for Deloraine and area.

## Objective A



Encourage population to grow slowly over time.

### KEY IDEAS:

Provide appropriate numbers of residential lots and business locations.  
Invite new residents to locate in

the community from other areas (e.g. other provinces or even other countries).  
Promote town for elderly people (e.g. from Toronto).

# GOAL 5

Maintain and promote the physical setting of Deloraine and area.

## Objective A



Develop new and innovative ways of enjoying the physical setting.

### KEY IDEAS:

Develop a moose observation tower.  
Develop snow and toboggan hill.  
Cross-country ski trails.

Bird watching society and observation towers, etc.  
Regional tourism trails.  
Develop a self-guiding trail of the entire area.

## Objective B



Promote Deloraine and area's physical setting.

### KEY IDEAS:

Develop a brochure for marketing.

# GOAL 6

Maintain and enhance the quality of life in Deloraine and area.

## Objective A



Develop affordable housing opportunities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Work with local service clubs to offer a town apartment building.

## Objective B



Maintain and develop Deloraine's "Welcoming Committee".

### KEY IDEAS:

Maintain Welcome Wagon.  
Publish pictures of new residents in the paper.

## Objective C



Enhance Deloraine's downtown area.

### KEY IDEAS:

Work with Chamber of Commerce, Town and Rural Development to continue to develop downtown area.

# GOAL 7

Maintain and diversify recreation, tourism and hospitality opportunities for Deloraine and area.

## Objective A



Create a local festival.

### KEY IDEAS:

"Be a Canadian for a Day"  
Festival (for U.S.  
citizens).

Community winter carnival.

Belgium theme festival.  
Country or rock festival.  
Promote International  
Winter Games.

## Objective B



Maintain and develop new recreational and tourism opportunities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Skidoo trail from U.S.  
to Deloraine.

Walking trail.

Canoe route (re: Marg Whetter)  
and in Turtle Mountain.

Allow horses to ride through  
town with route

and hitching posts.  
Hire a community coordinator.  
Hunters' cooperative.  
Promote further use  
of fair grounds.  
Promote high school  
hockey team.

## Objective C



Maintain and create new tourism facilities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Convention hotel.

RV weekend.  
Zoo or petting farm.

# GOAL 8

Develop and maintain agricultural opportunities in the area.

## Objective A



Create new business opportunities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Specialized forest products.

Tree nursery.

Community enticement  
for farm dealership;.

Heating devices from

specialized crops (e.g.  
wood pellets; alfalfa)  
Specialized crop  
processing plant.  
Commercial canning  
of wild fruit.

## Objective B



Maintain and develop existing opportunities.

### KEY IDEAS:

Special farm day in conjunction  
with local races.

Demonstration zero-till farm.  
Horse training and  
riding clinics.

# Deloraine Local Round Table

The goals identified were prioritized according to the response sheets after the community was surveyed on the Goals and Vision Statement.

A work plan was prepared for each goal. Each work plan deals with short and long term tasks which must be undertaken in

## OBJECTIVES

Create a local festival.



## PRIORITY

1

Maintain and diversity recreation, tourism and hospitality opportunities for Deloraine and area.

Maintain and develop new recreational and tourism opportunities.



## PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

Maintain and create new tourism facilities.



order to reach the stated goals. Actions are currently underway on some of the goals.

The goals identified will require the cooperation and energies of the whole community to be achieved. We recognize the past efforts of community leaders and look for continued guidance from these individuals

to chart our growth into the 21st Century.

Each work plan has been developed in such a manner that

- The objectives are clear;
- The key players are identified;
- Tasks are prioritized; and
- Time frames are established.



PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
1. Organize local festival committee.	Apr 1993	Elks Lions Chamber of Commerce
2. Provide organizational committee with support from community stakeholders.	1993 '94	RM of Winchester Deloraine Community Club Deloraine Horticultural Society Medora 4-H
3. Host Lukenfest.	July 1994	Deloraine 4-H Lionelles Deloraine Student Council
4. Promote international winter games incorporating theme "Be a Canadian for a Day".	Ongoing	Catholic Womens League

1. Lobby municipal councils to employ a Community Coordinator.	Immediately	
2. Establish a Hunters' Cooperative.	1995	Prairie Skills DCI Student Council Chamber of Commerce RM of Winchester
3. Establish a Walking Trail.	1995	Medora 4-H — Lionelles Agricultural Society Catholic Womens League
4. Establish a Skidoo Trail from U.S. to Deloraine including access route to services (obtain input from Goodlands Winter Sports Club).	1994-95	Deloraine 4-H Lions Legion

1. Promote/establish (Hainsworth) petting farm.	1994	Deloraine Ag. Society — Elks Chamber of Commerce — Lions Deloraine Horticultural Society RM of Winchester
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OBJECTIVES

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Encourage promotion  
and development of cultural  
and heritage events and sites.



PRIORITY

2

Promote Deloraine's  
history of ethnic  
cooperation and a  
friendly caring community.

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Market Deloraine and area's  
ethnic diversity.



PRIORITIES  
AND  
ACTION PLANS

---

Develop cultural,  
heritage businesses.





⊙	PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
⊙	1. Examine feasibility of revitalizing lost activities: e.g. black-powder shoot; coal mines; old brick factory.	1994/95	Chamber of Commerce RM of Winchester Medora 4-H
⊙	2. Examine feasibility of establishing/re-establishing historical sites/potential tourist attractions: e.g. Boundary Commission Trail; Indian burial tree; home site of Chief Sitting Eagle.	1995/97	Deloraine Horticultural Society Lionelles Catholic Womens League Prairie Skills DCI Student Council Deloraine Womens Institute Lions — Legion Auxiliary Conservation District Boundary Commission Trail Association.
⊙	3. Organize Pioneer Days at "Old Deloraine" in conjunction with Boundary Commission Trail Ride.		
⊙	4. Establish Interpretive Centre at Tourist Information Booth.	1998	
⊙	1. Erect a Deloraine symbol.	1998	RM of Winchester DCI Student Council Chamber of Commerce
⊙	1. Encourage existing restaurant owners to include ethnic dishes as menu items.	Immediately	Deloraine Womens Institute Deloraine Community Club Deloraine Horticultural Society Catholic Womens League

# PRIORITY

## 3

Diversify and promote Deloraine's health and education facilities for southwestern Manitoba.

### OBJECTIVES

Reinforce and expand the role of education through increased awareness.

Enhance and expand the training facilities in our community.

Maintain and diversify Deloraine's health facilities.

# PRIORITY

## 4

Maintain and promote the physical setting of Deloraine and area.

### OBJECTIVES

Develop new and innovative ways of enjoying the physical setting.

Promote Deloraine and area's physical setting

## PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. Support the mandates of the South West Health District and the Antler River School Division boards and the Prairie Skills Inc. board.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Catholic Womens League            Medora 4-H            Deloraine Horticultural Society            Deloraine Community Club            DCI Student Council            Prairie Skills Centre            Deloraine Womens Institute            Lions — Elks            Legion Auxiliary</p>
<p>2. Provide financial support for special projects that are outside existing funding sources.</p>	Ongoing	

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. Develop guided tours of the region as well as a self-guiding trail of the Deloraine area.</p>	<p>1994            Spring/            Summer</p>	<p>Elks            Catholic Womens League            Medora 4-H            Conservation District            Ducks Unlimited            Game &amp; Fish Association            Deloraine Community Club            Deloraine 4-H            DCI Student Council            Legion Auxiliary</p>
<p>2. Promote bird-watching and establishment of observation towers.</p>	<p>Spring            1994</p>	

<p>1. Develop a brochure for marketing.</p>	<p>In            Progress</p>	<p>Conservation District</p>
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# PRIORITY

## 5

Develop a diversified local economy for Deloraine and area.

### OBJECTIVES

Identify the opportunity for new businesses to locate in the region.

