

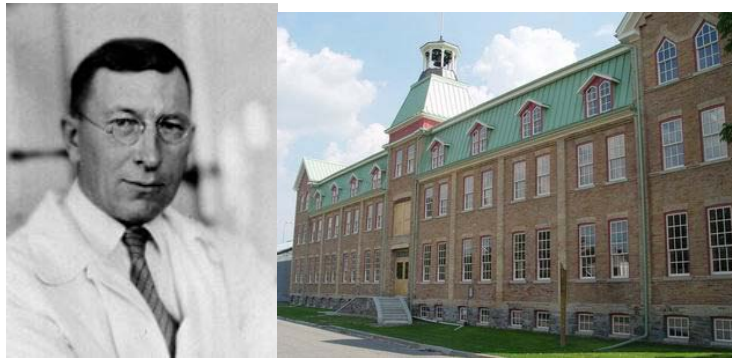


Alliston



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Alliston Business Improvement Association Strategic Plan



Prepared by: Debb Coote, Consulting to the Alliston Business Improvement Association

Date: March 24, 2011



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Why the need for Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an important element for creating a shared vision and bringing together ideas in a cohesive plan of action.

A strategic plan is a template that provides a process for mapping a clear path from present conditions to a vision for the future. This mapping is a calendar of how the B.I.A. will be going forward in how they see their vision for their business downtown. It will provide a detailed description of how objectives will be achieved and all the necessary rationalizations for doing them.

Another issue considered when creating this strategic plan is how the plan would affect the members of the Alliston Business Improvement Association. Most importantly, the involvement of the local volunteer organizations and stakeholders and how they could assist the ABIA in reaching the goals outlined within the Strategic Plan. The creation of a strategic plan is not only necessary to achieve completion of projects, satisfaction of issues, it also creates partnerships with others in the community, which may be far more valuable than the actual plan itself.

Grant funding opportunities are also available for organizations such as the Business Improvement Association. A strategic plan demonstrates to these organizations that the B.I.A. has done its homework; that the B.I.A. is an unified body with solid ideas about how they wish to see their community and the work thereto and how they will go about completing these projects.

A strategic plan is a great body of work, that when completed, creates excitement for future vision. It demonstrates to the community at large, that the Alliston B.I.A. is progressive and concerned for their Community, the businesses therein, and preserving the business downtown.

From all the information gathered by the Alliston B.I.A., both economically & socially, we are now able to make informed choices as to what needs to be undertaken to bring together the overall vision of what the A.B.I.A. would like to see for their downtown.



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Introduction

On March 1st, and 2nd, 2011, the Alliston B.I.A. Board of Directors met to create a list of priorities and recommendations they felt were necessary for the enhancement and improvement of the downtown. The information assisted the Board of Directors in the formulation of the action plans included in this Strategic Plan. These specify the goals, objectives and actions to be implemented. The Strategic Plan and the attached Action Plan Matrix is the result of these meetings. It provides a plan, which outlines actions to be undertaken in the next few years. This is to make certain the economic revitalization and congruent development of Alliston's downtown commercial/main street area is realized.

All of the items or actions identified in this Strategic Plan will not be completed this year. Therefore, there may be concern that the Alliston B.I.A.'s expectations are not being met. However, the A.B.I.A. will continue to work to implement the "actions" identified based on the priorities as outlined herein. Because there are strong economic factors at work, that have in the past worked against small downtowns, which is often the reason our downtown requires attention and help in the first place, some of these "actions" may take longer to implement than originally intended.

The A.B.I.A. Board of Directors have worked diligently to set realistic goals to enhance the Alliston downtown and to include the needs and wishes of the downtown users and those businesses already situated there. The A.B.I.A. identified what were considered the top priorities on a short list. This gives direction as to where to start and alleviates that feeling of "where do we start? And what do we do next?"

In conclusion, even though the A.B.I.A. has generated this report, they are quite aware of not losing perspective and realize that there still remains a considerable amount of work to accomplish. To that end, possible studies and further analysis will be required with respect to projects that require construction or streetscape design, among other things.



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Developing A Working Plan

Special Thanks to our Contributors

This project would not have been what it is without the hard work and dedication of the following:

- Alliston B.I.A. Board of Directors
- Bob Marrs, Ward 1 Councillor
- Town of New Tecumseth economic development and clerks department
- Christine Brayford, B.I.A. Co-ordinator
- Mike MacEachern, Mayor

Acknowledgements

Report produced for the Alliston Business Improvement Association.

