

TWO EVOLVING TOWNSCAPES : COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES FOR MANAGING CHANGE IN HISTORIC TOWNS IN CANADA AND SLOVENIA

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Both the 18th Century fishing town of Lunenburg, Canada and the 15th Century Venetian Republic town of Koper in Slovenia were at crossroads! The traditional industries connecting them with the sea, and dating from their more prosperous periods of fishing, their international trade and specialized maritime crafts were virtually gone. Their traditional economic base had left them in decline.

The fact that both were aspiring candidates for the World Heritage List presented both communities with tremendous opportunities for new economic development through international marketing, increased tourism, new cultural industries, and rejuvenation of local business and industry.

At the same time, it presented the towns with the considerable challenge of protecting the character of the historic fabric and assuring that new development and increased tourism would not diminish the communities' integrity, both as places to live and as cultural sites of international importance. Unplanned-for tourism was beginning to change the face of the towns and re-direct their economies. The social fabric was changing in both places; the future was uncertain. If left unchecked, these pressures would continue to change the communities whether townspeople desired change or not. The communities could not stop change from uncontrollable external forces, but they could influence change.

If the communities had clear visions of what they can be and what they want to be, if they had clearly defined game plans to pursue those visions and, most important, if they had strong commitments to achieving the plans, then they could make a real difference to the kind of change that was beginning to occur. Instead of resisting change, the communities had to direct change. Instead of fighting inevitable declines from pressures beyond their control, the communities had to replace them with new initiatives.

Although "orchestrated" by professionals, the conservation strategies that were developed actually belong to the communities themselves, having been developed through a lengthy process of consultation. Throughout the

process, the primary concern was to ensure that the strategies reflect what the communities understand of themselves and their visions for the future.

PREPARATION FOR THE PLAN

In preparation for our team of international professionals, academicians and students involvement in the plans, various community-input meetings were held along with representatives of the mayors and government, professionals from the towns, as well as cultural and educational leaders. Many problems and opportunities for improvement of the towns, the relationship between the historical centers and their infrastructure were identified.

Special Places

In a survey, communities were asked to express their ideas in a variety of ways. Citizens were asked to locate their Special place in the towns - the place in that had special meaning for them and that they would like to see preserved despite whatever changes might occur around it. The exercise was designed to get the communities thinking and talking about development and conservation in the towns.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

In addition, community vision workshops were held to gather ideas about the future of the town should they become World Heritage Sites and gain a sense of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that have a part to play in moving towards that future.

Lunenburg Community Visions

The questions were then synthesized into what turned out to be five collective "visions" for the future. The citizens in Lunenburg felt that the most important goal was:

To conserve the quality of life and restore the heritage for future generations

The second ranked "vision" for Lunenburg was the

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Renewal and revitalization of the marine industry

Followed by

Development of tourism as a sustainable industry that all townspeople can potentially profit by.” This goal included tourism as an industry, the development of heritage products and the renewal and revitalization of traditional industries

Enhancement of cultural and educational opportunities for the townspeople[] establishment of a learning institute

Development of heritage products as a new industry, and the “insurance of long term sustainability for Lunenburg

Improvement of the opportunities in the community in health care, sports and recreation

In both towns, common elements identified were the need to conserve heritage, culture and architecture of the old town centers, their tradition as hubs of social and business activity, and the conservation of traditional industries, records, archives, history, and town plans. The communities desired strong, local-based economies built on traditional strengths, using tourism, heritage and cultural assets. They wanted a sustainable economy and enhancement of local retail and commercial activity and restored and renewed towns with an enhanced quality of life.

Koper Community Visions

The opportunities and challenges were synthesized into five visions for the future of the island of Koper as a potential World Heritage Site.

The first priority was an overwhelming mandate:

Improvement of the Quality of Life for the residents of Old Town Koper while conserving and restoring the heritage of the town for present and future Generations.

The other Visions were.

The improvement of the Quality of Life for the residents of Old Town Koper while conserving and restoring the heritage of the town for present and future generations

To reconstruct the sea life of the Old Town and connections (physical and historical) with the sea, thereby developing trade and tourism as a sustainable dual business that all townspeople can profit by

To populate the abandoned and changing areas of Old Town with “active, creative people” who will improve opportunities for small commercial activities in the area, bring new recreational activities for the residents, improve the appearance and create new social and entertainment activities that all can enjoy

To provide facilities in Old Town for new University of Koper (faculty, students, classrooms, labs, and administration) taking advantage of its locations in order to enhance cultural and educational opportunities for townspeople as well

To improve opportunities for specialized health care, sports and recreation

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

After completing the visions, the next step was to implement their accomplishment. Two new umbrella organizations were recommended in both communities as the best vehicles to provide these means. These private organizations were to be regulated by government oversight committees, called the “Heritage Advisory Committee” (HAC), working under the mayors and town councils, so as to assure standards of conservation practices and business adventures that did not effect the quality of the historic preservation.

