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March 27, 2013
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List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADSAB</td>
<td>Algoma District Service Administration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKTA</td>
<td>Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Blind River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BR+E</td>
<td>Business Retention and Expansion Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>Blind River Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDS</td>
<td>Community Economic Development Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFDC</td>
<td>Community Futures Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP</td>
<td>Community Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELNOS</td>
<td>Elliot Lake and North Shore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG</td>
<td>Green House Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNDMF</td>
<td>Ministry of Northern Development and Mines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCIR</td>
<td>Northern Communities Investment Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTMP</td>
<td>Northern Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWMO</td>
<td>Nuclear Waste Management Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSM</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSMIC</td>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The Blind River Community Economic Development Strategy would not have been successfully completed without the extraordinary efforts, professional attitude and energy of many individuals, including the dedicated staff and Board Members at the Blind River Development Corporation, Steering Committee Members, Council Members, Town Staff and other community members.

Leadership and coordination contributions for this important undertaking were led by Mrs. Betty Ann Dunbar and Mr. Stoney Burton from the Blind River Development Corporation.

The Mayor and Council provided valuable direction and critique at key points in the process, including Mayor Sue Jensen, Councillors Robert Ambeault, Ken Kennedy, Vyrn Peterson, Lou Moise, HP Roy and Alex Solomon. We would also like to thank the following steering community members for their contributions to the development of this Community Economic Development Strategy:

- Jack Richardson
- Stuart Campbell
- Katie Scott
- Sally Hagman
- Cathy Jensen
- Louise Serre Demers
- Neil Tulloch
- Wei Yu Liu
- Wilma Bissiallon
Executive Summary

The Blind River Development Corporation initiated a process to develop a Community Economic Development Strategy – *Strategy for a Sustainable Economy* through an open and transparent public process to guide future economic opportunities for the Town of Blind River. The *Strategy for a Sustainable Economy* positions economic development resources in Blind River to increase opportunities for growth of existing businesses, establishment of new enterprises and increasing employment opportunities for the Town’s residents using a sustainable approach.

The Town of Blind River recognized that a Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) represents a way to maintain and enhance the Town’s vitality while finding ways to capitalize on community assets to improve economic development.

This *Economic Development Strategy* provides an action plan to stimulate growth, diversification of the local economy with the overall outcome of increasing economic sustainability.

The underlying philosophy of this Strategy is that the Blind River Development Corporation can develop local actions to achieve a common vision specific to establishing a sustainable economy for the Town of Blind River.

The Plan includes specific actions related to five proposed growth areas:

1. Marine Tourism
2. Destination Tourism
3. Filling the Industrial Park
4. Retirement Living
5. Supporting Existing Businesses

During the community engagement activities, participants provided ideas for their vision of the Town.

The vision:

Blind River is a well-managed and resilient community with a rich heritage and robust economic base. It is a desirable community in which to live, work, grow and invest. The Town’s has vibrant artistic and cultural resources, thriving community celebrations, and exceptional visitor services and infrastructure providing the necessary support for a thriving tourism and hospitality industry.

The Plan includes 4 goals supported by more detailed objectives and specific actions that will have to be achieved.
GOAL 1.0: Creating a Sustainable and Enabling Environment:
This goal focuses on ensuring the creation and management of a sustainable and enabling environment to attract and retain businesses for new business development and investment readiness.

- **Objective 1.1:** Focusing on Community Improvements
- **Objective 1.2:** Supports for Quality of Life and Community Well-Being
- **Objective 1.3:** Strengthening the Resources, Tools and Policies for Economic Development Initiatives

GOAL 2.0: Supporting Existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization
This goal focuses on providing the supports to existing businesses to increase opportunities for growth and retention.

- **Objective 2.1:** Creating local Economic Partnerships and Opportunities
- **Objective 2.2:** Building A Consumer Friendly Environment

Goal 3.0: Encouraging New Economic Development Activity
This goal focuses on providing the supports to existing businesses to increase opportunities for growth and retention.

- **Objective 3.1:** Maximizing Marine Tourism Potential
- **Objective 3.2:** Creating a Destination and Increasing Overall Tourism to the Town of Blind River
- **Objective 3.3:** Catalyzing Commercial and Industrial Development

Goal 4.0: Fostering a healthy, effective and well-functioning corporation
This goal ensures the on-going commitment from the BRDC for improved communication to carry-out their mandate.

- **Objective 4.1:** Improving Communications
1 INTRODUCTION

The Blind River Development Corporation initiated a process to develop a Community Economic Development Strategy – *Strategy for a Sustainable Economy* through an open and transparent public process to guide future economic opportunities for the Town of Blind River. The *Strategy for a Sustainable Economy* positions economic development resources in Blind River to increase opportunities for growth of existing businesses, establishment of new enterprises and increasing employment opportunities for the Town’s residents using a sustainable approach.

The Town of Blind River recognized that a Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) represents a way to maintain and enhance the Town’s vitality while finding ways to capitalize on community assets to improve economic development.

This *Economic Development Strategy* provides an action plan to stimulate growth, diversification of the local economy with the overall outcome of increasing economic sustainability.

The underlying philosophy of this Strategy is that the Blind River Development Corporation can develop local actions to achieve a common vision specific to establishing a sustainable economy for the Town of Blind River.

The Strategy includes:

- Section 1: Background
- Section 2: Methodology
- Section 3: Regional Profile
- Section 4: Local Demographic Information
- Section 5: Target Sector Identification
- Section 6: CEDS Framework
- Section 7: Mission and Vision
- Section 8: Goals and Objectives
- Section 9: Action Plans
- Section 10: Implementation Plan

1.1 Background

The Town of Blind River is located in the Algoma District on the North Channel of Lake Huron. According to the 2011 Census, the population of the Town of Blind River was 3549. Although the Town faced a decrease of almost 6% in population from 2006, the mean household income increased by over 30% signaling some economic prosperity.

The Blind River Development Corporation (BRDC) is a legally formed corporation organized for the purpose of assisting in business development within the Town of Blind River. The BRDC
offers a variety of services to help local businesses improve their operations or help new businesses in getting established in the region. Some of the services currently offered by the BRDC include:

- An up to date database of community data including local information on demographics, economic make-up, labour profile, educational resources, listings of available commercial and industrial land, infrastructure, financial resources, cost of living, and all numerous advantages of doing business in Blind River.
- Business/financial/marketing plan assistance
- A business resource library with publications on various business related topics including tourism, marketing, agricultural, manufacturing.

The Blind River Development Corporation is also committed to developing partnerships with other local and regional organizations on projects that will enhance business development in the area.

The community-based approach allowed for the exchange of creative ideas for increasing opportunities for growth of existing businesses, employment opportunities and the establishment of new enterprises.

1.2  What is an Economic Development Strategy

This *Economic Development Strategy* provides an action plan to stimulate growth, diversification of the local economy with the overall outcome of increasing economic sustainability.

This Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) incorporates:

- Input from community consultation activities
- A common vision to diversify the local economy
- A strategic action plan and implementation plan that will provide the municipality with a sharply focused road map for economic development, that spans a minimum of a 7 to 10 year horizon
- Specific opportunities, and recommendations related to business expansion, retention and attraction in identified growth areas
- Strategic partnerships and alliances that are needed to attract investment within the defined sectors/markets

The underlying philosophy of this Strategy is that the Blind River Development Corporation can develop local actions to achieve a common vision specific to establishing a sustainable economy for the Town of Blind River.

The vision, goals, and objectives of the CEDS are based on the interests of the community's multiple stakeholders and embody not only economic perspectives, but social, cultural and quality of life concerns as well.
The proposed actions were determined based on the comments identified during the community consultation process. This does not mean that sectors or opportunities not directly covered are inappropriate for the Town of Blind River. As the strategy is implemented, new ideas, opportunities and priorities may emerge. In the end, the strategy is meant to be a living document, changing and evolving to serve the best interests of the community.
2 METHODOLOGY

The process of preparing the Strategy for a Sustainable Economy has included:

- **Steering Committee Meetings**: A Steering Committee was established to assist with the Economic Development Process. The first Meeting was held in February 2012 to introduce the Project and steps moving forward to develop the Economic Development Strategy for the Blind River Development Corporation.

- **Council Presentation**: In February 2012, DPRA attended a regularly scheduled council meeting to introduce the DPRA Consulting Team and the Economic Development Strategy Planning Process. Council members were provided the opportunity to ask questions. Council members were encouraged to schedule and participate in a key contact interview. The Council Presentation is attached in Appendix A.

- **Community Workshop**: A community workshop was held in March. Participants were engaged in a discussion on the community strength, opportunities, challenges and threats. Participants provided input on a vision moving forward and key priority areas. There were approximately 45 people in attendance. The Community Workshop Presentation and flip chart notes are attached in Appendix B.

- **Community Survey**: During March, a community survey was launched that encouraged feedback on four core questions:
  - What do you love best about the Town of Blind River?
  - What are the most important issues facing the Town of Blind River?
  - How can we create an economically viable future for Blind River? How can we stimulate growth and new business development?
  - What can the Blind River Development Corporation and partners be doing better to create an economically sustainable Blind River?

  The survey was available on line at: www.blindriver.com and in hard copy in various locations across the community. The survey was available in both French and English. An advertisement promoting the survey was placed in the Standard. Posters were also placed throughout the Town. A copy of the Survey is attached in Appendix C.

- **Key Interviews**: Throughout the process, DPRA was conducting interviews with interested individuals. Over 40 interviews were conducted with Councillors, Staff and community members. A copy of the interview guide is presented in Appendix D.

- **Small Group Meetings**: A number of small group meetings were also organized. Participants were engaged in a discussion on community strengths and economic opportunities.
• The groups contacted to participate in the process included:
  o Legion and Lions Group:
  o Ecological Resource Committee
  o Club Richelieu
  o Seniors Centre Committee
  o Chamber of Commerce

• **Youth Engagement**: Civics and Careers classes at WW.C. Eaket Secondary School participated in a workshop where students provided feedback on the strengths and opportunities of the Town of Blind River. They provided feedback on challenges associated with economic development initiatives and their vision for the future. A copy of the summary notes are presented in *Appendix E*.

• **SWOT Analysis**: Throughout the engagement process, community members provided input on the community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
  
  • **Strengths** identify characteristics of the Town that give it an advantage over others.
  • **Weaknesses** (or Limitations) are characteristics that place the Town at a disadvantage relative to others.
  • **Opportunities** are the external chances that could be utilized or capitalized upon to achieve the Vision.
  • **Threats** (or challenges) are the external elements that could cause challenges for the City in achieving the Vision.

A summary of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented in the following figure.
**Figure 1: SWOT Analysis**

**Strengths**
- Trails
- History and Culture
- Rail
- Land availability
- Available Homes
- Natural environment
- Friendly people
- Active volunteers
- Hospital
- Leisure activities – Hockey Jr. A
- Climate
- Tourism assets
- Location
- Cameco

**Weaknesses**
- Shopping local
- Moving forward and accepting change
- Aging population
- Water supply - quality and cost
- Utilizing waterfront and tourism assets
- Local stores
- Available jobs
- Loss of youth and young families
- Proximity to other service centres
- Deteriorating infrastructure
- Building permits
- “Red Tape” for new developments
- Enforcing by-laws
- Lack of a long-term vision

**Opportunities**
- Target tourist abroad, including Europe
- Shoreline development and cottages
- Potential capacity for population growth
- Land available
- Ecotourism
- Linkages to Academic institutions
- Affordable housing for seniors
- Arts/Culture and heritage – summer and winter
- New business development
- Industrial park
- Museum and Visitor Centre

**Threats**
- Online shopping
- Negative self-image
- Managing traffic
- Lack of succession planning for existing business and employment opportunities
- Need a champion to move the plan forward
- “staying the course’
- Infrastructure to attract business
- Loss of young families and trained workforce
3 REGIONAL PROFILE

The Town of Blind River located on the Trans-Canada Highway midway between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, functions as a regional service centre to the communities of Huron Shores, Shedden, North Shore, Serpent River First Nation, Mississauga First Nation and to a lesser extent, Elliot Lake (See Figure 2).

