

Community Economies Pilot Project + Prince Edward County

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Background

- In 2021, Prince Edward County joined the **Community Economies Pilot Project**
 - A collaboration between the Shorefast Foundation, Canadian Urban Institute and Community Foundations Canada.
 - Driven by the question “how do we strengthen community economies?”
- Focus on centering community in the economic development
 - Community voices and perspectives at the planning table include diverse set of perspectives and ideas to shape the community’s economic future.

'We all need to start thinking about this issue right now and this book is a place to begin.' James A. Robinson, co-author of *Why Nations Fail*

THE THIRD PILLAR

HOW MARKETS and the STATE
LEAVE the COMMUNITY BEHIND



RAGHURAM RAJAN

The Third Pillar

- The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind (Rajan, 2019).
- Society has three pillars: business, government and communities.
- They are out of balance.
- It is only by balancing the third pillar – our communities – that we can build more sustainable and equitable economies.

Economic Development?

Economic development – traditionally pro-growth, wealth building, job creation. Relationship between businesses and governments.

Community or local economic development – additional focus on community well-being and quality of life.

“Community economies” – disrupts traditional pro-growth, extractive approaches to economic development.

“Inclusive economies” - expanded opportunity for more broadly shared prosperity especially for those facing the greatest barriers to advancing their well-being

Formation of Thrive PEC

- Three partners: County Foundation, Community Futures, Municipality
- A loose coalition of organizations focused on engaging the community.
- Focus on answering the project's guiding question: "How do we strengthen community economies?"



ABCD

What do you have?

What do you love?

What would you miss?

What are you going to do about it?



Asset-Based Community Development

Asset-based community development (ABCD) asks community members to identify local strengths or assets, rather than needs or deficits

ABCD sessions were hosted across Prince Edward County to map natural assets, built assets, organizational assets, cultural assets and heritage assets

