

## First Impression Community Exchange (FICE)



## FULL PICTURE

Magnetawan visited by Dorset  
*Tuesday August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014*

Community Tool Provided By OMAFRA



# Visiting Team

- Jennifer Pilon (Economic Development Intern for Township of Lake of Bays)
- Ruth Ross (Councillor for Township of Lake of Bays)
- Sarah Coombs (Business owner)
- Collin Reaney (Consultant)



# Before the Visit

## Impression of the community before visit

- Small town on water, natural beauty, friendly people
- Seasonal town: tourists, fishermen, hunters

## Availability of information

- Readily available online
- Informative, user friendly, easy to navigate
- Could use updates/content review



**BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

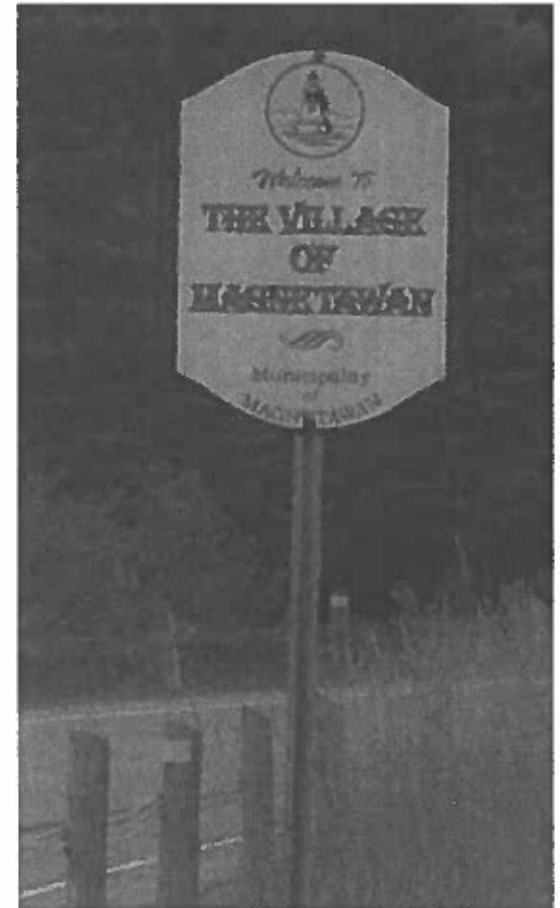
# Entering the Community

## First Impressions

- Clean, picturesque, beautiful park and waterfront areas
- Lots of green space
- Websites did not do it justice