This larger regional area and connectivity demonstrates that within 50 km of Blind River the population of the region is approximately 22,000 persons (2011) while within 100 km the population increases to 48,226 persons. At 150 km, the population is in excess of 165,000 persons.

Figure 2: Transportation Access / Local Context

Source: UrbanMetrics, Town of Blind River / Mississauga First Nation, Investment Attraction Program (June 2006)
The Town of Blind River is well positioned half-way between two of northern Ontario’s largest urban markets (Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie). The Town of Blind River is also located in close proximity (500 to 750 kilometres) to many other key urban markets in Ontario (Figure 3), including the urban markets of Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Windsor and the Greater Toronto Area.

Blind River is also located in close proximity to the U.S. Border and easily accessible to many urban markets in the Northern United States, including Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, and Buffalo. Blind River is also a less than a day’s drive to at least four other U.S. border crossings, including those at Thunder Bay, Windsor, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls (Figure 3). This provides an advantage to business located in the Town by allowing them to avoid the more congested border crossings in Southern Ontario. The Sault Ste. Marie border crossings offer access to Interstate 75, which currently has excess capacity to accommodate additional truck freight.

Figure 2: Transportation Access / Regional Context

Source: UrbanMetrics, Town of Blind River / Mississauga First Nation, Investment Attraction Program (June 2006)

1 UrbanMetrics, Town of Blind River / Mississauga First Nation, Investment Attraction Program (June 2006)
The regional location of Blind River is supported by a number of transportation networks that create an attraction for economic development opportunities, including the road and rail network, airport and marine access.

### 3.1 Road

Blind River’s location on the Trans Canada Highway (Highway 17) provides connectivity to many major U.S. and Canadian highways, including Highways 69 at Sudbury and Interstate 75 at Sault Ste. Marie (Figure 2). It provides local businesses with access to many major urban markets, in northern Ontario including Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and North Bay.

Blind River is connected to major urban centers in southern Ontario by Highway 69, including easy access to greater Toronto area. According to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Highway 69 serves as a key roadway for the movement of goods between Northern Ontario and Southern Ontario communities. On an average day, upwards of 3,200 trucks travel between Port Severn in the south and the City of Greater Sudbury in the north.2

The road network provides access to numerous U.S. markets including Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, as well as Buffalo and Detroit. Highway 17 connects with the U.S. Border opportunities at Sault Ste. Marie. This is immediate access to the U.S. Interstate 75 and markets in the northern U.S. states. The planned four laning of Highway 17 east of Sault Ste. Marie towards Blind River will further improve highway access.

### 3.2 Rail

A rail line parallels Ontario Highway 17 for the length of Blind River. A 305-kilometre route is owned by The Huron Central Railway and leased from the Canadian Pacific Railway. The railway operates trains in each direction six days per week between its two endpoints (westbound from Sudbury in the evening; eastbound from Sault Ste. Marie in the afternoon). Coil steel manufactured by Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie and freight from the Domtar paper mill at Espanola account for most of the freight traffic.

### 3.3 Airport

The Town of Blind River has access to three major Ontario airports (Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Elliot Lake) as well as one U.S airport (Michigan).

The City of Elliot Lake operates the Municipal Airport year-round. The airport is certified by Transport Canada for airline service and offers a 1,372 m x 30 m (4,500 ft x 100 ft) paved and lighted runway; High pressure fuel pump; Weather reporting service; and Terminal building with washroom facilities and area for flight planning. Air Bravo Corporation operates an air ambulance service, servicing all of Northeastern Ontario and provides charter services.

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2 UrbanMetrics, Town of Blind River / Mississauga First Nation, Investment Attraction Program (June 2006)
Sault Ste. Marie’s Airport is a major hub for north-central Ontario. Air Canada Jazz, and Bearskin Airlines operate daily services to and from the Sault Ste. Marie Airport and the airport offers regular daily flights to Toronto. The terminal is located on the western outskirts of the City approximately 16 kilometres from its downtown. There are two 6,000-foot runways, one equipped with an instrument landing system, and a series of taxiways to carry aircraft to the apron located in front of the terminal building.

The Greater Sudbury Airport is one of Northern Ontario’s busiest and is currently served by Air Canada, Bearskin Airlines, Porter Airlines and Sunwing Airlines. There are daily flights to Toronto by Air Canada Jazz and Porter Airlines providing North American and overseas connections. Regular scheduled flights provided by Bearskin Airlines offer air service to other major centres such as Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay. Much of Northeastern Ontario’s smaller communities receive regular airline service from Sudbury.

In addition, the city airport in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan is approximately one mile south of the International Bridge at Sault Ste. Marie and in close proximity to the Town of Blind River.

3.4 Marine
In addition to major road, rail and air access, the Blind River region also includes access to major port facilities that link the region to the St. Lawrence Seaway. A major freshwater port at Sault Ste. Marie offers modern port facilities and marine shipping services to cities throughout the Great Lakes basin and, via the St. Lawrence Seaway, to the Atlantic Ocean.

Other deepwater ports along the north channel (connecting to Lake Huron and Georgian Bay) include the Ontario Trap Rock facility, a privately run port west of Blind River, that transports primarily aggregates and the Carneuse Lime and Canada Lafarge facility east of Blind River that transports lime and aggregate materials.
4 LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This section provides a baseline demographic profile of the Town of Blind River, including population and labour force characteristics.

4.1 Population

According to the 2011 Census, the total population of the Town of Blind River was 3549. Although the Town faced a decrease of almost 6% in population from 2006, the mean household income increased by over 30% signaling some economic prosperity.

Table 1 presents the population percentage change rates in Blind River between 1996 and 2011. Both Blind River and Algoma have experienced a slow population decrease over the last 15 years, unlike Ontario, which has seen a steady growth over the same period (See Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>% Change 96-01</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>% Change 01-06</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% Change 06-11</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blind River</td>
<td>4374</td>
<td>-9.3%</td>
<td>3969</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
<td>3780</td>
<td>-6.1%</td>
<td>3549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algoma</td>
<td>125,455</td>
<td>-5.5%</td>
<td>118,567</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>117,461</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>115,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>10,753,573</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>11,410,046</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>12,160,282</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>12,851,821</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 illustrates a population trend comparison between Blind River and seven (7) other surrounding select cities/towns. Overall, Figure 2 shows a trend of population decline among the cities/towns with the exceptions of Sault Ste. Marie and Parry Sound. From 2006-2011, Sault Ste. Marie experienced a population growth of 0.3%, whereas Parry Sound experienced a 6.4% growth in population (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Population Change (%) Rates in Surrounding Communities; 1996-2011

---

4.2 Age
Figure 5 presents the age structure of the population in Blind River, Algoma and Ontario. The median age for Blind River in 2001 was 40.8, 46.1 in 2006, and 48.7 in 2011. This information demonstrates that not only does Blind River have an aging population, which is consistent with the Algoma District (47.2 in 2011); it also has a larger number of baby boomers than the Ontario average (40.4 in 2011).\(^4\) In 2001, the Town has a comparatively low young adult (20-44) population (30.4%) and a comparatively higher baby boomer (45-64) population (28.1%). Blind River also has a larger youth (under 20) population (27.6%) than the District or the Province.

![Figure 5: Comparative Population by Age, 2011](image)

4.3 Households
In 2006, there were a total of 1,615 private households in Blind River. The average value of each household was $122,854 in Blind River; Algoma’s average was slightly higher at $123,912, while Ontario’s average was more than double at $297,479. The average household size was similar for Blind River (2.3), Algoma (2.3) and Ontario (2.6).

In 2011, there were a total of 1,580 private households in Blind River, which is a decrease of 2.2% from 2006. The average household size decreased very slightly in Blind River to 2.2 (from 2.3), but remained the same in Algoma and Ontario.\(^6\) The household sizes are indicated in Figure 6 below. The most notable changes between 2006 and 2011 include an increase in the number of households containing couples with children in Blind River, which is reflected accordingly in the decrease of the number of households without children.

---

\(^4\) Statistics Canada, 2012  
\(^5\) Statistics Canada, 2012  
\(^6\) Statistics Canada, 2012
4.4 **Educational Attainment**

Educational attainment is a very important indicator for potential economic development as it evaluates the Town’s economic growth potential if it were to retain the population. This is extremely valuable as places like Blind River and other communities in the Algoma District, have moved towards developing a knowledge-based economy. A significant part of this Economic Base Analysis is to determine the skills and educational attainment of the Town’s population in order to identify areas of economic prosperity that can be easily supported by the current knowledge-base.

Figure 7 reveals that in 2006, just 14.9% of the Town’s working population (25 to 64 years of age) had a university degree, which is a significant decrease compared to that of the Province which is more than double (30.7%). The Algoma District’s overall Educational attainment is slightly higher than that of Blind River. Evidently, the Town does have a higher share of apprentice and trades educated population than the District or the Province, which provides a strong labour force base for industries such as construction and manufacturing.

As the number of jobs and opportunities available in the industrial sector decrease, the Town must transition into knowledge-based industries. Blind River must also look for ways to increase the educational attainment of the population, particularly since the largest portion of the

---

7 Statistics Canada, 2007
working population are those with just a High school certificate or equivalent (27.9%). This can be achieved in two ways: the first is by attracting more educated workers; the other is by attracting post-secondary institutions to improve the overall knowledge-base and educational attainment.

**Figure 7: Comparative Educational Attainment, Population Aged 25 to 64, 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No certificate, diploma or degree</th>
<th>High school certificate or equivalent</th>
<th>Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma</th>
<th>College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma</th>
<th>University certificate, diploma or degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blind River</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algoma</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.5 Labour Force by Industry**

The 2006 census indicates that the labour force in Blind River has 1900 people. The data also indicates that 54.4% are employed while 8.9% are unemployed. This is an improvement as the 2001 unemployment rate was 13.7%. In Algoma, the unemployment rate improved by a mere 1.3% to the same 8.9% as Blind River. Ontario on the other hand has an employment rate of 62.8% and has an unemployment rate of 6.4%, and improvement of 0.3% between 2001 and 2006.

Between 2001 and 2006, Blind River’s labour force grew by 0.8%, whereas Algoma’s labour force grew by 4.4%. While the growth in the labour force is slight, the fact that Blind River faced a 4.8% population decrease means that the labour force is growing at a better rate than first indicated.

As shown in Table 2, the areas of greatest concentration for Blind River’s labour force as of 2006 are:

- Health care and social services (250 persons or 13.3% of the local labour force)

---

8 Statistics Canada, 2007
Manufacturing (235 persons or 12.5% of the local labour force)
Business services (225 persons or 12.0% of the local labour force)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% of total labour force</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>% of total labour force</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>% of total labour force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
<td>1,880</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1,885</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and real estate</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social services</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business services</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 **Labour Force by Occupation**

Table 3 shows the occupations composition of Blind River’s labour force for 1996, 2001 and 2006. The categories employing the largest number of the Town’s residents include:

- Sales and service occupations (515 people or 27.4%)
- Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (365 people or 19.4%)
- Business, finance and administration occupations (255 people or 13.6%)
- Occupations in social science, education, government service and religion (240 people or 12.8%)

---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% of total labour force</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management occupations</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, finance and administration occupations</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and applied sciences and related occupations</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health occupations</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations in social science, education, government service and religion</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and service occupations</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations unique to primary industry</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Target Sector Identification

The Blind River Development Corporation and the Misswezahging Development Corporation partnered to contract UrbanMetrics Inc. in 2005 to prepare an Investment Attraction Program report.

A competitive analysis of the communities was prepared and key metrics were developed including location quotients by sector, labour force analysis, business case comparators and status of industrial/commercial lands inventories. The central directions offered in the report have not changed and remain relevant and meaningful for current economic development efforts.