Expand existing retail and service sectors of the local economy.

# PRIORITY

## 6

Maintain and enhance the quality of life in Deloraine and area.

### OBJECTIVES

Develop affordable housing opportunities

Maintain and develop Deloraine's "Welcome Wagon".

## PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

Enhance Deloraine's downtown area.

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
1. Refer suggested initiatives to the Economic Development Board.	Immediately	Economic Development Board Chamber of Commerce
2. Organize an annual "motivational" seminar for local businesses.	Ongoing	Chamber of Commerce

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
1. Maintain existing facilities and assess the need on an ongoing basis according to supply and demand.	Ongoing	Town of Deloraine RM of Winchester

1. Maintain "Welcome Wagon".	Ongoing	Lionelles Chamber of Commerce DCI Student Council
2. Publish pictures of new residents in the local paper.	Ongoing	
3. Continue "Celebrations" theme.	Ongoing	
4. Organize "Welcome" to new students in community (e.g. orientation to community; newspaper coverage).	Ongoing	

1. Promote the downtown area for development and beautification.	Ongoing	Chamber of Commerce Town of Deloraine RM of Winchester Lions Rural Development Economic Development Board Deloraine Community Club Deloraine Horticultural Society
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# PRIORITY

7

Develop and maintain agricultural opportunities in the area

## OBJECTIVES

Create new business opportunities.

Maintain and develop existing opportunities.

# PRIORITY

8

Maintain a manageable growth for Deloraine and area.

## OBJECTIVES

Encourage population to grow slowly over time.

## PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLANS

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. Organize a committee of agriculture-community representatives to examine existing and potential opportunities for establishment of agriculture-related business ventures.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>To be determined —</p>
<p>2. Provide the committee with Round Table information and encourage additional solicitation.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p><b><u>STRONGLY RECOMMENDED</u></b> by the Deloraine Local Round Table.</p>

PLAN OF ACTION	Target DATE	PARTICIPANTS
<p>1. If other goals are realized, Goal 8 will naturally occur.</p>		
<p>2. Encourage local governments to beautify the town by cleaning up lots that contain old vacant buildings, etc. and replacing such with playground equipment, play areas, picnic tables, etc. until such areas are used by residents in cooperation with local owners.</p>		<p>Resident property owners Town of Deloraine Province of Manitoba Elks Deloraine Womens Institute Deloraine Community Club Deloraine Horticultural Society Catholic Women's League Deloraine Round Table Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p>3. Invite residents from other immediate communities to Deloraine promoting the town as an ideal retirement and family centre.</p>		

# HOME-GROWN DEVELOPMENT

Rural Development Features reprinted from the DELORAINE TIMES & STAR

## Public survey calls for more development

Most of the 197 respondents to a 1992 survey by the local-area Round Table evidently want change and more development.

\* \* \*

The survey, conducted last year by Deloraine's Round Table, sampled public opinion for the local Economic Development Board (EDB).

The EDB itself was formed in 1989 to stimulate economic activity in four municipalities:

The Town of Deloraine and its surrounding Rural Municipality of Winchester and

The Village of Waskada and its surrounding Rural Municipality of Brenda.

The area has a combined population of about 2,850.

\* \* \*

Almost 90% of the survey respondents said that

they would like to see more development in the community during the next five years.

### UNDERDEVELOPED

Almost two-thirds said that, compared to other centres in the area, ours is underdeveloped. But more than 30% said it was just about right now.

Comparing the Deloraine area with other communities in the province, 72% of the respondents said that this area is underdeveloped while only 19% said they thought it was just about right.

\* \* \*

More than half said it is extremely important to

Diversify the local economy,

Develop existing local industry,

Improve local tourism,

Recapture taxes from government and

Obtain government financial support.

Eighty percent said that it is extremely important to attract new industry into the community.

### SCHOOL INVOLVED

Data tabulated by Round Table members at Deloraine Collegiate Institute (DCI) was reviewed by a small committee of the Deloraine Area Economic Development Board at a breakfast meeting in June. All agreed that the Round Table would need to reconvene to interpret the information and to plan for follow-up reports and activity.

\* \* \*

Comments volunteered by the respondents were especially interesting Round Table members said.

### DO SOMETHING!

"We don't want to see this survey thrown aside with nothing done," Ryan Claeys said about comments on the survey forms.

Duane Edwards, another member of the Round Table, said that neither cross-border shopping nor high prices nor high taxes were as significant in the survey as had been expected. But wider choice among retail offerings in the community was identified as desirable.

### LOCAL INITIATIVE

Edwards also said that the best way to grow appears to be through committed entrepreneurs who start new ventures and hire people who, in turn, create new demands for goods and services and often devise ways of responding to them.

### PART ONE

## General survey favors growth

Tabulation of the Community Surveys has disclosed some interesting data about how we see ourselves and our community.

The first results, compiled from a General Survey that was filled out and returned by 197 respondents, details

What's good about our community and

What should be improved.

From five sector surveys, the Round Table will

formulate plans of action and a vision statement for the future of our community.

\* \* \*

The General Surveys indicate that Deloraine is viewed as underdeveloped.

### NEGATIVE FEATURES

Factors limiting development, according to survey respondents, are:

Lack of citizen support and

Lack of business support.

Among the foremost concerns in the community are:

Too few businesses (lack of variety),

Cross-border shopping,

Loss of population and

Poor business attitude.

### POSITIVE FEATURES

But positive viewpoints in the community were also identified by the respon-

dents:

Good attitude toward the youth of the community.

People perceive community services to be excellent,

Government funds are being well allocated and

Businesses are price-competitive.

### PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

The survey identified several issues for various gov-

*Continued Next Page*



# ● General survey says aim for more growth

*Continued from the Previous Page*

Comments to address:  
 Local: Reduce taxes; Support new business; and Create jobs.  
 Provincial: Support rural communities; Provide funding; and Create jobs.

Adapted from a 1992 series of reports published in the *Deloraine Times and Star* —  
 July 8  
 Sept. 23 & 30  
 Oct. 7, 21 & 28 and  
 Nov. 4 & 18.

Federal: Provide funding; Cut the GST; and Support Westemers.

## LOYALTY

Shopping locally will improve the area, the survey said.

Respondents also said that the Turtle Mountains are the most promising resource for tourism development in the area.

The most promising human resource is our youth, according to the survey respondents.

## Survey Highlights

### WHAT WE HAVE IN ABUNDANCE . . .

- Good Attitude toward youth.
- Community Services are excellent.
- Government Funds are well allocated.
- Businesses are Price-Competitive.

### WHAT WE NEED TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY . . .

- Attract new business.
- Retain youth.
- Attract new Industry.
- Improve employment prospects.
- Improve local tourism potential.

*Some of the findings of the DELORAINÉ AREA ROUND TABLE ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY*

## PART TWO

# Seniors speak up loud and clear

Seniors and students returned 95% of their surveys — the highest rate of return

among all surveyed groups. \* \* \*  
 Of the 50 surveys dis-

tributed to Seniors, 45 were returned.  
 Seniors have a very posi-

tive view about the conditions and facilities in the community.

The concensus of the Seniors is that the power to make community decisions is not shared widely enough by the residents.

\* \* \*

In the specific part of the survey, Seniors said that they have the following to offer the community:

- Friendship . . . 25
- Volunteers . . . 23
- Community club support . . . 11

However, Seniors say that they feel that their skills are often not being utilized.

## HEALTH CARE

Seniors view their health care as:

For example:

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR
Shopping	6	34	2
Parking	9	34	0
Eating places	14	28	1

Seniors also expressed a few concerns.

For example, they rated some community features 'unevenly' (to put it politely):

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR
Sales people (attitudes)	4	28	10
Rest rooms	1	22	15
After sales service	4	16	12

- Good 32
- Fair 13
- Poor 0

## TRANSPORTATION, RESPECT

Seniors view public transportation, public services and respect as being adequate and convenient.

