

# Discussion Paper



## LookOff 2030: Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

Municipality of the County of Kings

Prepared by the Institute for Planning and Design

### Introduction

In May 2009, the Municipality completed Phase I of LookOff 2030, a new Integrated Community Sustainability Plan for Kings County. This phase identified strategic priority areas concerning sustainable development in Kings County, and included a Vision statement for the County. The Vision Statement is shown in Appendix I. Other materials pertaining to Phase One are available online at:

<http://www.county.kings.ns.ca/general/Lookoff2030.htm>

In September, October and November, 2009, the Kings County Council, acting on the advice from a Steering Committee established by Council, will be preparing the Phase Two plan. The ICSP will be prepared to address the four pillars of sustainability – Economic, Cultural, Environmental, and Social as defined by the Province of Nova Scotia. The Institute for Planning and Design (IfPD) will be providing professional and technical support. During this period, IfPD will be meeting with various groups and individuals in Kings County, including members of the public, key stakeholders and informants, as well as Village commissions to discuss the Vision and the action plan implications. **We hope that all residents of Kings County will take an interest and provide input into this process. Two public hearings have been scheduled to hear from you, on October 7th at the Port Williams Community Centre (7-9 PM) and on October 8th at the Kingston Fire Hall (7-9 PM). This paper will provide you with some background about findings to date and what we hope to achieve as we move forward.**

### Why This Matters

Like it or not, most people today will agree that global warming, water shortages and rising energy prices are symptoms of our misuse or overuse of the world's natural resources. The Swedish doctor Karl-Henrik Robèrt, founder of the Natural Step, suggests that we look at it this way: Life sustaining resources are finite. The availability of resources is in conflict with our demand for the same resources. Unless these conflicts are stabilized, they will collide. Robèrt and others like him realized that we need to start planning for change and just as importantly, how we go about business. That is why the Government of Canada requires each municipality across the country to prepare and implement an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. These plans are tied to eligibility for infrastructure funding, so there is a great deal of importance in doing so. But as we enter this new era we face a new problem. Municipal resources and public demands are also on a potential collision course. Municipalities are reluctant to raise taxes, yet costs rise as they try to provide better services. The new ICSP therefore has the potential to fundamentally alter the way Kings County goes about its business. The ICSP could alter your business perspective too. So your participation is of vital importance as we move from the visioning stage to policy development. Now is the time to get involved.

The Phase One study and an earlier study completed in 2008<sup>1</sup> provide insights about public perceptions about possible strategic directions for moving forward with the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. These studies

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Whitford Limited, *Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans: Annapolis Valley Municipalities*, February 2008; CBCL et al, *Municipality of the County of Kings Integrated Sustainability Plan Phase 1: Developing a Vision and Topics for the Plan*, Final Report, June 2009.

involved significant amounts of public consultation including public meetings, web-based surveys and stakeholder interviews. By using a ranking procedure, the Phase I report developed a list of nine strategic areas for further action. In our analysis of this list we identified six key strategic areas requiring that could require action plans:

- **Transportation**
- **Water Management**
- **Energy**
- **Heritage**
- **Food and agriculture**
- **Economic development**