While consideration should be given to updating the data in the report, it is noted that there have been no material shifts evident in the economic profile data. Concurrently, the community has undertaken to develop a number of initiatives in green energy that have not been finalized and will result in substantial changes to grid capacity, availability of industrial property, and level of services provided to the industrial park. In addition, there are a few major economic influences looming that could represent a substantial change in the outlook for the community with respect to property demand, labour force impacts, and business investment in the area.

Location Quotients are a commonly used tool in a regional economic analysis. They assess the concentration of economic activities within a smaller area relative to the overarching region in which it resides. The Location Quotient analysis undertaken in 2006 as part of the development of the Town of Blind River and Mississauga First Nation Investment Attraction Program presented a number of key findings.

- A location quotient greater than 1.0 for a given sector indicates a local concentration of economic activity as compared to Northeast Ontario. Sectors with a LQ greater than 1.0 may indicate a competitive advantage for the Town in attracting this type of employee and business or it may confirm that a local economy is comprised predominately by service industries.
- Location Quotients equal to 1.0 for a given sector suggest that there is the same concentration of economic activity as Northeast Ontario.
- A location quotient of less than 1.0 indicates a concentration of economic activity that is less than Northeast Ontario. The results of a location quotient analysis will help to identify where future opportunities may exist to develop/enhance an industry sector.

The Town of Blind River/Mississauga First Nation exhibits an above-average concentration in five sectors:

- Accommodation and food services (LQ = 1.86 & total jobs = 260);
- Finance and Insurance (LQ = 1.29 & total jobs = 60);
- Health care and social assistance (LQ = 1.23 & total jobs = 255);
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (LQ = 1.18 & total jobs = 55); and
Manufacturing is an opportunity (LQ = .64 & total jobs = 110) but concentrated in non-metallic mineral product manufacturing (LQ = 5.56) and primary metal manufacturing (LQ = 2.04).

The Report recommended that Blind River’s focus for investment attraction should comprise two key components:
- There should be a concerted effort to further develop and support the existing base of industries in the Service Area particularly where there is an opportunity for expansion or export market development.
- The Town should consider that the largest net import of jobs comes from manufacturing while the largest net export of jobs is in the construction sector. Given the number of manufacturing jobs in the region, this should involve the targeting of manufacturing operations in Ontario in the sectors noted above with the message that they can effectively ‘offshore’ some of their operations to more cost effective, but equally talented regions of Northern Ontario.

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (2011) was developed to stimulate growth by identifying key actions to create a diversified northern economy, stronger communities, a healthy environment and a skilled, adaptive and innovative workforce. The Growth Plan is structured around six theme areas, including the economy, people, communities, infrastructure, environment and Aboriginal peoples. Within each theme, the Plan identifies a series of policies to achieve the identified vision\(^\text{11}\). This Plan is a “strategic framework that will guide decision-making and investment planning in Northern Ontario over the next 25 years. It contains policies to guide decision-making about growth that promote economic prosperity, sound environmental stewardship, and strong, sustainable communities that offer northerners a high quality of life”.

There are many economic targets currently being explored in the Blind River area that support the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, including business initiatives in the business park, green energy potential, support for local businesses, opportunities associated with the long term storage of nuclear waste and the Pele Mountain Resources.

**Nuclear Waste Management**

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) was established in 2002 in accordance with the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act to assume responsibility for long-term management of Canada's used nuclear fuel. Several regional communities are participating in the Adaptive Phased Management process for site selection and have moved into successive phases with preliminary success in identifying possible locations in the region for long term storage.

As this is a very long term effort, it is unlikely to represent any substantial short term economic activity or impacts. In the longer term, however, and regardless of the outcomes as to the final

\(^{11}\) Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011
location of the site selected for underground storage, there is a likelihood of the area being host to a number of ancillary activities in supply and services associated with this industry. Consequently a longer term view of the preparedness of the community to host investments related to manufacturing, transportation, assembly and so on is warranted. In the event that the final site selection does not result in a location within the region being selected, the due diligence, planning and investment in capacity to host these activities represents a net gain in investment readiness that is complementary to the longer term growth of the community.

**Pele Mountain Resources**

Pele’s flagship property is its 100-percent owned Eco Ridge Mine Rare Earths and Uranium Project. Eco Ridge is located in Elliot Lake, Ontario, a proven mining camp with historic production exceeding 300-million pounds of uranium oxide (“U3O8”) and the only mining camp in Canada to have achieved commercial production of rare earth oxides (“REO”). Pele recently announced results of an updated NI 43-101 Preliminary Economic Assessment (the “PEA”) of Eco Ridge. The PEA was prepared by Roscoe Postle Associates (“RPA”) and demonstrates that Eco Ridge has potential to become a profitable producer of REO and U3O8.

The PEA is the culmination of several years of exploration and pre-development work by Pele and its world-class technical team. Commitment to proceed with the development of proposed mining operations has not been stated and therefore must be taken as speculation at present. Continued progress on this effort could, however, result in significant economic impacts for the region.

The potential impacts of the mining activity on the labour force and industrial investment in the region could in fact be considerable game changers warranting close monitoring and increased vigilance in ensuring the community is prepared to maximize potential benefits. Again, the due diligence, planning and investment in capacity to host ancillary activities represents a net gain in investment readiness that is complementary to the longer term growth of the community.
6 CEDS Framework

This CEDS is comprised of a mission, vision, goals, objectives, actions, and an implementation strategy, outlined in the Figure 8 below.

The actions plans identified include specific actions related to 5 proposed growth areas, including:

1. Marine Tourism
2. Destination Tourism
3. Filling the Industrial Park
4. Retirement Living
5. Supporting Existing Businesses

**Figure 8: Community Economic Development Strategy Framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>A Mission is a statement of the purpose of an organization. The mission provides the framework or context within which an organization functions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>The Vision is a general statement that presents a timeless inspirational view for the ideal future of the Town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Goals are qualitative statements that highlight key issues raised during the economic development planning process, add depth to the vision statement and chart the direction for the plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Objectives are more specific statements of the general goals and describe how the goals will be achieved. Each goal has multiple objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>The actions refer to specific tasks that need to be taken to achieve the objective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>The implementation section includes the steps necessary to ensure that the proposed actions are implemented by the Organization and partners and progress is measured.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 Mission and Vision

7.1 Mission

A Mission statement defines the corporation’s mandate and reason for existence.

The mission of the Blind River Development Corporation is to promote and maintain quality of life in Blind River, through sustainable economic and social development and to ensure employment and development opportunities for those who live and wish to live in Blind River by:

- Providing strategic leadership for sustainable economic development
- Developing markets and encouraging investment
- Assisting in community and social development
- Gathering and maintaining publicly accessible and relevant community data.

7.2 Vision

A vision is a description of the ideal state and desirable future for the community.

During the community engagement activities, participants provided ideas for their vision of the Town.

.........Some words and phrases that come to mind.

Strong economy
Building our future one step at a time
Working with our neighbours
Supportive
Positive
Four season tourist area
Technical Courses in Schools
Respect
Friendly
Partners
Lots of jobs
Local Services
Supportive
Local
Family oriented
Harbour and Airport tourism
Sustainable
Maintaining our youth
Service Industry
Best Place to Stop on HWY 17
Connected

Blind River is a well-managed and resilient community with a rich heritage and robust economic base. It is a desirable community in which to live, work, grow and invest. The Town’s has vibrant artistic and cultural resources, thriving community celebrations, and exceptional visitor services and infrastructure providing the necessary support for a thriving tourism and hospitality industry.

The vision is supported by the following community characteristics:

- **Economy** - A diverse economy providing balanced economic options, a vibrant downtown, a strong and expanding tourism industry, and a visible appreciation for waterfront assets through economic and recreational activity;

- **Land Use** - Plenty of open space and larger lots in the outlying areas; livable neighborhoods with transportation choices include walking, biking, or driving. Diverse housing opportunities of high quality, including historic homes, affordable homes, rentals, condominiums and homes for the elderly and disadvantaged are available.

- **Transportation** – Safe transportation routes provide efficient access to and through the community. There are adequate bikeways and pathways evolving as a result of active resident involved in planning transportation.

- **Environment** - Natural areas and habitat have been preserved, and greenway systems link pedestrian paths that incorporate well maintained waterfronts throughout the community. Residents are actively involved in protecting and conserving natural areas with plenty of space is provided for the enjoyment of wildlife and natural environments.

- **Public Facilities, Services and Safety** - Community services are accessible both electronically and physically. Volunteerism is thriving and is a key resource in the planning and delivery of public services, planning and development of public facilities, and continued support for the vision that focuses the community’s future.

- **Parks, Recreation, Community Creation and Celebrations** – Well-kept parks have adequate bikeways and walking paths, and neighborhood parks provide a focus for a range of recreation options. Cultural diversity is incorporated in Community Festivals and events in which community ownership and involvement is promoted and encouraged.

- **Health, Wellness and Social Services** - Health care is provided locally through a one-stop health care facility. The community encourages and supports programs aimed at health promotion and prevention. The delivery of leisure services programs includes the promotion of personal growth, balanced lifestyles, spiritual growth, and families. Social services are readily available in the community.

- **Education and Needs of Youth** - All levels of education are available; there is a strong business/school partnership. Technological changes provide easy access to information and
education for all residents. Nurturing our youth is a priority and youth are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of our community.

- **Arts, Culture and Heritage** - Public art, cultural events and activities, and museum activities are supported by the community. A living history museum focuses community and tourist attention on the local heritage and history. Cultural events are delivered which promote the heritage values of the area.

- **Communications** - All residents have access to information about the community with opportunities for working together, working more efficiently, and being informed as community participants. Issues are explored and discussed publicly in ways that work toward common ground to benefit the community through public participation in planning and development.
8 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the goals, objectives and actions proposed to achieve the Vision. The Plan includes 4 goals supported by more detailed objectives and specific actions.

Completing the Sustainable and Enabling Environment

Supporting Existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization

Encouraging New Economic Development Activity

Fostering a healthy, effective and well-functioning corporation

GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT:
This goal focuses on ensuring the creation and management of a sustainable and enabling environment to attract and retain businesses for new business development and investment readiness.

- **Objective 1.1:** Focusing on Community Improvements
- **Objective 1.2:** Supports for Quality of Life and Community Well-Being
- **Objective 1.3:** Strengthening the Resources, Tools and Policies for Economic Development Initiatives

GOAL 2.0: SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES FOR GROWTH AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION
This goal focuses on providing the supports to existing businesses to increase opportunities for growth and retention.

- **Objective 2.1:** Creating local Economic Partnerships and Opportunities
- **Objective 2.2:** Building A Consumer Friendly Environment

Goal 3.0: Encouraging New Economic Development Activity
This goal focuses on providing the supports to existing businesses to increase opportunities for growth and retention.

- **Objective 3.1:** Maximizing Marine Tourism Potential
- **Objective 3.2:** Creating a Destination and Increasing Overall Tourism to the Town of Blind River
- **Objective 3.3:** Catalyzing Commercial and Industrial Development

Goal 4.0: Fostering a healthy, effective and well-functioning corporation
This goal ensures the on-going commitment from the BRDC for improved communication to carry-out their mandate.

- **Objective 4.1:** Improving Communications
GOAL 1: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The Town of Blind River has been striving towards creating the infrastructure required for the attraction and retention of new businesses. This area focuses on ensuring the creation and management of a sustainable and enabling environment to attract and retain business development through investment readiness.

The BRDC is currently in the process of developing an Industrial park making it more conducive to new developments. The proposed work includes the extension of water distribution mains and access roads, as well as the clearing of sites for future development within the Park. The Park is located east of the Blind River town site within the Municipality's boundary and is accessed via Oak Road. The site is bordered to the south by the Trans Canada Highway and to the east by the Blind River Municipal Landfill Site. The site was originally developed approximately 10 years ago with the construction of the access road and water main.