The first private organization, the Community Foundation would manage initiatives in support of the heritage management and cultural tourism agenda. They were to be incorporated under existing Canadian laws and new enabling legislation by the Republic of Slovenia. This non-profit organization would work with a government and private interest groups to conserve the heritage, culture, and communities.

The second private organization - the Community Corporation would be a for-profit organization, which would initiate, promote, co-ordinate, and manage the community's economic activities. This organization will break new ground as a community of partners working together to market and support the business community and cultivate ways for that community to benefit from possible World Heritage listing. It would submit its business plans to the Heritage Advisory Board so as to get rulings on their appropriateness.

The Foundation and the Corporation were conceived to work together in developing and delivering the cultural

tourism product, in protecting and conserving heritage resources, and in developing and sustaining the cultural, recreational, and social life of the community. Existing organizations in both towns would be superseded or abandoned but be represented in the directorships of the new organizations, and the directorships of the new organizations would themselves overlap, in order to assure a common vision.

The Foundation

The Foundation would be a not-for-profit organization tasked with directing and managing the heritage resources effort in the communities' infrastructure to support other programs. These would include:

Championing the conservation of the Heritage
Visitor orientation
Developing a memorable visitor experience
Interpretations
Education
Publishing guides, architectural surveys, etc.
Fundraising
Heritage property management and easements
Finding ways to get community involvement in
Heritage Conservation
Developing work programs and internships
Providing the community with assistance with
preservation Conduct and fund research in support of
preservation technology.

The Community Foundations would take a major role in the management of the historic sites and their environs. One of the main goals of these non-profit organizations would be to assist the townspeople in restoration and other projects, and to be pro-active about acquiring conservation easements, initiating revolving funds, seeking grants, and other incentive producing methods of heritage resources management. The foundations could make professional services available at little or no cost to property owners

The organizations would compile a library of conservation information pamphlets and would take the lead in initiating historic building renovations, street and alley clean-ups, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting improvements to improve the beauty of the towns. The Foundations should maintain special conservation-related databases. By leading the effort for a managed environment and organizing the community heritage conservation effort, the Foundations ensure that the potential World Heritage sites are attractive and inviting.

The Foundations would also contribute by staging conferences, seminars, workshops, and courses on conservation topics. These could be taught in conjunction with the establishment of a new University of Koper or nearby Dalhousie University in the case of Lunenburg. They could also establish scholarship and apprenticeship programs for the youth of both towns to ensure that traditional building and conservation skills are made available to young people in the communities.

Both Lunenburg and Koper are open, living communities; they are neither museums nor theme parks. From a tourism perspective, however, the ideal attraction to drawing tourists and encouraging visitor spending would be to provide genuine heritage experiences in a non-contrived way. At the same time, it was vitally important that the experiences for visitors be enhanced if they are to stay longer and spend more. There also had to be a means of generating income to underwrite the cost of providing that enhanced experience and providing the infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate increased visitation.

The strategies recommended a system that had proved successful elsewhere, in many of the world's greatest heritage attractions, including Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, also a fenceless heritage area but not, like Lunenburg or Koper, both living communities.

Under this system, visitors would purchase a general admissions pass, a badge, at the arrival/welcome point, which they would wear during their visit. This would allow free entry to the various demonstration and interpretive buildings in the historic town center, discounts on paid-admission attractions, special transportation, and discounts on purchases of retail items and food and beverages in Foundation-operated concessions. Existing historic craft production would go on with the visitors observing unobtrusively. They would, however, have to pay for their privilege. The money would be used to enhance the environment and provide quality of life improvements to the community.

The Corporation

The second organization - the Community Corporation was to be a for-profit organization incorporated under existing Canadian Laws and new enabling legislation of the Republic of Slovenia.

Collective action was required to improve and sustain the economy of Lunenburg and Koper while protecting their historic and natural environment. These cooperations were to be a community of businesses working together and with

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the Community Foundation and town governments in order to make this happen.

