



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
CAROLINE OLIVER

MOVING ON



A DOLLAR SPENT IS A
DOLLAR SENT

EXCHANGE

MAGAZINE FOR ENTREPRENEURS / ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS / EDUCATORS

Vol. 28 No. 5 May 2011 - \$6.95



BUILDING A BETTER SANDBOX

Iain Klugman leads Communitech as it develops one of the most innovative digital incubator and accelerator centres in the world

INSIDE

- The Next Challenge for Jim Harper
- Business Excellence Awards
- Busting Social Media Myths
- Relief Sale – hands-on charity

STRAT PLAN CONSULTATIONS REVEAL CONTRADICTIONS

Residents of Waterloo Region are being asked what they like – and dislike – about their community. It's all part of a strategic planning process that the Region carries out with each new term of Regional Council. The members of Waterloo Regional Council were elected for a four-year term in the municipal election last fall.

At that time, the Region embarked on the public consultation process, says Lorie Fioze, manager of strategic planning for the Region. The first phase of public consultation – which included a telephone survey of 1160 regional residents, and on-line and published survey which resulted in 489 responses, and 18 focus group meetings – was completed earlier this year, and the second phase is now underway.

Fioze says that phase two involves “going out into the community again, just to be sure we had it right.” In the meantime, though, the findings of Phase One have been presented to council, and are also available on the Regional website – www.region.waterloo.on.ca; click on strategic plan. Fioze says that council has held a “brainstorming session” concerning the preliminary findings.

She told Exchange that there may be some gaps in the initial findings, although she quickly pointed out that the telephone surveys are “statistically reliable” across the three cities and four townships of the region. However, she added that the in-person groups were weighted toward seniors, immigrants and students (these three categories accounted for nine of the 18 focus groups), and that other segments of the community should be heard from in Phase Two.

Fioze also noted that Cambridge was the site of only one focus group – Phase Two will pay more attention to the part of the Region south of the 401 – and that only one meeting was held in the townships, although there are

four rural municipalities.

The four-year strategic plan will be presented to council at their last meeting before the summer, in June, and will probably be distributed to the public in July. Exchange asked if mid-summer was the most appropriate time for the dissemination of a key study; Fioze replied that the roll-out will continue through the fall.

The “Preliminary Public Input Report”, posted on line, explains that the strategic planning process is intended to “identify the most pressing priorities of the community.”

The consultation process was designed “to gather public input on what is liked best and least in Waterloo Region; experience and satisfaction with Region of Waterloo services; communication and engagement preferences; suggestions to boost trust and confidence in government; and most pressing needs of the community.”

Ironically, some themes emerged as both the best and the worst in the Region, according to respondents.

The study, to date, has identified a long list of things residents like about Waterloo Region. In brief, they include:

- Small town feel of Waterloo Region with big city advantages;
- Diversity of people;
- Post secondary institutions;
- Vibrant arts and culture scene;
- Easy to get around;
- Green space;
- Innovative/progressive;
- Collaborative nature;
- High tech sector;
- Agriculture and locally grown food;
- The downtowns.

However, several of these themes emerged as the very things respondents like the least. In contrast to those who praised the ease of getting around, some residents felt that public

transit is unreliable and inefficient. Unlike those who praised diversity, some feel the Region is a hotbed of racism. And there were many respondents who felt the arts and culture scene was not vibrant, and who called for more support for the arts.

Here are some of the things respondents like least in the Region:

- Getting around – public transit;
- Traffic congestion, especially Highway 7 to Guelph, and downtown cores;
- Growth management related to “suburban culture”;
- Lack of inclusion and racism;
- Lack of arts and culture;
- Fear of change that can stifle progress;
- Inequities between cities and townships;
- Water issues – management, sustainability and taste.
- Aesthetics – unappealing areas ranging from waterfronts to city entrances and cores.