Specific tasks have included:
- clearing of approximately 22 hectares for road rights-of-way as well as development sites;
- installation of water main along the proposed road alignment including hydrants, isolation valves and other water main appurtenances at regular spacing;
- construction of approximately 1400 metres of new access road

With support from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation and FedNor, the Blind River Development Corporation has cleared and serviced acreage in the park and is building an 8,000-square foot centre in its eco-industrial park. The new centre will house the North Shore Power Group operating solar generating facilities developed throughout 2010 to 2012. It will also help provide training for students and start-up businesses in the clean technology sector.

Investment Readiness
Investment readiness is the foundation of all successful economic development. It is about ensuring a sustainable environment and the tools necessary to attract and retain the investors. Communities across Northern Ontario are preparing for the future by becoming investment ready. Communities generate a competitive factor and prepare for potential investors to approach them with business propositions. There are several steps to becoming “investment ready”. It is important for Blind River to understand where they stand with respect to being investment ready.
This CEDS is an important step in identifying additional tasks that could support investment readiness. Specific steps to investment readiness include:

- Update asset inventory and Community Profile
- Detailed Market Study - identifies the industrial/business sectors which represent the best opportunity for success in investment attraction by the municipality
- Needs/gap analysis – examination of the underlying infrastructure of the local economy to identify missing or under-developed assets that need to be in place for the community to capitalize on its investment attraction/development opportunities
- Marketing Plan - how a community will reach out to prospective investors with respect to investment attraction.
- Implementation Plan

In order to attract investment to diversify the local economy and increase sustainability, a community must have the right environment and tools in place and be prepared to provide potential investors with the information they require in a timely fashion. Investment readiness does not just stop at having the tools in place but a plan in place to continuously update the relevant investment readiness information (community profile, website, etc.).

The Town of Blind River must understand where they stand in the changing and competitive market, develop and adjust economic strategies and implement the marketing plan to guide them on their journey. The Northern Communities Investment Readiness (NCIR) initiative promotes and supports a strong investment attraction climate in Northern Ontario. It assists northern communities to develop the tools and capability to attract, receive and successfully explore investment opportunities.

**Community Improvements**

Throughout the strategic planning process, many participants identified the need to improve certain areas throughout the Town. Certain areas identified included the downtown core and old mill site. Common to all Ontario municipalities is the need to build, reinforce or reshape themselves to meet global challenges and residents’ future needs in a sustainable community that delivers a high quality of life.

Community improvement planning is one of the many sustainable community planning tools found in the Planning Act, that can help municipalities address challenges as it provides a means of planning and financing development activities that effectively use, reuse and restore lands, buildings and infrastructure. Community improvement planning was popular in the 1970s and 1980s as a means to support and encourage neighbourhood renewal and commercial area improvement. Publications such as the 2000 Brownfields Showcase and Municipal Readiness for Economic Development helped increase awareness of how community improvement plans provide for clean-up of former industrial and commercial lands.
Community improvement plans are being developed more recently to address growth management challenges, intensification, energy efficiency, mixed-use and transit/bicycle oriented development, accessibility, and the emerging needs of an aging baby-boom generation. Some municipalities are using community improvement plans as an incentive for encouraging development that meets recognized environmental standards, such as LEED®, while others use them to attract certain kinds of employment uses. Local and regional community improvement plans can facilitate the development of infrastructure, including transportation corridors and affordable housing. Exploring community improvement initiative opportunities in Blind River could address the concern expressed by many with respect to deteriorating façade and derelict areas.

**Education**

Currently, there are three school boards operating within the Town of Blind River:

- The Algoma District School Board:
  - Blind River Public School
  - W.C. Eaket Secondary
  - Adult Learning Centre
- Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board
  - St. Mary’s
- Le Conseil Scolaire De District Catholique Du Nouvel-Ontario
  - Ecole St-Joseph
  - Ecole Secondaire Jeuness-Nord

The Algoma District School Board operates an Adult and Continuing Education day school program at seven different locations across the region. Adult and Continuing Education locations include: Blind River, Sault Ste. Marie, Northland, Central Algoma, Elliot Lake, Chapleau, and Spanish. The Adult and Continuing Education program is a free service. The program offers a variety of learning options and environments at the high school level, including “Continuous enrolment, day classes, home study, day care, flexibility in program and time”\(^1\). Considering that 47.1% of Blind River’s population

\(^{12}\) Town of Blind River, 2012  
\(^{13}\) Algoma District School Board.
does not have any post-secondary education, it is recommended that Blind River, in participation with the Algoma Adult Learning Centre, provide a more advanced program to help current residents improve their skills, talents and educational attainment locally on a post-secondary level.

Quality of Life and Community Well-being

An important part of creating an economically sustainable community is providing and supporting safe, healthy and vibrant lifestyles and ensuring that there is municipal operations and governance in place to develop, maintain, support and promote the required programs and services.

While economic strategies may have traditionally focused specifically on identifying prospects and attracting investment – new approaches are focusing on marketing high quality of life communities as a key locational and competitive advantage in today’s global, knowledge-intensive economy. While the focus on economic development is still available jobs, investment and overall growth, the avenue for achieving this goal is to leverage the community’s quality of life and supportive community infrastructure for broader economic development initiatives.

The Town of Blind River currently offers many programs that contribute to a quality of life that could be promoted as a place to live, work and visit. Participants provided feedback with respect to capitalizing on the community strengths and promoting the services and programs offered across the Town to newcomers and interested businesses investors.

There are several attractions in Blind River. As the Town is surrounded by the natural environment, there is a vast network of trails that can be used for hiking, skiing, biking and snowmobiling. For the warmer seasons, there are several beaches, cottages and campgrounds that visitors can enjoy.

Some of the current attractions include\(^{14}\):

- Huron Pines Golf Course: The Huron Pines Golf & Country Club is an 18-hole championship golf course located along the Mississauga River bank.
- Blind River Marina: A full service marina located on Lake Huron that includes a boater’s lounge, eatery, wireless internet, boating services and various other amenities.

\(^{14}\) Town of Blind River, 2012
• Timber Village Museum: This museum is dedicated to the early beginnings of Blind River (17\textsuperscript{th} century) depicting life in the lumber camps and early settlement homes and businesses.

• Boom Camp Interpretive Park: The Park contains 12 km of trails that pass through three ecological zones from headlands to wetlands located on the Mississagi River.

• The Alain Bray Auditorium: A state-of-the-art facility equipped with stage, sound system, lighting, grand piano and seats 247.

Some participants suggested that more could be done to promote and market the Town so that interested investors, potential residents and visitors recognized the high quality of life offered in the Blind River area supported by the available programs and services, health care, natural environment and tourism assets. As a means of remaining sustainable with respect to economic vitality it is important to continue to support and deliver the programs to meet the needs of the current residents, visitors and potential employers.

**The Goal of Creating a Sustainable and Enabling Environment is supported by the following objectives:**

- **Objective 1.1:** Focusing on Community Improvements
- **Objective 1.2:** Supports for Quality of Life and Community Well-Being
- **Objective 1.3:** Strengthening the Resources, Tools and Policies for Economic Development Initiatives
GOAL 2: SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES FOR GROWTH AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The second goal of this Strategy is the provision of supports to existing businesses to increase opportunities for growth, ensuring retention of the existing businesses and creating the tools necessary to ensure community revitalization.

It is commonly accepted that a large portion of business growth and job creation is from within existing business in community. Therefore, business retention and expansion efforts play a paramount role in this community economic development strategy. As a forward-oriented community, Blind River is looking to grow its economy by improving and developing the conditions and amenities that will make it attractive to a highly skilled, motivated and talented labour force. Efforts of creating and enhancing an environment that attracts talented workers might include renovated downtown core, parks, cultural facilities, and natural heritage, as well as appealing to newcomers developments with a mix of recreational, commercial, and personal uses. These assets should be communicated to potential new residents, visitors and businesses.

Since economic development is largely based on successful labour force development, it is important to imply work structures designed to better utilize the available pool of skilled workers and those who may need to develop new skills for occupations emerging in a service-oriented economy. Developing and marketing relevant programs through business-education partnerships can address issues related to gaps between existing skills and education levels and demands of emerging jobs. By retaining talented individuals and allowing them to generate new employment and job opportunities these programs will diversify Blind River’s local economy.

The Town has a limited amount of land on which it needs to accommodate new businesses. To support the future prosperity of Blind River, it is essential that the needs of existing and potential new businesses take central stage in the local economic planning, and factor strongly into the kind of development the Town allows on these lands. The focus should be on encouraging new enterprises to enter the community, while at the same time supporting and enhancing business services and retention and expansion efforts directed on stimulating new investment from existing businesses.

The issues discussed above and specific strategies on how to address the issues were among recommendations made in the Blind River and Area Business Retention and Expansion Study.
In addition, as a part of the Town of Blind River Investment Attraction Program, a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) was undertaken in order to examine the Town’s ability to support the retention, expansion, and attraction of business investment. Among the opportunities listed in the findings of the SWOT analysis were the following:

- Improve Support to Local Business;
- Enhance Local Skills Capabilities;
- Create a Business Mentoring Program; and
- Improvements to the Downtown.

Business Retention and Expansion is an activity that is carried out continuously. Provided below are selected comments and suggestions (related to this issue) that have been put forward through a variety of community input activities carried out during the process of designing the Economic Development Strategy:

- There is a need to invest money to improve our community’s appearance;
- Upgraded downtown businesses (façade development, electrical improvements, etc.) will become more appealing and make people want to stop;
- An advisory committee that included all local businesses needs to be created for discussing the expansion and investment potentials;
- Explore opportunities to further strengthen partnerships with neighbouring municipalities;
- Provide a reason for youth to either remain in, or to return to, Blind River following their education;
- Even in the summer some of the stores are not open late on Saturdays, and nothing is open on Sunday;
- More needs to be done to promote Blind River (i.e. signs along the highway, pamphlets describing our assets, etc.);
- Work in collaboration with neighbouring municipalities

In addition on building on its competitive strengths and community assets, Blind River can successfully diversify its economic base and stimulate the growth of high quality jobs, new wealth and investment by retaining existing businesses and creating an enabling environment for business expansion and creation.

In Blind River, many local small businesses are family owned and operated and many business owners will retire within the next decade or two; without succession planning, these businesses will close, creating further loss of investment and employment.\(^\text{15}\) Participants provided comments with respect to ensuring that local businesses get the support they desire to ensure they can stay in business if desired.

\(^{15}\) WCM, 2007

March 27, 2013
The Cameco Corporation is an active member of the Blind River community. Heading up its own Community Investment Program, Cameco focuses on providing programs for youth, education and literacy, health and wellness, and community development\(^\text{16}\).

There are other sectors that employ residents of Blind River. According to the Town of Blind River, the following are the top employers:\(^\text{17}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Blind River District Health Centre</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refinery</td>
<td>Cameco</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Lines</td>
<td>AJ Bus Lines (note – includes Elliot Lake)</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Nations</td>
<td>Mississauga First Nation</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Algoma District School Board (Adult Learning Centre, Blind River Public School, W.C. Eaket)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Store</td>
<td>Hutton's Valu Mart</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>Tim Hortons</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario - École Saint-Joseph et École secondaire catholique Jeunesse-Nord</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Supplies and Hardware Stores</td>
<td>Blind River Home Hardware &amp; Building Centre</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Government</td>
<td>The Corporation of the Town of Blind River</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>Government of Ontario</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board - St. Mary's Catholic School</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excavating and Aggregates</td>
<td>J. I. Enterprises</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excavating and Aggregates</td>
<td>Leroy Construction Ltd</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>HydroOne</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Institutions and Investment Services</td>
<td>Scotiabank</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto All Automobile Services</td>
<td>Milltown Motors Ltd</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Institutions and Investment Services</td>
<td>Royal Bank of Canada</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>Mics Kwik Way</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbing and Heating</td>
<td>Ernie’s Plumbing &amp; Heating</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rec Vehicles and Boats</td>
<td>Napa Power Sports</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing and Accessories</td>
<td>Haggers Footwear &amp; Clothing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing and Fabric Shops</td>
<td>Vegas Fabrics &amp; Gifts Inc.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{17}\) Town of Blind River, 2012
According to a 2002 shopping survey for Blind River, much information was collected about the economic vitality of the Town. The report stated that although almost 90% of respondents reported shopping out of town, only 43.4% indicated shopping as the primary for their trip, which explains the need for business retention tactics. It was also apparent that out of town trips are as much for entertainment/social events as they are for necessities which demonstrate a need for both industries to grow. In looking in more detail, respondents indicated that product selection was the most important reason for shopping out of town (81%), followed by pricing (71%) and hours of operation (44%). In terms of what this means in terms of dollars, it was calculated that with 42% of retail expenditures by Blind River residents are spent outside of Blind River, it translates to a loss of over $13 million from the community.

