

The Unity Plan: Huntsville's Guide to a Sustainable Future

Community Forum 3 Summary Report

Tuesday July 12, 2010 6:00 – 9:00pm

Algonquin Theatre

37 Main Street, Huntsville ON



The following Summary Report was prepared by Lura Consulting. Lura is a third party, working with the Town of Huntsville and the community to develop the Town of Huntsville's Unity Plan. The Report closely follows the agenda and happenings of the third community forum, held on July 12, 2010. The report is not meant as a verbatim transcript, and is subject to review. If you have any questions or comments regarding the summary, please contact:

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1. Background on the Town of Huntsville's Unity Plan

The Town of Huntsville and Lura Consulting have been working together to establish The Unity Plan which is a sustainability plan for the Town. The Unity Plan lays the foundation for Huntsville's future through an extensive community planning process that which has led to a vision and goals for the future, which will be achieved through many actions.

Specifically, the Unity Plan has:

- Defined a community vision using three pillars of sustainability: environment, social and economy,
- Identified Huntsville's principles for sustainability;
- Identified a vision for the future, with goals and actions to support this vision;
- Developed a framework for implementation and monitoring the strategy.

For a full review of the draft plan, visit http://www.huntsville.ca/residents/unity_plan.htm

2. Community Forum 3: The Community Celebration

Public Open House (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

From 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., a public open house was established to provide community members with an opportunity to review posters about each of the goals and actions of the plan, and identify the areas they felt were priorities for early implementation. This also provided an opportunity for community members to ask questions of the Town's Unity Plan Working Group and Lura Consulting team members about the draft plan or register their interest in one of the implementation teams. The posters for action prioritization were made available to the public at the Summit Centre for 2 weeks following the July 12th meeting. To review the top three priorities in each theme area as identified by the meeting attendees at the July 12th meeting, please see appendix A. The list of priority actions will be updated again on August 6th, 2010. All of the feedback obtained from the community will be integrated into the final list of priorities and considered in the revisions of the draft plan.

3. Presentation and Discussion on the Draft Unity Plan (7:30-9:00)

Welcome, Structure and Purpose of the Meeting

Councillor Mary Jane Fletcher opened the meeting by commending the community, project team, and all others involved with the plan on their hard work on the draft to date. Councillor Fletcher then re-introduced the Lura team, including Susan Hall, Liz Nield, and Lindsey Goodchild.

Draft Plan Overview Presentation

Susan Hall of Lura Consulting started the meeting and outlined the structure for the session, which included a presentation, question and answer period, and an action-prioritizing activity. Susan indicated the purpose of the third community forum was to present the new additions to the plan, which included actions to support each of the goals, an implementation strategy, and a monitoring/reporting plan.

The presentation highlighted a selection of actions identified by the community that will aid in the realization of the goals. The action prioritization activity further examined what actions were of the greatest priority to the Huntsville community. To review the top priorities identified in each theme category, refer to Appendix A.

A framework for implementation was also discussed. The implementation framework included a proposed organizational structure which can be found in Appendix B. The implementation strategy involves 6, Community- Implementation- Team's (C.I.T.'s), a Unity Plan Implementation Committee, the Planning Director, Council, and the CAO. Meeting attendees were invited to join the C.I.T.'s or to make suggestions for ideal potential members and partners for each of the C.I.T.'s.

The importance of monitoring and reporting the plan was also addressed. In order to measure progress, celebrate achievements, and identify weaknesses, regular monitoring of The Unity Plan is required. Lura recommends on-going progress reporting by each of the C.I.T.'s, which is compiled into an annual report. Further, to ensure transparency and credibility, third-party auditors could also be used.

Questions and Answer Period

The following identified the questions and answers addressed at the community event. Participant questions are marked with 'Q', comments are identified with a 'C' and responses are identified with 'A' and were provided by Lura Consulting unless otherwise specified.

