

## What do we want in Huron County?\*

1. The **economy** will continue to provide economic security and opportunity for its residents.
2. Huron County will have a **transportation** network providing multi-modal options.
3. Develop a strong and diversified **agricultural industry**.
4. Encourage local renewable **energy sources** and maximize energy conservation.
5. Retain **rural character** through planned growth of our settlement areas.
6. A healthy, resilient **ecosystem** with connected natural areas, clean water and diverse flora and fauna.
7. Sustain a moderate **population** growth with increased ethnic diversity.
8. **Downtowns** in Huron County will be active and healthy centres of commerce, government and culture.
9. Support **community organizations and services**.
10. Help residents live active, **healthy lifestyles**.



## How can I use the **Healthy Rural Lens** tool?



This is a tool to help you make good decisions about programs and policies in Huron County that will impact our people, economy and environment. The Healthy Rural Lens Worksheet is comprised of three parts (see reverse). On the left side is a list of indicators for success (taken from Sustainable Huron). On the right side are questions to help consider other important factors such as time, money and long term impact. In the centre is a circle diagram. Use your thoughts on these ideas from each list to assess if the program or policy would have a positive, neutral or negative impact. The resulting picture should help you see how the action will impact our county.

**It needs to make sense for our rural reality.**

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# The Healthy Rural Lens for Huron County

When it comes to programs and policies that affect our daily lives in rural Ontario, **one size does NOT fit all!**

What if policy makers and decision makers could test their policies and programs with a `lens` that is unique to the features of rural Huron County?

That question became the basis for the *Healthy Rural Lens* tool for Huron County. A working group of the Sustainable Huron committee has developed this concept over the past year and we invite you to use this tool in your work.

## What is a Lens?

A lens is like a pair of glasses – it is designed to help you see things more clearly, or in a new way.

## Using a lens makes sure we consider

- The implications of an initiative on a given population in Huron County. It helps to identify unintended consequences and opportunities.
- Rural issues and perspectives whenever new initiatives are being developed or adapted.
- A holistic view of important issues.

## A lens does not

- Tell you what to do. It helps you choose the best solution.
- Provide answers. Those are up to you to decide.
- Dictate specific policies. However, you can use this tool during the policy development process.

\*from the *Take Action for Sustainable Huron* plan <http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/>

## What are some of the strengths and challenges of rural Huron?

### Strengths

- High quality of life
- Strong agricultural economy
- Highly entrepreneurial workforce
- Seasonal population
- Natural environment with high quality beaches and trails
- High volunteerism
- Lower cost of living

### Challenges

- Seasonal economy
- Older population
- Youth outmigration
- Lower education and income levels than provincial average.
- Mental health and physical health decreases as income decreases
- Low population density
- Lack of public transportation

## Have questions or need help to use the **Healthy Rural Lens** Tool?



**Huron County Health Unit**  
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Sustainable  
Huron  
TAKE  
ACTION

# The Healthy Rural Lens Worksheet

## Indicators of Success

### Does the action...

<b>POPULATIONS</b>	<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support moderate and sustainable population growth</li> <li>Promote Huron as a great place to live, work and play</li> <li>Ensure Huron is a welcoming community for new residents</li> <li>Enhance opportunities for youth, families, seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect natural heritage systems and support biodiversity</li> <li>Reduce toxins, waste and greenhouse gases</li> <li>Consider water quality and quantity</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY NEEDS</b>	<b>ENERGY CONSERVATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and build arts, culture, and heritage</li> <li>Ensure Huron is affordable and accessible to all</li> <li>Encourage local training and learning opportunities</li> <li>Foster pride and sense of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster an energy conscious culture</li> <li>Exhibit municipal leadership in energy awareness</li> <li>Maximize energy conservation</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTHY ACTIVE COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>ECONOMY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote active and healthy lifestyles</li> <li>Support active transportation</li> <li>Ensure accessibility to excellent healthcare and wellness services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a diversity of economic opportunities</li> <li>Create an economy that supports the triple bottom line</li> <li>Assist with the retention and expansion of local businesses</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an accessible, efficient and integrated transportation network</li> <li>Ensure municipal transportation system is environmentally and economically feasible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the agriculture industry through diversification</li> <li>Build support for local food</li> <li>Promote environmental best practices</li> </ul>
<b>LIVABLE COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>DOWNTOWNS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preserve Huron's history and rural character</li> <li>Foster compact communities that address local needs</li> <li>Create long-term infrastructure plans</li> <li>Help mitigate the impacts of big box development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create accessible, aesthetically pleasing, people friendly spaces within downtowns</li> <li>Promote downtowns as the economic, social and cultural centres of the community</li> </ul>



Name of policy/program you are considering:

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## How to complete the worksheet

- Title the worksheet with the program or policy that you are considering.
- On the left side are the Indicators of Success for each of the Sustainable Huron Themes. Think about the impacts of your program or policy for each theme. Does it have a positive, neutral or negative impact on each theme?
- Place a dot on the theme line in the negative, neutral or positive area. Join the dots on each theme line and the resulting shape should help you see an overall perspective of how the program or policy will impact our county.
- Below are several Key Considerations. Consider your program or policy in light of these factors and identify components that require additional research or community engagement or collaboration.

## Key Considerations

- How will this program or policy impact the community 10, 20 or even 40 years from now?
- Are there possible unintended consequences?
- Does it enhance service delivery?
- Do we have adequate human and financial resources to do this?
- Is it sustainable?
- Have we adequately engaged the community?
- Does this improve accessibility?
- Does this enhance and fit with our unique Huron character?
- Who does this impact? Are we being inclusive?
- Are there partners we haven't considered?
- Are there previous experiences with this?

## Example of a completed worksheet:

