



A STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
LACLOCHE MANITOULIN



A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LACLOCHE MANITOULIN

A REPORT FOR THE
LACLOCHE MANITOULIN BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
CORPORATION

Prepared by
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VISION STATEMENT

The goal of LaCloche Manitoulin is to become a broad-based economically and socially attractive area where existing and future businesses can be sustained, while preserving the environmental, social and cultural diversity of the area.



CORE VALUES OF LACLOCHE MANITOULIN

1. Our Unique Identity - evidenced by our healthy lifestyle, unspoiled environment, low crime rate, low population density, temperate climate and beautiful natural surroundings - and the importance of maintaining our environment.
2. Our Balanced Economy - the importance of maintaining the diversity found in our farming, resource-based industries, tourism and services sectors.
3. Our Sense of Community - evidenced by our levels of volunteerism, community stewardship, cultural diversity, pride of individuality and pride of ownership of family/small businesses.

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To all the people who contributed their ideas and took the time to write or come out to a meeting, thank you for your interest. I hope that this report will be instrumental in building a stronger economy in your community while safeguarding your core values. I would also like to express my appreciation for the key informants gave me time out of their very busy schedules. They provided important input that resulted in many of the best ideas for development. Above all, the Vision Group made a significant contribution to this work. It reflects their hopes and dreams for the future of the area they love. The enthusiasm of this eclectic group was contagious and their dedication to the process at times almost surpassed my own! I thoroughly enjoyed working with such a lively and knowledgeable group.

The last word of thanks goes to FedNor for providing the funding for this project and to the LAMBAC board for having the vision to initiate it. My sincere hopes that this project will lead to a brighter future for LaCloche Manitoulin.

Mary Nelder, MPA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January of 2000, LAMBAC, a Community Futures Development Corporation, undertook a Strategic Planning project funded by FedNor. A consultant was hired to conduct the study and the project was named “*LaCloche Manitoulin...Let’s Go!*” The purpose of the study was to create a Strategic Plan for economic development of LaCloche Manitoulin which would direct the area in the next five years and explore ways to develop and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

The area covered by the Strategic Plan includes all the land under LAMBAC’s jurisdiction: Manitoulin Island with the exception of the First Nation communities, the north shore communities along highway 17 from Nairn Centre to Walford, as well as the highway 6 communities of Espanola and Whitefish Falls. The strategic plan looked for development opportunities in light manufacturing, agricultural diversification, forestry diversification and other sectors identified through the community consultations. The tourism industry in the area had been studied the previous year by LAMBAC and a Tourism Marketing initiative was already in progress so tourism was not the focus of this study.

Methodology

To ensure a participatory process and achievable recommendations, the study incorporated a three phase process:

- ⇒ Phase 1 - *Strategic Thinking*. Time spent planning to plan.
- ⇒ Phase 2 - *Strategy Creation*. Broad community consultation.
- ⇒ Phase 3 - *Strategic Planning*. Market research on a short list of potential opportunities.

The project began in Feb. 2000 and the final report was presented to the LAMBAC board in August. The resulting Strategic Plan was unveiled to the public in September 2000.

Involvement and buy-in from stakeholders was considered fundamental to the success of the project. This was achieved by several means. The project was followed closely in the local media and public participation was encouraged. Focus groups were held in almost every community across the area. Interviews were conducted with community leaders, government representatives and managers of the largest private sector employers. Drawing people from the agriculture, forestry, industry, service and public sectors, a Vision Group of 30 individuals was formed to guide the process and assist in decision making about development opportunities. In total more than 200 persons contributed to the project.

One hundred and ten suggestions for economic development came out of the community consultation. From these, a list of the Top Ten were selected for further research. Each was subjected to approximately twenty hours of market research. Based on the results of this research, and after much discussion with the Vision Group, recommendations were made for the Strategic Plan.

Study Results

After conducting a situation audit of the economy of the area, Vision Group members identified the Core Values, those things which they would *not* be willing to sacrifice in return for greater economic activity in the area.

1. *Our Unique Identity* - evidenced by our healthy lifestyle, unspoiled environment, low crime rate, low population density, temperate climate and beautiful natural surroundings - and the importance we attach to maintaining our environment.
2. *Our Balanced Economy* - the importance of maintaining the diversity found in our farming, resource-based industries, tourism and services sectors.
3. *Our Sense of Community* - evidenced by our levels of volunteerism, community stewardship, cultural diversity, pride of individuality and pride of ownership of family/small businesses.

They went on to develop a statement of their vision for the area, describing the kind of community they would like to see in five year's time. This Vision Statement is as follows:

"The goal of LaCloche Manitoulin is to become a broad-based economically and socially attractive area where existing and future businesses can be sustained, while preserving the environmental, social and cultural diversity of the area." This statement, along with the core values listed above, was used to set the stage for discussions in the community focus groups.

Out of the 110 community-generated suggestions for economic development, a list of ten was chosen for phase three, the market research phase. This list was dubbed the Top Ten.

1. cooperative marketing and branding of Manitoulin LaCloche products
2. abattoir
3. aquaculture research facility and demonstration farm
4. processing of rough lumber and remanufacturing of lumber
5. west end link to the U.S.
6. supported living for retirees and seniors
7. boat building industry
8. fruit wine production
9. microbrewery
10. glass production OR production of forms for Iso-mix

Since there were two options tied for #10, neither of which looked particularly promising after a few hours of research, a different option, commercial composting was substituted. Based on the results of the market research, there were several strategies recommended.

The study produced a Strategic Plan with a staggered time frame. This Plan recommends three concrete strategies to be implemented over the first two years, including a more complex strategy to be researched further and implemented if feasible, and an umbrella plan setting broader targets for the following three years, to be elaborated as circumstances allow.

Recommendations

Two of the development opportunities were recommended for *implementation* as soon as possible within the first two years of the Strategic Plan.

- ⇒ commercial composting
- ⇒ cooperative marketing and branding

One was recommended for *further research* and, if feasible, implementation as soon as possible.

- ⇒ west end link to the U.S.

Three others were recommended as *possible directions* for the last three years of the plan. They will be investigated as time permits and pursued if feasible.

- ⇒ supported living for retirees and seniors
- ⇒ aquaculture research facility and demonstration farm
- ⇒ fruit wine production

Throughout the course of the community consultation there arose many suggestions for economic development which the Vision Group felt were important, had potential and were compatible with the core values of the area but which were not suitable for inclusion in the Strategic Plan. Many of these ideas were already being pursued by a group or an organization in the area. The Strategic Plan offers support in principle to these organizations and encourages funding bodies to give serious consideration to financial assistance for these projects.

- ⇒ abattoir
- ⇒ boat building
- ⇒ call centre for Espanola
- ⇒ development of trails throughout region
- ⇒ tourism information centres in Espanola and Nairn Centre
- ⇒ development of fibre-optic infrastructure
- ⇒ bridge/link between South Baymouth and Tobermory
- ⇒ development of an air service for Manitoulin
- ⇒ youth enterprise centre as a joint initiative of LAMBAC and Waubetek
- ⇒ floating charity casino
- ⇒ development of flight school &/or aircraft maintenance service
- ⇒ development of better roads in the region

Implementation Plan

The Strategic Plan identifies questions which remain unanswered for each of the recommended strategies. It also outlines tasks which will need to be accomplished to begin the process of implementation. With the completion this Strategic Plan, LaCloche

Manitoulin is poised to embrace the new century with optimism and direction. LaCloche
Manitoulin...Let's Go!

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LACLOCHE MANITOULIN

INTRODUCTION

In the spirit of the new millennium, the Manitoulin LaCloche area embarked on an exciting project of planning for the future. Under the leadership of LAMBAC, a Community Futures Development Corporation funded by FedNor, a Strategic Planning project was initiated. A consultant was hired to conduct the study which would result in a strategic plan for the area. This project was named “*LaCloche Manitoulin...Let’s Go!*”

Purpose:

The purpose of the study was to create a Strategic Plan for economic development of LaCloche Manitoulin which would direct the area in the next five years and explore ways to develop and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Objectives:

There were three stated objectives for the study.

To involve the people and the communities of LaCloche Manitoulin in a process of

- a) *strategic thinking* about their vision for the future of the area
- b) *strategy creation* to generate ideas towards the realization of the future vision
- c) *strategic planning* to develop a road map for implementation of the most promising strategies.

Terms of Reference:

The area to be covered by the Strategic Plan included all the land under LAMBAC’s jurisdiction. This includes Manitoulin Island with the exception of the First Nation communities, the north shore communities along highway 17 from Nairn Centre to Walford, as well as the highway 6 communities of Espanola and Whitefish Falls.

The strategic plan would identify development opportunities in light manufacturing, agricultural diversification, forestry diversification and other sectors that might be identified through the community consultations. The tourism industry in the area had been studied the previous year by LAMBAC and a Tourism Marketing initiative was already in progress. Thus it was decided to put the focus on other economic sectors in this study.

The intent of the LAMBAC board of directors was to involve the whole community in determining the best directions to pursue and to identify the individuals and organizations to make the plan happen. See Appendix A for the complete Terms of Reference.

ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY

To ensure a participatory process and a successful outcome, the consultant and the LAMBAC board agreed on the following three essential elements of the study.

⇒ A three phase process:

- Phase 1 - *Strategic Thinking*. Time spent planning to plan.
- Phase 2 - *Strategy Creation*. Broad community consultation.
- Phase 3 - *Strategic Planning*. Market research on a short list of potential opportunities.