- C1: By creating Community Implementation Team's (C.I.T.'s) that are focused by sector, it detracts from the triple bottom line approach that this sustainability plan is based upon. This approach is too segregated. It would make better sense to have a large team that unifies all of the different theme areas so that all of the issues are equally considered.
- Q1: Why is "education" not specifically iterated in the C.I.T. group themes?
Education needs to play a more prominent role in this plan and in the community. This topic warrants its own C.I.T. group

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A1: Education does have a specific goal in the draft plan, but also plays a role in many of the other themes as well. Because of its presence in many goals, we felt it could be distributed through each C.I.T. However, we could find a place within one of the 6 groups, or make it its own if that is what the community deems necessary.

Councillor Greaves - It is important that we look at The Unity Plan as a living document. It will continue to evolve and adapt, it's important to understand that this plan is just the beginning of the process. It is a blueprint that will be reviewed and adjusted – there is a large emphasis on the continual evolution. You will see Education throughout many of the goals in the plan.

C2: This plan needs to have an increased focus on economic development. This plan needs to promote business development and the attraction of industries/manufacturing that so that the people who live in Huntsville can have access to wages that allow them to continue to live here. If this plan doesn't place an emphasis on unemployment and wages, many residents of Huntsville will be forced to leave and all of the other parts won't matter. As we see it, once a strong economic base is established, the other pieces will naturally come and evolve (i.e. increased education options, effective health care services).

A2: Councillor George Young - When we have examined Huntsville's economy, we have discovered that it is unlikely that large manufacturing industries will locate here. However we are focusing on expanding our knowledge based industries, the IT sector, and green technologies opportunities. We have identified some new opportunities in the market, and are going to continue to explore new options to expand/diversify the job opportunities here. It has been proven to us that focusing on manufacturing is outdated - the location of Huntsville is not as suitable in comparison with other locations (highway access, rail, etc).

The presentation provided highlights within each theme area. Within the economic theme of the Unity Plan many of these issues are addressed with a number of goals and actions.

C3: I disagree with the idea of putting the economic pillar in front of the other ones. It defeats the purpose of this plan, which is to provide balance in our community. We can't continue to have one pillar outweigh the other, because when we do that we are left with a whole host of new problems. For example, when we focus solely on economic development, the environment loses priority and our environment becomes quickly degraded.

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C4: I am impressed with the idea of the C.I.T.'s, and support the way they have been grouped into the 6 theme sections. These theme groupings will draw on a resource base of enthusiastic people who are passionate about their sector, and are already involved in the sector (with a good understanding of the issues/opportunities in the sector). It is ideal to have these committees comprised of people that have the pertinent backgrounds, networks, and passion to drive change within these different impact areas.

Q2: As this is a draft document, is there still an opportunity to make changes and provide feedback? Can new issues be brought forth at this stage in the Plan? If there is an issue that hasn't yet been addressed to this point, can it be incorporated at this point?

A2: As it is in a draft stage, feedback and suggestions are still welcome. If people have feedback, they are welcome to contact the project team. It is ideal if the comments could be provided by email to ensure that the team has them in writing. If you have comments, please send forward to shall@lura.ca or unity.plan@huntsville.ca

Q3: On the municipal side, how will the staffing for this plan work? Will the Planning Director have time to ensure this plan moves forward?

A: Councillor Mary Jane Fletcher - The Planning Director that has recently been hired has a background in sustainability so is a great fit to help lead this from the municipal side. However, we plan on working the Unity Plan roles into the job description for all Town employees. We realize that this is more than a 1 person job, and we know that to really make this happen, we need to develop a culture and way of thinking around this plan (and the job description mandate will help to ensure that).

Councillor Chris Zanetti - In the municipal process, sustainability implications will now be included in consideration of projects, developments, etc. The sustainability considerations will be demonstrated in a similar way to the financial implications that we currently use.

C5: I would like to know how this plan affects tax payers. It seems as though it is already expensive with the hiring of the Sustainability Director, and also with the C.I.T.'s.