Report prepared by: Debbie Coote,
In consultation to the Alliston B.I.A.



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Alliston Business Improvement Association's Board of Directors 2011

- Janette Vander Zaag, Chair
- Mike Jerry, Vice Chair
- Ken Brisco, Treasurer
- Sherry Ellison, Marketing Chair
- Rory MacKinnon, Secretary
- Rose Taylor, Director
- Sylvia Munro, Director
- Bob Marrs, Ward 1, Council Representative
- Mike MacEachern, Mayor
- Christine Brayford, BIA Co-ordinator

Supporters of the Alliston Business Improvement Association

- South Simcoe Arts Council
- Banting Homestead
- South Simcoe Railway
- The Gibson Centre
- Alliston & District Chamber of Commerce
- Tottenham District Chamber of Commerce
- Beeton Tottenham Business Improvement Association
- Museum on the Boyne
- Madhunt, New Tecumseth Free Press Online
- Alliston Herald



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- Briar Crier
- Town of New Tecumseth

Recommendation Summary

The Alliston B.I.A. Board of Directors collaborated to decide what was important to them in enhancing and improving the Alliston Experience. These recommendations are listed below and those that are printed in **bold** were identified as priorities by the Alliston Board of Directors in meetings held on March 1,2, 2011 and further endorsed by the A.B.I.A. Board of Directors at a meeting held on March 24, 2011.

Organization Recommendations

- 1. Work with and continue to have a great relationship with municipal government to establish by-laws, policies and procedures. Also, the ABIA needs to have an internal structure of policies and procedures.**
- 2. Be Proactive not reactive**
- 3. Work with Tourism, municipal and provincial**
4. To be proud of the Community – A.B.I.A. to be the Ambassador for the town of Alliston
5. Business mentoring program
6. Ambassador Program for youth and seniors



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7. Volunteer Youth Hours – Banting
8. Create pilot project in Alliston

Marketing and Promotion Recommendations

1. Hire consultant for branding
2. Web page, social media – Facebook, Twitter
3. Create a roadmap to enhance the experience of Downtown Alliston
4. Sustain marketing & promotion outside as well as inside the Town of New Tecumseth
5. Events with Alliston, i.e. Alliston Potato Festival
6. Banting's Birth Place
7. Shop Alliston Stickers
8. Promote what sets Alliston apart
9. Make Alliston a destination
10. Art Festival
11. Print – media, brochures
12. Arts & Entertainment
13. New Theme for Alliston Downtown



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14. Public Service Announcements
15. Getting information out to community
16. Festivals
17. Kiosk for information

Marketing and Promotion Recommendations cont.d

18. What sets Alliston apart
19. Wow Factor
20. Endorsement and support of visitors and residents
21. Great location close to Toronto – bring visitors to Alliston --- make it a destination
22. Promote Alliston as a great location to shop and stay

Physical Enhancements – Issues and Projects

1. Streetscape – lighting, sidewalks, garbage receptacles
2. Alliston needs a cohesive look
3. Banners & Hardware
4. Encourage Landlords to invest in their buildings
5. Tackling graffiti – outsource removal
6. Parking Zoning Issues
7. Facades
8. Signage



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9. The Boyne River
10. Statue of Frederick Banting
11. Trail Development

Physical Enhancement – Issues and Projects Cont.d

12. Mill Street Project
13. Need money 50/50 to promote owners to invest in their buildings
14. Cleanliness of downtown
15. Sports trails
16. Cenotaph
17. Trees

Economic Development

1. **Healthy vibrant downtown, successful establishments (retail establishments)**
2. **Decide what defines Alliston**
3. **High end residential in our downtown – intensification, bring in condominiums**
4. Business attraction & recruitment
5. Increase dollars spent
6. Waiting list of businesses wanting to come to our downtown



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7. Boundaries expanded
8. Grant Development program

Background – Brief History of Alliston

Alliston was established in the late 1840's when William Fletcher and his sons built a sawmill and gristmill on the banks of the Boyne River.

A devastating fire in 1891 destroyed many homes and most of the business section of the bustling town. It didn't take the people of Alliston long to rebuild. The new buildings were constructed with more durable building materials and many of them are still part of Alliston's streetscape today.