There are some aspects of the “city shopping experience” that the Blind River area simply cannot compete with, and it would be unrealistic for consumers to expect local businesses to be able to do so. Sudbury and SSM have a large market, and are therefore able to provide consumers with things the Blind River Area cannot. Shopping locally could be promoted and reviewed to make it a more desirable option for the residents.

The weakest areas of the retail sector were identified as the following:
- Computer and Computer Supplies: 74%
- Clothing and Footwear: 68%

Whereas the strongest areas of the retail sector were:
- Hardware Supplies: 76%
- Automobile and Repairs: 72%
- Furniture and Appliances: 70%

The information presented above indicates business retention efforts should be concentrated on smaller businesses that are product specific. The results for a downtown shopping study had similar conclusions regarding pricing, availability and hours of operation. Blind River’s Downtown retail industry is currently made up of 18 stores and has the largest group of clustered retail businesses in the Blind River area. Additionally, there are law firms, medical offices, restaurants/bars, and opticians.18

18 MacDonald, 2002
A local business support organization in the Blind River area is the Blind River Chamber of Commerce. This is a not-for-profit organization, run by volunteers in the communities of Blind River, Spanish, Serpent River, Spragge, Algoma Mills and Huron Shores. The Blind River Chamber of Commerce mandate is:

- To promote business excellence in and through private enterprise;
- To strengthen our organization through increasing membership and our resource base;
- To strengthen the local economy through business & economic development projects;
- To provide leadership to our members through actions on their behalf and through seeking their feedback;
- To promote business locally, fight for fair taxation, and keep members informed of important business affairs;
- To lobby on behalf of small business through membership in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Northeastern Chambers of Commerce, and through regional partnerships.

Participants generally felt commitment to supporting local businesses; although many indicated that they regularly shopped out of Town. Many participants were concerned with the closing businesses and felt that the local economy was greatly impacted by residents shopping out of town.

Many participants felt that the downtown area of Blind River looked run-down. Many felt that more could be done to create a more welcoming atmosphere in the downtown area. Some suggestions included: façade improvements on the front and back of buildings, fresh planters, establishing stores that attracted people to the area.

While the attraction of new business is an important aspect of overall economic development strategies, BR+E recognizes the need to do more to assist existing businesses, helping them to survive and grow in recognition of the fact that 70% of new jobs in the Canadian economy are created from existing businesses.

Goal 2: Supporting existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization includes the following objectives:

- Objective 2.1: Creating local Economic Partnerships and Opportunities
- Objective 2.2: Building A Consumer Friendly Environment
GOAL 3: ENCOURAGING NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Blind River Development Corporation

Blind River lies at a strategic location along the Trans Canada Highway and on the North Channel – one of the world’s premier yachting areas. Blind River’s summer festival has been consistently recognized as one of Canada’s top 50 festivals and the Boom Camp Trails in Blind River are ranked as Canada’s fifth best trails.

Marine and Destination Tourism
Tourism is one of key drivers of local economy through the attraction of visitors to a community and creating entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism-related activities (i.e. accommodation, food and beverage services, retail, equipment rental, etc.) which may be of interest to semi-retired relocated individuals who choose to move to the community for its lifestyle benefits.

Blind River gets high volume of tourists and travelers due to its natural beauty and strategic location on the Trans-Canada highway at the halfway point between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. The Town offers year-around tourism opportunities such as yachting, golfing, hunting and angling, hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, curling and scuba diving. Visitors can also enjoy several beaches during the summer time. In addition to the Boom Camp Trails ranked as Canada’s fifth best trails, there is a scenic 120 kilometer Deer Trail Triangle, where each September artists display their works at full-service host locations along the trail. Cultural and recreational attractions also include:

- Blind River Summer Festival which has been consistently placed on the list of the country’s top fifty festivals;
- Winter Carnival – a four-day festival which hosts a variety of events such as sliding, skating, skiing, snow sculptures, ice fishing, hockey, a polar dip, traditional meals, live entertainment, etc.
- Senior Games is an event with a range of activities including card games and cycling;
- Dragon Boat Races – a charity event which raised money for not-for-profit health organizations;
- Beach Bash & Kite Festival which includes a parade, kite show, sand castle building, watermelon eating competition, etc.
- Community Days Festival which includes a variety of rides, games, food vendors, etc.
- Huron Pines Golf Course – an 18-hole championship course located along the Mississauga River bank;
- Timber Village Museum dedicated to the early beginning of the Town and depicting life in the lumber camps and early settlement homes and businesses; and
- Alain Bray Auditorium equipped with stage, sound system, lighting and grand piano.

A SWOT analysis conducted as a part of the Town of Blind River Investment Attraction Program considered developing the Town as a tourism destination as an opportunity. Commissioned by the BRDC Branded Accommodation Pre-Feasibility Study also concluded that the community has the potential to support a hotel development which over time will result in significant benefit to the area.\(^{22}\)

At the planning session held in June 2011, the BRDC was in agreement that if appropriate campground facilities and water-based attraction were available in the Fourth Sand Beach, capturing benefits from existing RV traffic and increasing possibility for prolonged stops and overnight stays in Blind River should be considered as an opportunity. Following the initial research and cost-benefit analysis, the BRDC recommended conducting a Preliminary Market Feasibility Study which will provide insight as to the potential financial viability of developing a campground and/or waterfront facility in the Town. The prefeasibility study indicated that the Fourth Sand Beach was an ideal location for a fully-serviced RV Park. The proposed site is located in close proximity to a major transportation route and offers the natural environment within close proximity to available services desired by the RV travellers. The research demonstrates the desire for a site located within Blind River to act as a destination stop for travellers as well as a convenient location for people travelling through Blind River to a destination elsewhere. The site should provide some amenities and services to attract the client base required for business success. The site could include camping sites as well as RV parking. The site would require the infrastructure developments to ensure proper services to meet the needs of the client base. If favourable, this study should be followed by a Comprehensive Market Feasibility Study.

It should be noted that a strong unified marketing presence that distinguishes Blind River within the broader region could benefit the community. This could include increased online presence, signage on major regional and provincial highways, distribution of promotional materials, attending relevant trade shows, etc. The BRDC is planning to develop a marketing strategy with a goal of promoting existing features that qualify as destination attractions and attracting more tourism traffic.
Majority of stakeholders consulted for the Economic Development Strategy were in opinion that Blind River will benefit significantly from efforts directed towards expanding its tourism sector. However, there was also a misconception about the potential contribution of tourism to the local economy. A few sceptics perceived that jobs in the sector are mostly minimum and low wage, and there is nothing that would attract visitors to the Town.

As a part of its tourist attractions, Blind River also has a full-service marina which offers a boater's lounge, eatery, wireless Internet access, 30 or 50 amp power and water, gas, diesel, pump-outs, charts, launch ramps, repair facilities, storage, recycling services, courtesy bicycles, washroom and shower, laundry facilities, horse shoe pits, car and trailer parking, and spotless personal comfort stations. The Marina was assessed in the Blind River Tourism Attraction Review as extremely attractive and well-maintained facility that could be a tremendous stopping point not only for boaters but for RV and motorcycle tourists as well. It can also serve as a starting point for fishing enthusiasts looking to explore adjacent lakes (Lauzon, Matinenda, Duborne). At the same time, the review pointed out that with reasonable but not exceptional signage from the highway, the facility has a minimal promotion to highway traffic.

Some stakeholders who provided their input on the Economic Development Strategy considered expanding marine tourism as an opportunity for Blind River. It was suggested that a private or municipally run ferry servicing northern shore of Lake Huron and Manitoulin Islands (and possibly Tobermory) would open up an entire new avenue for tourism. Similarly, the idea of offering tour packages with anchor stops in neighbouring municipalities was raised in a Regional Economic Development Strategy for East Algoma. Marina can also be promoted via boating/sailing event (for example between Mackinaw City, MI and Blind River) which was considered at the BRDC brainstorming planning session (held in June 2011) as a community-based opportunity that could drive economic development in the area.

The BRDC is currently undertaking many initiatives to capitalize on the town’s assets to increase the benefits from existing tourism traffic and to attract more tourism traffic. Some key ideas included promoting the beaches, creating a place where people could stop for a rest or camp.

Filling the Industrial Park
According to the Community Economic Development Activity Matrix developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, when a municipality owns a Business Park it can work with a business to negotiate an appropriate set of terms for the business to locate on property it owns. There are 871.23 acres of land available (as per 2003 data) for industrial and commercial development in the Blind River industrial park, which has fully modern roadway infrastructure and is conveniently located due to its proximity to:

- Trans-Canada highway (direct access);
- Elliot Lake Municipal Airport (within two hours);
- Small-package transportation hubs in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie
- Two deep-water ports.
Municipal water mains have been installed into the site, and natural gas and hydro are available at the property line and can be extended onto the properties when a confirmed tenant is identified. It is expected that this tenant will be prepared to offset or assume a portion or all of the capital costs associated with the installation.

Permitted uses of the property include Rural Industrial and Highway Commercial (at the portion of land adjacent to Highway 17). Rural Industrial zoning allows the development of auto-body shop, contractors yard, salvage yard, sawmill, and manufacturing. However, only low water use industries would be permitted due to restrictions associated with on-site sewage services. Highway Commercial zoning permits the following uses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Hospital</th>
<th>Auto-body Shop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Car Wash</td>
<td>Automotive Service Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Gas Bar</td>
<td>Automotive Repair Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automotive Sales Establishment</td>
<td>Building Supply Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Entertainment Establishment</td>
<td>Convenience Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Establishment</td>
<td>Existing Retail Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Parlour</td>
<td>Furniture Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Centre</td>
<td>Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motel</td>
<td>Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Market</td>
<td>Private Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Arcade</td>
<td>Recreational Commercial Establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Vehicle Sales, Storage and Service</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Outlet</td>
<td>Tavern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Outfitters Establishment</td>
<td>Video Rental Outlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Preliminary studies conducted several years ago by the Blind River Development Corporation identified call centre industry, value added wood sector, the branded accommodation market, the transportation sector, and general retail as potential opportunities for business development in the municipality. It should also be noted that approach to filling the industrial park should be balanced. Therefore, a following recommendation was made in the Town of Blind River Investment Attraction Program:

Recognizing the importance of the tourism industry to the region, Blind River should consider imposing site plan control on their industrial park lands. This in conjunction with the highway commercial zoning that is anticipated on the lands abating Hwy. 17 would provide the community with additional mechanisms to ensure that development at the industrial park does not negatively impact the tourism industry.  

Some of key stakeholders and community members who provided their comments on the Town of Blind River Economic Development Strategy considered available industrial land as an asset

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23 Town of Blind River Investment Attraction Program. ubanMetrics, June 2006, p.8-64
that can assist in attracting mining equipment industry or development of the green energy buildings there.

**Retirement Living**

There has been a significant increase in the older population in Ontario. In 2011, the baby-boomers began reaching age 65. This demographic cohort will keep growing for the next twenty years, and the population shift caused by its growth will affect many aspects of society.