A5: Councillor Mary Jane Fletcher - There is no tax implication from this project. The Planning Director position is a position that has already existed within the Town, it just hadn't been filled. The timing has worked out well however, because we were able to retain someone with a strong background in sustainability. The

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C.I.T.'s are unpaid volunteers, so that will not create any costs. In terms of the various projects that may be undertaken as a result of the Unity Plan, the Green Municipal Fund has many funding opportunities and grants for the bigger projects. Further, many of these developments/projects will help us with the federal gas tax. The gas tax credit requires a sustainability plan, which is one of the reasons we undertook this plan. We are currently running ahead of the curve taking this plan on at this point.

Councillor Chris Zanetti - The only additional costs – would be a minimal cost to council – copying and paper etc. The potential hiring of a Sustainability Coordinator has not yet been fully explored, and at this point there are no funds set aside for this as of yet. We will investigate other ways to deliver this role.

Councillor Mike Greaves - As well, we should explain that municipal time is divided (part of “in kind” contribution). The work that Town employees do on this plan, it is part of their 40 hours a week. It is part of their roles, it isn't excess time.

- Q4: Does this plan identify private, Crown and the First Nations land? The plan needs to identify these distinctions and be applicable to Crown lands.
- A4: Thank you for your comments; we can discuss this more in detail after the meeting.
- Q5: What is the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the other potential partners in the C.I.T. process? The potential partners identified in the presentation have focused on federal, provincial and District partners
- A5: The potential partners listed in the presentation are to give an idea of the types of organizations with which to partner. Many of these organizations already have initiatives that relate to the goals and actions making them an ideal partner. The draft plan identifies a longer list of options as well. If you have ideas about different potential NGOs, please inform us and encourage them to approach us.
- C6: In CIT's, need an iteration that states that you are going to have a triple pronged approach – must balance all 3 needs.
- C7: I can appreciate the work that has been done here. But it doesn't seem to discuss the absolute realities of many of these topics. For example, there is a lack of focus on reduction of our consumption habits or reducing growth.
- C8: I am concerned with the wording “encourage”/”support” under the municipal operations goal. I would rather see more ”mandate” . I think the community needs to closely look at these words and provide feedback to the project team.

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- A8: Only in the municipal matters can we use the terminology mandate. The words that are chosen such as encourage and support, are chosen because we felt we could not mandate the public or certain groups within the community on actions. We can discuss further use of 'mandate' under municipal operations with the Town.
- Q6: Again on the publicly owned Crown land or First Nations land - does the draft specifically address any of the land use issues faced by First Nations in the area?
- A6: The Unity Plan is intended to be a high level strategic plan and does not address land ownership in its recommendations.
- Q7: Will you be retaining all of these actions that are on the boards, or will you be knocking any off?
- A7: The purpose of the prioritization exercise is to help identify those actions that are most important to the people in the community today for the C.I.T.s. I believe that all the actions identified should stay on the list, but we can organize it in a way that some actions are acted upon first, while others are longer term.
- C9: Councillor Mary Jane Fletcher - It is important at this stage that the implementation is the focus. The community partners are essential, and so are the residents, but it is difficult to reach out to everyone. This is where we encourage you to reach out to your neighbours and friends and others in the community and suggest their participation in CITs. We have done some soliciting for the C.I.T.'s but this is a community plan, so please take advantage of the input opportunities and become involved.

Closing Remarks

Susan re-iterated that community members were welcome to provide further comments via email until August 6th and to provide their thoughts on the priorities in each of the goals if they had not done so already. She also encouraged participants to register their interest in the Implementation Teams and thanked all for the attending the evening and providing their input to the draft plan.