Engagement

- 245+ residents
- Community
- Government
- Youth
- Business & developers





NATURAL ASSETS

ACCESS TO WATER THROUGH BOAT
LAUNCHES AND OPEN ROAD
ALLOWANCES; PROTECTED HARBOURS

no tall buildings

lack of development,
lack of fast food,
lack of signage

Vicki's Veggies
heirloom seeds

Master
Gardeners

panoramic vistas

bird song

beaches, provincial parks, trails, parks,
green spaces

wildlife

sunshine
"hotspot" in
Canada

wetlands, escarpments,
wildlife, fishing

Dark Night Sky

Biodiversity

locally produced
food, markets,
community gardens

sunrises/sunsets

South Shore
Joint Initiative

peace and quiet

moderate climate

***unique and beautiful
natural environment***

Seedy Saturday

CLEAN AIR

important birding area

white sand/turquoise waters

diversity of agriculture



ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS

99.3 COUNTY FM

Marilyn Adams
Genealogical Centre

6 elementary schools

All Welcome Here

Alternatives for Women

volunteer firefighters

County Food Hub

**The HUB Child &
Family Centre**

Career Edge

Visit The County

Reaching for
Rainbows

4-H

THE COUNTY FOUNDATION

Quinte
Conservation

COUNTY TRANSIT

Picton Pirates

***Baxter Arts
Centre***

Service
Clubs

THE ROC

PEPtBO

Kate's Rest

Museums

PEC Arts Council

***Recreation
Committees***

Hospice PEC

PEFAC

South Shore
Joint Initiative

Local Newspapers

Prince Edward
Learning Centre

**County
Co-Working**

Chamber/BIAs

Farmers' Markets

Mustang Drive-In

Wellington Dukes

Dept of Illumination

Greater Than Youth Collective

Festival Players

libraries

Regent Theatre



**BUILT
ASSETS**

Golf Courses

Glenora Ferry

walkable towns
and villages

bird banding station

main streets with wide sidewalks

***villages with
distinctive character***

MOUNT TABOR THEATRE

heritage churches

boat launches

Curling Rink

Millennium Trail

arenas/community centres

town halls

SKATE PARK

Base31

airfields

Lighthouses

Mustang Drive-In

Regent Theatre

charming storefronts

Pioneer
Cemeteries

INDOOR WALKING TRACK

Museums

heritage barns

Crystal Palace



CULTURAL ASSETS

Baxter Arts Centre

PEPtBO

heritage churches

Base31

Mustang Drive-In

care for neighbours

safe community

pride of place

SINGERS, PERFORMERS, COMEDIANS

COMMUNITY GENEROSITY

vibrant LGBTQ+ community

Lighthouses

Glenwood Cemetery

friendly place where you know your neighbours

Dukes Hockey

strong sense of community

Festivals & Events

Cooperation v. Competition

Commitment to goals of Truth & Reconciliation

Pioneer Cemeteries

BIG LAKE ARTS

Museums

UEL

libraries

Festival Players

SKATE PARK

History Lives Here

volunteer spirit

Moto Social

Crystal Palace

Regent Theatre

Dept of Illumination



Close to Queen's University

small-scale food manufacturing:
maple syrup, cheese.

Close to Loyalist College

deep water port

Base31
Redevelopment

**deep pockets
of personal wealth**

strong creative
economy

history of resiliency and
bouncing back

strong entrepreneurship

CLOSE TO TORONTO, OTTAWA,
MONTREAL, US

Low degree of
chain/franchise
activity

proximity to Hwy 401

strong networks
among local
business owners

Close to St. Lawrence College

active
construction
industry

strong tourism
industry

small-scale beverage
manufacturing:
wineries, breweries,
cideries, distilleries,

**high percentage
of locally owned
businesses and farms**

ABCD Mapping Themes

Area	Theme
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic diversification and innovation
Tourism/Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating pro-active and sustainable tourism strategies
Economy/Quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balancing growth and investment with residents' quality of life
Culture/Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protecting and celebrating natural heritage
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding support networks and better welcome newcomer
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebrating place, culture, community

Interviews with PEC Community Members

- 18 interviews; in person and online
- Met with long-time farming families, newcomers, environmental stewards, local thought leaders, business operators, non-profit leaders, and land developers.
- ABCD themes and asked set questions



PEC: Strengths & Assets



LANDSCAPE &
HERITAGE



COMMUNITY



TOURISM



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



AGRICULTURE



ARTS & CULTURE



LOCATION

Landscape, Natural Beauty, Heritage

- Beautiful place to live
- Home to provincial parks
- Rich cultural and Indigenous history

“People live here because [the natural beauty] is what they want to look at and this is what they want to be part of”





Community

- Sense of belonging, diverse voices and inclusivity
- People are passionate about Prince Edward County

“Everybody has each other's back. I think that's what is really important”



Tourism

- Prince Edward County is “on the map”
- Tourism supports restaurants, wineries, farming etc.

"If you took away the tourism, if you took away the wine region and took away the restaurants and took away the festival players, and you took away...all the nice hotels, then you would be a sleepy old town with nothing. Like no grocery store, no amenities, nothing"

Entrepreneurship

- Many small businesses and opportunities for entrepreneurs
- Strong artisanal food and drink entrepreneurship

“There are a lot of entrepreneurs, a lot of business owners, a lot of very innovative creative people here and a lot of opportunities for growth”





Agriculture

- Second largest industry in Prince Edward County
- Generational farmers

"Agriculture has always been part of this place and always will be"

Arts and Culture

- Rich culture, creative community

“The county is just a magical place. It's unlike other places. It's full of culture. It's full of good food and experiences, wineries and stuff like that”





Location

- Proximity to major cities such as Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal

“I love that I can be in Toronto, either on the train or by car in two hours, I can get to Ottawa, Montreal quickly”

PEC: Challenges



HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY



ACCESSIBLE
SERVICES



GENTRIFICATION &
OVER TOURISM



QUALITY JOBS



VAST REGION



INFRASTRUCTURE
& TRANSIT




MUNICIPAL
LEADERSHIP



Housing affordability & short term accommodations

- High demand for housing yet young people and many who have lived in PEC for generations cannot afford housing prices
- STAs have decreased affordability and have made neighbourhoods “ghost towns”