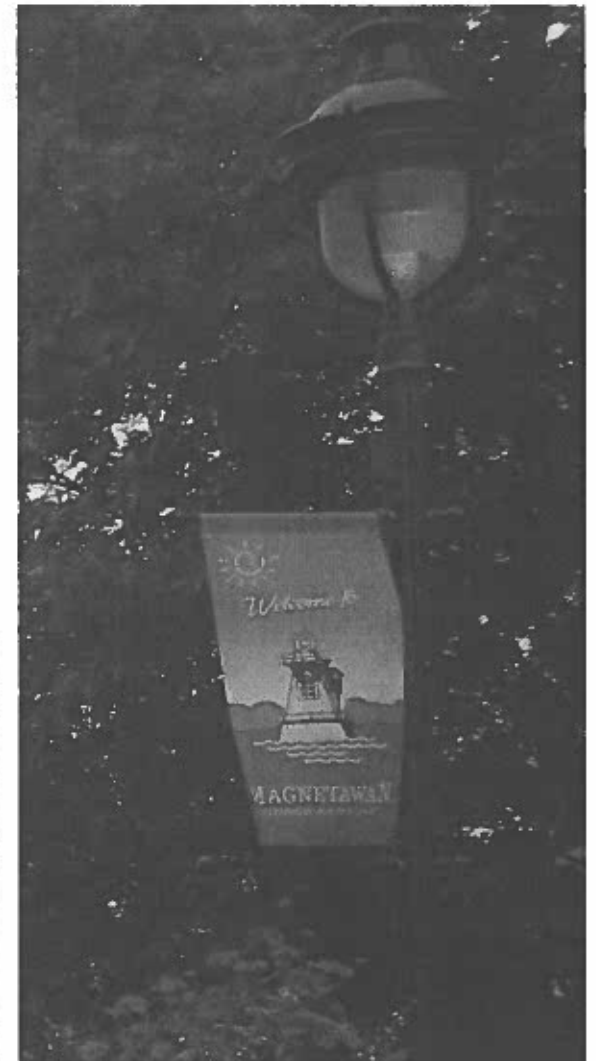
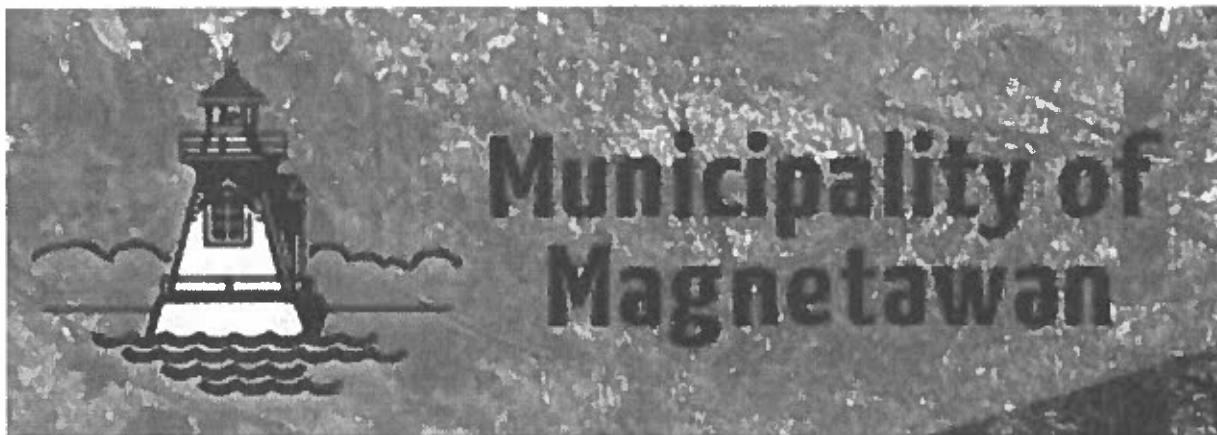
## Signage

- Focus on heritage evident
- Welcome signs at 3 town entrances – nice touch, however we suggest:
  - Increase size of signs
  - Use larger text size/clearer fonts that are easy to read driving by



# Entering the Community

- Great banners on lampposts
- Love Lighthouse as iconic branding, however we suggest:
  - Increase banner size
  - Use larger text size/clearer fonts
  - Continuity throughout town



# Entering the Community

## Comments

- Some signs are overgrown – need trimming to improve visibility



# Housing and Residential Areas

- Variations to suit income levels
- Fair amount of waterfront property
- Many for sale signs

## **Most appealing**

- Yards well maintained, demonstrates homeowner pride

## **Least appealing**

- Many homes on hills, challenging in winter
- Many small driveways, forced to back onto main street

# Housing and Residential Areas

## Quality and availability of residential infrastructure

- Enviably amount of green space
- Beautiful sidewalks
- Great utilization of waterfront: park areas, benches, gazebos
- No public transit
- Suggestion: Add bicycle stands downtown





## **Pre-school/Daycare**

- Daycare available at the school

## **Education**

### **Primary/Elementary (Magnetawan Central School)**

- Great to see in small community! Resident's opinion positive
- Conveniently located close to downtown
- Appears well kept, could use updating



### **High School or College/University**

- Grades 7-12 bused to Burk's Falls (20+ min)
- Closest post secondary: North Bay (Nippising U), Bracebridge (Georgian College) – (both 100km)

### **Comments about education services in the community**

- Public Library: friendly service, free wifi, public use computers, appeared busy/well used

# Health

## Hospitals

- None within the community (45+ min)
  - Parry Sound (West Parry Sound Health Centre)
  - Huntsville (Muskoka Algonquin Health Centre)
  - North Bay (North Bay Regional Health Centre)



## Physicians and Dentists

- None within the community (20+ min)
- According to residents, closest physician's office/outpatient clinic: Burk's Falls / Sundridge
- Distances to hospitals/healthcare a concern, particularly for retirees

# Social and Emergency Services

## Social Services

- Community centre services include: free seniors exercise, family karate, adult tai chi

## Not-for-profit organizations and clubs

- Lions Club, Friendship Club, local Church groups (multiple churches)

## Fire, ambulance and policing services

- Local Fire Department
- Ambulance stationed at fire hall (nice to see!)