A consortium of nine organizations representing more than a million seniors in the province set out the following four priority issues that must be addressed in the near future:

- Positive aging: its promotion within Age Friendly Communities
- Health care: access and affordability
- Economic wellbeing: including access to employment, adequate pensions, affordability of prescription drugs and care, and affordable housing, and
- Supporting infrastructure: establishing a Cabinet Committee of Aging; providing financial incentives for developing hubs of services where required.  

The Town of Blind River should be well prepared to the effects of this demographic shift. At the BRDC brainstorming session held in June 2011, the development of senior living and supportive senior accommodation was identified as a community based opportunity that could drive future economic development in the Town. Moreover, preliminary research conducted by the BRDC staff on the current situation in Blind River and neighbouring municipalities indicated that the Town should narrow the focus of its assessment to retirement home and/or senior care facility as opposed to the long-term care home. The potential economic benefits of this initiative might include:

- Short- and long-term employment and spin-offs within community;
- Taking pressure off of the hospital system and making it more efficient;
- Keeping existing and new residents along with their economic impact within community, and
- Reinvesting any realized surplus (if publicly operated) in community wide programs and projects

The BRDC decided that a Preliminary Market Feasibility Study must determine the true need and demand for a retirement home and/or senior care facility in the Town along with the

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potential financial viability of this initiative. If favourable, this study should be followed by a Comprehensive Market Feasibility Study.

Most stakeholders who participated in consultation activities on the Blind River Economic Development Strategy and shared their thoughts on senior care opportunities in the Town were in agreement that health sector is growing and attracting retirees will be beneficial for the community. Also, the comment was made that a retirement community needs the infrastructure that would make them feel like they are part of the community and where they can spend some time together (i.e. nice picnic area or seniors park).

**Attracting New Businesses**

Similar to other small communities in northern Ontario, Blind River faces challenges with retaining and attracting employment opportunities and business investment. In response to this challenge, the Blind River Development Corporation and the Mississaugi Frist Nation (Misswezhging Development Corporation) undertook the development of an *Investment and Attraction Plan (2006)*.

According to the Town of Blind River / Mississaugi First Nation Investment Attraction Program report, Blind River’s focus for investment attraction should comprise of two key components:

- Further develop and support existing base of industries in the Service Area particularly where there is an opportunity for expansion or export market development
- Focus initially on those investment attraction opportunities that may come from within Ontario and other areas of Canada – i.e. largest net import of jobs comes from manufacturing followed by construction

The BRDC has also undertook feasibility studies which outline business opportunities. These studies give investors an overview of the industry and insight in to which areas are likely to succeed in Blind River.

The studies completed to date include:

- **Blind River and Area Retail Study (2002)**
  - An analysis of consumer spending habits and local economic conditions
  - With over an estimated $13 million spent outside the Blind River Area annually, there is need for business retention tactics.

- **Branded Accommodation Pre-Feasibility Study**
  - There are currently no branded hotels in operation on the Trans Canada Highway (Hwy 17) between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, with just one located in Elliot Lake, approximately 30km from the East-West corridor
  - Objectives to determine the feasibility of
developing additional roofed accommodation in Blind River, and the prospects of that enterprise should it be branded.

- Concluded that the community has the potential to support a hotel development and that there would be significant benefit to the area should such a development come to fruition.

**Call Centers Sectoral Report**

- Call center industry has been one of the leading areas of growth in the country. It feeds off of areas with higher unemployment and lower wages. That has made it a great fit for several Northern Ontario towns and could become so in Blind River as well.
- The economic conditions seem to be very compatible for a smaller technical support call center and should fit in well in Blind River as it has on a larger scale in larger Northern Ontario communities.
- The call center industry can bring valuable opportunities on a limited scale to the community and can give necessary training that improves quality of the workforce as a whole. But the type of call center and the scale is critical to success.
- There is also an opportunity to exploit the growing market of Internet based call center assistance which has a better quality of work and lower turnover record.

**Value added Wood sector Sectoral Report**

- The value added wood sector is a diverse sector that has shown areas of growth and areas of decline. It is also a sector that has been virtually ignored in Northern Ontario.
- A lot of the current characteristics of the industry present challenges for Blind River getting into the value added wood sector. The trend of more mergers and the higher costs in Ontario as compared to western Canada makes it more difficult to compete.
- There does appear to be an opportunity for development of a value added wood sector business in Blind River. It is important that growth areas identified like engineered wood products and structural panelboards are focused on.

**Transportation Sectoral Report**

- Blind River is an ideal location for transportation. It is on one of the busiest areas of the Trans-Canada highway in Northern Ontario. It is also located on the great lakes and has rail going through the town with
stations within close driving distance to the town. And with low property and labour costs it is an ideal location to set up a headquarters for smaller sized transportation companies.

- A smaller trucking based delivery company seems to be the method most suitable to Blind River. The market size is increasing from the demand for quick and flexible delivery of goods. Smaller carriers have been profitable and the industry has shown positive growth being lead by strong retail, employment and housing stats. Access to employees has become a major issue in the industry which makes Blind River’s labour availability another advantage.

Blind River also provided several reports to help attract and support new business. These reports are as follows:

- **The Marketing Plan**: The Marketing plan provides an overview/skeleton of how to prepare a marketing plan and the benefits of doing so.


Blind River is also advertising on its website several community (economic) initiatives that the Blind River Development Corporation, the Town of Blind River, and several Joint Venture partners are undertaking to increase development and revenues for the town. These community initiatives are outlined below.

### The goal of Encouraging New Economic Development Activities is supported by the following Objectives:

- **Objective 3.1**: Maximizing Marine Tourism Potential
- **Objective 3.2**: Creating a Destination and Increasing Overall Tourism to the Town of Blind River
- **Objective 3.3**: Catalyzing Commercial and Industrial Development
GOAL 4: FOSTERING AN EFFECTIVE AND WELL-FUNCTIONING CORPORATION

The Blind River Development Corporation is a legally formed corporation organized for the purpose of assisting in business development within the Town of Blind River. They offer a variety of services to help local businesses improve their operations or help new businesses in getting established in the region.

Some of these services provided by the BRDC include:

- An up to date database of community data including local information on demographics, economic make-up, labour profile, educational resources, listings of available commercial and industrial land, infrastructure, financial resources, cost of living, and all numerous advantages of doing business in Blind River.
- Business/financial/marketing plan assistance
- A business resource library with publications on various business related topics including tourism, marketing, agricultural, manufacturing, and more.
- The Blind River Development Corporation is also committed to developing partnerships with other local and regional organizations on projects that will enhance business development in the area. The Blind River Economic Development Corp has been working hard to attract new businesses to Blind River.

The Economic Development portion of the Town of Blind River’s website is dedicated to take potential movers through an easy step-by-step process that guides business owners from Thinking, Starting, and Growing their business. For further ease in transitioning businesses to Blind River, the website provides a list of available properties as well as a list of other businesses and organizations. The investment attractions, community profile and community labour force information provides further encouragement for new businesses to re-locate in Blind River.\(^25\)

Blind River is also advertising on its website several community (economic) initiatives that the Blind River Development Corporation, the Town of Blind River, and several Joint Venture partners are undertaking to increase development and revenues for the town. Participants provided many comments with respect to what the Blind River Corporation could do differently. Some actions identify how the Blind River Development Corporation could be best organized to meet the objectives and tasks that will be presented in the strategy.

This goal of fostering an effective and well-functioning organization is supported by the following objectives:

- Objective 4.1: Improving Communication

\(^{25}\) Town of Blind River, 2012
9 **Action Plans**

This section presents the specific actions for each of the Goals and objectives presented in Section 5.

Each action will include potential steps for carrying out the actions, timing and the proposed resources required.

**Action Plans**

This section presents the specific actions for each of the Goals and objectives presented in the CEDS. Each action includes more detailed steps for carrying out the actions, timing and the proposed resources required.

**Goal 1: Creating a Sustainable and Enabling Environment**
- **Objective 1.1:** Focusing on Community Improvements
- **Objective 1.2:** Supports for Quality of Life and Community Well-being
- **Objective 1.3:** Strengthening the Resources, Tools and Policies for Economic Development Initiatives

**Goal 2: Supporting Existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization**
- **Objective 2.1:** Creating Local Economic Partnerships and Opportunities
- **Objective 2.2:** Building a Consumer Friendly Environment

**Goal 3: Encouraging New Economic Development Activities**
- **Objective 3.1:** Maximizing Marine Tourism Potential
- **Objective 3.2:** Creating a Destination and Increasing Overall Tourism to the Town of Blind River
- **Objective 3.3:** Catalyzing Commercial/Industrial Development

**Goal 4: Fostering an Effective and Well-Functioning Corporation**
- **Objective 4.1:** Improving Communications
### Goal 1.0: Creating a Sustainable and Enabling Environment

**GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Responsibility</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1: Develop and implement Community Improvement Plans</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Planning Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Include CIP Policy Base in Official Plan - already being done - budget required = $0. Develop CIP Policy - in-house exercise - consultation with stakeholders - budget required year one = $0. In conjunction with new Official Plan being developed, identify areas of the community in need of improvement (including brownfields, aesthetically challenged areas and areas in need of significant renewal). Develop a policy and incentives for community/private action required to achieve results. Ensure promotion and enforcement of property standards and bylaws. Address the need to revitalize abandoned and derelict sites (eg: the old mill yard area) - identify target areas and ensure future uses are reflected in OP and zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2: Develop a waterfront development initiative.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Planning Advisory Committee SSMIC</td>
<td>Investigate technology status. Budget - $500 Coordinate with SSMIC to determine potential changes that could increase access and reduce carrying costs. This could be done by coordinating a workshop and inviting the neighbouring communities and interested public to participate - a low cost entry fee to offset fees/costs would be appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### OBJECTIVE 1.1: FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Responsibility</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Years 4-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3: Consider developing a long term capital infrastructure plan and asset management plan under a publicly supported Community Development vision.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>All staff and committees contribute</td>
<td>Review existing asset management materials to identify missing elements/reports and identify budget requirements for year 2 - budget $0. Prepare summary report and post to web site - budget $0. Initiate documentation and review of long term capital asset and major infrastructure management plans. Start process of community newsletter - each committee prepares an annual report to include next year’s plans for Town approval. Resulting plans assist in budgeting and can be used to give opportunity for public comment with a short version quarterly update included in existing mailings.</td>
<td>Annual capital project plan - review status, update proposed projects, establish rationale, budget and financing - budget required $0. Develop reporting tool for public release with budgets - post via web/print according to communications strategy - budget $0. Coordinate and schedule planned developments and projects annually. Ensure strategies are intact and that projects and expenditures are connected to sustainability, and having meaningful and relevant impacts that assist in achieving overall vision.</td>
<td>Establish GHG &amp; Carbon Footprint for municipal assets - staff report - possible intern position combined with other functions - budget $5k Expand asset descriptions with a &quot;carbon footprint&quot; and Green House Gas report to guide investment decisions relative to energy efficiency, building envelope, life cycle, sustainability etc.</td>
<td>Ongoing review and update to refine estimates and renew schedules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.2: SUPPORT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Responsibility</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Years 4-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1: Consider developing a sustainable social infrastructure plan for the community.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Coordinate input required from existing committees and staff.</td>
<td>Assess planning base - internal effort - budget = $0. Terms of reference for committee - internal - budget = $0</td>
<td>Assess the planning base for the municipality to determine the need for additional planning efforts in Health &amp; Social, Arts &amp; Culture &amp; Heritage, Recreation &amp; Leisure, Learning, Affordability &amp; Housing. Determine scope of effort required to bring planning base up to speed and determine need and terms of reference for steering committee. May require staff resources assigned in future to assist in developing funding, study RFP’s and research requirements. Ensure asset management plans include related infrastructure - age, condition, asset management characteristics etc in preparation for planning efforts. Continue to support investment in sports, recreation and cultural facilities and amenities that help define Blind River as needs are justified by research.</td>
<td>Implement priority study requirements - possibly budget of $50k less possible funding for intern, study needs - net budget estimate $10k.</td>
<td>Consider establishing a social planning advisory committee to act as a steering committee in establishing a needs assessment report on recreation, social housing, health care and cultural amenities to adequately define future needs (eg senior care facilities spectrum and gap analysis, recreation needs assessment etc). Report should provide rationale and due diligence for future investment and guide decisions as to municipal action required to achieve results (as owner, facilitator promoter etc).</td>
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### GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