For example, in response to the question: "Are public social services adequate for people of your age?"

- 39 answered YES
- 3 answered NO and
- 3 had no answers.

Seniors regularly attend religious functions and the

churches in turn provide essential services and opportunities.

It appears walking is an important recreational pursuit for Seniors.

Seniors indicated that living alone, with home care, is desirable.

## PART THREE

# Youths need excitement, jobs

Fifty-eight out of 60 student surveys were completed and returned.

Of students, 55% said that shopping is poor in Deloraine, citing

- Poor selection,
- Poor attitudes and
- Poor prices

as reasons why they buy

farther afield.

\* \* \*

However, they also indicated that the knowledge of sales people and their advertising were positive.

## LOCAL SCENE LACKS APPEAL — EXCITEMENT FOR YOUTH

Entertainment is poor in their community, according to 72% of the students. But  95% of students say that eating places are good (a positive trend reflected in the general survey as well) and

67% of students said that auto sales and service are

good.

## YOUTH'S CONCERNS PARALLEL THOSE OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Student concerns are the same as those expressed in the Seniors and General

*Continued next page*

## ● Young people seek excitement, work, learning

Continued from previous page

Surveys:

- Lack of community development,
- Lack of citizen and business support.

\* \* \*

Students cited other concerns:

- Nothing to do,
- Losing population and
- Too few businesses.

\* \* \*

### YOUNG PEOPLE WANT MORE REASONS TO STAY

It appears youth would like to stay in the community because 79% of them indicated retaining youth in the community was extremely important.

\* \* \*

Students also indicated that

- Improving local employment prospects,
- Increasing local population and
- Attracting new businesses were extremely important to them.

### DEVELOP MORE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

The reason of most stu-

dents for leaving Deloraine is the lack of learning opportunities and the lack of employment opportunities:  81% of the student population plans on furthering their education in university or community college.  50% of them would continue their education in the community if it were possible.

## PART FOUR

# Businesses look at pros and cons

Among business respondents, 16 (out of 20) sent replies.

Contrary to the general outlook which indicates that selection, attitude and prices in the business community could be improved, business people tended to view shopping and services as good.

Business agrees with the majority in the rest of the survey: that the community is now underdeveloped due to the lack of citizen support.

According to business operators, the four main ways to address community development are:

- To attract new businesses and industries.
- To retain youth in the community.
- To develop existing industries.
- To capitalize on local tourism.

### MAJOR RESOURCES: YOUTH... AND TURTLE MOUNTAIN

Business identifies students as the greatest local human resource and the

greatest physical resource as the Turtle Mountain area.

\* \* \*

Business people say that the Provincial Government could give more support to rural communities and that the Federal Government should give greater support to Western Provinces.

Business views the Town of Deloraine as a good place to live and also expresses high regard for the quality and support of the Service Clubs.

The business community does most of its shopping locally and indicated movement from the community would only be business related to a larger market area.

One-third of the businesses indicated that sales were up, 33% said they were the same and 33% said they were down.

### BUSINESS CONFIDENCE NEEDS A SHOT IN THE ARM

There is a general decline in confidence in the business community. However, there is a reluc-

tance to spend time and expertise to solve the problems.

\* \* \*

Advantages of doing business in Deloraine are:

- Parking availability.
- Being able to offer personalized service.
- High income levels in the town.

The survey indicated that Monday and Friday were the busiest days and that the mornings seem to be most favourable. *(It is interesting to note that some businesses are closed Mondays.)*

\* \* \*

All businesses feel that they are price competitive. This correlates with the general survey in which most respondents felt that, indeed, businesses were price competitive.

### MARKETING WOULD HELP

Most businesses felt that sales could be increased through improved marketing.

Issues that continue to be important, ones that

businesses think the community should address, are:

- Vacant buildings.
- Businesses and service.
- Garbage pick-up.

These are ideas cited by businesses to benefit the area:

- Attract tourists.
- An active business association.
- A sign, marking the entrance to our area.

Businesses would be very interested in participating in another "Main Street" program if one became available.

### MODERNIZE SKILLS

Businesses said that they could benefit from business courses and seminars with special interests in:

- Computers.
- Bookkeeping and accounting.
- Communicating effectively.
- Product pricing promotion and distribution.

## PART FIVE

# Outlying areas send in their report

From outlying areas, 17 surveys were returned and completed. Most of these were residents 20 kilometers or farther from Deloraine.

These rural residents feel that the following should be improved in the

town of Deloraine:

- Product selection.
- Business attitudes.
- Prices.
- Hotels and motels.

\* \* \*

Non-residents feel that the following are some of the positive aspects of the

Deloraine Community:

- Street lighting.
- Store fronts.
- Telephone manner of businesses.
- Street cleanliness.
- Knowledge of sales people.

\* \* \*

Non-residents feel that the community is underdeveloped due to lack of citizen support and felt that the town could benefit from more businesses.

Non-residents feel that the most important ways to

Continued Next Page

# Amenities satisfy professionals

## Professional group rates rural lifestyle very high

People working in the various professions in Deloraine returned 38 surveys, offering their perspective on the local economy.

Of those who returned survey forms, 50% said that the main factor limiting development in Deloraine is

lack of citizen support.

The Professionals' Survey indicated that businesses could do the following to improve our community:

- Be friendly.
- Improve attitude.
- Be competitive.

However, another part of the survey noted that generally, local businesses do a good job in providing the following:

- Good hours of operation.
- Helpful and courteous staff.
- Competitive pricing — but they should improve overall goods and services.

Seventy-nine percent of the respondents preferred to remain in Deloraine and cited the rural lifestyle as one reason they might like to stay. Other reasons included job satisfaction and family ties.

attractions.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated they belong to a volunteer organization, most of those being in sports clubs and service clubs.

Positive features about living in Deloraine were noted as follows:

- Water and sewer services
- Fire department.
- Recreation.
- Health services.
- Police services.
- Cultural activities.
- Visual appearance of the town.

\* \* \*

The only notable dissatisfaction with the community was the cost of living.

\* \* \*

Overall, only two (out of 29 surveyed) were dissatisfied with the working and living situation Deloraine.

## ● Outlying areas

*Continued from previous page*

improve the community are to:

- Attract new industry.
- Improve local employment prospects.
- Retain youth in the community

Non-residents seem to view the community differently from residents in that they felt that:

- Our community is effective in dealing with its problems.
- Residents have pride in

the community

What percentage of their purchases are made from businesses in Deloraine? People living in nearby rural areas said:

- Food and beverages ~ 42%.
- Apparel and accessories ~ 18%.
- Automobile sales ~ 43%.
- Automobile parts and service ~ 41%.
- Furniture and appliances ~ 0%.

## HEAVY USERS OF AMENITIES

According to the survey Professional/Wage Earners utilize the recreational facilities in the area, citing golfing, skiing, and camping as the most popular

LAST  
PART

# Farmers take mainly positive view

In a limited survey of the farming sector, 21 responded.

Farmers indicated that the positive aspects of Deloraine services were:

- All good facilities.
- Street cleanliness.
- Good eating places.

Two aspects that drew negative comments were:

- Special promotions.
- Limited selection of goods.

\* \* \*

Farmers feel that the most important problems to address are:

- Attracting new business and industry; and
- Retaining youth in the community.

Farmers said that the community is strong in the following areas:

- Pride in the community.
- All welcome to live in the community.
- Good variety of clubs and

organizations.

- Harmony in the community.

Farmers noted that even though certain products could not be purchased in Deloraine they did return to the community to buy the products that were available.

\* \* \*

Farmers outlined that the following aspects were poor:

- Shopping facilities or other needs.
- Employment opportunities.

These were good:

- Recreational opportunities.
- Senior facilities.
- Health care.