In 1991, the provincial government amalgamated the towns of Alliston, Beeton, Tottenham, and the Township of Tecumseth; this created the municipality of the Town of New Tecumseth. To date each community has managed to keep its own distinct identity.

In the heart of a vibrant agricultural area, Alliston is also the home to Honda Canada's manufacturing plant that employs more than 4,500 workers. A beautifully picturesque farm landscape conveniently located near major cities, New Tecumseth offers a wonderful quality of life to its 28,800 residents.

The Town is rich with volunteers and active community groups in a wide variety of areas including sports, arts and culture and charitable endeavours.

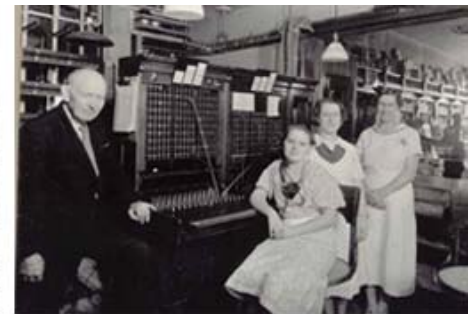
Alliston is steeped in heritage. It is the birthplace of Sir Frederick Banting, the Co-founder of insulin. The Banting Homestead still stands today and is undergoing a major reconstruction to create a fitting tribute to Dr. Banting's legacy. The Gibson Cultural



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Centre provides a hub for arts and culture. Annual New Tecumseth festivals including Alliston's Potato Festival draw visitors from across the country and beyond. Alliston continues to prosper and grow and is recognized as a great place to live, work and play.



Top left to right: Main Street Alliston, Alliston Post Office, Hipwell's Store.

Bottom left to right: Morrow Hotel, Main Street Alliston WWII, Banting Homestead ²

¹ Courtesy of A.B.I.A. Website

² Courtesy of A.B.I.A. Website



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Who We Are:

The Alliston Business Improvement Association (formerly the Alliston Downtown Improvement Area) was originally established by the Town of New Tecumseth in 1988 to help revitalize the downtown core of Alliston and to undertake promotional initiatives in support of the businesses within its boundaries.

In 2007 the boundaries were expanded to include the shopping district north of King Street and along Young Street to the town's most westerly boundary, and in 2011 the boundaries expanded again to include the east end smart centre development.

The ABIA Board of Management is a local board of the municipality and is made up of business owners, tenants and property owners from within the ABIA boundaries and even some volunteers outside of the ABIA boundaries. These hard-working volunteers are elected and then appointed by Council for a four-year term.

The main role of the ABIA is revitalize and maintain a dynamic local neighbourhood and to promote the area as a business or shopping destination. While a major goal of revitalization is to encourage both local residents and others to spend their shopping dollars within the commercial district, all businesses and residents in the area may benefit as well.

Another important role for the ABIA is to develop a network of relationships and partnerships throughout the community. The ABIA works closely with the town Council and staff, the Chamber of Commerce, local community organizations and facilities such as the Gibson Centre for Community, Arts and Culture and the South Simcoe Arts Council as well as other business organizations from Beeton and Tottenham. It is through these partnerships that the ABIA is able to achieve many of its stated objectives. Revitalization and maintenance often includes defining an identity for the



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local community. This identity is then used as a means to further promote the local community as an interesting and unique business area.

Who We Are Cont.d.

In some cases, the ABIA Board acts as a line of communication between the business community and New Tecumseth Council and often encourages Council to pursue policies and initiatives that will promote and strengthen the Alliston downtown and its unique identity. A great example of this is the recently released Downtown Enhancement Master Plan undertaken by the town. This work was initiated as a result of the ABIA's keen interest in developing a coordinated approach to downtown revitalization. The final outcome has been the development of a downtown revitalization program for each New Tecumseth's three downtown areas.³

³ Courtesy of the A.B.I.A. Website



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MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the A.B.I.A is to support the promotion and development of the business areas of Alliston, to create a vibrant downtown to support the established businesses, entice new businesses, and validate Alliston's image as an independent, viable progressive centre of commerce.

The intent is that local businesses and residents will work to support existing businesses and encourage their expansion, while attracting new businesses to locate in the downtown.



