



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Making good things happen



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M a k i n g g o o d t h i n g s h a p p e n

CHANGING WORLD - CHANGING ECONOMIES

At EcoPlan, we want to help cities, towns, regions and First Nations to move beyond reactive, crisis-driven actions, confusing laundry lists, and the latest fads, and prepare for long-term economic growth by focusing on ideas, impact and implementation.



IDEAS: *What does economic development mean to your community? What is innovative, possible and proven? Who needs to help? Can you kick-start the virtuous circle of investment, productivity, and development? What assets can be tapped and levers pulled to stimulate from within?*



IMPACT: *What ideas are right for our community? What does success look like? What will give us the “biggest bang for our buck”? What will make the biggest change on the things we care about, such as jobs, revenue, or quality of life?*



IMPLEMENTATION: *How can we make sure the best ideas actually happen? What needs to be in place to ensure success? How should we evaluate and update the program over time?*

WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

Local governments are the stewards of the communities we live in. They are working to support commercial, volunteer and traditional opportunities, where actors and ideas can connect, and where high quality of life is lived.

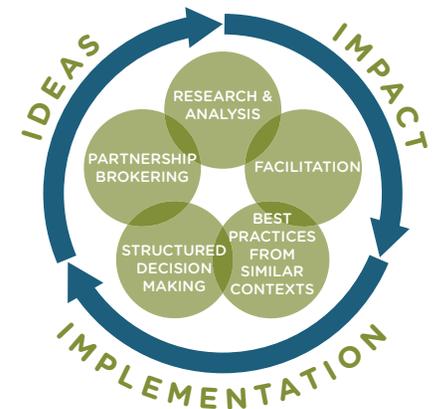
By looking closely at the strength of local assets and their own limitations, local government can help focus energy and investment where it can truly make a difference, diversify for resilience and get out of the way when they need to. They can plan better to create compact, complete and connected places that facilitate mobility of people, goods and ideas.

HOW CAN OUR SERVICES HELP?

EcoPlan offers targeted capacity building and technical support in the development and delivery of strategic plans for economic development. We help local leaders to make the best use of their resources, assets, and skills.

Depending on where a community, city or region is at, we can provide different levels of assistance to generate ideas, evaluate impacts, or provide surge capacity for implementation.

Our support is tailored to the specific characteristics of each place—regardless of whether it is small or large, rural or urban, prospering or re-imagining, there are solutions that can create a positive path to the future.



EPI can work with you to design a flexible program that meet budget considerations or other resource challenges. Our services could take the form of:

- ✓ **Asset Mapping and Trend Reports (What can you build on? What is driving your local economy?):** population, infrastructure, assets, urban form & density, crime, enterprise development, clusters.
- ✓ **Feasibility studies:** options and choices around strategic projects and their locations, and investment in infrastructure and services.
- ✓ **Strategic plans for making a difference (5,10 year horizon):** trade-offs, choices, evaluation, priorities, concrete actions, results.
- ✓ **Implementation instruments:** business plans, service delivery models, investment promotion tools and others.
- ✓ **Targeted training for local authorities to lead the economic development process themselves.**
- ✓ **Coordinate local with regional economic development.**





IDEAS: LOOKING INWARD

There are a number of approaches that can be used to help build thriving local economies—from policies and programs, to projects such as capital and infrastructure investments, that create enabling environments where businesses can succeed. Once a region has a solid understanding of “*Where we are at now*” they can plan for “*Where do we want to go*” and “*How do we get there*”.

HOW CAN OUR SERVICES HELP?