Farmers ranked things easy to change and things difficult to change. The easy aspects:

- Housing to buy or rent.
- Shopping facilities.
- Programs for senior citi-

zens.

Difficult to change:

- Employment opportunities.
- Additional senior citizen housing.
- Control this community has over its present affairs.

Farmers have a very positive view of Deloraine. However, they do not feel that the future of the town looks very bright. Farmers go on to say small communities have a lot to offer but what can we do to save them?

Farmers view the community as having good leaders but they are reluctant to take economic chances to attract new industry.

\* \* \*

The main reasons farmers gave for *not* purchasing local items were:

- Food and beverages — prices too high.
- Apparel and accessories

— selection and availability.

- Automobile sales — selection.
- Automobile parts and service — availability.
- Furniture and appliances — availability.
- Farm machinery parts — availability.

It was noted that farmers would like to take computer courses and generally were well-educated: most of respondents had completed high school and college programs.

Some of the major causes of the slump in agricultural activity cited by the farmers were:

- Decreasing export market and
- Ineffective farm policies.

It was noted that poor management practices by farmers were not a cause for slumping activity, but most

*Continued next page*

## ● Farmers' responses round out the survey

*Continued from previous page*

were very concerned to moderately concerned about the financial trends in farming.

Most farmers have reacted to the poor farm economy by postponing major farm purchases. Minor adjustments have been made to postpone major household purchases, food buying habits and entertainment, and to defer other expenses.

Farmers reacted favorably to financial institutions except that they felt they did not have their best interests at heart when making decisions.

Family, friends and neighbours offer the most support to farmers. Social service organizations offer little or no support to farmers.

One-third of the farmers surveyed said they feel that

their lifestyle is as good as in most other occupations; 23% said they are better off than people in other occupations.

Most farmers indicated that NISA and GRIP programs have been helpful in maintaining the economy.

To make things better, farmers also suggested that it would help to

Improve grain and cattle prices.

Make corporations pay

their share of the taxes.

Show the politicians where they belong.

Minimize farm machinery purchases.

Lessen taxes.

Cut prices on cost items.

Keep people in rural communities by government incentives.

Get rid of the Wheat Board.

Reinstate investment tax credit.

Assist young farmers.

## Notes:

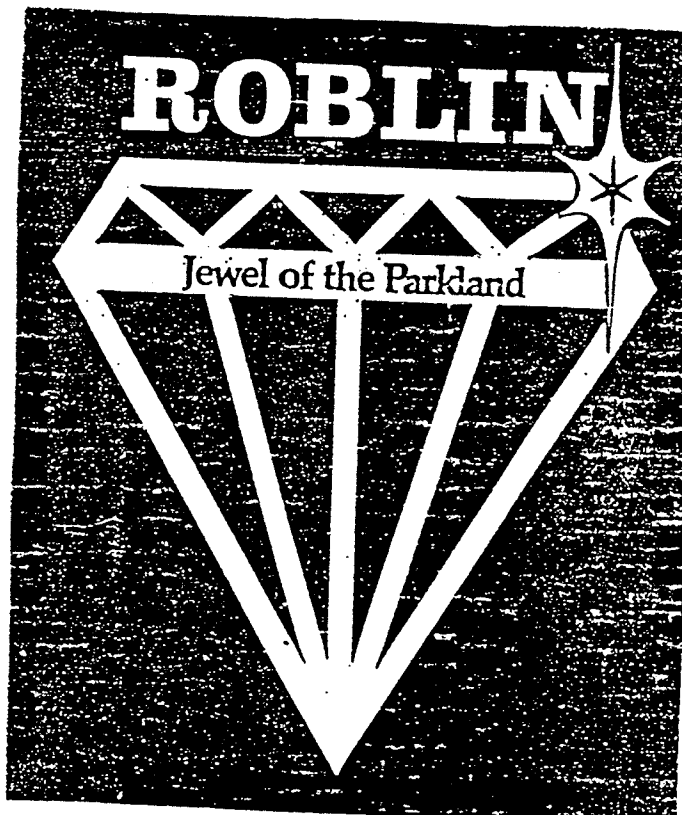
**APPENDIX II**

The Roblin Community Round Table Handbook

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# ROBLIN

## COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE HANDBOOK



SEPTEMBER, 1977

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## **Introduction**

There are many specific groups or segments of the population who should become aware of the scope and nature of local economic development initiatives. The public at large, the Municipal councils, the local economic development committees, the local business community, service clubs, organized labour, and the various potential pools of entrepreneurs in the small business development process should be involved.

Therefore the marketing effort to the community involves communicating to the various groups, keeping them informed and increasing their readiness to be involved as partners in the economic development process. A particularly effective way of encouraging involvement and explaining the scope of the local economic development process is through the organization of seminars and workshops designed for this purpose. The seminars and workshops permit the participants to engage in discussion and to learn from each other's ideas and experiences. This creates a forum in which people are encouraged to exchange views, to make explicit their reasoning, and to develop consensus.

With this in mind Roblin Economic Development, the local economic development organization for the Roblin area, together with Parkland West Economic Development and the Department of Rural Development initiated the community round table process for the Roblin area. The community round table process involves several workshop sessions with groups, individuals, and organizations from the community. The purpose of the workshops is to increase the awareness of the participants: 1) concerning the scope, nature, and possibilities of local economic development initiatives; and 2) concerning the necessity and possibilities for their own involvement in a local program. This makes the participants better able to contribute to the initiation of further development of a local economic development program. As a result of their own involvement in the workshops, the participants will also be better able to deal with the issues that face the community and, indeed, will be able to start contributing to their solution.

## **HISTORY**

In 1985 the Inter Park West Development Committee, the local economic development committee for the Roblin area at that time and the Parkland Regional Development Committee undertook a study, Project Discovery, to develop a profile of the area in order to provide the basis from which economic development strategy and activities could evolve. The study involved conducting surveys with both the consumer and business population aimed at testing their perceptions of the current economic climate and the future economic needs of the Roblin area. The study also involved investigations into statistical information with respect to population, physical landscape, labour force, employment, recreation, medical services, financial services, education, agriculture and investment.



## **HISTORY (cont.)**

The consumer surveys revealed a high percentage (83%) of consumer dollars spent locally with a generally positive conception of the business community. Consumers identified lack of employment, a poor agricultural economy and competition from larger centres as the major problems facing economic development.

Consumers judged needs to be well served but recognized the necessity for more economic activity in the area. While the economic activity was not specifically defined it was stated that it should be agriculturally or forestry related. Some sort of tourist development was also identified as desirable.

The business surveys had also identified a need for economic development but were not specific as to particular projects. Agriculture, forestry, and tourism were all identified as general project areas.

Project Discovery identified two formidable barriers to economic development in the Roblin area. The first barrier is that the community has learned to be satisfied with its situation, whatever it may be. The second is a lack of active local leadership taking charge of the problem and encouraging a "we can do it" attitude. In other words, philosophically the residents have "learned to live with the situation" and that attitude has resulted in a lack of local leadership and action on issues and problems vital to the economic health of the area.

## **COMMUNITY EVALUATION**

The community round table process involved brainstorming sessions in which participants defined what they believed to be the strengths and weaknesses of Roblin as a community. To further evaluate the community, individual participants also identified the threats they perceived to be facing the community as well as the opportunities the community had before it. Once issues had been identified within a particular category, i.e., strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, those issues were prioritized based on the relative importance the participants placed on the issue. The issues identified as first within a particular category were judged to have equal priority as were the issues identified as second and third and so on.

The results of this exercise are the lists of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that follow.

## ROBLIN'S STRENGTHS

- First: Diverse agricultural base  
Volunteers  
Excellent schools - Recognized in academics and sports  
Transportation services: Bus, train, trucking, airport  
Recreation: Golf course, curling, pool, etc.
- Second: Infrastructure: Good fire department, waste disposal, lagoon system, ambulance, etc.  
Facilities for seniors  
Tourism  
Health care facilities and personnel  
Sports recognized: Dog sledding, broomball, and hockey  
Well recognized artists/local artisans  
Lake of the Prairies  
No physical trade barriers  
Churches
- Third: Picturesque area  
Safe community
- Fourth: Knowledgeable people in Roblin  
Good quality, locally produced agricultural products, forest products, cattle production and pregnant mare urine industry  
Sound banking system/Credit Union  
Location/tourism  
Abundance of natural resources  
Duck Mountain and Riding Mountain  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Wealth of Community  
Human resources  
Crop area is good  
Reliable climate  
Stable business centre  
Experience of older population  
Friendliness - easy to integrate  
Not close to the U.S. border

## ROBLIN STRENGTHS (cont.)

Fifth: Youth attitudes  
Forestry products/industry  
Goose Lake  
Automotive and machinery industries are strong  
Entrepreneurs  
St. Vladimir's College  
92 Community organizations  
Proximity to Saskatchewan  
Much improved relations with the Rural Municipalities

Sixth: Businesses that employ more than 10 people  
Trade access to the North  
Population base  
Youth  
Four hours to Winnipeg

## ROBLIN'S WEAKNESSES

- First:           Lack of population  
                  Fear of failure
- Second:         Inadequate accommodations  
                  Lack of local investment by residents
- Third:           Too far from decision-makers  
                  Lack of involvement in local politics (Municipal)  
                  Lack of community promotion  
                  No multi-purpose building for year-round use  
                  No industrial park  
                  Several businesses do not support Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
                  Development incentives absent  
                  Loss of large business and agri-business  
                  Loss of local control of natural resources  
                  Lack of jobs  
                  Deterioration of farm income  
                  People's negative attitudes  
                  Lack of positive communication - Internal  
                  Lack of management of recycling  
                  No cellular phone service
- Fourth:         Lack of community spirit  
                  Lack of effective political lobby  
                  Not located on a major transport route: east - west  
                  No local beach area  
                  Lack of community development funds  
                  No local MP or MLA person/resident  
                  Don't have large corporations making Roblin headquarters  
                  Lack of involvement in community groups
- Fifth:           Lack of affordable housing  
                  Inability to communicate with local government services i.e., Hydro,  
                  Manitoba Telephone System  
                  Lack of management of waste reduction  
                  Lack of support for community development - land prices  
                  No indoor swimming pool  
                  No ski hill  
                  No youth centre

## THREATS TO ROBLIN

- First: GATT - General Agreement On Trade and Tariffs - Farm Economy
- Second: REPAP - Loss of local management of forest products industry  
Large forestry companies control forestry market - poor access for smaller companies  
Dwindling support for community organizations  
Lack of young people to keep/make full use of existing facilities
- Third: European/U.S.A. subsidies to agriculture  
Loss of business - machine, jewellery store, dairy, farm foreclosures  
Hazardous materials/ waste handling, acid rain
- Fourth: Cross border shopping (PST) Saskatchewan  
Lack of political clout  
Loss of national unity  
Difference in payment in Crows Nest Pass Rate  
Closure of Hudson Bay Route  
Hesitancy to invest in Roblin by residents and non-residents  
lack of local political representation on provincial and federal levels  
Provincial decentralization promises may not be met  
Lack of control over multi-nationals decisions on closures that impact locally
- Fifth: Attitudes/apathy  
G.S.T. (Government Sales Tax)  
Yorkton, Saskatchewan marketing initiatives  
Improperly educated/informed animal rights activists  
Lack of consumer confidence  
Potential loss of interest of youth  
Loss of local control of interest  
Older people still working where young people should be doing jobs  
Government bureaucracy  
Government slow to improve infrastructure  
Make civil servants accountable for mistakes  
Lack of health care funding  
Government grants/funding cut-backs  
Lack of education funding  
Dwindling support on farm products  
Change age of agriculture producers - few young farmers
- Sixth: Hole in ozone  
Lack of Manitoba incentive for feed lots (as in Saskatchewan and Alberta)

## ROBLIN'S OPPORTUNITIES OR MAJOR PLANNING AREAS

- First: Accommodations - tourist, campgrounds, hotels, beaches
- Second: All purpose facilities: Conventions - Town Hall  
Education programs and training designed to meet local needs  
Infrastructure development to accommodate industrial  
development  
Promoting facilities, people, assets, attractions to tourists  
Business and employment opportunities
- Third: Plan communications network for community  
Industry - Ethanol plant, help livestock producers  
Level and quality of health care  
Accommodations - residential  
Retirement centre: promote Roblin - fishing, golfing, medical, seniors  
Value-added in agriculture  
Recycling and waste management  
Opportunities in recreation and culture  
Public involvement in community  
Improve public awareness of animal husbandry presently practised to  
combat animal-rights activists  
Changing demographics, aging population, visible minorities  
Transportation and communication  
Bringing people and groups together (plan communications  
network for community)  
Plan marketing process regionally, provincially, nationally, globally  
Plan for more regionalization

## **ROBLIN'S VISION FOR THE YEAR 2002**

Our vision for Roblin in the next 10 years is a dynamic, diversified, environmentally friendly, self-reliant, fully serviced and prosperous model (leader) community with places and opportunities for its energetic and knowledgeable citizens, who are proud to be a part of Roblin.

# **ROBLIN'S ACTION PLAN**

## **RESEARCH**

1. Funding for research into tourism opportunities.

Responsibility: Manitoba Tourism  
Federal Government

2. Study to discover existing skills of present area population and the needed skills in the next 10 years.

Responsibility: Assiniboine Community College  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Labour Force Advisory Board

3. Funding for research into economic development.

Responsibility: Department of Rural Development  
Western Diversification  
Employment and Immigration

4. Study into primary value-added products and opportunities.

Responsibility: Manitoba Agriculture  
Community Futures  
PFRA  
Agricultural Organizations

5. Investigate a four seasons resort at Lake of the Prairies.

Responsibility: Department of Natural Resources  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Roblin Economic Development  
Banks and Credit Unions  
RM of Shell River



## Action Plan (cont.)

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Full-time town employee responsible for the promotion of business development and management.

Responsibility: Town of Roblin  
Roblin Economic Development  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce

2. Develop business skills courses at Goose Lake High School.

Responsibility: Department of Education - School Board  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Roblin Economic Development

3. Lobby government and government departments for timely economic development for Roblin.

Responsibility: Town of Roblin  
RM of Shell River  
RM of Hillsburg  
Roblin Economic Development  
Private Sector

4. Encourage government investment in Roblin and area - infrastructure development and development at Lake of the Prairies.

Responsibility: Town of Roblin  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Roblin Economic Development  
Private Sector

5. Attract Seminars - Business related, self improvement, agriculture, waste management, etc..

Responsibility: Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Individual groups and organizations  
Roblin Economic Development

### Tourism and Recreation

1. Multipurpose facility in the Town of Roblin.

Responsibility: All groups who would utilize the facility.

## **Action Plan (cont.)**

### **Tourism and Recreation (cont.)**

2. Promote eco-tourism in the immediate area.

Responsibility: Parkland tourism group  
Local tourism operators  
Department of Natural Resources  
Tourism Manitoba

3. Bed and Breakfast system.

Responsibility: Private individuals  
Existing hoteliers  
Tourism Manitoba  
Parkland tourism group  
Roblin Round Table

4. Develop a festival to bring people to the area.

Responsibility: Agriculture Society  
Town of Roblin  
Roblin Economic Development  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce

### **Communication**

1. Complete the Town of Roblin's strategic plan.

Responsibility: Town of Roblin  
R.M. of Hillsburg  
R.M. of Shell River  
Community groups and organizations  
Residents  
Roblin Community Round Table

2. Increased communication at all levels of interaction in order to obtain a better informed and more open-minded community.