⇒ Stakeholder involvement:

- *Community Contacts*. Because of the size and diversity of the area, it was important to enlist the support of a key contact for each of the LAMBAC partners, LaCloche and Manitoulin, a person with established business contacts in their area. These three people played a key role in working with the consultant to identify stakeholder groups and recruit representatives to participate in the Vision Group.
- *Vision Group*. To ensure that the strategic plan was developed by the people who would be responsible for implementing it, a stakeholder group was created early in the study and consulted at each stage of the study. This Vision Group, comprised of 30 members, included representatives from the municipalities as well as from the agricultural sector, the forestry sector, the mining sector, the service sector and from industry.
- *Community Focus Groups*. To ensure broad based community consultation in an area as large as LaCloche Manitoulin, a series of community-based focus groups was held in locations and at times most suitable to the target group. The focus group sessions were well advertised to encourage wide participation. Focus group participants were asked for their ideas for economic development in their area / sector.
- *Key Informant Interviews*. Senior management of the largest industries in the area were individually interviewed, as were representatives of the provincial and federal civil service who play key roles in assisting with funding of development initiatives in the area.

⇒ A staggered strategic plan:

To limit the number of problems which arise from discontinuities in the future and to allow for flexibility to adjust to such unforeseen changes, the study would produce a staggered plan. This would include concrete strategies to be implemented for a period of two years, and an umbrella plan setting broader targets for the following three years, to be elaborated as the circumstances at the time dictate.

METHODOLOGY

Phase 1 - Strategic Thinking

Henry Mintzberg, in his book *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*, discusses the many pitfalls which may lead to unsatisfactory endings when undertaking strategic planning. He argues convincingly that rather than engaging in planning first, thus eventually arriving at a set of strategies, one must instead begin with strategic thinking, identifying strategies from “ideas which are in the air”¹ before moving on to planning. “In these steps, we see planning taking over after strategy has been identified, so that the two elements in our planning dilemma combine in sequence. One creates the direction through synthesis, the other clarifies and orders that direction through analysis.”²

Guided by this recommendation, “LaCloche Manitoulin...Let’s Go!” invested considerable time and energy in strategic thinking. LAMBAC board members, Community Contacts and Vision Group members from different walks of life were encouraged to ponder a future for their area which would include a healthy economy interwoven with a healthy lifestyle. It was their vision which shaped the outcome of this project.

Planning to Plan - An initial meeting was held with the board of directors of LAMBAC to clarify the consultant’s mandate and to determine the project objectives. The board members identified stakeholder groups and offered suggestions as to possible candidates for the Community Contacts and Vision Group. A detailed workplan was agreed upon as shown in Appendix B.

Key community contacts were hired to advise the consultant. Jeff Hietkamp, the Reeve of Gordon Township and current chair of the Manitoulin Municipal Association, agreed to act as the western Manitoulin community contact. Kelly O’Hare, owner of The Anchor Bar & Grill, past president of the Manitoulin Chamber of Commerce and vice president of the Manitoulin Tourism Association agreed to act as the contact for eastern Manitoulin. Bill McKenna, a marketing consultant from Massey, acted as the community contact for the LaCloche area.

Developing Framework - The consultant reviewed all relevant existing studies for economic development in the area. LAMBAC files on specific initiatives were reviewed. A promotional plan for the project was developed. The project name was chosen and a logo was commissioned to create public interest in and recognition of the process. A press release was prepared for the local media.

¹ Langely, as quoted in *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. Mintzberg, Henry. 1995. p 338

² *ibid.* p 336

After setting terms of reference for the Vision Group, thirty people were recruited to sit on this advisory body. Members were carefully chosen to ensure representation from forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, mining, industry, local government and the service sector. The consultant made every attempt to balance the group in terms of age, gender, and geographic representation. Appendix C shows the terms of reference for the Vision Group and Appendix D lists the members and the area they represent.

Although the project mandate specifically did not include First Nations, it was considered important to develop links with the planning process in the aboriginal community. To this end, the executive director of Waubetek, the Community Development Corporation for First Nations communities in the area, was asked to address the first meeting of the Vision Group regarding planning for economic development in their communities. She also agreed to sit as a member of the group.

Vision Group meeting #1 - At the first meeting of the Vision Group, members were introduced to each other and to the consultant. The objectives of the project were explained, as was the mandate of the Vision Group. During the day the group was coached in conducting a situation audit of the area and in assessing its readiness for economic development. They identified what they believed to be the Core Values of the area and from those, developed a Vision Statement for the future which would guide the remainder of the strategic planning project. At the end of the day, assistance was solicited from the Vision Group members in setting up focus groups within their community of influence.

Phase 2 - Strategy Creation

Community Consultation - A total of thirteen focus group sessions were held in communities across the LaCloche Manitoulin area. Sector-specific groups were held with representatives of the agriculture community, the aquaculture community, the Chamber of Commerce for Manitoulin Island and the economic development committee for the town of N.E.M.I. Advertisements were placed in the three local newspapers, posters were distributed and personal invitations were issued to encourage public participation in the focus groups. Examples of the advertisements and invitations can be found in Appendix E. Approximately 165 people attended and participated in this form of public consultation.

Specific key stakeholders in the area were identified and individual interviews were conducted with them. These included the managers from the Domtar paper mill and the Domtar sawmill and the manager of the Lafarge operations on Manitoulin. Unsuccessful attempts were also made to interview the management at Manitoulin Transport and Farquhar's Dairies, two other industries in the area. Representatives of the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines, the Ministry

of Agriculture and Food, Human Resources Development Canada, and FedNor were also interviewed. Two of the municipalities in the area, Assiginack and Espanola, have economic development officers and are actively engaged in certain projects. These two economic development officers were interviewed along with the mayor of Espanola and the reeve of Assiginack.

The consultant attended the annual general meeting of the Espanola Chamber of Commerce and two meetings of the Regional Economic Partners. This is an informal association of municipal and First Nation leaders whose meetings to discuss economic development are jointly sponsored by LAMBAC, Waubetek and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Written submissions were solicited from the general public regarding ideas for economic development. Eight such submissions were received. In total, more than 200 people participated in the community consultation phase. From all of the sources, a total of 110 suggestions for economic development were obtained.

Appendix F contains a listing of the locations of the community focus groups as well as the key informants who were interviewed. The interview format used for the Key Informant interviews can be found in Appendix G

Analysis - Data from the community consultations were divided into categories according to the sector of the economy. They were analysed for common themes and like suggestions were grouped together. They were prioritized according to the number of times the idea was suggested or supported during the consultation phase. Each idea, herein after referred to as a development opportunity, was identified by the community from which it originated. This final prioritized list of development opportunities was circulated to the Vision Group members.

Vision Group meeting #2 - After approving the revised Vision Statement and Core Values, the Vision Group discussed the list of 110 development opportunities. They began by establishing their criteria for selecting the top ten for further study. See Appendix H for the selection criteria.

As each opportunity was discussed it was assigned a colour code as follows. Green signified a suggestion which looked promising. Yellow meant that there was need for more information and discussion before a decision could be made. A red dot indicated that the group thought the opportunity did not represent a good bet at this time. A blue dot was used to indicate development opportunities which should be or were being pursued by some other body.

Because this process took an entire day, the Group agreed to meet again the next week to finish the job. At this meeting, all those development suggestions which had been coded yellow were reviewed and reclassified as either green, red or blue. The green list was also reviewed and some further grouping of mutually

dependent development opportunities was done. The Vision Group was left with a final list of 22 “definitely green” suggestions from which they voted to select the Top Ten. Twenty eight members of the Vision Group participated in the voting. Each of the final Top Ten development opportunities received at least ten votes.

A second list was created from those suggestions rated blue for development opportunities which should be or were being pursued by another organization. The group judged these opportunities to be worthy of support and voted to send a letter indicating their support to the various bodies responsible for their development.

Phase 3 - Strategic Planning

Market Research - Each of the Top Ten development opportunities selected by the Vision Group was subjected to market research by the consultant. Efforts were made to identify potential markets and to investigate existing models in other locations. Information was obtained concerning infrastructure needs and capital investment required for business start-up. The market potential was assessed and barriers to development were identified.

Vision Group meeting #3 - For one last time the Vision Group members came together for a day to consider the results of the market research on the Top Ten development opportunities. The consultant presented research notes and comments on each of the ten suggestions. Questions remaining to be answered were identified by the group for each of the ideas. Discussion focused on the feasibility of each opportunity. Consensus was reached concerning the final recommendations for strategic development, those to be pursued in the short term and potential directions for the longer term. After issuing a joint statement to the press announcing their recommendations and calling for implementation to begin as soon as possible, the Vision Group disbanded. Appendix I contains the press release.

Writing of Strategic Plan - The results of the strategic planning project were written up in the form of a draft report which was presented to the directors of LAMBAC for their review and feedback. Following approval of the report, the LAMBAC board of directors sponsored a public launch of the new Strategic Plan for LaCloche Manitoulin in September 2000.

STUDY RESULTS

Phase 1 - Strategic Thinking

Situation Audit

Vision Group members began by conducting an audit of the existing strengths and weaknesses of the area, looking at each sector in turn. Although it was acknowledged that there are regional differences across and between LaCloche and Manitoulin, the decision was made to consider the area as a whole for the purposes of the situation audit. This decision came from the realization that many similarities exist across the area when looking at sectors of the economy. For example, the Massey area with its agriculture base bears many similarities to western Manitoulin. Tourism and the service sector cut across all boundaries. The forestry sector is vital to Nairn Centre, as it is to many parts of the Island.

Looking to the future, the economic opportunities and threats in each sector were also predicted. Tables 1 to 5 below show the results of the situation audit by sector.