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⁴ Courtesy of A.B.I.A. Website



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Where is Alliston

Alliston is located off Provincial Highway #400 on highway #89, known as Victoria Street. It is approximately 45 minutes north of Toronto. Alliston is known as a potato growing area, which is celebrated every year by the annual Alliston Potato Festival. Honda of Canada Manufacturing operates a large auto manufacturing plant just southeast of Alliston.



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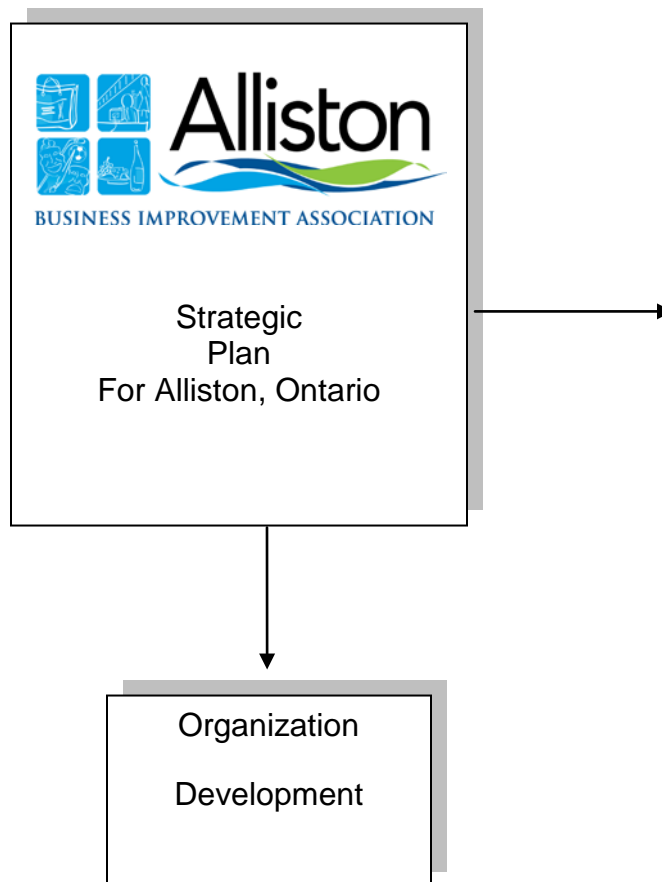
CHART 1: THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE A.B.I.A. STRATEGIC PLAN





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Background – Downtown Enhancement

The Alliston Business Improvement Association has recognized that there is a need for improvements and enhancements in the downtown core in the Town of Alliston. They realize that for the continued good health of the downtown, business retention, economic development and enhancement of the downtown it is essential to develop a plan in order to accomplish these goals.



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The improvement and enhancement of the Alliston downtown depend on four elements:

- A strong cohesive **organization** representing the businesses that will manage the revitalization of the downtown;
- An attractive, interesting and functional **physical** environment that enhances the buildings, public spaces, streetscapes and waterfront;
- A **marketing and promotional** plan to draw people to the Town of Alliston, working to augment its image and hosting events and activities;
- An **economic development** plan that aims to attract investment and new development, while retaining and expanding the existing businesses and services.

Concentrating on these four elements combined, has worked successfully in other communities to improve and enhance their downtowns. In communities across Quebec, Rue Principle and Main Street U.S.A. in the United States, these elements have successfully given new revitalized life to their communities and their downtowns.

The Process and Stages of the Project

The Process includes

- Hiring a project co-ordinator
- Completing an initial analysis of the town's appearance
- Analyzing the local business mix
- Surveying the local business owners in regards to their needs, concerns and wishes



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- Determining the Alliston Trade Area
- Formulating a Community Design Concept Plan for the Town
- Developing a Revitalization and Enhancement Strategic and Implementation/Action Plan

Why Revitalize downtown:

Healthy downtowns represent healthy communities. There are a number of reasons why downtown revitalization and enhancement is important:

- ✓ **Improves Image and first impression;
- ✓ **Makes use of existing buildings
- ✓ **Avoids blight and abandonment
- ✓ **Provides residents with retail services
- ✓ **Keeps trade dollars in the Community
- ✓ **Attracts new businesses to the area
- ✓ **Increases property values
- ✓ **Enhances business profitability
- ✓ ***"Shop Local" Incentive

CHART 2: STAGES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A.B.I.A.

Organization
Alliston B.I.A.
And Alliston

Market
Research
Conducted



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