#### OBJECTIVE 1.2: SUPPORT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.22: Prepare a culture/arts/museum needs assessment and management plan.</td>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>Timber Village Museum, Council</td>
<td>a. Cost and engineering analysis - assess existing buildings at site as to life span, envelope efficiency, operating costs and required investment to maintain and operate versus estimates for demolition/redevelopment and long term operating costs for new building incorporating appropriate efficiencies. Budget – approximately $8,000</td>
<td>Conceptual design development - budget $35k - anticipated net cost of $5k-$8k with balance funded. Assuming favourable funding availability, proceed to secure funds and issue RFP for contract services to undertake planning and design efforts. Primary thrust will be conceptual planning and design effort for redevelopment of the site and facilities and to:</td>
<td>Engagement of architectural and business planning services to undertake detailed site, facility and program development including:</td>
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<td>On completion, formalize steering committee comprised of members from BRDC, Museum and Town Council to develop recommendations for timelines and redevelopment strategies to be tabled end of year in the form of an RFP for required planning services and a report on the investigation as to available funding sources /requirements.</td>
<td>i. Engage in community consultation to determine and define other community needs and opportunities for establishing sustainability ii. Assess existing programs and visitorship and prepare estimates with respect to potential for achieving sustainability through visitorship and community programming iii. Consider improved use of available site space and provision for parking, RV’s and continuation/enhancement of existing uses of the Peoples Pavilion iv. Combine visitor services with the museum – essentially a kiosk serving both the museum functions and traveller information v. Assessment/determination of actual conservation and storage space required considering the holdings and artifacts in possession/accessioned and restoration/curator function space needed vi. Consideration of the need for multi-use space for;</td>
<td>b. lowest possible operating costs using LEEDS design principles, green building technologies and alternative energy solutions c. detailed pro-forma operating projections demonstrating sustainability and community support Completion of project and launch of funding for re-construction targeting Canada’s 150th birthday celebration in 2017</td>
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## GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### OBJECTIVE 1.2: SUPPORT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

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| 1. open conference room and modern flexible meeting space for up to 100 people with proper sound, wiring, equipment etc |                     |         | 2. include ability to section off or divide space for breakout sessions, separate functions/meetings and smaller arts and culture exhibit/presentation spaces | 3. proper storage for related equipment and furnishings                 | 4. allow potential for expansion of exhibit areas in the future          | vii. Assess the need for permanent space to house and display special collections of art significant to Blind River, Ontario and Canada, i.e. the Cecil Youngfox and Carl Beam collections (other permanent pieces of local artists).  

viii. Assess, and incorporate into site design, storage building for antique mill machinery and Blacksmith Shop for location adjacent to The Northern Ontario Logging Memorial. |
### GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

#### OBJECTIVE 1.2: SUPPORT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

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<tr>
<td>1.2.3: Seniors Care Gap Analysis</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Not-for-profit Housing, Algoma District Service Administration Board (ADSAB)</td>
<td>Monitor and assess outcomes of ADSAB Social Housing study. Budget - $0</td>
<td>Develop RFP and funding for senior care analysis - budget $20k. Seek funding assistance for a Preliminary Feasibility Study to determine the viability of developing a senior care facility in Blind River. Develop partnership structure required to engage stakeholder support and provide resources including colleges, universities, internship and so on for following up on pre-feasibility with detailed planning. Detailed budget requirements to be developed for subsequent years.</td>
<td>Implement findings as necessary to pursue opportunity and define appropriate role of the municipality to facilitate.</td>
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#### OBJECTIVE 1.3: STRENGTHENING THE RESOURCES, TOOLS AND POLICIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

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<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Conduct a review of policies and procedures to ensure a business friendly environment is maintained.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Staff BR + E Chamber of Commerce BRDC</td>
<td>Internal review and liaison with BR&amp;E - budget required = $0</td>
<td>Internal review and liaison with BR&amp;E - budget required = $0</td>
<td>Internal - policy development - cost = $0</td>
<td>Implement findings as appropriate</td>
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- Review existing document base and develop a plan for record/file management.
- Review policies and procedures related to business to ensure they are current and reflect a desire to encourage investment as appropriate. Evaluate and remove the 'red tape' that can deter and delay potential developers by working with investment attraction, economic development, and administrative leads to minimize lost opportunities.
- Redesign web pages, links and menu short-cuts etc - web master services - estimated budget $2.5k
- Establish an internal process to find realistic alternative solutions for converting failed applications into opportunities where possible. Develop a "yes we can" culture of cooperation and achievement. Internal - policy development - cost = $0
**GOAL 1.0: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

**OBJECTIVE 1.2: SUPPORT FOR QUALITY OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**

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<tr>
<td>1.3.2: Establish an Investment Attraction program.</td>
<td>BRDC</td>
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<td>Realty listings ongoing - administrative - budget = $0</td>
<td>Develop RFP for marketing strategy - seek funding - budget = $0</td>
<td>Implement strategy and materials - budget $30k less funding = $8k</td>
<td>Consider establishing an advisory body with business reps to guide discussion, leverage network connections, maximize knowledge base, and focus research requirements. Work to research and define the business activities that are complementary to the planned future of the industrial park area and prepare conceptual plan/drawing of future vision.</td>
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<td>Assess marketing strategy for investment attraction - administrative - budget = $0</td>
<td>Re-work marketing strategy to update based on results and new opportunities. Work with partners to promote the quality of life and community well-being as a place to live, work and play. Cultivate and continue to build partnerships and relationships that will provide strategic economic value and advance market position (i.e. First Nation, municipal neighbours). Leverage partnerships with regional boards, chambers and business organizations, as well as various levels of government to promote and market BR as a preferred location for business and investment</td>
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## Goal 2.0: Supporting Existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization

### Goal 2: Supporting Existing Businesses for Growth and Community Revitalization

#### Objective 2.1: Creating Local Economic Partnerships and Opportunities

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<tr>
<td>2.1.1: Re-invigorate local BR+E programming.</td>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>Chamber, CFDC, MNDM</td>
<td>Establish BR&amp;E committee, develop strategy and bring forward for year 2 - budget $0</td>
<td>Re-establish a committed and ongoing partnership based effort involving interested agencies, organizations, and individual business champions/leaders. Conduct regular business needs identification surveys through site visits to identify and discuss solutions to business issues and concerns. Consider the “Economic Gardening” model for supporting and growing local employment and sustainability. Create a plan for new business start-up - advocating for ‘open for business’. Make available for people interested in doing business in Blind River with steps required.</td>
<td>Research implementation project - budget = $8k</td>
<td>Internship - research/resource to BR&amp;E - budget $5k</td>
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## OBJECTIVE 2.1: CREATING LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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<tr>
<td>2.1.2: Maintain active participation in local and regional partnerships and advisory groups.</td>
<td>BR&amp;E</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small Business Week - promotion, rentals etc - budget = $2k</td>
<td>Work with other agencies as appropriate (e.g. Algoma Workforce Investment Committee, CFDC, ELNOS, AKTA) to advocate for the business training and awareness activities that promote opportunities for expansion, provide skills development opportunities, and information relevant to local business needs (e.g. succession planning, loyalty programs, advertising, financial planning).</td>
<td>Small Business Week - promotion, rentals etc - budget = $2k</td>
<td>Work with partners to develop and support general Business Awareness and Appreciation Program and incorporate opportunities for existing local businesses to develop/refresh business plans that identify directions for growth and sustainability. Advocate for projects/opportunities which will identify labour market issues (such as skilled labour shortages and forecast of business needs/opportunities) impacting investment growth or retention.</td>
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## OBJECTIVE 2.2: BUILDING A CONSUMER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

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<tr>
<td>2.2.1: Review built environment to ensure ease of consumer access to business areas.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Planning Advisory, BR&amp;E, Chamber, BRDC</td>
<td>Revisit CAUSE report and consider street scaping issues and solutions. Evaluate the availability and visibility of parking spaces. Develop a plan that would allow for additional parking spaces as required.</td>
<td>Work with partners to develop a signage improvement plan for business area access and parking.</td>
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# OBJECTIVE 2.2: BUILDING A CONSUMER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

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<tr>
<td>2.2.2: Promote and encourage a buy-local culture.</td>
<td>Chamber</td>
<td>BRDC, CFDC</td>
<td>Develop a plan for getting participation in a business registry and encourage the use of online database of product/services to increase consumer and business awareness of what is available locally. Work with partners to develop a shop-local program. Could be regionally based by bringing catchment areas or market areas together to participate.</td>
<td>Incorporate shop local ideas/programming and feedback in BR&amp;E Initiatives to ensure results are known and program continues to evolve. Consider group participation in Balle (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies) and economic gardening to develop enhanced tools that address practical business concerns.</td>
<td>As part of a “Go-Local” initiative, related research into opportunities for local gardens, greenhouse and other high-value crops/plants and medicinal products should be kept in mind as possible investment opportunities.</td>
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Goal 3.0: Encouraging New Economic Development Activity

**GOAL 3.0: ENCOURAGING NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: MAXIMIZING MARINE TOURISM POTENTIAL**

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<tr>
<td>3.1.1: Secure the viability / sustainability of existing assets.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Marine Park Committee</td>
<td>Develop and implement a business plan for the Marina to better cope with changing markets, boater trends and identify opportunities for growth and sustainability eg: gift shop, storage, repair shop, art studio).</td>
<td>Ensure ongoing active participation and support for (North Channel Marine Tourism Council) to maximize relevance and usefulness.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Chamber, All Committees of Council</td>
<td>Encourage the sustainable use of waterfront locations and waterfront events as a tool to encourage a local culture of waterfront appreciation, and external recognition of this asset.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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**OBJECTIVE 3.2: CREATING A DESTINATION & INCREASING OVERALL TOURISM TO BLIND RIVER**

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<tr>
<td>3.2.1: Consider establishing a local tourism partnership program.</td>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>BR &amp; E Chamber of Commerce CFDC MNDMF AKTA</td>
<td>Tourism Coordinator - FedNor Internship - net cost $7k Explore opportunity to bring together local business interests to more effectively coordinate marketing materials - such as an electronic visitor guide and business directory - and develop funding proposals for identified opportunities. Such a group could provide recommendations on existing public attractions; help leverage resources, and increase destination marketing and awareness.</td>
<td>Continue active participation in regional bodies responsible for regional tourism marketing and development (eg: Algoma Kinniwiabi, North Channel Marine Tourism, NOTMP and CFDC). Work to ensure effectiveness of membership as relevant/meaningful. Collaborate with regional communities, tourism operators, and transportation/tours companies to consider initiatives to increase tourism to the area (i.e. ferry connections with west end of Manitoulin and Tobermory).</td>
<td>Undertake a signage program to support tourism and facilitate way-finding across the Town.</td>
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Start with invitation to informal discussions to gather input on specific activities such as AKTA representation, attractions inventory, and annual review of attractions to set a few priorities. Develop over time to a more formal process as required.