Responsibility: Groups and organizations  
Roblin Chamber of Commerce  
Roblin Economic Development  
Local Governments

## **Action Plan (cont.)**

### Communication (cont.)

3. Development of a media communication strategy.

**Responsibility:** Roblin Review  
Roblin Community Access T.V.

### Waste Management

1. Development of a recycling and waste management program.

**Responsibility:** Provincial government  
Parkland Regional Waste Management and  
Recycling Committee  
Town of Roblin and surrounding  
municipalities

### Health Care

1. Develop specialized medical care. eg. Become the acupuncture centre of Canada.

**Responsibility:** Hospital Board  
Private enterprise (doctors)  
Roblin Community Round Table

## **ROBLIN'S ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME**

Once the results of the Round Table process were put into a report form, Roblin Economic Development, the sponsoring group, met to attach some specific timeframes to the suggested avenues of action. The following are the results of that meeting.

### **RESEARCH**

#### **Short Term Goal:**

Identify actual and potential funding sources for each of the stated research areas.

#### **Medium and Long Term Goal:**

Conduct the research and have the data to begin projects beyond the research stage.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Short Term Goal:**

Convince the Town of Roblin and surrounding R.M.'s of the need for a full-time local employee to promote business development for the Roblin area.

#### **Medium and Long Term Goals:**

Have the local employee work in conjunction with Goose Lake High to develop business skills courses in the school, lobby the government for timely economic development, and encourage government investment in the Roblin area (infrastructure development and development of Lake of the Prairies).

Attract seminars - business related, self improvement, agricultural, waste management, etc. to the Roblin area.

### **TOURISM AND RECREATION**

#### **Short Term Goal:**

Investigate the possibility of developing the stated tourism and recreation facilities and ideas.

#### **Medium Term Goal:**

Promote those facilities and ideas which are found to be feasible in order to raise interest and funds to achieve them.

#### **Long Term Goal:**

Develop the facilities and ideas which are both feasible and have sufficient backing by the community or individuals with the potential to develop the ideas and facilities as private enterprises.

## **ROBLIN ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME (CONT.)**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Make the results of the Round Table available to all members of the community in order to make the public aware of the need for increased communication between all groups and to facilitate the goals of better communication within the Roblin community.

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Support the Town of Roblin's agenda in the development of a recycling and waste management program.

### **HEALTH CARE**

Investigate the possibility of developing more specialized medical care within the community in order to bring people into the community.

**\* NOTE:** While discussing the various goals outlined in the action plan and attaching more specific timeframes to the action plan, the members of Roblin Economic Development decided that in their view the highest priority items were to hire an economic development officer to specifically serve the Roblin community and to work at getting a multi-purpose tourism and recreation facility built for the Roblin community. It was the feeling of the group that the achievement of these two goals would lead to the greatest amount of future community and economic benefit for the Roblin community.

## Conclusion

The assessment of the Roblin area does not seem to have changed a great deal since Project Discovery was conducted in 1985. Lack of employment opportunities, a poor agricultural economy, and competition from larger centres were raised as impediments to economic development then and they were raised, in several forms, in the community round table process of 1992.

Project Discovery identified the need for more economic development activity. It also identified some general direction for economic development such as it should be agriculturally or forestry related and there should be some sort of tourism development. While the Roblin Community Round Table concurs with those conclusions the process we have gone through takes those conclusions a step farther.

The round table process has been able to both assess the current situation and identify some specific projects which can be pursued to work toward greater economic health of the Roblin community. The task that remains is to discover if the Roblin community is able to overcome the barriers to economic development which were identified in Project Discovery and seemingly still remain today, given the fact that the economic assessment remains essentially the same today as it did when Project Discovery was undertaken.

Can the Roblin community overcome the perceived lack of local leadership and its apparent acceptance of the current economic situation in order to spurn the community to greater economic prosperity? The community round table has provided the forum for the organization of an economic development process to begin. The people of the Roblin community have taken up the challenge by participating in the process. What remains for the process to be a complete success is for them to carry on and act upon those ideas and strategies they took part in developing.

# GOOSE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL ROUND TABLE

## INTRODUCTION

One of the principle concerns that arose out of the Roblin Community Round Table was the need to keep the youth of Roblin in the community after they completed high school. The Roblin community must be able to offer its youth a future if it is going to survive and thrive as a community. As a result, Goose Lake High was approached to host a community round table session with the students as participants.

The Goose Lake High Round Table consisted of 26 student participants representing a cross section of senior 1 to 4 or grades 9 to 12. Several teachers made appearances during the session but were not actively participating in the round table process.

The Goose Lake High Round Table took place over one regular school day with participants being excused from classes for that day. Participants were responsible to report back to their class their findings and impressions of the day's activities.

The Roblin Round Table hoped to gain the opinions of the youth population in order to compare, contrast, and augment the findings of the Roblin Round Table community evaluation, vision and action plan of September 1992.

The following is a complete unedited transcript of the results of the Goose Lake High Round Table. Along with the unedited transcript is an evaluation of the student material as well as a comparison between the results of the Roblin Round Table and the Goose Lake High Round Table.

In order to facilitate the process of moving from the SWOT analysis to the vision statement to the action plan it was decided that the common themes of each component of the process be extracted. By having the students draw out the common themes the process of moving through each stage of the evaluation was simplified and therefore more focused. The Students were divided into three groups to complete the SWOT analysis and the Vision Statements. The Action Plan was completed as one unified group using the themes from the Vision Statements (underlined portions in the Vision Statements below).

NOTE: The points in the SWOT analysis marked with an \* indicate points that were raised by more than one of the three working groups.

## **Roblin's Strengths:**

### **MAJOR THEMES:**

1. Schools:\*
  - St. Vlads\*
  - Library
  - Enrichment courses
2. Socials and Community Events:
3. Recreation - Opportunities Available:
  - Fishing
  - North Stars
  - Lake of the Prairies\*
  - Proximity to Duck Mountains
4. Recreation facilities:
  - Tourist Information
  - Free Camping (Goose Lake)
  - Skiing (Madge and possibly Asessippi)
  - Golf Course
  - Music Festival\*
  - Entertainment
  - Community Bingo
  - Fair
  - Theatre
5. Social Services:
  - Volunteer Fire and Ambulance\*
  - Personal Care Home
  - Hospital
  - Handivan
  - RCMP
  - Bus Depot
6. Geographic Location:
  - Lakes
  - Two Main Highways
  - Duck Mountain
7. Quality of Life:
  - Positive Attitude of People
  - Family Roots



## Strengths (cont.)

### 7. Quality of Life (cont.)

- Low Crime Rate
- Quiet Place to Live
- Lots of Land for Expansion
- Cultural Diversity
- Indian Reservation

### 8. Major Employers

- Agriculture
- Roblin Truck Service
- Roblin Forest Products\*
- Gabers\*
- Elevators\*
- Roblin Auction Mart
- Car Dealerships

### 9. Other:

- Compost Station
- Local Talent
- Youth
- Size

# ROBLIN'S WEAKNESSES

## MAJOR THEMES:

### 1. Lack of Spirit and Activities for Youth:

- Lack of Community Activities\*
- Too Many Drugs/Alcohol\*
- No Local Support
- Rising Crime Rate
- Lack of Community Spirit\*
- Too many Cliques
- Fights at Socials
- Misuse of Vehicles
- Vandalism
- Loss of Moonshine Daze
- Fair Has Gone Downhill

### 2. Lack of Jobs:

- Not Enough Jobs for the Young\*
- High Unemployment\*
- Few High Paying Jobs
- Young People Moving Where Jobs are Available (Cities)\*