Respondents were also asked about the priorities regional government should focus on in the next four years. The answers:

- Getting around the Region – Transportation;

- Eliminating poverty;
- Creating more and better affordable housing;
- Managing growth;
- Supporting arts and culture;
- Promoting active lifestyles;
- Improving services for children, youth and families;
- Improving services for seniors;
- Increasing inclusion and promoting diversity;
- Improving communication and engagement.

Replies to the telephone survey were intriguing – respondents were mainly positive about regional services, with a small minority in the negative on almost all issues. One exception is the area of transportation, where 50% agree that “The regional transportation system meets my needs,” 18% are “neutral”, and 33% disagree (figures don't total 100% due to rounding off).

Another exception to the general satisfaction occurs in the area of “Indicators of Trust in Regional Government.” Only 44% agreed that “the Region of Waterloo is in touch with the needs of my community,” and only 25% agreed that “I feel involved in decisions that impact me as a resident of Waterloo Region.”

- Paul Knowles

and lighter than its predecessor and retains the same 9.7 inch screen.

BLACKBERRY PLAYBOOK: To say the Blackberry Playbook is coming late to the game is a bit of an understatement when you consider Apple has already released their updated tablet while RIM is still trying to get theirs out the door. Regardless, they've come up with a strong contender with a 7 inch screen which will appeal to those that find the iPad's larger format inconvenient. Like the iPad 2, the Playbook will come equipped with front and rear facing cameras and be available with similar storage capacities. Unlike the iPad 2, the Playbook will have support for Adobe Flash, ensuring that web sites viewed on your Playbook look and function the same way they do on your desktop computer.

THE ANDROID CHALLENGERS: Google's release of the Android operating system has been a boon to smartphone makers for a number of years, and as it's grown more robust over time, that versatility is now being put to good use by several manufacturers releasing their own tablets. Along with Adobe Flash support and the familiar dual-camera setup, both the Toshiba Tablet and Motorola Xoom enter the ring with attractive features for those looking for a portable media device: Higher screen resolution than the iPad 2, and an HDMI port so you can watch your videos on a TV or projector in high-definition.

For those who want the same suite of tools available on a desktop computer, the most compelling tablets may be the ones getting the least attention: **WINDOWS 7 TABLETS.** These devices run the same operating system as any new PC and work seamlessly with the touch interface of a tablet computer. In fact, I wrote this article in Microsoft Word on my recently purchased Asus Eee Slate. As anyone who's used a touchscreen will attest, any significant typing on one is less than ideal. That holds true for the Eee Slate as well; fortunately, Asus had the good sense to include a wireless keyboard with it, which was perfect for a long typing session such as this.

At the end of the day, choosing the right tablet, or any tablet at all comes down to what your needs and priorities are and whether they can be met by a tablet computer. Think carefully about what you want to accomplish with it and find out if the model you're interested in can perform those tasks the way you want. In terms of getting a real sense for how a tablet will work for you, sheets of specifications can't compete with the feel of a hands-on evaluation. So get out there, find a demo model and play with it. After all, new toys are supposed to be fun!

Adam Smith, recently nominated for Young Entrepreneur of the Year, is the CEO of My IT Guy (www.myitguy.ca). He can be reached at adam@myitguy.ca.

THE TABLET TAKEOVER? BY ADAM SMITH



With so much talk of the iPad 2 and the Blackberry Playbook, not to mention the Android-based tablets that are supposed to give them both a run for their money, no one would fault you for thinking our future will soon be dominated by more and more brilliantly glowing portable screens.

Tablet computers exist to fill the gap between smart phones and laptops. But what does that mean for you? Is a tablet just a smartphone with a bigger screen? Or is it a laptop without a keyboard? Neither description is quite accurate, and the competing products all bring something different to the table.

What follows is a brief rundown of what each tablet has to offer.

APPLE IPAD 2: While the iPad wasn't the first tablet, it was certainly the first to be widely adopted. Nearly 15 million units were sold in the first nine months it was on the market. While the original iPad was revolutionary, the iPad 2 is an update on that established platform, and its improvements can be summed up quite simply:

Despite gaining two cameras (front and rear facing), it manages to be thinner