### OBJECTIVE 3.2: CREATING A DESTINATION & INCREASING OVERALL TOURISM TO BLIND RIVER

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<tr>
<td><strong>3.2.2: Pursue the continued development and maintenance of existing tourism assets to address market trends and opportunities.</strong></td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>BRDC, Chamber, Museum, and Planning Advisory Committee as identified.</td>
<td>Follow through on existing plans activities already initiated (ie bike racks, trail controls). Delegate Museum and NOTICE Centre committees to develop a brief report defining advantages/disadvantages of making tourist information booth more appealing and possibility of long term replacement by combining with museum operations.</td>
<td>Develop plans for improvement of access to and the use of less accessible areas (i.e. Fourth Sand Beach, Boom Camp). Investigate the potential of developing attractions and activities that complement existing assets (eg: an extreme bike park through the trails; water park facility etc). Initiate planning for an interconnected trail system that links natural and heritage features. Longer term vision to connect with neighbouring municipalities through the development of a regional parks and trails master plan.</td>
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### OBJECTIVE 3.2: CREATING A DESTINATION & INCREASING OVERALL TOURISM TO BLIND RIVER

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<tr>
<td><strong>3.2.3: Identify opportunities for sustainable development that promote and increase capacity.</strong></td>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>Preliminary market assessment - in-house data collection - budget - $0</td>
<td>Asses the potential for development of an overnight RV park and campground that facilitates access to local business to support services and capitalizes on the existing travelling public.</td>
<td>Feasibility assessment and business plan - budget - $60k - net after funding $30k</td>
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<td>Council</td>
<td>Delegate to appropriate staff and/or committees</td>
<td>Include in mandate for existing festivals/events coordination - $0</td>
<td>Ensure ongoing liaison with groups pursuing regional development ideas with local impact including cycling/hiking routes, outdoor events (triathlons, regattas etc) and continue to identify other opportunities for unique attractions and events that build upon the destination concept.</td>
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**OBJECTIVE 3.3: CATALYZING COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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<tr>
<td>3.3.1: Investigate the opportunities of attracting new industries to the area and make appropriate and necessary investments to demonstrate viability and to facilitate investment in priority opportunities.</td>
<td>BRDC</td>
<td>BR&amp;E</td>
<td>Market threshold and business mix analysis - budget = $5K</td>
<td>Capitalize on priorities by supporting appropriate market research to validate opportunities and define municipal role in facilitating the investment (eg: developing a retirement home and/or senior care facility, developing regional waste handling centre, agricultural product development such as aquaculture and berry farming).</td>
<td>Encourage expansion of existing related business to capitalize on identified opportunities as a preferred method. Review opportunities to create/facilitate sustainable ventures which replace imported products and services with local goods and services (eg: water and waste water treatment supplies). Ventures that are known to be viable opportunities, but fail to find local champions and expertise can still be pursued through either promotion to attract investors, or, as a last effort to ensure priority developments are pursued.</td>
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- Work with BR&E to carry out a market threshold and business mix analysis. Engage business community in the process of identifying potential gaps and opportunities in under-represented products and services (eg: electronics industry, heating system – pellet stove operations, operating discount type warehouse stores, knowledge-based industries, cottage industries, franchise eateries, grocery store, truck stop/service centre). View an example at http://www.growdowntown.ca/blog/assets/content/documents/Sudbury%20Business%20Mix%20Analysis.pdf
- Present findings with business community event.

| BRDC | BR&E | Market threshold and business mix analysis - budget = $5K | Capitalize on priorities by supporting appropriate market research to validate opportunities and define municipal role in facilitating the investment (eg: developing a retirement home and/or senior care facility, developing regional waste handling centre, agricultural product development such as aquaculture and berry farming). | Encourage expansion of existing related business to capitalize on identified opportunities as a preferred method. Review opportunities to create/facilitate sustainable ventures which replace imported products and services with local goods and services (eg: water and waste water treatment supplies). Ventures that are known to be viable opportunities, but fail to find local champions and expertise can still be pursued through either promotion to attract investors, or, as a last effort to ensure priority developments are pursued. |

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| BRDC | BR&E | Market threshold and business mix analysis - budget = $5K | Capitalize on priorities by supporting appropriate market research to validate opportunities and define municipal role in facilitating the investment (eg: developing a retirement home and/or senior care facility, developing regional waste handling centre, agricultural product development such as aquaculture and berry farming). | Encourage expansion of existing related business to capitalize on identified opportunities as a preferred method. Review opportunities to create/facilitate sustainable ventures which replace imported products and services with local goods and services (eg: water and waste water treatment supplies). Ventures that are known to be viable opportunities, but fail to find local champions and expertise can still be pursued through either promotion to attract investors, or, as a last effort to ensure priority developments are pursued. |

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- Present findings with business community event.
### Goal 4.0: Fostering and Effective and Well-Functioning Corporation

**Goal 4: Fostering an Effective and Well-Functioning Corporation**

**Objective 4.1: Improving Communications**

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<tr>
<td>4.1.1: Ensure roles, mandate, governance and reporting requirements are complete, current and understood by all parties.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Staff and Committees</td>
<td>Internal - policy development - existing staff - budget = $0 Confirm mandate and reporting requirements for all committees/boards and formalize to ensure timely reporting and transparency/accountability is, and is seen to be, in place.</td>
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<td>4.1.2: Develop formal and simple Communication Plans</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Staff and Committees</td>
<td>Internal - policy development - budget = $0 Formalize policy for posting and distribution of meeting notices, agendas, minutes, distribution of minutes, agendas, and reports as minimum requirements. Web page re-design and posting tools - estimated budget = $5k Expand Town web site to accommodate postings.</td>
<td>Web page re-design and posting tools - estimated budget = $5k Expand the Town web site to highlight progress, successes, project activities, opportunities, and possible newsletter features to ensure transparency of operations.</td>
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### GOAL 4: FOSTERING AN EFFECTIVE AND WELL-FUNCTIONING CORPORATION
### OBJECTIVE 4.1: IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

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<tr>
<td>4.1.3: Maintaining appropriate representation, partnerships, and collaboration.</td>
<td>Council</td>
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<td>Internal - policy development - budget = $0. Representation with external agencies and initiatives should be discussed, clearly defined and delegated with reporting requirements to avoid duplicated efforts (eg: rail linkage, tourism organizations, business development networks, administrative groups) to maintain a cohesive and coordinated image.</td>
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10 IMPLEMENTATION: TRANSLATING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

The Blind River Development Corporation’s Community Economic Development Strategy: A Strategy for a Sustainable Economy includes a series of actions to be taken to achieve the objectives. This section includes proposed implementation steps to make sure that clear directions are established to carry through the actions presented in Section 6.

- Monitor the implementation of the economic development strategy by identifying priorities and through the establishment of key performance indicators, timelines and accountabilities for each outlined course of action
- Prepare and publish a regular report card on the progress of the implementation activities
- In order to be accountable and transparent to residents, ensure open and accessible information flow and accessible decision-making

The Community Economic Development Strategy will be implemented in conjunction with other municipal plans and goals, and in partnership with local organizations and citizens. Implementation of the CEDS may require changes in municipal policy, and may benefit from coordination and communication with surrounding communities.

The implementation strategy includes the following steps:

- Creating the Detailed Work Plans to Achieve the Short-Term Actions
- Continued Support from the Steering Committee
- Integration of the CEDS into Day-to-Day Operations
- Continuing to Build Community and Council Support
- Building Partnerships & Identifying Priorities
- Ensuring Continual Review and Renewal: A Living Document

10.1 Creating the Detailed Work-plans to achieve the Short-Term Actions

As the first step in implementing the CEDS, staff will review the actions identified as short-term and identify the tasks necessary over the next five years to complete the actions.

Staff will prepare a work plan to respond to each of the identified actions, including proposed timing (within the next 5 years), all necessary steps to accomplish the action within the required timeframe and performance measures or indicators of success to measure progress.

10.2 Continued Support from the Steering Committee

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee will assist in facilitating and supporting the implementation of the Plan. The Committee will be responsible for:
• Overseeing the CEDS Implementation Strategy
• Providing a regular mechanism for tracking and reviewing strategic plan initiatives in the Town of Blind River
• Establishing and overseeing strategic plan initiatives to build awareness and promote the success of the plan
• Providing guidance, advice and support to City Staff to ensure the implementation of the Work Plans that outline the annual objectives, activities and indicators necessary to implement the Action Plan.
• Receiving regular updates on the progress and reporting back to Council and the BRDC Board
• Receiving and reviewing updates from staff related to budget, funding, staffing and resource allocation to complete the tasks.

**10.3 Integration of the Strategic Plan into Day-to-Day Operations**

A critical consideration will be the need to maintain a sustainable financial position when planning and implementing the measures identified in the Plan. Implementation must be carefully planned and staged to not place a burden on either the short or long-term financial health of the Town. Ultimately, the Town will have to continue to live within its means.

Typically smaller communities cannot afford to dedicate significant resources to implementing an Economic Development Strategy. The Town of Blind River should take advantage of a strong volunteer network and the existence of many groups that already support proposed initiatives. The establishment of relevant indicators and monitoring systems will facilitate the implementation of the Plan and continue its strategic commitments.

To achieve the objectives, the BRDC will work within its existing budget approval framework. The BRDC will continue to develop budget plans based on their annual business plans, for endorsement by the Town Council and BRDC Board during regular budget discussions.

The CEDS should be directly linked to other relevant municipal planning documents. Specific examples of plans and policies that may be affected by the CEDS which may include Official Plan, zoning by-laws, secondary plans, and various policies.

**10.4 Continuing to Build Community and Council Support**

The BRDC strongly believes that consistent support from the community and Town Council is imperative to the implementation of the CEDS. If general support is in place, residents and organizations will assist with the implementation of the plan. The BRDC can then ensure that the Plan is incorporated into day-to-day operations, Town plans and policies.
The BRDC is encouraged to continue sharing updates with community members and relevant partners. Communication and awareness opportunities could include:

- Regular updates on progress and initiatives at meetings and events;
- Community meetings to present the Plan to the community, to discuss key accomplishment and actions that are being implemented;
- Showcasing of the CEDS and progress on the municipal website, social media, newsletters and print media; and
- Providing information on the availability of the Plan on-line and provision of comments for consideration.

10.5 Building Partnerships & Identifying Priorities
The CEDS was developed with consideration of the potential forces and sources of change both within and surrounding the Town of Blind River – from the actions of neighbouring municipalities to the potential impacts of climate change and national/global economic downturns. As the Town moves forward with implementation, it will continue to build partnerships with surrounding municipalities and to strengthen the actions identified in this Plan.

In addition, it will be important to include the community – both organizations and individuals - in the implementation of the CEDS. Throughout the development of the Plan, members of community groups, committees, and individual residents have expressed an interest in continuing their involvement. Now that the Plan has been completed, conversations around setting priorities and identifying leads and partners for key actions can begin.

10.6 Ensuring Continual Review and Renewal: A Living Document
Even the best plan is of little use if it does not lead to action, and is not continuously referenced and updated to reflect changing municipal and external realities. The CEDS needs to be recognized as a ‘living plan’ and must be recognized by the BRDC, Town Council, municipal staff and the community as an evolving document that should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. As times, circumstances, economic and environmental conditions change and the Town’s needs may shift as well. Therefore, the BRDC commits to revisiting the actions included in the CEDS and adjusting the focus of its efforts.

The foundational pieces of the Plan will likely remain constant; the focus for continual renewal will be refreshing the proposed list of actions. Actions may be refreshed for many reasons: they have been completed, other best practices emerge, or a new need is identified. The CEDS Advisory Committee (with relevant partners) may amend the plan from time to time, subject to ratification by the BRDC Board.

During the life cycle of the CEDS the BRDC commits to an examination of best practices from other municipalities and orders of government, the private sector, utilities, and businesses in Ontario and around the world.
The BRDC will:

- Continue to update and identify priority actions, lead organizations, key partners and timelines for completing the proposed actions;
- Periodically review and update the Plan;
- Develop and review annual action plans with the BRDC Board during budget planning processes; and
- Prepare an annual report or report card summarizing achievements to date on implementing the CEDS, and prioritize actions for the near future.