Table 1 **AQUACULTURE /AGRICULTURE**

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family based, a way of life • motivated by desire to live here, not by money • alternative forms of farming - fish, hemp • organic farming - trendy, on the rise • regional marketing • inexpensive land • climate • fresh water resources • no large population to be offended by smell of manure • aquaculture strength in processing • labour pool - federal programs available 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor returns, very low wages • climate • lack of markets • rocky land • distance to market • gas prices, transportation costs • lack of local processing • investment costs to start up • lack of gov't support • market franchization
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alternative farming -e.g. sheep for wool, hemp production and processing • aquaculture - e.g. pond, public water bodies • marketing of LaCloche Manitoulin products • aquamarket huge • unused land • "Manitoulin" product • process locally - niche market 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climate • economic conditions • global competition • no consistency of products • increased population leads to increased land values • exchange rate • transportation costs • recreation taking property out of production

Table 2 **RESOURCE SECTOR (forestry/ mining)**

<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clean water • abundance of resources • water transportation • less legislation - doesn't restrict us • financing favourable • lots of water for power production, fish species • big company in forestry - Domtar • conscious of need for reforestation • mineral resources - limestone - jobs in processing • clean air 	<p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distance from market • resources being depleted • increasing costs, decreasing profit • climate • not too many job opportunities • Manitoulin private land • isolated
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trade with U.S. • further processing of products • "value-added" e.g. smoked fish, cedar furniture • minerals - research and development - e.g. nickel batteries • fossil fuels decreasing, alternatives increasing • cheaper place to research and produce 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trade with U.S. • increasing bureaucracy

Table 3 INDUSTRY

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inexpensive land • lower labour rates (<i>only on Manitoulin</i>) • lots of available labour • good roads • quality of life • close to natural resources - forest, water, fish, minerals • shipping routes - water, land • young families 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • out-migration - better jobs elsewhere • distance to market • poor telecommunications e.g fibre optics • lack of infrastructure • rezoning • attitude of laissez-faire • higher educated are leaving
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convert natural resources to value-added products • CRTC changes will improve • Global opportunities through home-based telecommunications • education - college, staff, satellite - to train skilled staff • cogeneration: loss of opportunity if inaction 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brain drain • smoke stack industry • pollution • not viable to achieve high speed communication • lack of skilled labour force • never current so we fall behind

Table 4 SERVICE SECTOR

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health care / hospitals • highways 17 & 6 • rinks in all communities • rec. centre in Espanola • diverse and unique services • skilled people • volunteerism • tourism • friendliness 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telecommunications • lack of doctors • width of bridge • too close to Sudbury services • maintenance of highway • limited selection • buying power for small service providers • lack of population • lack of year-round employment • too much supply, not enough demand • need for staff education in customer service • availability of water/sewer
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telecommunication • improved access to Manitoulin e.g. ferry, fixed link • hospitality training • expanding recycling, sewer, water supply 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer mind set • red tape • competition for development and limited money • snowballing costs for infrastructure

Table 5

OTHER / TOURISM

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four seasons • unique geology, flora and fauna • community arts and entertainment • marine heritage • ecotourism • well-established industry • economical tourism • compatible with other industries • water • beautiful scenery of Manitoulin, LaCloche 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short season for nature opportunities • economic viability • low pay, short-term employment • lack of air service • limited scope of choices • lack of accommodation for large groups • limited hours of services • water/sewer services
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generation of films from small communities • interpretive opportunities - students, specialty schools • microbrewery - clean water • marketing our uniqueness • could be year-round • inbound tour packages • “retirement” living- marketing to people who are retired - clean air, water, space • assisted living for seniors • central tourist reservation system using internet • aim market at “aging” before “old age” 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transportation costs • low water levels • environment - effect on fishing • lifestyle of seniors moving to the area - e.g. 6 mos. stay per year • seniors demand for services cause higher taxes • shorter life span for seniors

Predicting Trends

Philosopher Eric Hofer says that the only way to predict the future is to have control over the future. Acknowledging that they were unable to predict the future, Vision Group members nevertheless attempted to identify the trends which they saw evolving both internally in the LaCloche Manitoulin area and externally. By identifying recent developments the group got a sense of direction for the near future.

Internal trends which they identified were:

- increased production of fish through aquaculture, leading to public debate about impact on water quality
- increased interest in leisure activities resulting in proliferation of services
- the need for re-education in commercial fields resulting from technological advances
- increased need for volunteerism with downsizing of social programs
- strengthening of identity of First Nations communities and increased business activity
- growth of interest in ecotourism
- changing municipal boundaries, leading to changing sense of community identity

External developments thought to be having an impact on the area were:

- the demand for fibre optic capability
- 'dot.com' influence on daily living
- the search for prime retirement locations
- increasing fuel prices and the impact on transporting goods
- changing demographics and the aging population
- the return to work of retirees
- market globalization, creating room for niche markets
- big box stores
- the brain drain

Core Values

While it is easy to say that economic development is desirable, sometimes it comes at a price which, if predicted, might have prevented or changed the way development occurred. To avoid the possibility of economic development strategies recommended by this project becoming more of a curse than a benefit, the Vision Group judged it wise to think carefully about those values which we hold most dear in the LaCloche Manitoulin area. They pondered what they would or would not be willing to sacrifice in return for greater economic activity in the area. Discussion focused on how we see ourselves as unique, what it is that makes the area an attractive place to live and work...in effect, those factors that brought us here and keep us here.

From the list of values identified by the Vision Group, three themes emerged as the core values which should not be compromised.

1. *Our Unique Identity* - evidenced by our healthy lifestyle, unspoiled environment, low crime rate, low population density, temperate climate and beautiful natural surroundings - and the importance we attach to maintaining our environment.
2. *Our Balanced Economy* - the importance of maintaining the diversity found in our farming, resource-based industries, tourism and services sectors.
3. *Our Sense of Community* - evidenced by our levels of volunteerism, community stewardship, cultural diversity, pride of individuality and pride of ownership of family/small businesses.

Vision Statement

The Vision Group developed a statement of their vision for the area, describing the kind of community they would like to see in five year's time.

The goal of LaCloche Manitoulin is to become a broad-based economically and socially attractive area where existing and future businesses can be sustained, while preserving the environmental, social and cultural diversity of the area.

This statement, along with the core values listed above, was used to set the stage for the discussions in the community focus groups. The public was asked to react to the vision statement and the core values and to indicate whether or not it accurately described how they see their area. Aside from suggestions of minor changes in wording, participants in the community consultation process overwhelmingly supported this vision statement and the core values for LaCloche Manitoulin.

Phase 2 - Strategy Creation

Focus Group Results

In keeping with Langley's analogy of "mining the ideas which are in the air"³, the consultant solicited public participation from across the region in a series of community-based focus groups and sector-specific focus groups. Agriculture and aquaculture groups were targeted, as were business associations and economic development committees. Although nine meetings were held on Manitoulin and only four in the LaCloche area there was equal representation from both areas.

The agenda for the focus group meetings was consistent across all groups. Vision Group members from the community assisted with setting up and chairing the meetings. The consultant explained the strategic planning process, then reviewed the core values and vision statement identified by the Vision Group, asking for feedback from those in attendance. The participants then engaged in a brainstorming session where they were asked for their ideas for economic development in their area/sector. Critiquing the suggestions was discouraged, although other participants were encouraged to ask questions about or further develop the ideas as they arose.

All ideas were recorded on chart paper and categorized by the sector of the economy. Appendix J contains these notes, coded by community and recorded verbatim from the charts. After approximately two hours, the focus group sessions were adjourned with thanks to the participants and exhortations to contact the Vision Group members in their area if they wished to have further input. As a result of the focus groups, three new members joined the Vision Group.

Combined Results of Community Consultation

Focus group notes were combined with input from the key informant interviews, written submissions, and notes taken by the consultant at the two meetings of the Regional Partners. To this was added the "opportunities" lists identified by the Vision Group in their situation audit. The combined data were analysed using the constant comparison method. Table 6 below shows the codes which were used to identify the source(s) of each suggestion. Tables 7 to 14 show the results of this analysis. Ideas are listed in descending order according to the number of times they were suggested. A total of 110 ideas was submitted.

Vision Group members were presented with this information at their second meeting. After establishing criteria for selection, they proceeded to discuss each suggestion and assign a colour code to it. Ultimately they created two lists: the

³ Langely, as quoted in *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. Mintzberg, Henry. 1995. p 338

‘definitely green’ list of 22 ideas from which the Top Ten were selected, and the ‘blue list’ of ideas which should be pursued by another organization or process.

Table 6 Codes Used to Identify the Source of Suggestions

<u>CODE</u>	<u>LOCATION / GROUP</u>	<u>CODE</u>	<u>LOCATION / GROUP</u>
E	Espanola	MB	Meldrum Bay
NH	Nairn & Hymen Council	Aq	Manitoulin Aquaculture
A	Assiginack	GB	Gore Bay
B	Baldwin Township council	Min	Mindemoya
LC	Little Current	Mas	Massey
K	Kagawong	Ag	Manitoulin Agriculture
CC	Manitoulin Chamber of Commerce	W	Written submissions
VG	Vision Group	RP	Regional Partners
KI	Key Informants		

TABLE 7 AGRICULTURE SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
GB, LC, Min, K, Mas, E	greenhouse industry	better climate, more sunshine, proximity to market? Storage and shipping is a problem for fresh produce. - indigenous plan propagation, ground covers, herbs, landscaping stock
GB, Min, Mas, Ag, A	abattoir	slaughter house, inspection facility, meat processing facility
LC , Mas, Ag, KI , KI	cooperative marketing	cooperative marketing, central location, - market square, cottage industries such as our jams and jellies, candles, soaps. What about setting up cooperatives? Maybe it takes a collection of about 10 growers to cooperate with the marketing.
KI, LC , Ag , VG	branding of “Manitoulin” products	“Foodland Manitoulin” , home grown products, branded, requires standards set by producers- like “VQA”, committee could set Manitoulin standards, product would be allowed to use Manitoulin brand if it meets the standard, branding of every product leaving Manitoulin, branded product that people recognize

		and crave, like Manitoulin lamb, or Manitoulin turkey.
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TABLE 7 AGRICULTURE SUGGESTIONS, cont'd