Councillor Mary Jane Fletcher thanked all who attended the meeting for their continued contribution to the development of the plan

4. Next Steps

Final input from the community on the draft plan and implementation strategy will continue being sought until August 6th, 2010. The Huntsville community is encouraged to review the plan which can be found on the website, and send comments to

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shall@lura.ca or unity.plan@huntsville.ca . Residents can also participate in the prioritizing of actions, using the same boards which were used in the community celebration. The theme boards will be on display at the Summit Centre until August 6th, 2010.

The information gathered at this Community Forum will be used in conjunction with other feedback received from the Working Group, Council and residents over the coming weeks to further refine the plan. The final version of The Unity Plan will be presented to Council for approval in September 2010. Following approval, the final plan will be submitted to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The formation of the implementation teams will officially occur in the Fall. Interested individuals should email: unity.plan@huntsville.ca. to express their interest in joining the implementation teams, this email should indicate the implementation team of choice. Huntsville's new Planning Director is scheduled to join the Town in early September. The Planning Director will help to ensure the forward movement of the Plan and the implementation teams.

5. Project Team and Council Members Meeting Attendance

Council in Attendance	Working Group Members in Attendance	Lura Team Members in Attendance
Councillor Fletcher	Councillor Greaves	Susan Hall
Councillor Greaves	Councillor Fletcher	Liz Nield
Councillor Young	Colleen MacDonald	Lindsey Goodchild
Councillor Zanetti	Teri Souter	
	Mike Harrower	

APPENDIX A

The following is a list of the top three priorities identified in each theme area. The number next to the theme title/goal indicates the number of votes. The three actions listed under each theme illustrate the goals which received the highest number of votes within that theme area. These are the results from the July 12th, 2010 meeting exclusively. The priority actions will be updated August 6th, 2010 once all other feedback from the community is received.