# Local Economy - Downtown

## Variety of shopping

- Retail: gift shop, custom quilts, grocery store/grill, fresh produce/baked goods stand
- Services: credit union, real estate, Home Hardware building centre



## Customer service

- Friendly, engaging

## Variety and quality of merchandise

- Limited, could use modernisation

## Quality and availability of parking

- Lots available/free

## Ease of locating the downtown area

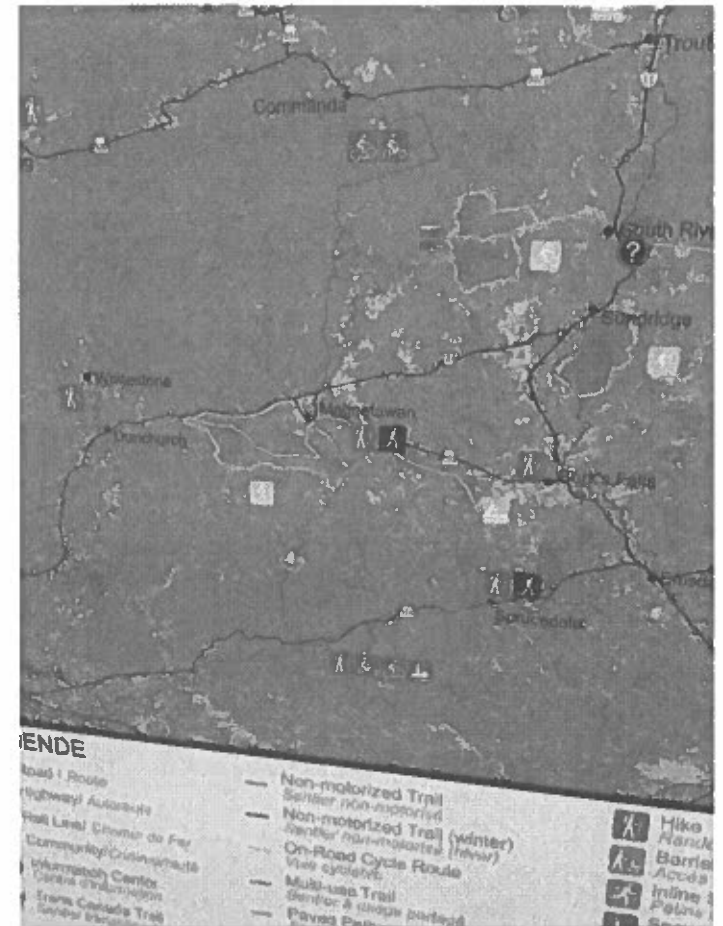
- Easily accessed from all 3 directions/entry points



# Local Economy - Downtown

## Potential for the downtown to play a greater role in tourism

- Snowmobile/ATV trails lead to town centre
  - Suggestion: Install gas station – promote Magnetawan as halfway point to refuel/eat/sleep on TransCanada trail
- Promote:
  - New recreation pavilion for sport tourism, i.e. tournaments
  - Accommodations to attract overnight visitors



## Retail

- Residents need to go to Huntsville (60+ km) or North Bay (90+ km) to shop for many necessities

### **Stores or services that appear to be missing**

- Gas station
- Pharmacy
- Café/Bakery
- Furniture/Home Décor
- Groceries (beyond the basics at the local store)
- Clothing store (for all ages), or a second hand store
- Office supplies/Electronics
- Art studio