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
GB, Ag , CC , Ag	local produce for local market	local products featured in local restaurants and stores, need uniform quality and constant supply, need storage facilities for fruits and vegetables, “surf and turf “, locally grown premium products, keep products local, reduce transportation costs, command a premium for quality branded products, continuity of supply requires storage facilities
E, LC, Mas, A	hemp farming and processing	good return, specialized mechanization, experimental trials, challenges in export to US., easy to grow, ideal climate, processing necessary. Cost of processing equipment? Cost of product to market? US market closed?
GB, K, Mas, A	turkey, etc...	profit from by-products such as feathers-rabbits, turkeys, meat birds, free-range turkeys and chickens, pheasants, wild turkeys for controlled hunts
E, GB, K	exotic meats	caribou, emu, elk, buffalo, low fat, good demand, export market, farm near Verner
E, Mas,A	alternative crops	truffles, mushrooms, wild rice, cranberries, fiddleheads, blueberries, wild mushrooms, garlic
E, KI, A	fruit wine production	market in Europe, blueberry, ice wine
GB, LC, Mas	organically grown produce	not genetically altered, good market for it
Ag, LC, KI	feed storage & drying facilities	portable feed mill & treat seeds, seed processing plant. Feed, there is potential for growing the raw product that goes into manufacturing feed but you have to have the volume to justify. We could probably justify an upgrading station here where people could collectively pool canola, soybean, barley, wheat, and send out truck load lots.
A, Ag, Mas	processing and packaging of vegetables	cash crops, barley, cabbage, sauerkraut, canning and processing of products

VG	value-added fish product	e.g. smoked fish
E	stocking program	increased production of game fish

TABLE 9 FORESTRY SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
E, K, Mas, GB, Ag	silviculture	nursery, container stock, greenhouse, opportunity for private landowners, tree farming, reforestation, cut-your-own Christmas trees
E, KI, NH, Ag	processing of higher end value wood	prefab construction, trusses, pressure treatment for finished lumber, custom trim and molding manufacturing
CC, KI, A, K,	cedar products	cedar posts, fence posts and firewood, cooperative shipping, central location for marketing, cedar trellises, obelisks, patio furniture, split rails, furniture, log home construction, eastern white cedar, pellets, mulch
NH, KI, GB	co-generation	Cogeneration of electricity is a good possibility, using the bark as a source of fuel to produce electricity. Because there is natural gas in this area, it can be used to burn the bark. The mill in Espanola has been talking about putting in a cogeneration plant but hasn't done it yet.
NH, GB, KI	rough lumber for pallets	The rough lumber produced at the mill in Nairn Centre could be processed locally. These are short lengths which can't easily go through the equipment, so are set aside as rough (from 1 x 3 x 5' up to 2 x 6 x 6') not dried or planed. Currently sold to a company in Bolton which makes pallets out of it. Many possible uses for this wood, mostly jackpine and spruce
Ag, CC, RP	small wood-lot management	owner-operator saw mills (\$300 /log value added to \$1500 to \$3000 per 1000 ft.), bush lot management, harvest mature trees, market squared timber, solar dried lumber process fills a market niche for cabinet makers
E, KI	remanufactured lumber	finishing rough lumber now sent to Barrie to make pallets. Re-man plant for non-standard sizes of wood, finger jointing - cabinetry, gluelam (glued and laminated)

		panels. Currently shipping to plant in Quebec
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TABLE 9 FORESTRY SUGGESTIONS, cont'd.

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
E, KI	use of wood waste (bark)	The spruce bark is not useful for landscaping but the pine bark could be packaged and sold for landscaping. Drying of bark and processing as wood pellets. Very costly to truck the wet bark, but if it is dried, much more economical to truck to markets in the south. Demand for pellets for wood stoves, but very capital intensive to set up plant...dryers, extruders, etc... Not certain if the demand would justify the cost to produce.
KI	supplies for mill in Espanola	Domtar would favour closer development of services that would support the mill. All of the net inputs to the mill, the closer they are, the better. Materials and supplies to run a business employing 770 people. At today's value of the Canadian dollar, opportunity to compete in pulp and paper supply and services businesses from a Canadian location is improved.
KI	reclaiming sludge from Domtar	Things that sink in water settle out in Domtar's reservoirs, and these materials are dredged from time to time and used as overburden. It is used in agricultural areas as a soil supplement by other mills. There is so little agriculture within economic haul of this mill that its probably not feasible. What is being pursued is the use of these sludges (at Domtar) in covering and reclaiming tailings areas of mines.
KI	supplies for mill at Nairn Centre	"stickers" - used for placing between the layers when drying wood. These must be finished wood, 1 x 3 x 60". Currently purchased from outside the area. Lathe - unfinished strips 3/16" x 1 1/4" to put between 2 x 4's to hold the bundles rigid for shipping.
Mas	chipboard, plywood	

	factory	
Mas	fireplace logs	made with old newspaper

TABLE 10 MINING SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
GB, LC, K, Ag, CC, A, KI	stone for landscaping, building	stone tiles, other stone products, youth intern at GB airport looking into stone products. landscaping stone, packaged stone, palettes loaded with stone. Decorative stone, fieldstone, building stones, limestone quarries e.g. Hercules in Gordon Twsp. Fossils, decorative stone, oversize stone from Lafarge quarry could be used for decorative stone, fill for shoreline erosion.
LC, A, KI, KI	glass production	Lafarge has system for making glass sand
NH, B	granite quarry	granite quarry in the area, privately owned but no development of it. Quarries of quartz and granite behind McKerrow could be developed.
A, KI	agricultural lime	agricultural lime as a waste product from quarry at Meldrum Bay, difficult to handle when dried, but could be packaged and sold in a water mixture for spraying.
KI	Iso-mix	poured concrete with styrofoam beads in it within chipboard forms which stay with the product. Very cheap to make, uses both concrete and cheaper wood products, both of which are locally available.
Mas	palladium and platinum	Mustang Minerals open pit
Ag	quarry used as a tourist attraction	viewing gallery, e.g. Rock of Ages in New Hampshire
B	Agnew Lake mine	low grade copper

TABLE 11 MANUFACTURING SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
NH, E, CC, B, KI, Mas.	active pursuit of industry to relocate here	Highway, railway, port for access, as well as natural gas, good location for a plant. Low cost land, housing, lower tax base, good transportation, rail service capability Partnership with Domtar for industrial park in Espanola, examine incentives municipality can offer to locate industry here. Market Manitoulin as a good place to locate, ready for industrial development, no development charges, low commercial taxes. Entice existing manufacturers to move north, develop inventory of available lands, buildings. Ads in Toronto papers.
E, GB, Mas, B, LC,	generation and sale of power	water power, wind power (e.g. Blind River, Spanish), hydro generation on the Sables River, cogeneration, ethanol
VG, GB, LC, A, KI	microbrewery	distillery for corn whiskey, beer
LC, GB, A, W	boat building industry	cedar strip boats, 14' to 16' runabouts, use hangars at the Manitoulin East airport
GB, K, A	bottled water	"Manitou Water"
A, Min	natural gas	make use of local supply; bring it in from Espanola, gridding natural gas found locally e.g. Drummond Island
E , GB	cottage industries	handcrafts, hand-made papers, cards, willow chairs, toys. Use senior labour pool, encourage local talent to develop hobbies into industry. Develop a clearinghouse for distribution and marketing of locally made products, registry e.g. North Bay, mail order
K	leather products	coats, etc..
Mas	recycling	pick up and processing of recyclables
Mas	injection molding	
CC	casket manufacture	

A	manufacture of nickel-cadmium batteries	
W	manufacture of gypsum board	

TABLE 12 TOURISM SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
VG, GB, A, W, RP, KI, Ag	tour packages	provide services to cruise ship passengers, package tours, bus tours, adventure tours, mountain bikes, kayaking, artists' studio tour with map, art gallery tour. Bus tours of Manitoulin from marinas, ferry dock to eco-sites, historic sites, art galleries. Taxi / van / bus guided tours from Kagawong marina. Eco-tours, bike tours, hunting packages, pheasants raised and released hunt packages. "Agritourism" - promote cottage industry, farm tours to educate consumers on how food is grown or raised.
GB, K, W, A, NH, W	trails	hiking trails, bike trails, adventure trails, X-country ski trails and packages. Rail line from Espanola linked to the Trans Canada Trail, access for snowmobiles, hikers, cyclists. Long distance trail across Manitoulin, with different access points
CC, GB, K, W, W	develop ecotourism	cross country skiing, hiking tours, survey of Manitoulin residents to determine support for ecotourism industry, a wilderness campground on Western Manitoulin
KI , RP,GB	water tours	around Manitoulin and North Channel, cruise ship from Alpena. Get Manitoulin included in the Heritage Coastline process Sightseeing /fishing water charters
W, VG	central reservation system for Manitoulin	central reservation system on 'net
KI, A	Norisle	Take everything useful off it and put it in a museum, then sink the ship and use it as a safe wreck for the diving industry, make Manitowaning a destination for divers.

		Norisle a steamship possibility, Heritage cruise.
NH	tourist services	information booth, motel, campgrounds, outfitters, fish stocking, boat launching
GB	theme campground	e.g. Yogi Bear
CC	Manitoulin money	Chi-Cheemaun miles
A	spa / retreat	

TABLE 12 TOURISM SUGGESTIONS cont'd.