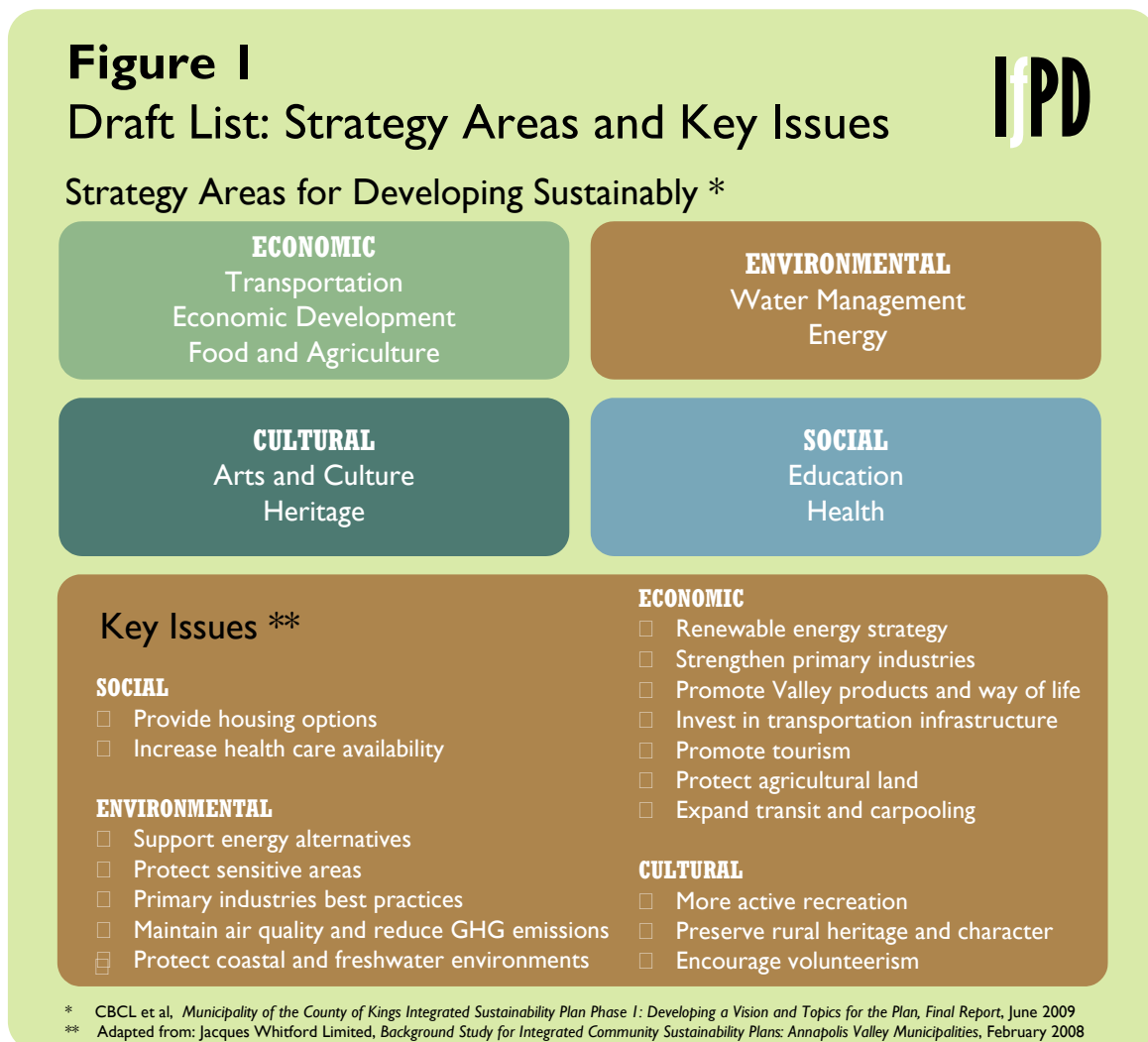
Three strategic areas in the list in fact relate to tools and resources, and therefore do not require action, since it can be argued that they could be part and parcel of any action plan. These are:

- Governance and partnerships
- Built environment
- Land use planning

In studying the list of six residual strategy areas, we noted that the social and cultural pillars of sustainability were under-represented. This prompted us to revisit the Phase I report and from that report we identified the next three highest scoring strategy areas, which were:

- **Arts and Culture**
- **Education;** and
- **Health**

By adding these three priorities we arrived at the following DRAFT set of Strategy Area that offers good balance and representation across the four sustainability pillars, as shown in the figure below. Also included in the figure is a list of the key sustainability key issues identified in 2008, grouped by sustainability pillar.



The table below summarizes and sorts the strategy areas and issues identified above. Finally, one additional way of looking at these issues is to identify themes which could be considered the basis for action plans. Three themes are proposed:

- Preservation
- Development, and
- Innovation

Thinking about the issues in this way is helpful because it can inform the kinds of resources that will need to be drawn upon in addressing them