# Commercial Services

## **Convenience of bank and ATM locations**

- Kawartha Credit Union
- 2 ATM's in retail stores



## **Convenience of bank hours of service**

- Open Mon-Thurs (9:30am-2pm), Fri (9:30am-5pm)

## **Types of commercial businesses serve the local community**

- DSL/wireless internet available
- Bell cellular signal very strong

## **Availability of other professional services**

- Limited: real estate, bookkeeping
- Missing services: insurance, accounting, legal, dental

# Industries

## Major industrial sectors in the community

- Tourism & Seasonal services
- Construction & Contracting
- Farming & Agriculture (Farmer's Market)
- Sport fishing (but not off town docks)

## Major employers in the community

- Municipality, grill & grocery, lumber yard, school, real estate
- Most employment opportunities 60+ km away (North Bay, Huntsville, Parry Sound)

## Noticeable dependence on any one type of industry:

- Tourism





# Government Information

## **Convenience of municipal office location**

- Convenient, great parking/accessibility

## **Availability of information on the website**

- Good information
- Some updates required



# Government Information

## Ability to find adequate information to make informed retail, commercial or industrial decisions

- Great service from Town office staff, very informative
- Introduced to the mayor
- Everyone very positive about the town



# Tourism

## Strength of tourism sector

- Needs further development – under utilized green spaces, pavilion
- Historical signs – great for history buffs.  
Suggestion: create map to link historical signs in town

## Community slogan/brand

- Love lighthouse branding – could be utilized more (consistency/repetition)
- Could not locate actual lighthouse – signage directing to it?



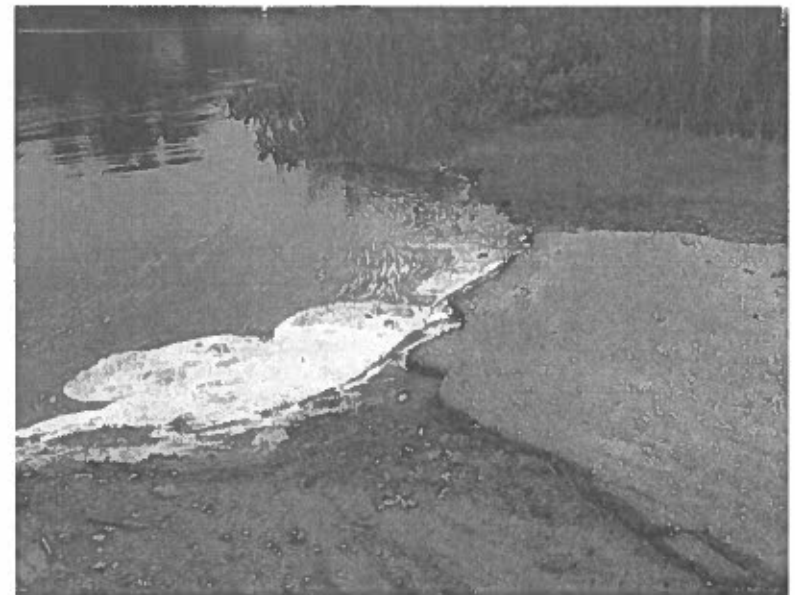
# Tourism

## Community events to expand/develop into tourist attractions

- Expand Farmers Market – great draw from nearby towns
- Expand Fall Fair – feature local agriculture, home craftsmanship, Farmer's Market items. Make bigger & better! Get on Fall Fair poster.

## Attractions that could be developed to draw tourists

- Campsites – encourage camping for fishing/canoeing/ATV trips
- Boat launches – encourage use
- Add road signs to identify boat launch locations
- Main boat launch needs repair (see photo above)



# Tourism

- Great map/sign at downtown intersection with local business information



## Recreation

### Quality, variety and mix of restaurants

- Food options in town: Grill & Grocery, Snack Bar

### Recreation activities

- Public Golf Course (need more signs, found by accident)
- TransCanada trail
- Horseshoe pits in park
- Horseback riding
- White Water Canoeing/Kayaking (saw no signs)



# Public Infrastructure

## **Parks/Recreation facilities**

- Beautiful parks
- Well-equipped playgrounds
- Unique outdoor exercise park
- Great 4 season pavilion/rink