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
W	provincial park on LaCloche Island	explore possibility of donation of land for park use by Cliff Fielding
W	kayaking	market the Island as a kayaking destination
E	information centre	hospitality centre needed to stop the tourists as they drive through

TABLE 13 SERVICE SECTOR SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
LC , CC, Mas, A, RP, VG	supported living for seniors	private nursing homes, long term care facilities. Look for opportunities in technology to look after older people in their own homes, e.g. cameras for monitoring, T-shirts to monitor pulse, blood pressure and heart. Seniors' complex in Massey, empty school plus six acres. Retirement home, large scale facility with different care levels, access to services such as hair care, groceries, health and fitness
LC , CC, Mas, A, RP, VG	services for retirees	cleaning, snow plowing, water line maintenance, carpentry, housekeeping, health care services
E , GB, A, B, W	convention centre	year-round resort and conference centre, e.g. Deerhurst, destination resort. Casino, ample land on highway17, could include conference centre for at least 300 people
E , NH , GB,	call centre/ fibre-optics	expansion of fibre optics, opportunity for

Mas, LC		high tech. industries. NH vacant school building could be used for call centre, has fibre-optics capability. Fibre-optic structure Island-wide, should be driven by MMA
B, E , NH, KI	outlet mall	people will drive 3 to 4 hours from major centres to shop at them. Opportunity for franchises on hwy. 17 or in Espanola

TABLE 13 SERVICE SECTOR SUGGESTIONS cont'd.

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
VG, LC, NH	private schools	specializing in outdoor ed, computers... Vacant school could be turned into an outdoor ed. centre for urban students.
K , Ag	better marketing of existing products	catalogue of Manitoulin products, on-line marketing, Manitoulin branding system, multi-stall market open all week, cooperative marketing, market coordinator, act as broker or vendor - e.g. Manitoulin standards⇒ Manitoulin brand ⇒ market coordinator⇒ markets Rental space for Manitoulin agricultural products in major urban centre
Min, KI	business investment corporation	“Manitoulin Island Inc.” a vehicle to bring the ideas, the capital and the initiative for development together. (Like Manitoulin Livestock Cooperative but with a wider scope) An investment group on Manitoulin. A consortium of people who are willing to invest in a young entrepreneur with a good business venture locally.
NH	housing development	possible bedroom community for Sudbury, Espanola
GB	tax centre	
RP	motel	motel on highway between Little Current and Gore Bay
LC	large scale private residential facility for developmentally handicapped	e.g. Hope Farm
LC	private summer camps for kids	

CC	landscaping business	
MB	services to freighters	providing services to freighters and crew at Lafarge plant in Meldrum Bay
W	cafe with a health-food focus	
W	Play It Again Sports store on Manitoulin	

TABLE 14 PUBLIC SECTOR SUGGESTIONS

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
GB, LC, K, Mas, CC, A, W	bridge - Tobermory to South Baymouth	Toll bridge from Tobermory, fixed link would be boost to agriculture markets. Causeway linking the ferry terminal in South Baymouth with Fitzwilliam Island, via road across the south of Wikwemikong First Nation, and docking facilities on Fitzwilliam Island for the ChiCheemaun. This shortens the ferry route by about half and could possibly allow for year-round service.
LC, GB, K, CC, MB	west-end ferry	Hovercraft at Meldrum Bay, west end Ferry from Meldrum Bay to Detour (Fred White has research file) Bridge from Meldrum to Cockburn Isl (2 mi), bridge or existing ferry from Cockburn to Drummond. Provincial road across Cockburn Island (Lonnie Avra has bought majority of Cockburn Isl)
GB, LC, CC, A, W	air service on Manitoulin	air services with one board for Manitoulin
LC, CC, MB, KI	marina development	At Goat Island coal docks in Little Current. Marina at Meldrum Bay for cruise ships
KI, K, Mas, Aq	aquaculture /agriculture / forestry school	Training centre for forest technology, school of science, agriculture, satellite agriculture college. Research facility and demonstration site for aquaculture
GB, Mas, CC, KI	business training programs	entrepreneurial training program, training for home-based businesses in e-commerce Training for service sector should be part of school curriculum. Cambrian should offer a meaningful

		course in hospitality, with a diploma that businesses can display on the wall
K, LC, KI	bus service, taxi service	Island bus service, 75% prov'l. rebate on cost of acquisition of buses for public transit. Limousine service to airport in Sudbury
E, LC, KI	deep water port	providing necessary services to ships, for import and export, with good highway/ rail link to it, talk to Cliff Fielding

TABLE 14 PUBLIC SECTOR SUGGESTIONS, cont.

Source Code	Suggestion	Notes
RP, KI, KI	LaCloche Manitoulin Economic Development Association	Including First Nations and municipalities, fed'l and prov'l gov't, to work towards the development of a specific strategy for the area. Regional development officer, with lots of experience in Ec. Dev., with a budget of \$500,000. Municipalities could buy in to the service. Municipal support for existing businesses, should be asking "What do you need? What can we do to be helpful?"
E, K, W	arts and cultural centre	school of the arts, studio tours, performing artists, Manitoulin School of the Arts
E, LC	better roads	four lane-ing of highway 69
GB, A	flight school	aircraft engineering school, service & maintenance, flight school (HRDC), parachute jumping on weekends
RP, KI	regional profile	inventory on data base, labour force, land, buildings, rental rates, tax rates. We need some land set aside for industrial purposes, and also a regional data base, an inventory and a proper community profile of Manitoulin.
W, W	social housing	Construction of homes for low income families through volunteer labour and donations e.g Habitat for Humanity in Brockville "Homesteading" demonstration community of small, highly efficient homes for low income/homeless families,

		which will encourage self-sufficiency through small-scale farming and cooperative living.
A	canal between Manitowaning Bay and South Bay	Proctor & Redfern did a preliminary study

The “Definitely Green” List

After careful and lengthy consideration of these ideas by the Vision Group, 22 final suggestions were left on the “definitely green” list. Ideas which seemed interdependent, which logically fit together to support one larger concept, were grouped accordingly. It was from this “definitely green” list, shown below, that the Top Ten were selected for further research. Vision Group members voted for their ten favourite ideas and those with the most votes were selected.

DEFINITELY GREEN OPTIONS

- **Cooperative marketing & branding of “Manitoulin-LaCloche” products**
catalogue of products; on-line marketing; multi-stall market; market coordinator; retail space in major urban centre; clearinghouse; local produce for local market; cottage industries; alternative farming - e.g. truffles, mushrooms, wild rice, cranberries, fiddleheads, blueberries, garlic, hemp farming, maple syrup, Northshore herbs, pick-your-owns, dried grasses and corn for decorative uses, Manitoulin lamb, honey, turkeys, queen bees.
- **abattoir**
- **fruit wine production**
- **in-land aquaculture - ponds, fee-fishing**
- **aquaculture equipment / nets cleaning and supply**
- **rough lumber for pallets and remanufactured lumber**
- **boat building industry**
- **tour packages** - bus, boat, bikes, adventure, artists’ studio, van, ecotours, agritourism, hunting packages
- **water tours** - cruise ships, sight-seeing tour boats, fishing charters
- **supported living for seniors** - retirement homes, services: health care, home maintenance, fitness, health monitoring
- **convention centre**
- **business investment corporation**
- **west-end/ international ferry/ bridge**
- **LaCloche-Manitoulin Economic Development Association & regional profile / inventory / active recruitment of industrial and agricultural entrepreneurs**

- **use of bark for landscaping, pellets**
- **call centre for the LaCloche area**
- **private schools**
- **styrofoam plant and Iso-mix**
- **microbrewery**
- **manufacture of nickel-cadmium batteries**
- **college / research facility - agra/aquaculture/ forestry**
- **glass production**

Selecting the Top Ten

As discussed in the section on Methodology, p. 6, the Vision Group developed criteria for selection of the final ideas that would be carried forward into Phase 3, the research phase. These criteria were:

- ⇒ longevity , sustainability
- ⇒ employment opportunities
- ⇒ regional impact if possible
- ⇒ economic viability - no on-going need for subsidy
- ⇒ compatibility with core values, other ideas
- ⇒ no negative environmental, social impact
- ⇒ practical, do-able idea
- ⇒ no duplication of another process
- ⇒ suitable time element required for development

Using the above criteria, they then voted for the Top Ten, those development opportunities which would be subjected to market research to determine their feasibility and suitability to the area.

Table 15

TOP TEN

- Cooperative marketing and branding of Manitoulin LaCloche products
- abattoir
- aquaculture college / research facility / demonstration farm
- processing of rough lumber and remanufacturing of lumber
- west end link (ferry/ bridge) to the U.S.
- supported living for retirees and seniors - support services and facilities
- boat building industry
- fruit wine production
- microbrewery
- glass production OR production of forms for Iso-mix

The Blue List

Throughout the course of the community consultation there arose many suggestions for economic development which the Vision Group felt were important, had potential and were compatible with the core values of the area but which were not suitable for inclusion in the Strategic Plan. These became the blue list. It is shown on the next page, entitled “Ideas That Should be Pursued Through Another Process.”

Many of these ideas were already being pursued by a group or an organization in the area. Upon discussion with these groups, it was determined that the most useful function that the Strategic Plan could serve would be to endorse the efforts of these organizations towards realizing their goal and to encourage funding bodies to give serious consideration to financial assistance for these projects.

Others on the blue list were judged to be beyond the realm of influence of a Strategic Plan and in need of action at a political level. Such things as the development of fibre-optic infrastructure and better roads, while vitally important to the economic development of the area, were considered to be more appropriately dealt with through a political process. The Vision Group decided to use the Strategic Planning process to make a strong public statement urging local,

provincial and federal governments to recognize the importance of such infrastructure to economic development and to work diligently to put it in place.

One idea which was heard often was that of a fixed link between Tobermory and South Baymouth. It was decided after much discussion that this development opportunity required more research and intensive scrutiny than was available through the Strategic Planning project before its feasibility could be determined. It was thus included on the blue list as a recommendation to be considered separately and possibly pursued through a dedicated study. The LAMBAC board has agreed to spearhead such a study if there is sufficient public interest. A public meeting has been called for Aug. 23, 2000 to assess the demand for such a study.

