



# Town of Minto

## Working Paper for Strategic Plan

LONG VERSION -- Updated December 7, 2005

## Executive Summary

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## Vision Statement and Core Values

*We believe in a **lifestyle** that honours and embraces community.*

*We believe in supporting and promoting the values of our community.*

*Peace and **rural tranquility**.*

*Stability and affordability.*

*Respect for the environment.*

*Sustainable economic growth.*

*Neighbourliness and togetherness.*

*These values are what make us unique, and what make Minto the community where families belong.*

**Should something about volunteers be included in the vision statement? (from Mayor Burns, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

## Brand Positioning Statement

**"Minto. Where your family belongs."**

This positioning offers two, distinct promises:

One, for families it says that Minto is the place where your family deserves to be for a more rewarding and enjoyable lifestyle. For visitors, it says Minto is where your family deserves to be for family-centered events and activities, and for an escape from the problems and chaos of daily city life.

Two, it says that Minto offers families the opportunity for belonging – to a community, to a way of life, to shared values and dreams – peace, tranquility, affordability, stability, clean environment and old-style neighbourliness and friendliness.

"Where your family belongs" also has the ability to broaden its meaning to suit specific needs and occasions. To attract and encourage business development and sponsorship, it's "Where your business belongs." To attract business conference or off-site meetings, it's "Where your conference belongs." To attract any type of sporting event, it's "Where your tournament belongs." In everything the town does, "Where your family belongs" is a natural "button."

## Business Planning Process

This business plan for the Town of Minto is based on the strategic plan developed in 2005. That plan began in the spring of 2005 with a brand positioning exercise. The brand project resulted in the new tagline: 'Minto. Where your family belongs.'

Once the brand position was approved; it was a logical step to put a strategic plan for the Town in writing, using the family position as the core idea. All strategies, on some level, support the goal that Minto will be the place where your family belongs.

The strategic plan was approved in December 2005.

Upon completion of the strategic plan, it was up to town staff to develop a detailed business plan that could be used internally as a working document. Each department was responsible for writing a business plan for their section based on the strategies in the strategic plan.

Below is a chronological list of the milestones for developing the brand strategy, strategic plan, and business plan.

### **Key Dates:**

#### **Brand Strategy**

- April 5/6, 2005 -- Branding brainstorm sessions
- April 26, 2005 -- Planning session with brand committee
- May 17, 2005 -- Creative brief provided to brand committee
- June 21, 2005 -- Brand and communication framework approved

#### **Strategic Plan**

- July 13, 2005 – Strategic Planning Launch Meeting
- August 10, 2005 – Strategic Planning Meeting #2. To review strategies and sub-strategies.
- August 15 - September 23, 2005 -- Information gathering / research.
- August 24, 2005 -- Ideation Sessions. To gather input from key groups such as youth, seniors and service clubs.
- September 2005 -- 1:1 research interviews
- September 2005 -- 1:1 research interviews summary notes
- October 25, 2005 – Strategic planning meeting to review working paper
- November 22, 2005 – Strategic planning meeting to review final draft
- December 2005 -- Strategic Plan Draft available for public comment

- January 2006 -- Council approves strategic plan

**Department Plans**

- January 31, 2006 -- Departmental business plans complete

# Strategic Directions and Outcomes

## 1. Economic Vitality

Economic vitality refers to the health of the Town's economy and includes such factors as employment opportunities, skilled workforce, competitiveness with other towns, investment and affordability for living and working in the Town of Minto.

**Strategic Direction:** Establish sustainable economic development strategies

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Increase our population from 8,500 to 11,000 within five years (January 2011)
  - a. Determine if the GTA is a target audience in addition to K/W/G.
  - b. Develop a strategy to attract new families in Canada to Minto.
    - i. Investigate the feasibility of lobbying the federal government to divert immigrant flow from large urban centres to areas such as Minto, as part of this strategy.
    - ii. Look into Provincial/Federal programs that place new Canadian families in rural settings.
  - c. Continue to allow Collier's International to market the community
2. Provide sufficient serviced/serviceable land for prospective businesses and residents
3. Encourage a healthy, clean, interesting quality of life which will attract and retain engaged citizens
  - a. Provide a welcoming environment for creative and entrepreneurial people
4. Encourage business enterprises to develop and expand
  - a. Conduct a business retention and expansion survey
  - b. Continue to support Communities in Bloom
  - c. Provide positive commercial zoning districts
  - d. Enforce Property Standards By-Laws
  - e. Become more visible in target communities (K/W/Guelph) by participating on relevant tradeshow committees

