

**TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH**  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP SESSION**  
**CONESTOGO PUBLIC SCHOOL GYMNASIUM**  
**JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2011**

Residents of Conestogo, Winterbourne, West Montrose and the surrounding area participated in a community focus group session to identify **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)** facing the Township and the community at large.

The following **strengths** were identified:

- Tourism
- Safe communities (small town feel)
- Education system
- Multi-generation families
- Unique, quality of life
- Prime agricultural land
- Big city amenities but small town feel
- Official plan and planning structure to manage growth
- Airport
- Historic sites and heritage
- Infrastructure maintenance

The following **weaknesses** were identified:

- Tourism (marketing in smaller communities)
- Youth programs
- Danger of Crowsfoot Road
- Poor traffic planning i.e. need for better communication between Township and the Region (road construction)
- Balance of power (Township and the Region)
- Elmira dependent on Waterloo for water
- Breslau left out; lack of cohesiveness
- Not a lot of nursing homes/retirement homes
- Poor budgeting/planning of recreational facilities
- Funding shortage to operate Township facilities
- Enforcing planning policies
- Infrastructure maintenance is not consistent from community to community
- Trails network

The following **opportunities** were highlighted:

- Increasing tourism in surrounding areas
- Economic development for all communities (zoning)
- Marketing/promoting communities of interest
- More bike lanes, wider paths
- Housing for seniors
- Historic/heritage site promotion
- By-laws to govern development (noise, zoning/extraction near settlements)
- Tourism retreat/resort
- Promotion of trails in communities
- Improving tourism signage

The following **threats** were highlighted:

- Exodus of Mennonite culture
- Gravel pits
- Lack of progressive rehabilitation of gravel pits to farmland
- Loss of agriculture
- Vision/mission statement concepts being ignored
- Impact of development on water supply
- Air quality affected by gravel pits
- Urban expansion in Elmira and affect on transportation infrastructure to and from Waterloo
- Growth not properly managed

There was a discussion about what residents like most about Woolwich, what they like least and what they feel the priorities the strategic plan should focus on.

Items that they like **most** about Woolwich:

- Small town feel
- Township website and posting documents online – more online services i.e. dog tags
  - o Work on search and categories, organization, posting of timely info
- New Council openness and interaction with residents
- Unique settlement identities
- Spirit; but could do more
- Variety of youth programs
- Open sessions with residents on a yearly basis

The factors that they like **least** about Woolwich:

- Gravel pits
- Loss of agriculture and Mennonite culture
- Impact of gravel pits on flow of traffic, safety of school children
- High traffic/poor planning of Crowsfoot and Northfield Drive

The following **top priorities** were identified:

- Environment
- Protection of prime agricultural land
- Safe communities, healthy communities
- Follow Township mission and vision statement and the official plan
- Council accountability (follow through) and decision making
- Inexperience of new Council and length of meetings
- No gravel pit extraction in and around settlement areas
- Water supply protection
- Controlled growth
- Change for the betterment of existing community
- Small town feel should be preserved
- More experience re: Council representation
- Renewable energies (green technologies)
- Preserve what makes the Township special – improve/better areas and the Township as a whole
- Affect of tourism/economic strength in the Township
- Trails/cycling trails
- Public safety of school children/speed limit in front of schools
- Customer service