One might ask why the idea of a link at the west end of the Island was included in the Top Ten when a link at the southeast end of the Island was recommended for a dedicated research process. Why should two such apparently similar suggestions be treated differently? The answer lies in the scope of the project. The west end link proposes to join two spans of approximately two kilometers each between Manitoulin Island, Cockburn Island and Drummond Island, the latter of which is currently linked with the mainland of Michigan by a year-round ferry. On the other end, the Tobermory - South Baymouth link would cover a span of approximately forty-five kilometers. The variety of options for routes and methods of bridging this span as well as the complexity of the cost/benefit analysis for each of several options demand a stand-alone, in-depth study.

IDEAS THAT SHOULD BE PURSUED THROUGH ANOTHER PROCESS

APPROVED IDEAS	GROUP/ORGANIZATION
• call centre in LaCloche area	Town of Espanola
• development of trails Town	Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, of Espanola
• development of ecotourism	LAMBAC Marketing Project
• central reservation system for Manitoulin	LAMBAC Marketing Project
• “Manitoulin money” & “ChiCheemaun miles”	Chamber of Commerce/ MTA/ Ont. Northland
• tourism information / hospitality centres for Espanola and Nairn Centre	Town of Espanola, Township of Nairn & Hyman
• development of fiber-optic infrastructure	Municipal, provincial, federal governments

- Lafarge quarry as a tourist attraction Lafarge, Twsp. of Dawson & Robinson
- bridge / link between South Baymouth and Tobermory LAMBAC
- development of one board to pursue an air service for Manitoulin airport steering committee
- development of a flight school and/or aircraft maintenance service airport steering committee
- better roads in the area. Municipal, provincial, federal governments
- youth enterprise centre joint project - Waubetek & LAMBAC
- floating charity casino joint project - Waubetek & LAMBAC

Phase 3 Strategic Planning

Market Research on Top Ten Development Opportunities

Each of the Top Ten development opportunities were subjected to market research. Please see Appendix K for detailed research notes on each idea.

#1 - Cooperative Marketing and Branding.

Developing a brand or logo for products which are uniquely made in the Manitoulin LaCloche area was the starting point for this idea. The companion idea entails cooperative marketing of local products. It was the judgment of the Vision Group that these two ideas were so interdependent that they should be considered one initiative. The decision was also made to include in this category a list of cottage industries and alternative farming ideas which could potentially be developed and efficiently marketed through such a cooperative effort.

The consultant looked at several existing models in the province. An earlier initiative on Manitoulin Island, spearheaded by the first Manitoulin Economic Development Association in the mid-seventies, had developed a Manitoulin brand and marketing effort. The sole surviving business to be a partner in this venture and still marketing under the Manitoulin name was interviewed about this experience. Various management options including private ownership and cooperative management were investigated.

Research showed that one critical factor for achieving longevity in a cooperative marketing venture was the generation of revenue as government programs are unreliable for covering operating costs. Existing models were struggling with finding the most effective ways to do this. Other issues which arose in the course of the research included the scope of products eligible for using the brand, the quality control standards and enforcement thereof, and the relative merits of private versus cooperative management structure.

#2 - Abattoir.

Information was obtained concerning a group of farmers who have been meeting to discuss the possibility of reopening the recently closed abattoir on Manitoulin Island. In an interview, one of the farmers indicated that a second consideration was the possibility of developing a new regional facility, perhaps on the North Shore. As a first step, he indicated it was their intention to request funds from FedNor for an inventory of farming operations in the area. This survey data would provide the base figures to determine the need for such an operation.

Research showed that new government regulations for meat processing plants make it difficult for small operations to achieve viability, creating the necessity of looking at a wider catchment area that could supply larger volumes of animal units. Discussions with farmers across the area suggested that the absence of an abattoir is a serious obstacle to viable cattle finishing, hog and lamb operations. Disposal of deadstock is a further problem created by the recent closing of both the abattoir on Manitoulin Island and the one at Bruce Mines. Vanishing markets for meat waste also created pressure on the already struggling small operations.

It was clear that extensive market research needed to be done in this area before a recommendation could be made as to the potential viability or optimum size of an abattoir. Since this farmers group was both knowledgeable and motivated to pursue the issue, no further research time was spent on this development opportunity.

#3 - Aquaculture Research Facility and Demonstration Farm

Aquaculture operators in and around Manitoulin Island argued strongly for the need for a research facility for cage aquaculture in this area. Although there is an existing facility for land-based aquaculture at the University of Guelph, no such facility exists to address the needs and concerns of the cage culture industry. With the rapid growth in recent years of this industry, many questions have been raised which could best be answered by carefully controlled research. New types of equipment, new techniques for site management, research on the effects on water quality are all issues which could benefit from scientific scrutiny. In light of pressures on federal and provincial governments to grant new licenses at the same

time as pressures from environmental groups to institute stricter regulations, research of this type would be invaluable in establishing public policy.

Investigation into the feasibility of this suggestion revealed several potential problems. The concept of a research facility is not compatible with a commercial operation so opportunities for revenue generation are restricted to what can be made luring tourists to visit a demonstration farm. The very specific requirements make a good cage culture site rather difficult to find. The public pressure to restrict the growth of the industry calls into question the wisdom of a large public investment for what may have to remain a small industry.

In spite of these concerns, the possibility of establishing a satellite operation of the existing facility at the University of Guelph aroused some interest with the Director of the Alma Research Station. The potential for using a currently vacant site, formerly a MNR research station on Manitoulin Island, also added to the positive side of the balance. Although not in itself a viable commercial enterprise, the existence of such a research facility could be a great benefit to the existing aquaculture operations in the area and could contribute to the expansion of this industry, making it a major employer in LaCloche Manitoulin.

#4 - Processing of Rough Lumber.

Two broad possibilities exist for the use of rough lumber currently produced by the Domtar sawmill operation at Nairn Centre. Rough lumber refers to the short lengths of lumber rejected because it does not go easily through the equipment. It does not get planed or dried and cannot be used in the construction industry. The first possibility for a value-added product involves the use of this lumber to construct pallets and other rough wood products which are treated as disposables. The second opportunity involves the remanufacture of these non-standard sizes of wood into usable products for the construction industry through a variety of blending processes including 'finger jointing' and 'gluelam', a combined glue and lamination process.

Current practice at Domtar is to sell the rough lumber for pallets to a company in Bolton, Ontario and to sell the non-standard sizes of wood for remanufacture to a plant in Huntsville, Quebec. Research indicated that neither of these contracts are long term commitments. However Domtar has recently signed an agreement with an American manufacturer to develop a plant in Sault Ste. Marie for the manufacture of I joints. Whether this will impact the sale of rough lumber remains to be seen.

Although on the surface it would seem that the processing of rough lumber holds possibilities for economic development, especially in the Township of Nairn and Hyman, the consultant was unable to obtain further information from Domtar as to their interest in seeing such a development locally. This appeared to be less of an indication of lack of interest than lack of time to respond within the limits of

the project. This development opportunity could not be recommended due to lack of information but still represents a potential area to be explored by an entrepreneur or a municipality.

#5 - West End Link to U.S.

The concept of a link at the west end of Manitoulin with the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is not a new one. At least two attempts have been made in past years to examine this idea and to solicit support for it. Although evidence of strong support exists on the west end of the Island and this same sentiment was echoed throughout all other parts of the Island during the community consultation phase of this project, no serious attempt to study this idea has been made to date.

The shortest distance from the western tip of Manitoulin to the eastern shore of Cockburn Island is approximately 1.75 miles. Similarly, the shortest distance from the western shore of Cockburn to the east side of Drummond Island is 1.75 miles. Drummond Island to the Michigan mainland at Detour is about 1 mile, with a year-round ferry service already in operation on this stretch. The total distance from Meldrum Bay village to Detour, sailing either north or south around the islands of Cockburn and Drummond, is thirty-five miles, just slightly more than the Tobermory to South Baymouth stretch.

Cockburn Island is approximately 8 miles across, with about 5 miles of existing east-west road. Drummond Island is about 15 miles across, with approximately 8 miles of existing east-west road. The year round population of Drummond Island is less than 1000 and that of Cockburn Island is less than 10. Drummond Island is a popular tourist destination for American golfers, cyclists and snowmobilers, with the seasonal population estimated to be 6,000.

American proponents of a west end link forecast a substantial increase in tourist traffic to and through Drummond since it would no longer be a dead-end destination but a link to Manitoulin and in fact, all of Ontario for those coming up the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Many possibilities exist for increasing the flow of tourists across Manitoulin Island if a link is created at the west end of the Island with the northern United States. Further benefits could include easier access to American markets for local products and services. Preliminary calculations suggest that the flow of U.S visitors to Manitoulin could double, bringing a potential increase in revenue of \$10m annually with the creation of a west end link. Although the costs would be substantial, the potential benefits to the economy of the area justify further investigation of this idea.

#6 - Supported Living for Retirees and Seniors

A grouping of interdependent ideas evolved as the consultant investigated suggestions for services related to seniors and retirees. Community input on this topic ran the gamut from small scale residential facilities to larger, all encompassing, upscale private nursing homes, from in-home health monitoring

services to home maintenance services, from developing new technology that would allow seniors to remain in their homes to building cooperative mini-communities of 'garden homes' for retirees.

Research showed that, while in-home medical services are available in the area, support services such as transportation, home maintenance, and respite care are less accessible. Where the services are available it seems that seniors are unable or unwilling to pay for them even when the costs are heavily subsidized. One entrepreneur from outside the area indicated that her companion service, which includes the support services listed above, is most often purchased by the adult children of seniors as a way of supplementing the time they are able to spend with their aging parents and allowing their parents to stay longer in their homes.

Small scale retirement homes exist in the area for seniors who are mostly capable of independent living but need some assistance with meal preparation and laundry. These provide a home setting for four or five seniors who live with their caregivers in a family environment. Although the service is in demand and appears to fulfill a need, it is questionable how economically viable such small scale operations can be. More research needs to be done to determine the economies of scale which come into play with different sizes of facilities and different levels of care.