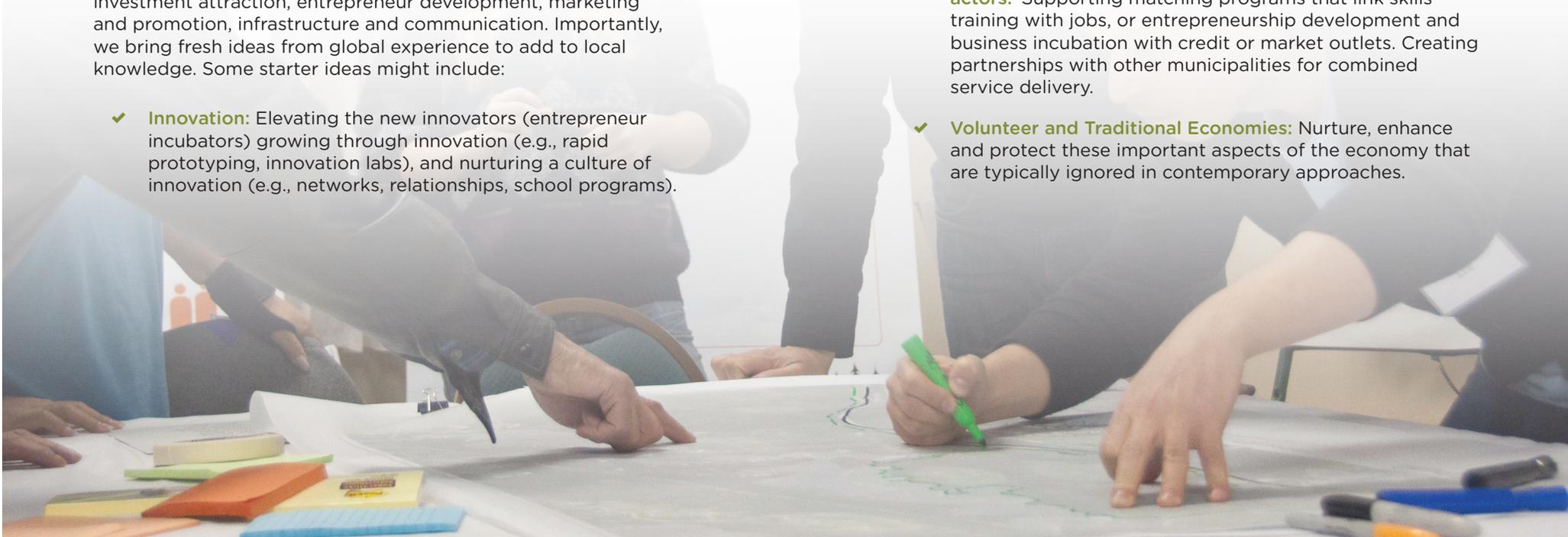
Basic Data • Fresh Ideas • Proven Actions

We help by working with locals that know their community and region to generate ideas that are based on local realities and make the best use of local resources, assets and skills. These are then combined with relevant best practices and our understanding of how economies work.

Using structured decision tools and expert facilitation, we can bring together government, business and citizens to define goals and objectives – such as jobs, revenues, productivity, or resilience – and develop ideas that could help reach these goals. We start with the basics: business retention and expansion, investment attraction, entrepreneur development, marketing and promotion, infrastructure and communication. Importantly, we bring fresh ideas from global experience to add to local knowledge. Some starter ideas might include:

- ✓ **Innovation:** Elevating the new innovators (entrepreneur incubators) growing through innovation (e.g., rapid prototyping, innovation labs), and nurturing a culture of innovation (e.g., networks, relationships, school programs).

- ✓ **Promoting investment:** Targeting incentives, sectors, clusters and value chains with high potential for job creation, growth and revenue. Promoting investment in urban regeneration and infrastructure projects.
- ✓ **Place-making for commercial success:** Making the city a great place to live and do business – safe streets, good transit infrastructure, and minimal red tape for businesses.
- ✓ **Promoting and capitalizing on compact and efficient urban development:** Land and infrastructure policies and incentives to promote density and capture benefits from savings in infrastructure cost, property and land value appreciation and agglomeration economies.
- ✓ **Public private partnerships (P3s):** Partnering with private-sector businesses to deliver infrastructure or other typically public goods.
- ✓ **Transform through information, communication and technology (ICT):** Build the knowledge economy, attract jobs and growth in green businesses and buildings, renewable energy, internet based enterprise, and more.
- ✓ **Youth-centered projects:** Providing training and employment for youth.
- ✓ **Connecting economic opportunities and actors:** Supporting matching programs that link skills training with jobs, or entrepreneurship development and business incubation with credit or market outlets. Creating partnerships with other municipalities for combined service delivery.
- ✓ **Volunteer and Traditional Economies:** Nurture, enhance and protect these important aspects of the economy that are typically ignored in contemporary approaches.





IMPACT:

FINDING WHAT WORKS

Coming up with great ideas is not the biggest hurdle. The true challenge lies in choosing which ideas will best meet the specific objectives, given finite resources, and urgent needs. Which ones will most likely generate the most jobs, unleash the greatest entrepreneurial energy, maximize productivity of local resources, and generate the most municipal revenue and be culturally and environmentally appropriate?