### 3. Lack of Business Activity:

- Poor Shopping
- No Jewelry Store\*
- No Sports Store
- No New Businesses - All Closing\*
- Town Kicked Out Ag Shield
- Two Implement Dealers Closed
- Losing Businesses - Shell\*
- Need 24 Hr. Business (7-11)\*
- No Good Men's Store\*
- Poor Eating Places
- Poor Management for Other Businesses
- Gas Stations on East Side Only
- Out of Town Shopping (Yorkton and USA)
- No Hotels
- Not Much Competition in Businesses (Higher Prices and Gas Wars)

## Weaknesses (cont.)

4. Old People - Fear of Change:
  - Many Old People Residing Here\*
  - Too Much Building of Housing Complexes for Older People
  - Aging Population
  - Too Much Money Spent on Seniors
  - Fear of Change
  
5. Lack of Attractions:
  - Not Enough People\*
  - Not Enough Recreation for the Young (YMCA)\*
  - More Courses in School (Trades and Arts)\*
  - No Major Industries (To Attract People)
  - No Incentives for People to Start Businesses Here
  - Lack of Good Leadership
  - No Rural Development
  - Not Enough Advertising
  - Extreme Distance From Large Metropolis
  - Nothing to Attract Younger Families
  - People Leaving for Larger Cities
  
6. Agriculture:
  - Depend on Agriculture for Businesses
  - Crop Failure
  - Losing Small Farmers
  - Poor Farming Conditions\*
  
7. Recreation:
  - Poor Fairs - No Moonshine Daze
  - Poorly Run Recreation Facilities
  - No Parks
  - Dirty Ol Lake of the Prairies (Poor Facilities)\*
  - More Activities Needed for all Age Groups
  - No Nice Eating Facilities
  - Theatre

## Weaknesses (cont.)

### 8. Services - Town and Business:

- Hospital - No Maternity\*
- Maintenance of Streets - Highways\*
- Angle Parking on Main Street
- Not Enough Tour Sites
- Lack of Rental Housing
- Hotels are Poor
- RCMP
- Poor Airport
- Garbage Dump

# ROBLIN'S OPPORTUNITIES

## MAJOR THEMES:

### 1. Business Development

- Room For Business to Move Into Town - Empty Buildings\*
- Good Home For Both Agriculture and Forestry Facilities
- Opportunities to Build a Nice Hotel
- Daycare\*
- Develop into Resort Town
- Drive-in Theatre
- Fitness Centre (YMCA)
- Improve Hotels\*
- Bigger Industries\*
- Farm Dealerships
- Stores: Jewelry, Sports (Hunting and Fishing), Shoes, Clothing\*
- Better Bars (themes)
- Riding Stables
- Proposed Fish Hatchery for Jobs
- Create a Better Youth Job Centre - Year Round
- P.M.U. Farming
- Production of Organic Foods
- Good Restaurant - Home Delivery\*
- Construction Company
- More Qualified Workers
- Pawn Shop
- Chiropractor
- Chain Restaurant
- Sunday Shopping

### 2. Entertainment and Recreation:

- Develop and Expand Lake of the Prairies (Cabins)\*
- Major Annual Event (Moonshine Daze)\*
- Room to Improve the Recreation Facilities (Sports Complex)\*
- Better Organisation of the Athletic Programmes\*
- Bring in More Events - Variety\*
- More Dances (Street Dances)\*
- Youth Hang-Out
- Indoor Pool\*
- Get Older People Involved in Activities
- Take Greater Advantage of Our Parks - Make Them Look Better
- Bike, Cycling and Walking Trails
- Better out of Town Entertainment
- Game Farm

## Opportunities (cont.)

### 2. Entertainment and Recreation (cont.)

- Football Team
- Tennis Courts
- Ski Hill\*
- Cross Country Ski Trails
- Improve Golf Course
- More Concerts For Talent
- Night Entertainment
- Nature Trails
- A Bingo Palace

### 3. Schools:

- More Subjects
- Courses to Help Further Careers
- St. Vlad's

### 4. Advertising and Promotion:

- Opportunity to Stand out From Surrounding Communities
- Beautification of Streets and Town\*
- Improve Parking
- Develop into a Resort Town
- Advertise Assets of the Community (Museum, Lake and Hunting)\*
- Landscaping of Public Property
- More Town Spirit
- Use Local Talent
- Clean-up Lake of the Prairies
- Newspaper

### 5. Services:

- Better Programs on Access T.V.
- Let Youth Take Over Access T.V.
- Better Medical Facilities (Part-Time Obstetrician)\*
- Friendly Police Officers
- Develop A Rural Crime Watch

### 6. Investment:

- Potential for Funding Through Seniors

### 7. Other:

- Much Area To Expand Everything
- Potential for Inter-community Cooperation - Unified Event

# ROBLIN'S THREATS:

## MAJOR THEMES:

### 1. Financial:

- Recession\*
- Lack of Money\*
- Out of Town Shopping - Businesses Closing\*
- Businesses Closing
- Roblin Becoming A Ghost Town
- Decreasing World Market Grain Prices
- Too Dependent on Farming
- Taxes Increasing
- Poor Farm Position
- Cut-Backs From Government (Rural Spending)\*
- No Investors
- Not Enough Community Support

### 2. Employment:

- No Jobs\*
- No People to Start New Businesses

### 3. Competition:

- Russell Inn is too Close
- Jobs in Cities Bribe Youth To Move\*
- Size of Winnipeg and Yorkton\*
- Many Immigrants Taking Jobs
- Loosing Small Farmers
- Vicious Circle With U.S. (Entertainment and Business)
- Declining Population\*
- Poor Restaurants - Go Out of Town To Eat
- Poor Hotels - Go to Russell
- Small Business Market
- Small Population

### 4. Regulations:

- No Support For Rural Development
- Pollution\*
- Environmental Concerns\*
- Over Hunting
- Over Fishing
- Environmentalists Can Stop the Building of the Ski Hill

## Threats (cont.)

### 5. Elderly:

- Majority of Recreation Boards Made Up of Older People
- Old People Running Community
- People Don't Want To Change
- Community Not Willing To Take Chances
- Elderly Drivers
- Many Elderly

### 6. Youth Involvement:

- Lack of Interest From Young People
- Don't Take Youth Seriously

### 7. Social Issues:

- Threat of Separation of Quebec
- Increasing Crime Rate\*
- Too Many People On Welfare and U.I.
- Not Enough Qualified People
- Poor Town Spirit
- Fire Service Not Fast Enough
- Too Much Drinking and Driving
- Abuse of Health Care System
- Uneducated Population
- Single Parent Families



## ROBLIN'S VISION STATEMENTS:

1. By the Year 2002 we plan for the Town of Roblin to be enhanced economically and physically. We foresee a time when Roblin will overcome its high rate of unemployment by bringing in specialised industries. By planting trees and keeping the town neat in appearance, it will benefit by tourism. The people will come to look at Roblin with a new and changed perspective.
2. Ten Years from now Roblin's youth will be more active. There will be more recreational activities and festivals. It will be a thriving community based not only on farming but other industries. The population will therefore increase. The hospital will offer us more as well as the local business. This will help people to shop locally. The Town will be in a more beautiful state.
3. In Ten years time we hope to have thriving businesses and a better economy. We should have more family recreation centres and better hospital care. We hope farming situations improve, so people will have more money to spend at the new restaurants, hotel, sports complex, daycare and Roblin's own unique festival (multicultural or musical). These will be built by a thriving new construction company. The school will offer more arts and trade courses. A large industry will be based here, employing many people and boosting the population and economy. The Town will also be beautified with the addition of trees on the streets and Parks. With these improvements, a greater population should form, providing for a more stable economy.