Another group with different needs is the newly retired especially in light of population demographics and the trend to early retirement. Preliminary research suggests that a market exists for small, low-maintenance private dwellings located in an attractive setting close to services. Grouping several of such homes in one location would allow for communal gardening and cooperative maintenance as well as a sense of a supportive community while still allowing privacy and independence. A market demand study could assess how much support there would be for such a development in the Manitoulin LaCloche area.

#7 - Boat Building.

The Township of Assiginack was actively involved in negotiations with a manufacturer of boats to locate a plant in the area. Research showed that this industry would be congruent with the core values identified for Manitoulin and would provide up to 25 much needed jobs for a readily available workforce. Both skilled carpenters and unskilled labourers are needed for the boat building industry. Site requirements are dependent on ready access to water and launch facilities, of which there is an abundance on Manitoulin. A large facility of at least 25,000 square feet with an industrial power supply would be required. Such facilities are in short supply in the area but renovation of or adding to an existing facility is a definite possibility.

After preliminary investigation indicated good potential for a successful boat building industry, the decision was made to leave this idea to Assiginack to pursue

rather than duplicate efforts and potentially jeopardize negotiations. As of the time of writing, application has been made for funding to FedNor to assist in the location of a boat building plant in Assiginack Township.

#8 - Fruit Wine Production

The idea for fruit wine production stems from the fact that fruit wines are currently the fastest growing wines in popularity in Ontario, as reported by LCBO. There is also an increasing demand for fruit wines in the European market. Research showed that there is relatively small capital cost required for start-up and excellent profit margins for wine makers with their own orchards.

A license for a fruit winery is relatively easily obtained, although the industry is carefully monitored by LLBO. Producers are required to report on a monthly basis to several agencies and governing bodies. Wine sold through the LCBO is charged a mark-up of 58%, so most small scale wineries prefer to sell on-site, which requires a retail license.

One critical factor in judging the feasibility of a wine making operation in this area is the accessibility and reliability of the fruit supply. Although strawberries and raspberries are grown commercially in the LaCloche area, it remains to be determined if the producers would consider selling their fruit at affordable prices for winemaking. An abundance of fruit grows wild in the area, including blueberries, black currants, apples and cranberries, but further research would need to be done to determine if sufficient quantities can be obtained, and at what cost.

#9 - Microbrewery.

Given the current popularity of specialty beers and the fact that they represent the only growth sector in the brewing industry at present, the idea of a microbrewery was considered for Manitoulin Island. The concept of a microbrewery seemed to be congruent with the popular image of Manitoulin as a place of pure water, relaxed lifestyle and good times. Raw materials for beer making are few and must be imported to Ontario, making a southern location only slightly more advantageous than a northern one in that regard. The availability of inexpensive land and ample water supply on the Island could offset to some extent the negative factor of distance to major markets.

Research showed that there were several disincentives to establishing a microbrewery on Manitoulin Island. For one litre of beer to be produced, 6 to 7 litres of water are used, much of it going back out of the plant as effluent. This effluent needs to be carefully monitored for its ph level and must go into a sewage treatment facility. There are also some solid wastes which cannot be recycled and must go to a landfill, while others can be used for cattle feed. A further concern is the gas produced by fermentation which is released into the environment. While not a noxious substance, this gas can be an issue for neighbours. A microbrewery

did not appear to be compatible with the core values identified at the outset of the project.

Further disincentives included significant capital costs and a cumbersome licensing process to start a microbrewery. The industry is heavily regulated and taxed and marketing through LCBO is expensive. Finally, good brewmasters are in demand. For all these reasons, the Vision Group thought that a microbrewery would only be a good option if there was an entrepreneur with significant money to invest and a passion for beer-making.

NOTE FOR ITEM #10: Since there were two options tied for idea #10, the consultant was to decide which to pursue based upon preliminary market research. In fact neither of the two options, glass production or Iso-mix for forms, looked particularly promising after a few hours of research. A different option, commercial composting was substituted.

#10 - Glass Production.

Although the raw materials for glass production are readily available in the area, the distance to market and the problems inherent in shipping such a fragile product argued against such a plant. The raw materials are easier and cheaper to ship to a location close to major markets than is the finished product. Specialty glass products such as lenses for scientific instruments, while small enough to ship easily, require a level of expertise not locally available and significant capital investment. The consultant found little support for this idea in the area.

#10 - Forms for Iso-Mix.

Iso-mix is a mixture of cement, sand, and polystyrene beads which is poured into aspenite forms for the construction industry. The forms remain with the Iso-Mix and form part of the construction. Lafarge is contemplating the production of Iso-Mix, but an opportunity exists for the production of the forms. However, since the Iso-Mix is poured into the forms at the building site, it makes more sense to construct the forms close to major markets or actually at the site rather than shipping pre-fabricated forms over great distances. Once again, as with glass production, the distance to major markets becomes an obstacle.

#10 - Commercial Composting.

While investigating options #2, the abattoir, and #3, the aquaculture research centre, the concept of a commercial composting operation came to the surface as a possible solution to some of the obstacles limiting development identified by each of the other two. One of the difficulties in establishing a viable abattoir operation is the issue of the meat offal, for which there is a very limited market. Similarly in the aquaculture industry, the fish offal must now be shipped at the producers' cost to processing plants in southern Ontario. A commercial composting operation could make use of both of these sources of nitrogen in combination with

a carbon source such as wood waste or cardboard to produce a rich organic fertilizer. Once pelletized, this product can be marketed successfully to farmers, landscapers and garden centres.

Several systems are now available to speed up the natural process of composting. One such system uses a tow-behind machine pulled by a tractor to turn and aerate windrows of compostable material lying in a field. Another system grinds up landfilled material and mixes it with small amounts of soil to speed up composting. While this system may relieve pressure on landfill sites, the end product is not useful unless the operator is very selective about the materials which are allowed into the mixture.

A third system, known as the Marvel Composting System, has been developed in Ontario and has undergone testing at the University of Guelph for nutrient content and rating of the resulting compost. This system is able to use a variety of waste products which, when combined in a pre-determined ratio, produce a rich compost that can be sold as organic fertilizer. The entire process requires approximately four to five months although the actual time the material is in the machine is one month. The developer of the Marvel system is prepared to buy back the compost at \$30 / tonne for processing into granular or pelletized organic fertilizer and to share the profit from its sale with the producer.

Estimating the volume of waste products which could be used in a composting facility in the Manitoulin LaCloche area, the Marvel system would require a building of approximately 5,000 sq. ft. The total capital cost for start up would be approximately \$225,000. Further research is required to determine what costs would be involved in transporting the waste material and which location would be optimum before projections can be made concerning economic viability.

Recommended Strategies

After considering the results of the market research and identifying the questions still outstanding for each of the ten development opportunities, the Vision Group ranked their favourites. Graph 1 on the next page illustrates the results of the final vote for recommended strategies by the eighteen members of the Vision Group who were able to attend the last meeting.

Two of the development opportunities were recommended for *implementation* as soon as possible within the first two years of the Strategic Plan.

- | |
|--------------------------------------|
| ⇒ commercial composting |
| ⇒ cooperative marketing and branding |

One was recommended for *further research* and, if feasible, implementation as soon as possible.

⇒ west end link to the U.S.

Three others were recommended as *possible directions* for the last three years of the plan. They will be investigated as time permits and pursued if feasible.

⇒ supported living for retirees and seniors
⇒ aquaculture research facility and demonstration farm
⇒ fruit wine production

Support in Principle

All of the recommended strategies were supported by the majority of members present. Although the abattoir and boat building were not recommended, the Vision Group wished to express their support for the pursuit of these initiatives by other organizations. As a result, the list formerly referred to as the blue list was revised. Listed below are the development opportunities for which the Strategic Plan pledges support in principle to other groups as they work toward these goals.

Table 16 Support in Principle for Other Groups to Pursue

<u>Support in Principle for Other Groups to Pursue</u>
⇒ abattoir
⇒ boat building
⇒ call centre for Espanola
⇒ development of trails throughout region
⇒ tourism information centres in Espanola and Nairn Centre
⇒ development of fibre-optic infrastructure
⇒ bridge/link between South Baymouth and Tobermory
⇒ development of an air service for Manitoulin
⇒ youth enterprise centre as a joint initiative of LAMBAC and Waubetek
⇒ floating charity casino
⇒ development of flight school &/or aircraft maintenance service
⇒ development of better roads in the region

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Questions to be Answered

While considering the Top Ten development opportunities, the Vision Group identified questions which remained unanswered for each idea. For the six recommended strategies, those questions are as follows.

Commercial Composting

- Scale: Should this be an individual private enterprise? An on-farm operation? A municipal operation? A regional operation? A Domtar-sponsored project?
- Partnerships: With municipalities? - would reduce landfill costs. With industry? - Domtar could benefit from forest regeneration possibilities; the aquaculture industry could see benefits. Cooperative? - fits with initiative to market organic local products. With farmers? - could assist the abattoir initiative
- Further research: “Hot” source (nitrogen supply) - Will farmers sell their manure? Who would pay for trucking waste materials? Will fish farmers reroute their fish offal from current buyers? Where would you locate facility to reduce amount of transportation of waste material? Carbon source - How much savings would municipalities experience? Would Domtar guarantee waste wood supply?

Cooperative Marketing and Branding

- Costs: of marketing? of manager? of operations? How does it keep generating revenue? Can we access Healthy Futures money?
- Structure: How to ensure local interest? How to ensure sustainability? Board or steering committee? Private or cooperative?
- Cooperative: Will local producers support it? Will they transport their products? Could it be a division of Manitoulin Livestock Cooperative?
- Marketing: Can a broker/agency be contracted to handle promo? Could we rent a retail outlet on hwy 17? On hwy 400?
- Process: Who uses brand? Do they pay for it? What percentage of sales? What products / services qualify? Start small or start big?