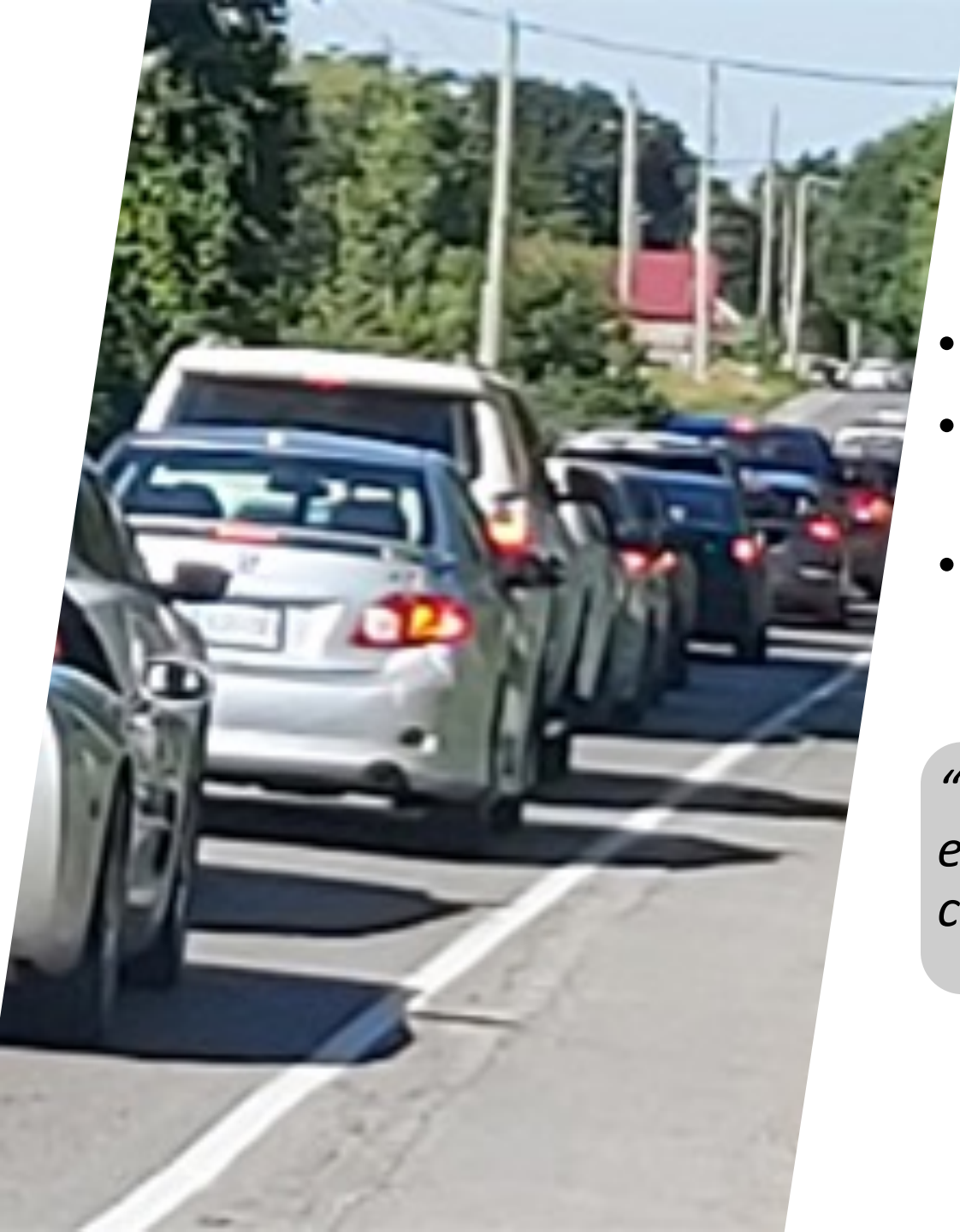
“Kids who grew up here can't afford to stay here. A lot of families are Airbnb'ing out their homes so that's changing the economy. It becomes more of a seasonal kind of place”