## **Popular community events**

- Summer Farmer's Market and Fall Fair



# Culture and Heritage

## Heritage buildings

- Heritage Centre/Museum
- Historical signage at various locations

## Religious buildings

- 4 churches in Magnetawan





# Environmental Sustainability

## Recycling, green energy or other “green” practices

- Garbage/recycling bins available in parks
- Solar panels on fire station
- Municipal website:
  - ‘Carpool Magnetawan’ link
  - Recycling sorting document



# Welcoming Community

## Employment or job placement services

- “Employment North” at Magnetawan Library (job search coaching)



## Housing information

- Local newspaper, 2 local real estate offices

## Comments

- Amenities easy to find, everyone is friendly
- Attracting/retaining people may be challenging due to lack of services and local job opportunities

# Using Our Senses

## Smell

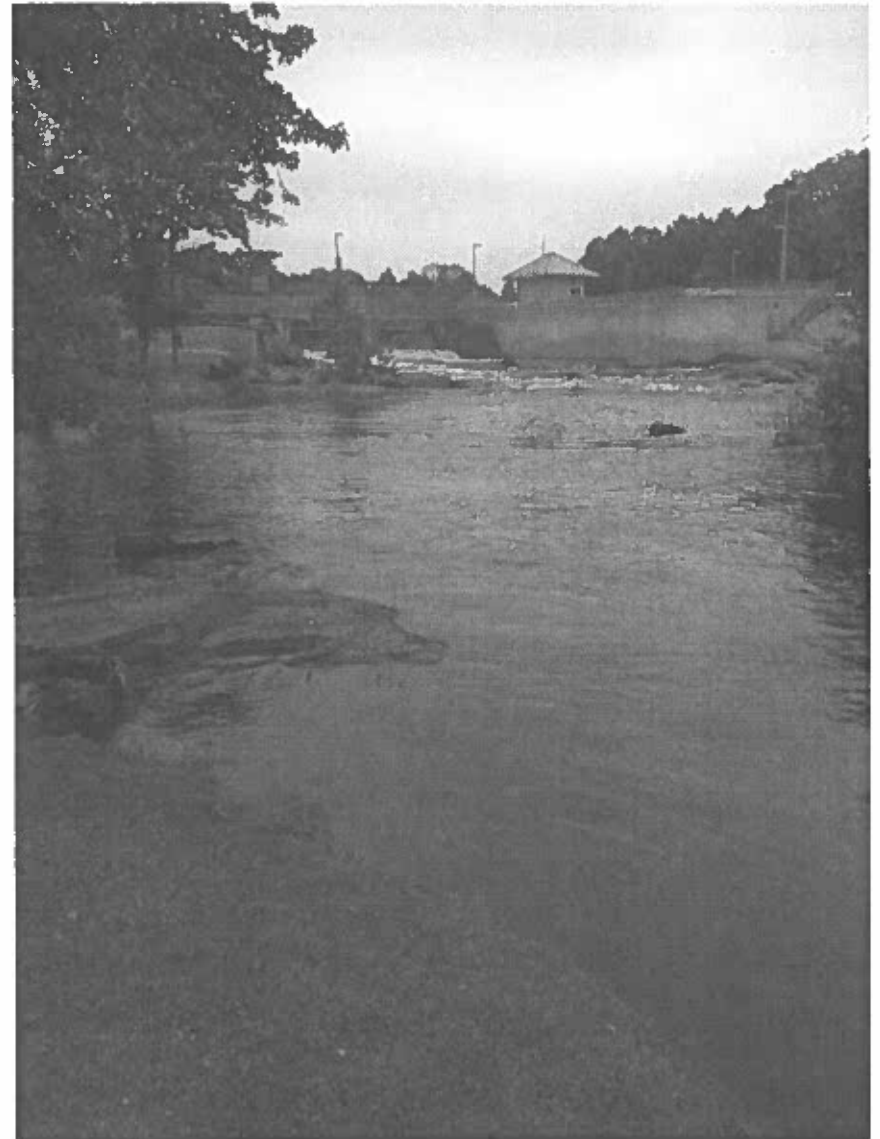
- Lovely scent from flowers.  
Clean, fresh air smell.