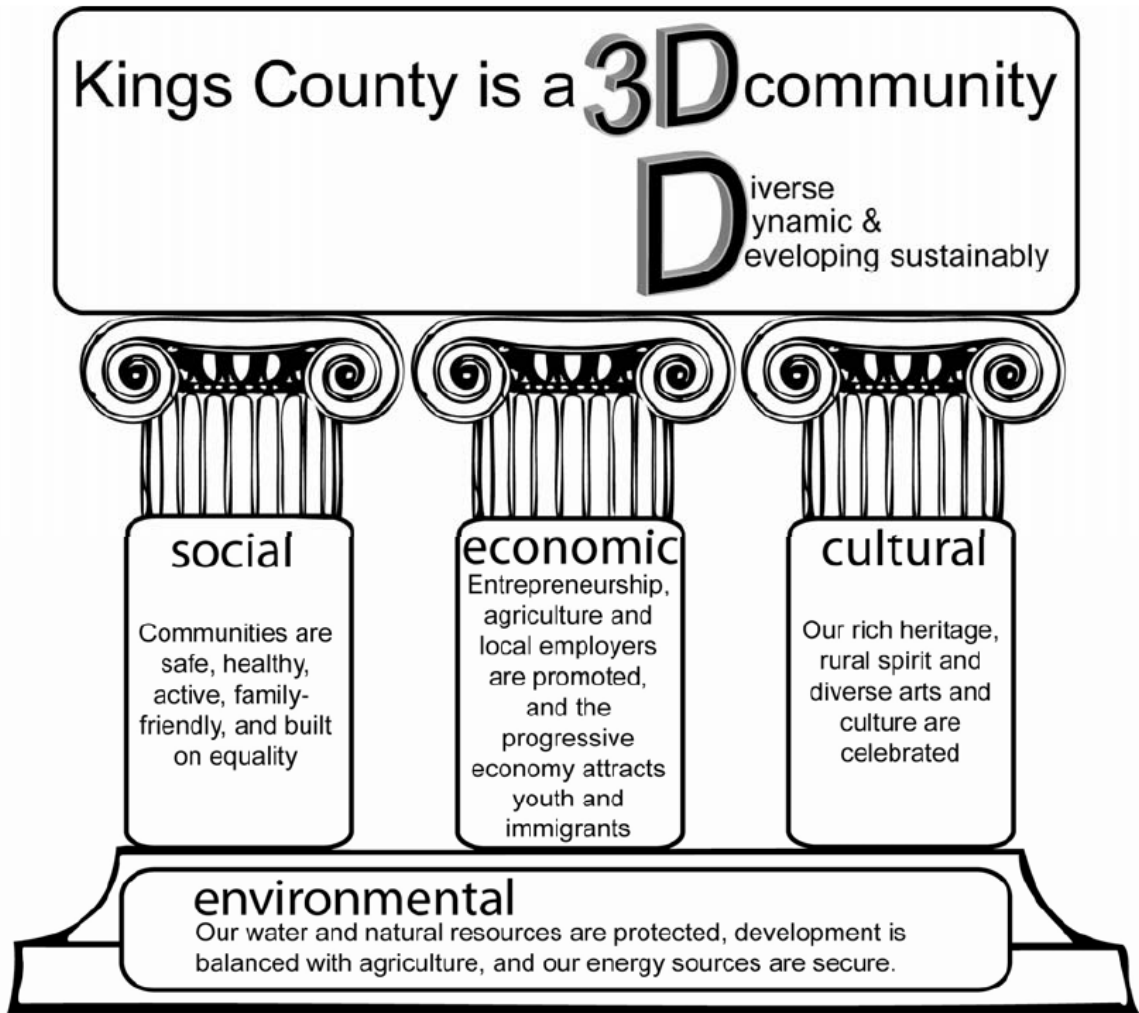
Strategy Areas and Issues		Action Plan Theme		
		Preservation	Development	Innovation
<b>Economic Pillar</b>				
<i>Strategy Area / Action Plan</i>	<i>Key Issues</i>			
<i>Food and Agriculture</i>	Protect agricultural land	•		
	Promote Valley products and way of life		•	
<i>Economic Development</i>	Promote tourism		•	
	Strengthen primary industries		•	
	Renewable energy strategy			•
<i>Transportation</i>	Invest in transportation infrastructure		•	
	Expand transit and carpooling		•	
<b>Environmental Pillar</b>				
<i>Energy</i>	Support energy alternatives		•	
	Maintain air quality and reduce GHG emissions			•
<i>Water Management</i>	Protect coastal and freshwater environments	•		
	Protect sensitive areas	•		
	Primary industries best practices			•
<b>Social Pillar</b>				
<i>Health [and Wellbeing]</i>	Increase health care availability		•	
	Ensure housing options for all ages and incomes		•	
<i>Education</i>				•
<b>Cultural Pillar</b>				
<i>Heritage</i>	Preserve rural heritage and character		•	
<i>Arts and Culture</i>	More active recreation		•	
	Encourage volunteerism		•	



Appendix I

# Vision for Sustainability

Here is the proposed vision as contained in the Phase One report. It is subject to revision as Phase 2 progresses.



## Appendix 2

# Sustainability Issues

The following list of sustainability issues was extracted from the *Phase I Report: Developing a Vision and Topics for the Plan* (2009) and the *Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans* (2008) pages 60-63. The issues are grouped under the relevant sustainability pillar.