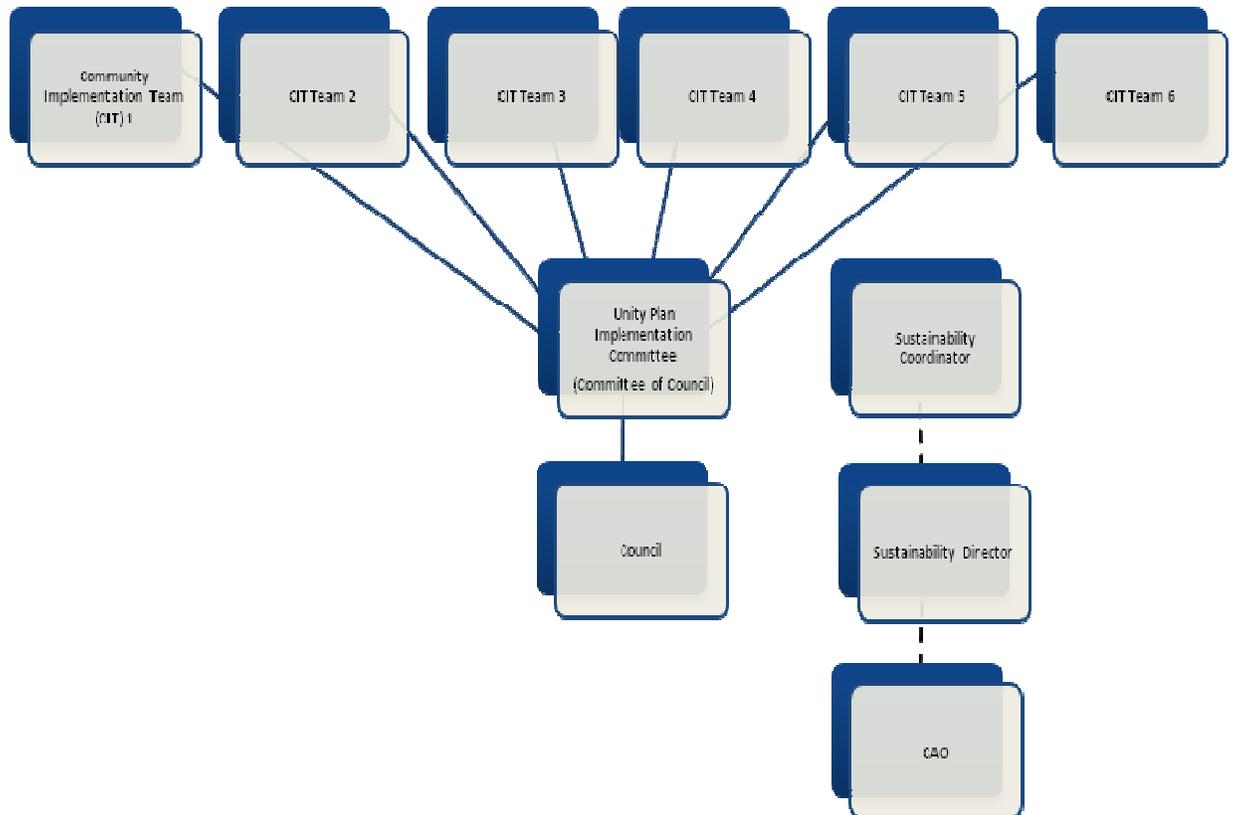
- Environmental Protection (109)
 - Enforce shoreline protection (12)
 - Protect natural environment (10)
 - Minimize habitat fragmentation (10)
- Healthy Active Community (87)
 - Promote outdoor recreation opportunities and work with school board for use of facilities (7)
 - Work with Seniors Housing facilities to offer health and active options for older adults (8)
 - Connect trail from Huntsville to Arrowhead Provincial Park (9)
- Energy Conservation (85)
 - Educate the community organizations and Town about green energy opportunities (16)
 - Work with district to develop local small scale power generation project that sustains Huntsville's needs using renewable energy (15)
 - Be a municipal leader in renewable energy (14)
- Transportation (85)
 - Advocate for train service to GTA that include practical schedule of arrival/departure (11)
 - Examine feasibility of implementing a car share or bike-share program (10)
 - Promote and participate in the Bike Train (12)
- Affordable Housing (85)
 - Amend OP to support the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of households of all income levels (11)
 - Provide a range of housing options to support senior's age-in-place and active lifestyles (11)
 - Break the cycle of poverty and get to the root cause of the need for affordable housing (8)
- Land Use Planning (79)
 - Protect tree lines and viewscapes of the Town (6)
 - Develop environmental codes and standards (8)

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- Ensure that green building design/construction is incorporated into urban development (6)
- Promote multi-residential structures and increase density in the urban core (6)
- Municipal Operations and Infrastructure (77)
 - Mandate % of energy coming from alternative sources (9)
 - Create litter-free community and eliminate plastic water bottles (6)
 - Investigate how to increase grey water re-usage (8)
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage (64)
 - Develop a Cultural Plan that identifies common goals and strategies to promote art and culture (8)
 - Explore collaborative solutions to finding appropriate facilities and venues for art (e.g. public art gallery) (9)
 - Recognize arts as a feasible economic driver (8)
- Healthcare (59)
 - Provide dignified seniors housing that meets the needs of the community (8)
 - Educate health care members on preventative medicine (8)
 - Work with organizations to promote preventative health measures (9)
- Education (58)
 - Identify any additional programs/higher education that may be interested in coming to Huntsville (12)
 - Provide re-training opportunities for those in the manufacturing sector in areas that contribute to sustainability (7)
 - Encourage University of Waterloo students to design and implement sustainability programs (7)
- Economic Development (56)
 - Promote trades training facilities and recruit technical research opportunities (6)
 - Create opportunities for eco-technology and eco-tourism (5)
 - Revise Economic Development Strategy and establish Economic Development Corporation (4)
- Social Well Being (29)
 - Create awareness of cultural sensitivity (4)
 - Provide money management training for families (3)
 - Educate community on appropriate language to describe people with special needs (3)

APPENDIX B

Proposed organizational model for The Unity Plan Implementation



Community Implementation Teams by Theme