5. Develop an urban development strategy for the Town of Minto utilizing the expertise of both internal and external resources such as an urban planner.
  - a. Meet with the County of Wellington Planning Department to discuss this project and determine the role the County can have in it.
  - b. Investigate the feasibility and value of hiring an external urban planner
  - c. Ensure urban development strategy ties into marketing plans
6. **Determine if a mega-project (ie. A very large factory employing several hundred people) is feasible for Minto.**
  - a. Consider the effect on infrastructure as part of the urban development strategy
  - b. Investigate the desirability for a mega-project by Minto residents
7. **Research and set up criteria to make decisions based upon economic impact.**
  - a. **Develop a checklist of economic impact criteria that will be referred to when making significant decisions for the Town.**

## 2. Fiscal Responsibility/Financial Strategies

Fiscal responsibility/financial strategies imply that the strategies included here support the goal of being a fiscally responsible municipality.

**Strategic Direction:** Establish sustainable financing mechanisms and sources. They are sustainable because they can be maintained over time. They don't require extraordinary time, money or expertise to implement and upkeep.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Work with Federal & Provincial governments to ensure Minto receives its fair share of grants and revenue-sharing programs
  - a. Lobby governments at the departmental and political level for funding.
  - b. Encourage Council to support resolutions calling for more grants and revenue sharing to small, rural municipalities.
2. Work with neighbouring municipalities and the County to devise mutually-beneficial cost-sharing arrangements
  - a. Continue to ask neighbouring municipalities to enter joint ventures in the purchase of equipment, sharing capital expenses on common projects and sharing personnel where possible.
3. Continue a blend of capital financing methods including long-term debt, user fees, grants, internal reserves and taxation

4. Increase Reserves to the point where Minto does not need to rely on borrowing or tax increases in order to finance major capital expenditures.
5. Encourage group fund-raising activities, explore possible public-private partnerships.
6. Monitor debt burden and ensure the Town is able to comfortably service its debts.
7. Analyze proposed capital projects and determine if they are financially feasible.
  - a. Prioritize major capital projects and evaluate them from a cost-benefit perspective.
  - b. Use the procurement by-law to ensure that the municipality is receiving fair prices from suppliers.
8. Ensure facilities and programs are operated as efficiently and effectively as possible

### 3. Health

Health refers to the health of the citizens of the Town of Minto. This is affected by many factors including the environment, accessible healthcare and recreational opportunities.

**Strategic Direction:** Ensure a safe, healthy environment for our residents.

**Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Town Council and Staff will continue to cultivate strong relationships with the healthcare community and to take a leadership role in moving health initiatives forward.
2. The health board representative on Town Council will oversee this portion of the strategic plan and stay informed of issues such as the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).
3. Continue to assist the local medical community with recruitment and retention of Doctors, Nurse Practitioners and other medical personnel.
4. Ensure the local Fire Department follows the latest Fire Prevention and Public Education standards.
5. Continue the implementation of the Town's Emergency Plan including public education and training exercises.

6. Council and staff will devise and implement strategies to complete a Physical Activity Plan in partnership with other healthcare stakeholders including Active 2010.
  - a. Implement the "Walkable Community" policy to govern future development.
7. **Increase** public awareness of the guidelines for pesticide use, hazardous chemicals, and noxious weeds.

## 4. Destination

Destination implies a place where people go or to which they are traveling. In a broader sense, it can include tourists, businesses and families.