Access to services and education

- There are not enough family doctors, retirement homes, long term care spaces, day cares, schools, mental health supports

“Public Health says our daily drinking rates are higher than the community and our average rate of opioid use and fentanyl deaths and all that stuff is higher than average, but they say we don't need any addiction mental health service”



Gentrification & Unsustainable Tourism

- Inequality between residents and tourists
- Quality of life of residents interrupted by tourists
- Belief that newcomers try to make PEC like the cities they come from

“It's becoming a bit elitist. I'm finding places so expensive. There's no way that anybody local can go and enjoy them”

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a silver pen and clicking a white computer mouse on a wooden desk. The background is blurred, showing a keyboard and a person's face.

Job Quality & Seasonality

- A lack of year-round, well-paying jobs
- Agriculture and tourism are not prevalent in the winter

“The ability to find a full-time year-round job that pays a living wage here is really challenging”



Vast region

- Long travel times from one end of the County to the other
- Focus on Picton or Wellington; other areas get forgotten

“I think a huge piece for the County at least, is ensuring that there's more resources available to other pockets of the County rather than just in Picton, because it seems like everything is in Picton”



Infrastructure & Transit

- Declining infrastructure with limited investment in signage, roads etc.
- Concern over water supply to support development
- Difficult to travel without a car

“It's frustrating to see our wayfinding signage just in disrepair and no focus or attention on it”

Municipal leadership

- Need for a long-term vision
- Limited diversity on Council
- Not enough staff (e.g., planners).


“Give more people an opportunity to provide input and listen to their input. Build a more diverse Council”



Who is
responsible
for economic
development?

- Confusion among the PEC community
- Everyone can play a role
 - Municipality
 - Businesses and entrepreneurs
 - Resident groups
- Thrive can play an important role to establish relationships and facilitate community economy discussions

Role of Thrive PEC




“We're finally getting all of these incredibly smart, capable people in a room together, which has never really been done before. And I think even just the exercise of finding those people [identifying] who's an actor in this or a potential actor is, or an activator.”

Role of Thrive PEC

“Thrive [is] on the right track. Community Economic Development Commission should be swallowed up by that. There [are] a number of other groups, I think that could be swallowed up by this Thrive concept with those pillars... the three pillars of, government, community and business. So, thinking...of the structure, I would say that Thrive has the potential to be that answer. If all the stars align, and all the right people get to the table.”

Role of Thrive PEC



“So when I heard about the Thrive initiative, frankly, I was like, this is fantastic, because it's going to give us, [the opportunity to] actually articulate the local assets and a vision for the future for the county”.

*“Everyone wants to be part of
it...Thrive!”*



Community Vision for Prince Edward County

Theme	Details
Affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Residents can afford housing and they are food secure
Quality jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong workforce with good paying, secure jobs and opportunities for training and development
Economically diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifying how new and existing sectors of the economy can help build, grow and sustain the local economy.
Sustainable tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Creating policies and programs that promote tourism while protecting the landscape and quality of life of residents.
Climate protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing a pro-active climate action plan focused on mitigation and adaptation.
Arts and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Celebrating and funding the region's rich arts and cultural scene. Acknowledging and building on its Indigenous history.
Community connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building relationships between residents. Promoting diversity and equity. Mentoring and supporting youth.
Social infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investment in parks, bike lanes, libraries, meeting places and public transit
Social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Every resident has access to a doctor, schools and daycare

Observations

- PEC residents care deeply about the future of their community
- The pace of change in PEC is on everyone's mind
- Residents acknowledge that new investment and visitors are driving a large portion of the local economy
- Want a say in how to sustainably manage change and growth
- Focus should be on striving for balance

Recommendations

1

Activate
Thrive PEC.

2

Seek Alignment.
Build
Partnerships.
Create Capacity.

3

Explore
Approaches.
Share ideas.

4

Foster Economic
Diversity.