Evaluation of the impacts of each idea will determine which actions will have the greatest positive effect, and which should be done first - to provide interim “wins” and build support while longer term actions take hold. Identifying the sectors that drive the economy, and how their impact can be inclusive and sustainable is crucial to making informed hard choices, and marshaling resources to their best use.

HOW CAN OUR SERVICES HELP?

Jobs • Commerce • Revenue • Skills

Need an agent of change? We work with local leaders to select the best location-specific ideas that are realistic, high impact and based on local assets. What can be done today with the given resources of the city, and what might be possible in the long term with outside investment?

We can help make informed decisions driven by local values and critical data.

We can create feasibility studies, mapping out the costs and potential benefits to enable informed comparisons between choices.

Often, different individuals or groups may disagree on the best course of action. Our facilitation can help create an environment for constructive interaction and find common ground for stakeholders with differing concerns and priorities.



IMPLEMENTATION:

SURGE CAPACITY AND MAKING IT HAPPEN

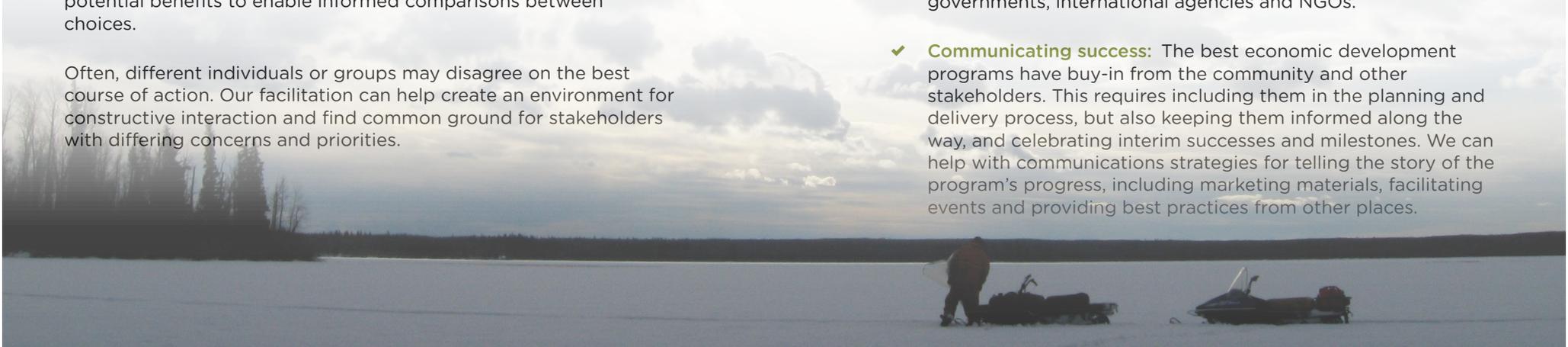
How can we make sure the best ideas actually happen? Many promising economic development plans fail at the implementation stage due to a lack of capacity, strong partnerships and commitment, insufficient funding, poor support infrastructure or low levels of buy-in from the community.

HOW CAN OUR SERVICES HELP?

Funding • Tools • Partnering • Communication

We can help ensure that the people who are responsible for doing the work get the support they need.

- ✓ **Surge Capacity:** It is not unusual to have momentum and a long list of projects after a planning process. We provide the expertise to bridge the gap between planning and action, getting quick start projects off the ground, doing some rapid prototyping of innovative ideas, generating grants and funding. Our surge capacity services have been both short-term in-community or remote technical support.
- ✓ **Tools, structures and systems:** Implementation plans, participatory impact monitoring, evaluation, organizational structures and administrative systems—all of these help make to move the ideas to action.
- ✓ **Brokering partnerships:** Successful economic development strategies are not created or implemented in isolation. The more linkages a project has to other regions, sectors, or projects, the greater the chances of success. We can help broker partnerships between groups, communities, cities, regional or national governments, international agencies and NGOs.
- ✓ **Communicating success:** The best economic development programs have buy-in from the community and other stakeholders. This requires including them in the planning and delivery process, but also keeping them informed along the way, and celebrating interim successes and milestones. We can help with communications strategies for telling the story of the program’s progress, including marketing materials, facilitating events and providing best practices from other places.



WHO ARE WE?

EcoPlan is a multidisciplinary firm of planners, economists, decision-analysts and environmental professionals. We work with those who are deeply committed to making their world a better place to live, work and play.

We have applied our experience in a diverse range of fields, including community planning, economic development, tourism, natural resources, non-market valuation, traditional use studies, business case analysis (financial, social, cultural) and more.