**A. Strategic Direction:** Establish a successful and sustainable tourism product.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Increase awareness of "Minto" as a family destination.
  - a. Create an annual event that will bring people to Minto.
  - b. Create Minto promotion materials (brochures, guides) and place in popular tourist centres and strategic locations.
  - c. Attend successful tourism events outside of Minto to promote the town.
  - d. Continue to sit on regional tourism committees and increase networks.
  - e. Re-locate the Tourist Information Centre to a more visible location.
  - f. Create a "passport -- type" promotion campaign
2. Facilitate businesses and/or groups offering a range of agri-tourism offerings including those geared toward educating children and families about agriculture.
  - a. Work/partner with the Minto Fall Fairs, as these events promote agriculture awareness
  - b. Assist in improving the Farmer's Market
  - c. Contact Agri-Businesses to develop B&Bs, farm stays, pick-your-own, country family courses (ie. making preserves, holiday ornaments) and other appealing tourist offerings

3. Utilize Minto's heritage/culture to create a unique family destination.
  - a. Work with our local heritage groups to create heritage tours and plaques with historic stories
  - b. Investigate the possibility of developing a National Toy Museum in a historic building (i.e. National Toy Train Museum in the Railway Station).
  - c. Create theatre courses/Children's Family Theatre in Old Town Hall Theatre
  - d. Engage the Mennonite population in idea generation involving their culture
4. Increase tourist use of recreational facilities & attractions.
  - a. Hold/create sporting tournaments
  - b. Encourage local schools to hold their competitions in our facilities
  - c. Create Minto information packages to be handed out at sporting events taking place in our facilities
  - d. Encourage existing groups to use our facilities by providing incentives
  - e. Increase awareness of local trails through trail association membership, brochures and website
  - f. Create a 'Community Challenge' event -- Families from surrounding communities come to Minto to compete in various sporting challenges for bragging rights.
5. Maintain dialog with the local retail sector in tourism 'destination' development.
  - a. Develop an information package that contains statistical information to encourage commercial tourism businesses to move or start a business here.
  - b. Involve the tourism business community in the Tourism, Heritage, Arts & Culture Committee (THACC).
  - c. Collect testimonials from current successful tourism businesses in Minto.
  - d. Update retail sector on current trends in tourism, specifically commercial tourism
  - e. Meet regularly with local retailers to brainstorm and discuss ideas for themes, improvement and specials (ie. sidewalk sales)
  - f. Approach outside retailers about setting up shop in Minto and the benefits of doing so.
6. Write a tourism and marketing plan based on these strategies that includes tactics, timing and evaluation.

**B. Strategic Direction:** Provide an attractive destination for business to be conducted.

**Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Increase the awareness of Minto as a place for family friendly businesses, a place that has a thriving business district, and a place to visit and shop.
  - a. Create a Community Guide that stresses that Minto is a family friendly destination.
  - b. Develop an information package that contains statistical information to encourage commercial tourism businesses to move or start a business here.
  - c. Develop a community profile
2. Secure funds for infrastructure enhancement after determining, through an urban planning exercise, which enhancements are needed.
  - a. Conduct an urban planning exercise
  - b. Look into grants that may fund infrastructure enhancements
  - c. Meet with provincial officials to ensure Minto, and its situation is known
3. Provide a strong family image and activities to attract more family oriented businesses.
  - a. Include resident and business testimonials supporting the family image in publications
  - b. Utilize the new Minto logo
  - c. Create and/or support amateur sporting events
  - d. Support existing family oriented events
  - e. Create signage that is family friendly and portrays the family theme
  - f. Initiate a Family Christmas event/ promotion
  - g. Work with current businesses to help them become more family friendly (i.e. Motels offering family programming and specials)

4. Continue to improve the cosmetics of the community.
  - a. Continue to invest and participate in Communities in Bloom
  - b. Become involved with the Green Legacy Program and continue involvement with the various trail groups
  - c. Look into the possibility of providing a grant for businesses that improves the aesthetics of their buildings
  - d. Purchase Town of Minto banners for all three communities
  - e. Incorporate this strategy and tactics into the urban plan for Minto

**C. Strategic Direction:** Provide a welcoming, attractive, and safe location for families to reside in.

**Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Continued support for effective local Police, Fire and Ambulance Services.
2. Determine services and activities requirements for the Town's citizens.
  - a. Utilize the recent Recreation Study
  - b. Encourage public input on what activities and services the public requires
3. Establish a "Welcome Wagon" program
  - a. Encourage local businesses to participate in the Welcome Wagon program and reinforce the benefits of the program
  - b. Work with the Minto Chamber of Commerce to solicit business participation
  - c. Research what other communities are doing for their Welcome Wagon program
4. Utilize resident testimonials to promote Minto.
5. Ensure a target proportion of housing is included in the urban plan such as condos - country homes.