## Sight

- Beautiful green space and  
waterfront.

## Sound

- Quiet and peaceful.



# Information from Residents

## **Were community residents knowledgeable about their community?**

- Residents friendly, knowledgeable, helpful
- Community pride

## **Did residents identify any particular issues to be of major concern?**

- Town “shuts down” after Labour Day – very seasonal and tourism based

## The most outstanding feature of Magnetawan

### What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

- Beautiful waterfront and beaches, extensive parks, playground built around natural assets

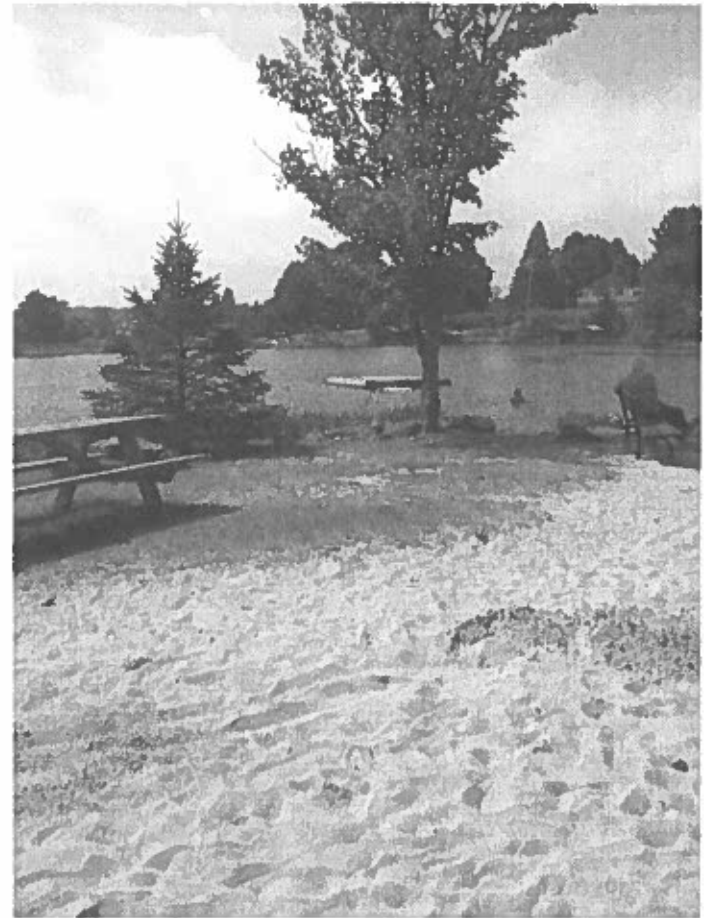
### What will you remember most about this community six months from now?

- Friendly people, beauty of the waterfront



## Five Positive Things About Magnetawan

1. Friendly people, small town feel.
2. Nice sidewalks, great lamp posts, pedestrian friendly.
3. Beautification and cleanliness of the waterfront, beaches, parks, downtown, and residential areas.
4. Various parks and playgrounds in the community.
5. 4-season recreation facilities (pavilion).



## Five biggest challenges facing Magnetawan

1. Distance from Hwy 11.
2. Seasonality – relies heavily on tourism.
3. Proximity to:           Health services – aging population  
                                  Post elementary and high school
4. Branding – what makes Magnetawan special? Tourist hook?
5. Lack of:                   Recreational activities and entertainment  
                                  Job opportunities  
                                  Shopping

## Five potential opportunities available to Magnetawan

1. Outdoor adventure business: take advantage of proximity to TransCan trail. All seasons guided trail tours (ATV & Snowmobiles – signage on Hwy 11).
2. Host events in parks/pavilion (i.e. sports tournaments, festivals, art shows, etc.)
3. Larger online presence (improve websites) – attract telecommuters.
4. Advertise golf course – people willing to travel distances for golf.
5. Add message to the back of signs as motorists leave town i.e. "Thank you for visiting Magnetawan, we hope to see you again soon!"