### Economic

The top five priority issues in the initial survey of residents of Annapolis Valley communities as part of the 2008 background study were:

- developing a renewable energy strategy;
- strengthening the primary industries;
- promoting the Valley for its products and quality of life;
- investing in transportation infrastructure; and
- developing and creating new forms of tourism such as ecotourism and agro-tourism.

These top five priorities demonstrate that the respondents understand their dependence on primary industries for employment and the current challenges, including costs of fossil fuels. Further, there is an emphasis on the need to continue with digital and transportation connections while retaining the unique character that is Kings County.

Items that were listed but which did not rate highly were:

- reducing poverty and unemployment
- providing grants or tax incentives to help businesses stay and survive in the area
- supporting local entrepreneurs through education and business mentoring
- making town centres more exciting with a better mix of uses (retail, housing, parks, etc)
- supporting knowledge workers and new industries (e.g., IT and environmental technologies)
- putting up better signage and tourist information
- expanding industrial parks
- promote recycling of housing and commercial stock
- promote composting and reduce what comes in the front door
- prepare for Peak Oil – when petroleum becomes scarce and prohibitively expensive
- keep our young people here by providing good jobs and quality of life second to none
- establish a quality of life program
- enhance agricultural (and other product) sustainability (buy local) - give money locally, not to big box stores; initiate legislation to require retailers to buy local
- make the valley unique
- take care of our environment, communities, and existing businesses which will make our area more livable and attractive to others with the same core values
- eliminate employment barriers
- help provide opportunities for young people to gain work experience.

### Environmental

Based on the 2008 community survey, the top priority issues were:

- looking for and assisting opportunities for alternate and renewable energy;
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas such as rivers, marshes and species habitat;
- promoting environmentally friendly methods in the primary industries;
- protecting air quality and reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs);
- protecting agricultural land; and

- protecting coastal areas and the marine and freshwater environments.

Items listed but not as highly rated were:

- helping residents on private wells and septic systems to protect water quality
- creating a watershed management plan
- protecting and expanding green space within urban areas
- upgrading and expanding municipal sewer services
- adapting to climate change
- upgrading and expanding municipal water services
- focusing on pest control and invasive species
- enact legislation and actual change to effect results
- change policies that guide urban and rural development to ensure sustainable design
- Create communities that are “accessible” to all citizens – wheelchair accessible, ramped, Braille signage, welcoming to those with disabilities - follow principles of ‘universal design’
- Develop alternatives to truck and auto transportation; implement a walking, biking and transit plan for reducing auto dependence
- Prepare for Peak oil
- Initiate incentives for garbage reduction
- Educate about the “big picture” as to what this could look like 25 years from now and how this can happen in small steps

### **Social**

The 2008 survey combined social and cultural pillars. Of these issues, the top ones relating to only the social aspects were:

- making a range of housing, especially smaller and more affordable housing, available;
- expanding public transit system and/or carpooling opportunities;
- increasing health care facilities and services.

These top social issues appear to align with the challenges of demographics and education for Kings County. Items listed but not as highly rated were:

- addressing problems with youth smoking, drinking, and using drugs
- increasing opportunities for adult education to meet the needs of the local economy.
- Making the community welcoming to immigrants
- Fighting child and adult obesity
- Addressing the problems with local traffic
- Alert and educate people about peak oil
- Build bike lanes or at least expand shoulders on roads
- Expand capacity for integration of senior citizens into the community
- Provide fun and educational opportunities for youth
- Promote community inclusion – incorporate all individuals in what we do
- Initiate incentive programs (tax breaks?) to get low wage jobs to increase beyond minimum wage to reduce poverty; address the welfare system and how we can get people off this over-used process and feel better about themselves
- Integrate health care services between conventional medicine and alternative and conventional and preventative methods – moving towards “health care”, not “sick care”
- Look out 25 years from now to see how we can regain and retain a healthy viable community.

### **Cultural**

The key priority issues relating to cultural aspects were:

- building opportunities for active recreation (bike lanes, trails, golf courses) and promoting active living for all ages;
- preserving the rural character and heritage of the community;
- encouraging volunteerism and promoting a sense of community;
- encourage the arts through promotion and grants

The top cultural issues represent the cultural identity within Kings County, which is the value and need for preservation of its unique culture and heritage. Items listed but not as highly rated were:

- Protecting and enhancing beauty
- Building a new Kings County Library
- Broaden opportunities for arts-related activities

A concern with climate change is evident but not explicitly stated in some of the priorities listed above. The sense of vulnerability to changes in the global climate (e.g., sea level rise, severe weather, droughts, etc.) is heightened in Kings County due to its physical characteristics (e.g., low lying areas) and the predominance of agriculture.

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