## 5. Agricultural Identity

Minto, by nature of its location in the heartland of Ontario surrounded by farmland, has developed a strong agricultural identity. Minto is recognized as a farming area and community. The strategies below embrace and build upon Minto's history and future as a farming community.

**Strategic Direction:** Expand Minto's agricultural image / identity and encourage developments of agri-industry and agri-tourism.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Increase awareness of Minto's agricultural identity.
  - a. Promote and advertise Minto as an agricultural area
2. Strengthen and expand existing agricultural-related products and services, and develop new ones.
  - b. Create an agriculture product map for Minto
  - c. Create a Farmer's Market in Minto (**'Assist in improving the Farmer's Market' is a tactic under Destination A.2.b. Do we have a farmer's market already or do we need to create one? These 2 tactics conflict.**)
3. Assist & encourage current farming businesses and family farms in diversifying into tourism.
  - a. Form a temporary work-group consisting of tourism and agricultural leaders to investigate the opportunities for agricultural tourism in Minto. If feasible, implement strategies to increase agricultural tourism.
  - b. Offer information and seminars on the benefits of diversifying the farm product and general information on agri-tourism.
  - c. Offer joint advertising opportunities for those farming businesses that open their homes/farms to tourists
  - d. Establish an agri-tourism award
4. Provide a range of agri-tourism offerings including those geared toward educating children and families about agriculture. Ensure they are fun.
5. Strengthen the relationship between agriculture and retail.

6. Attract farm related industries.
  - a. Continue to work with Collier's International to attract farm related business
  - b. Attend farm shows, conferences and seminars
  - c. Create specific promotional material directed to this industry and target market
  - d. Create a Minto information package that addresses all the issues that farm related industries need when relocating

## 6. Leadership

Leadership is the capacity or ability to lead. In this strategic plan, Town Council and Staff are given the primary task of implementing and following the direction of this plan. However, the importance of identified roles for community leaders is also a critical element of success.

**Strategic Direction:** Create a leadership platform/web/map for all constituents and programs that will engage and direct the community.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Lead the implementation of the strategic plan:
  - a. Assign the responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan to an oversight committee with representation from stakeholders aligned with the major sections of the plan. Ensure a chairperson is selected and that the committee meets quarterly.
  - b. Draw on the volunteer community to help with implementation.
  - c. Promote senior citizen and volunteer leadership.
2. Be a leader, among smaller municipalities, in aiding the provision of career/work solutions in Minto. For example:
  - a. Encourage coordination between local businesses and the schools to organize an open-house day for high-school students.
  - b. Work with the agricultural community to improve the knowledge of careers in agriculture among local high-school students and people in targeted geographic areas.

- c. Educate and encourage incentive opportunities available for businesses that offer apprenticeship opportunities for students, such as the Apprenticeship Tax Credit and training grants.
- d. Expand and encourage sponsored scholarships for local high-school students to enter apprenticeship program for skilled trades.
3. Be a leader in healthcare by continuing to be involved in projects such as the medical office space/library and funding the recruitment of medical personnel.
4. Increase the visibility of Town Council and community leaders among students, business owners and the general population.
  - a. Schedule school visits for councilors
  - b. Investigate feasibility of a monthly profile of a councilor in local publications.**
5. Demonstrate innovation in municipal management practices acknowledging that a primary innovation is the use of a consensual **and volunteer based** management approach in place of a more traditional hierarchical approach to managing a municipality.
  - a. Demonstrate public support for projects that encourage original communities to work together. i.e.: Norgan Theatre, Communities in Bloom.
6. Identify the leadership needs in the community beyond traditional Town Council and staff jurisdictions such as service clubs, sport and cultural associations, schools, churches.
  - a. Once needs are identified, determine if Minto can form a satellite leadership organization based on an existing leadership focused group. For example Future Leaders and Toastmasters.**
  - b. Provide leadership training resources where needed**
  - c. Apply for and win awards that demonstrate Minto's leadership qualities to target audiences.**

## 7. Linkage

Linkage refers to the ability of Minto to overcome the challenge of combining **four former municipalities** into one. It relates to the interconnectedness between different town elements including services, organizations, businesses, education, healthcare and tourism.