# ROBLIN'S ACTION PLAN

## MAJOR THEMES:

### 1. Thriving Business Community:

- Investment By Local People in Local Businesses
- More Business Advertising and Promotion
- Incentives to New Business From the Town
- Involve More People in the Community
- Encourage Cooperation Among Business
- Chamber of Commerce Should Establish a Student Discount Card
- Province and the Town Should Establish a Business Start Up Program
- Promotion of New Ideas
- Greater Awareness of Government Programs for the Youth
- Business Education - Youth to Elderly
- Young Entrepreneurs Program - Summer Business
- Support of Local Business

### 2. Recreation:

- More Professional Recreation Director
- More Young People on the Recreation Board
- More Event Advertising
- Wider Range of Recreation Activities:
  - Football, Indoor Pool, Beach Volleyball, High School Hockey, Recreational Dance Classes
- Use Roblin Access T.V. to Televisе Local Sporting Events
- Community Effort to Clean Up Lakes
- More Winter Recreation - Bowling
- Work at Changing Negative Attitudes

### 3. Hospital:

- Approach Hospital Board to Have Them Lobby for Increased Hospital Services
- Volunteers in Hospital to Gain Experience (Young People)
- Better Hospital Food
- Quicker Service
- 24 Doctor at the Hospital
- More Efficient Use of the Health System (Hospital Not to be Used for Minor Ailments)
- More Public Health Awareness

## Action Plan (cont.)

### 4. Festival:

- Moonshine Daze - The Way it Used to be
  - Find Out Why its Gone
  - Create a Committee of Interested People to Revive it (Old and Young)
- Spend More Money on the Fair and Make it Better for Everyone (Fundraisers and Grants)
- Demolition Derby
- Concerts featuring Local and Outside Talent
- One Week Long Festival to Include all Events
- Revive Kinsmen and Kinettes
- Revive Call of the Wild

### 5. Education:

- More College Courses
- Make School More Interesting - More Relevant Curriculum with Better Books
- Better Teachers (Younger)
- More Vocational Courses
- Excellerated High School Program
- Condoms in the Washrooms

### 6. Town Beautification:

- Stricter Garbage Control
- Recycling - Program and Processing
- Hire the Unemployed to Clean the Streets
- Youth Tree Planting Program
- Promote Cutting Lawns - Proper Yard Care
- Pave Streets and Sidewalks
- Town Beautification Program - Employment for Youth
- More Beautification on Town Property - Employment for Youth
- Encourage Stores to Beautify

## Action Plan (cont.)

### 7. Agriculture

- Another Implement dealer
- Better Access to Elevators
- Gum Plant
- Diversify Crop Production
- Mushroom Plant
- Lobby for Better Grain Prices
- Encourage Farmers to Have Other Business Interests
- Ethanol Plant
- Better Agricultural Support Programs

## CONCLUSION

The results of the Goose Lake High Community Round Table suggest that the young people of the Roblin community have a great amount of awareness of the current condition of the community and some very strong and positive ideas about where they would like to see the community go.

The analysis done by the students covers a broad range of issues. The students seemed to place a fair amount of importance on recreation, quality of life, social services, schools and major employers when delineating the strengths of the Roblin community. Business activity, jobs, activities and recreation for youth and the community in general, services and the elderly were the areas in which the students judged the greatest weaknesses to occur. The areas of opportunity from the students' perspective occur in business development, entertainment and recreation, schools, advertising and promotion, services and investment. The threats to the Roblin community outlined by the students are in the areas of finance, employment, competition, regulations, the elderly, youth involvement and social issues.

While the area of recreation was judged as a strength of the community it was also seen as a weakness and an opportunity. The recreation programs and facilities were clearly appreciated but, it was felt that they are not properly developed and are not meeting the needs of the entire population. Opportunities exist, from the student perspective, to develop the community's recreation facilities and activities. Similarly, services were judged to be a strength, a weakness and an opportunity. Again, existing services are seen as strong points but the students believe that the community could be better serviced and therefore opportunities exist to expand the service level enjoyed by the community.

The students highlighted major employers in the community as a strength and at the same time said that a weakness of the community was the lack of overall business activity within the community. These are not contradictory points given that the students recognize the need for the business base to be diverse enough to meet the totality of needs which exist within the community. The result of this is that the students see business development as a major opportunity for the community to exploit.

Schools were seen as both an existing strength and an opportunity. The students realize the importance of education both in the present and for the future. They seem to be expressing a desire for the schools to be responsive to the changing educational needs of the population.

The students defined the elderly as both a weakness of the community and a threat to the community. The elderly are also seen as an opportunity. The prevalence of the elderly was associated with the decline of the community and the lack of a willingness to change and take chances. The elderly are also perceived to be reaping the majority of

## Conclusion (cont.)

the benefits from the community and dominating the decision-making process that effected the entire community. On a more positive note, the elderly are viewed as the one portion of the population who have the resources to invest back into the community in order to help it survive.

The students seem to recognize that they also have some measure of responsibility for the state of the community and its potential to change. This is indicated by their outline of the lack of spirit among the youth as a weakness of the community and the lack of youth involvement in the community as a threat.

Advertising and promotion were identified as opportunities on which the community could capitalize. There is a desire among the students to promote the positive things about the community as well as improve the aesthetic qualities of the community.

A certain number of the threats to the community identified by the students were internal. These perceived threats to the community can be changed because they originate from within the community. In particular, the role of the elderly relative to the youth within the community can be altered in order to correct the perceived inequities and problems that exist.

The action plan outlined by the students makes recommendations in seven major areas; business, recreation, the hospital, a festival, education, town beautification and agriculture.

With the exception of the recommendations in the area of agriculture, most of the recommendations concern themselves with how to make the Roblin community better for the people that currently live in the community. Issues put forward are those which can be solved internally without relying on people from outside the community to provide the avenue for change or make the suggested change successful. The focus of the students seems to be working at the deficiencies they perceive to be keeping the community from being the best place for them to live.

## COMPARISON - ROBLIN COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE TO THE GOOSE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL ROUND TABLE

While many of the issues raised in the Roblin Community Round Table were also raised in the Goose Lake High School Round Table, there are some marked differences. The student round table identified seniors as a weakness and a threat to the community due to their perception that a disproportionate amount of the community's resources are going to the senior population. The seniors are also associated with the power group of the community which the students see as unresponsive to their needs. The seniors are viewed as representing the portion of the population that is unwilling to change and therefore keep the community from progressing. This view of the senior portion of the population was not one expressed by the Roblin Community Round Table.

The Roblin Community Round Table (RCRT) identified recreation as a priority as did the Goose Lake High School Round Table (GLHSRT). The difference lies in the perspective of the two groups. The RCRT focused more on recreation and tourism ideas that would satisfy the needs of outsiders coming into the community to spend money. The GLHSRT focused more on meeting the recreational needs of the people who currently reside in the Roblin community. Both perspectives have merit and serve a purpose. The RCRT seems to suggest the greatest need is to bring outside money into the community to keep the community prosperous. The GLHSRT seems to suggest that the greatest need is to satisfy the requirements of the people who currently live and work in the community. If the people currently living in the community are satisfied with their community, then people who are not currently part of the community will come to see that community as a desirable place to be.

Both round table groups identified economic development or business activity as priorities for the community. Once again the difference lies in the approach each group took toward the problem. The RCRT put the greatest emphasis on attracting business to the area while the GLHSRT emphasised the development of business skills and business from within the community. For example, the GLHSRT stressed the need to support and promote existing business as well as develop the skills of the people who are currently in the community so they might have the tools to meet the business needs of the area's population.

Health care was also identified by both round table groups. The RCRT emphasised the need to develop more specialised medical services. The GLHSRT emphasised more specialised medical services as well as more efficient use of the existing services and opening avenues that would allow them, as young people, to become involved in the local medical system.

## Comparison - RCRT & GLHSRT (cont.)

The other categories identified by both groups differed in their content. The RCRT identified research, communication and waste management as priorities. All of these areas were placed within a predominantly local focus. The GLHSRT identified a festival, education, town beautification, and agriculture as priorities. All of these areas with the exception of agriculture focused on local projects aimed at improving the community for the current residents.