West End Link to U.S.

- Potential problems: international differences in government regulations? Customs? International waters?
- Market Demand: Demographics of travelers? Studies of travel patterns supporting statistics regarding potential numbers coming to Manitoulin? What are savings in time? Is there any economic benefit to LaCloche area? Is there an airport in N. Michigan where you could make connections to flights in U.S. and/or internationally?

- Financing: Is there a private sector investor who would see a bridge as an opportunity? What about the American landowner on Cockburn? What about a Hovercraft? What support is there for it in U.S.?

Supported Living for Seniors and Retirees

- Further research: What are the economic advantages of a healthy community? Of seniors staying out of hospitals and institutions? Is there access to funds for these services?
- Retirement Living: Look at the Elliot Lake model and assess what is happening there.

Aquaculture Research Facility and Demonstration Farm

- Viability: Is there any revenue to be generated by this idea? Would province and/or feds support this venture for initial costs?
- Other Partnerships/Possibilities: Possible to link with institution currently doing coastal research on cage culture? What about combining this facility with a field camp for geology students? Could it become a training site for aquaculture students?
- Ecotourism angle: Tours of the site? Boat tours out to cages? (Wabuno doing this now)
- Further research: Why did Ag. School in New Liskeard close? What is happening with lobby groups in the salmon industry? Any private sector interest?

Fruit Wine Production

- Financing: what partnerships would be needed? Are there investment dollars available?
- Market demand: Is it trendy or is it just new? How much demand is there? Can the 58% mark-up by LCBO be reduced?
- Supply: Is there an adequate fruit supply? What would be the costs of collecting wild fruit?

Tasks to be Done

To begin implementation of the strategies recommended for the first two years of the Strategic Plan, and the remaining strategies recommended for further research, the following tasks will need to be completed. It should be noted that these are not exhaustive lists as other tasks will arise throughout the process of implementation which will need to be addressed. They simply outline the direction for getting the process started.

Commercial Composting

1. Investigate interest of fish farmers in composting offal
2. Discuss possibilities of using farm manure with Brian Bell and farmers
3. Discuss possibility of investment with individuals who have expressed interest
4. Arrange for Tom Smith to visit the area and explain the Marvel system
5. Investigate other commercial composting systems available
6. Investigate interest of municipalities in composting some of their waste stream
7. Investigate interest of municipalities in sponsorship / investment.
8. Discuss possibility of sponsorship/investment with Domtar sawmill manager
9. Explore possibilities of financial assistance with capital costs.
10. Calculate financial projections and develop business plan

Cooperative Marketing and Branding

1. Survey local producers regarding interest in idea and preferred structure
2. Implement competition to develop a brand
3. Develop guidelines for use of brand
4. Contact manager of Manitoulin Coop regarding their interest in plan
5. Investigate costs of contracting out marketing responsibilities
6. Explore possible sites for retail outlet in north and in south
7. Investigate possible funding programs:
 - Healthy Futures
 - Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative
 - CanAdapt Program
8. Investigate costs of setting up a mail order catalogue
9. Investigate costs of marketing through e-commerce
10. Calculate financial projections and develop business plan

West End Link with U.S.

1. Read past studies
2. Complete preliminary costing of options
3. Investigate possible interest in partnerships
4. Develop terms of reference for feasibility study
5. Apply for funding for feasibility study

Supported Living for Seniors and Retirees

1. Develop flow chart of all possible services and housing requirements of retirees and seniors
2. Conduct survey of current retirees in this area and soon-to-be retirees in the Sudbury area, possibly also southern Ontario cities
3. Survey real estate agents regarding demand for 'garden homes'

4. Determine possible location(s) for types of services and housing. Investigate infrastructure, zoning, development policies of municipalities
5. Survey sandwich generation regarding services they would pay for their parents
6. Visit Elliot Lake and other “retirement communities” to investigate the strategies and the pitfalls.
7. Search literature for studies on economies of scale in residential facilities

Aquaculture Research Facility and Demonstration Farm

1. Investigate coastal research facilities
2. Talk to Prof. Rick Moccia further about partnership with Guelph U.
3. Contact Julian Hynes at the Ont. Aquaculture Assoc. regarding the need for such research
4. Contact MOE regarding research being done at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters
5. Contact Laurentian University Geology Dept. regarding interest in a Geology field station
6. Talk to Steve Naylor at Min. Of Ag. re: Healthy Futures funding
7. Contact representatives of all government agencies and regulatory bodies to arrange a meeting to discuss a suitable template.

Fruit Wine Production

1. Determine what fruit could be used in this area (Strawberries, raspberries, black currants, apples, crab apples, cranberries, hawberries, blueberries, dandelions?)
2. Determine what volumes are available.
3. Determine the costs involved to buy or harvest this fruit.
4. Investigate market potential
5. Investigate possible locations, facilities
6. Investigate interest by private investors, partnerships
7. Calculate financial projections and develop business plan

CONCLUSION

“The goal of LaCloche Manitoulin is to become a broad-based economically and socially attractive area where existing and future businesses can be sustained, while preserving the environmental, social and cultural diversity of the area.”

With this Strategic Plan, LaCloche Manitoulin is now poised to embrace the new century with optimism and direction. This Strategic Plan for economic development will direct the area for the next five years and assist it to develop and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Reviewing the Vision Statement established at the outset of the “LaCloche Manitoulin...Let’s Go!” project, we can see how the strategies recommended will assist the area to achieve this vision.

The two strategies recommended for immediate implementation, *commercial composting* and *cooperative marketing and branding*, are practical, timely and congruent with the core values identified by the citizens of the area. They address the area of the economy most in need of revitalization, the agricultural sector. Although neither initiative promises to create substantial new employment, when successfully implemented they will both contribute to the sustainability of existing businesses, one of the key components of economic development. By solving the problem of disposal of waste materials, agriculture and aquaculture businesses can cut costs and improve the bottom line. By facilitating marketing of locally made products and using cooperative efforts to reduce marketing costs, a climate will be created where food producers and cottage industries can flourish. The spin-off benefits will accrue to all businesses in the area.

The *west end link* recommendation, although it is a bigger project requiring more time and money to develop, holds the promise of a proportionately larger return for the citizens and businesses in the LaCloche Manitoulin area. The tourism sector, the largest employer on Manitoulin Island, will benefit immensely by the potential doubling of numbers of American visitors to the area. The growth in snowmobiling as a winter sport offers greater promise for year-round tourism if American enthusiasts can have access to the trails in and around Manitoulin and LaCloche. A west end link will change summer traffic patterns, pulling traffic into the interior of the Island that now goes straight up highway 6, exiting the Island without spending time or money here. Not only will existing businesses on the western end of the Island benefit, new businesses will spring up across the area to service the increased flow of traffic. Commercial activity with the markets in the States will also be greatly facilitated by a link with the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The three recommendations for further consideration in the last three years of the Strategic Plan are also compatible with the core values of the area and designed to build

on existing strengths. The *supported living for seniors and retirees* initiative will have many benefits for the service sector, an important part of the LaCloche Manitoulin economy. The natural beauty of the area readily attracts people to it but more services are needed to encourage people to retire and spend the rest of their lives here. A climate can be created where people over the age of fifty, the largest growing demographic group, know that they are encouraged to become a part of the community and that the services they will need as they age can be readily obtained. This initiative will require some tangible developments such as new businesses and new infrastructure, but more than anything will require some new ways of thinking about how we can create such a welcoming climate.

Manitoulin LaCloche has an important relationship with the water. It provides many of the attractions that draw our tourists, it is fundamental to our identity as an island and as a northern paradise, and it is the source of one of our important resources, fish. As the consumption of fish world-wide increases and the ocean fisheries become less capable of supplying this demand, in-land fisheries and the farming of fish assume an ever more important role. The aquaculture industry on Manitoulin is at a crisis point. Further development of this lucrative industry is held up until we are able to determine what impact it has on our waters. What better location for the research than this area? This *aquaculture research* initiative embraces all of the goals identified in the Vision Statement. Such a research centre could lead to the expansion of the aquaculture industry, resulting in the development of spin-off businesses, while ensuring that our environment is preserved.

A demonstration farm would attract tourists while educating people about the industry, its impact on our environment and the importance of our connection with the water.

The last recommended initiative, *fruit wine production*, offers the promise of an industry which adds value to a natural resource currently unused. Wild fruit grows in abundance in the area but often goes unpicked. The presence of a fruit winery would encourage not only the harvesting of this untapped resource but the commercial production of other fruits which indigenous to the area. A fruit wine industry is congruent with the core values of LaCloche Manitoulin. It could potentially benefit from and make an important contribution to the cooperative marketing initiative. Fruit wine making has the potential to broaden the economic base of the area by developing a resource and encouraging an industry never before considered in this area.

This Strategic Plan goes beyond these six recommendations and the five year period. It outlines further initiatives which should be seriously pursued if economic development is to take place in LaCloche Manitoulin. LAMBAC is only one player, albeit an important one, in striving to achieve this sustainable competitive advantage. Private enterprise, municipal governments, First Nations and other organizations such as Waubetek, chambers of commerce, tourism associations and conservation groups all have an important role to play. Working together and supporting each others' efforts as we embrace this challenge will only increase the benefits to our area. LaCloche Manitoulin.... Let's Go!

APPENDIX A

Terms of Reference for Study

APPENDIX B

Project workplan

APPENDIX C

Terms of Reference for Vision Group

APPENDIX D

Membership of Vision Group

APPENDIX E

Promotional Materials

APPENDIX F

Focus Group locations and Key Informant Interviews

APPENDIX G

Key Informant Interview Format

APPENDIX H

Criteria for Selection of Development Opportunities

APPENDIX I

Vision Group Press Release

APPENDIX J

Focus Group Notes

APPENDIX K

Research Notes