**Strategic Direction:** To provide a structure that supports 'one community' and improves communication between related town services, organizations, businesses, education, healthcare and tourism.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. Town Council will lead the acceptance and integration of 'one community' by providing a clear vision for the Town of Minto.
2. Determine what overlapping services exist, if any, that the Town can work toward minimizing. This includes programs and organizations supported by the Town.
  - a. An example of linkage in action is the Communities in Bloom program. This program encouraged the original municipalities to work together on a common project and resulted in significant awards for Minto.
  - b. Complete the recreation needs study by January 1, 2006.
  - c. Begin implementing recommendations from the recreation study in 2006.
3. Provide a system to help coordinate event planning within the Town of Minto across multiple organizations. This could include an event calendar on the website that can be updated by different groups.
  - a. The Business and Economic Manager will continue to build and maintain communication with the Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Association.
  - b. Develop list of businesses willing to post community information
  - c. Investigate feasibility of a town bulletin board
4. Determine areas of time/cost savings in Town communications material through conducting a communications audit of existing communication material. This includes all internal and external communication vehicles such as media relations, newsletters, bulletin boards, and tourism guides.
  - a. Develop a list of items to assess for the communication audit
5. With the Chamber of Commerce, examine the feasibility of linking retailers from existing towns by creating a loyalty program for shopping in any retail establishment within the three towns. Consider partnerships (like a credit card company) and cross-promotional opportunities.
6. Implement amalgamation of three fire stations into one department.

## 8. Retail / Downtown Strategy

Retail refers to businesses with a store front and located in downtown Minto.

**Strategic Direction:** Ensure there is a downtown area that will encourage tourism and new business growth.

### **Strategic Sub-directions:**

1. **Reverse the flow of resident dollars so they flow into Minto's retail businesses vs. the surrounding municipalities.**
  - a. Investigate feasibility of loyalty program among retailers (see Linkage)
  - b. Develop a program to encourage residents to shop in Minto
  - c. Promote media coverage in publications that target surrounding municipalities to encourage those residents to visit Minto
2. Continue to invest resources into maintaining and improving the visual appeal of the downtown core.
  - a. Review suggestions from the Walkable Communities initiative
  - b. Invest in banners, Communities in Bloom, unique signage, and lighting
  - c. Promote maintenance of heritage buildings and include in urban development strategy
3. As part of an urban plan, explore possibilities for building a stronger 'one-town' feel.
  - a. Investigate creating 'niches' for downtown based on the former three towns while giving public homage to the former towns.
  - b. Create a consistent visual design between the former municipalities. (ie. similar colours, light standards, planters)
4. Follow zoning by-laws such as using commercial/retail space only for commercial/retail purposes.
5. Investigate and define the types of retail businesses that appeal to tourists seeking a family destination.
  - a. **Ensure the urban plan addresses the topic of a target balance for the sizes of retail businesses in Minto. For example: 60% small, 30% medium, 10% large.**

6. Investigate and define the types of retail businesses that can build upon the agricultural heritage of Minto.
  - a. Look into current research and conduct research, as needed, to address the above two sub-strategies.

# Timeline

The timeline gives milestones for implementing the strategic plan. It also includes the evaluation process and indicates who or what committee is responsible for tasks.

The macro timeline for 2006-2009 follows this page.









# Evaluation

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## Feedback

- Website address with directions to download strategic plan
- Feedback form

## Appendix

- List of references and information sources
- Studies, plans and strategies
- Key Terms
- List of people involved in developing the plan