As for-profit corporations, the organizations become an important member of communities' efforts, and will break new ground in giving the business sector of Lunenburg and Koper the ability to capitalize on heritage tourism. The Corporations were designed to be purpose-built business organizations, functioning as a partnership of the various business interests in the communities.

The premise was that many small economic solutions provide greater long-term stability than a few large solutions. In that way, they were to become catalysts for the sustainable economic growth of Lunenburg and Koper. The Corporations role would include the following.

The Corporations would take on responsibility for marketing the towns, its products, educational and recreational facilities and would work with the Foundations in the areas of heritage tourism, special events, arts and craft products development, and heritage commercial initiatives.

The Corporations would also be the marketing arms for both its own initiatives as well as those of the Foundations. The Corporations would be tasked with tourism program management and marketing and the economic develop programs, including:

Managing and marketing the tourism experience.
Establishing and supporting commercial and industrial partnerships.
Facilitating the growth of existing, and the establishment of new, commercial enterprises and economic activity.
Find new ways to jump-start the economy
Finding financing and funding for existing and new businesses and tourism.
Business advice and support.
Introduce a micro-enterprise program.
Marketing and promotions
Business development
Special events
Hospitality
Packaging
Heritage product development
Enhancing the range of tourism product offerings
Enhancement of the retail and commercial sector in the Historic Town Center

By licensing designs from the artist/artisan for production by a third party and subsequent marketing by the Corporations became part of a broader product mix. A

royalty on sale would go to the artisan. Also, working/studio space could be provided at affordable rates, perhaps in craft's villages, which would also be tourist demonstration areas.

For businesses that manufacture their own products, the Corporations would manage co-op-marketing programs; under a common branding such as "Heritage" branded products. Alternatively, the Corporations contracted with the manufacturer to handle the marketing

In the tourism areas, the Corporations would, through their tourism arms develop, manage and market packaging programs. Packages would include get-aways, learning products, adventures, etc. The corporations would also work with local ground operators and tourist services in delivering the products on the ground.

To survive, many craftsmen will have had to diversify into other products and other markets. With the drive and industriousness typical of the entrepreneur, many of these efforts have succeeded and today, the economy in both towns is more diversified than it has been in the past, with a mix of craft items and assembly-line-based businesses, manufacturers of different products, many of which are exported around the world, and an active and growing tourism sector.

The recently evolving pattern of economic development can be expected to continue in the future. Craft industries will continue to be important. Product and market diversification of manufacturers will continue to be a successful strategy. Bearing in mind the visions developed in community workshops, a number of initiatives were proposed, both to enhance the communities traditional craft economy and to develop new economic opportunities in the fields of cultural tourism, education, and heritage craft production.

An enhanced craft economy based on traditional strengths can then be developed using four inter-related initiatives was proposed to enhance the traditional, craft-based economies.

Establish a craft industry consortium
Enhancing the heritage experience for visitors
Establish incentives for traditional industries to participate in tourism
Enhance the town as an Artists' Village
Establish telecommuting industries

Heritage Advisory Committee

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Since the Strategies proposed introducing expanded parameters to the business of heritage conservation in the towns, there had to be a clear and fair process established by which public preservation interests and private development interests could be negotiated and balanced. The Heritage Advisory Committees were intended to be the government's watchdog for community conservation and therefore had to be a strong, professional, and pro-active body which reports to the mayors and town councils.

The broadened mission of the HAC would be the preservation of sites and structures of historical, cultural, archaeological or architectural significance and their appurtenances within the designated historic districts and control of any proposed physical development within the historic sites.

Each member of the Committees not on the Town Councils had to possess a demonstrated special interest, specific knowledge, or professional or other training in such fields as history, architecture, architectural history, planning, archaeology, anthropology, curation, conservation, landscape architecture, urban design, or related disciplines. Their duties:

Review applications for "Certificates of Appropriateness" for projects, which had an effect on the exterior appearance of sites in the official historic district.
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Determine the appropriateness of any proposed development or construction project that is of such nature that it could effect the conservation of the designated historic district and advise the Town Council accordingly.

CONCLUSION

It should also be noted that the new organizations would not spend the towns' funds, thus allowing the town councils to concentrate on such projects as the harbor cleanup, expanding infrastructure, traffic control and rerouting, and other pressing matters.

While both the Foundation and the Corporation would require initial new enabling legislation and hopefully, seed funding, from both the Canadian and Slovene national governments, it is intended that both organizations eventually become self-sustaining - the Corporation from its profit-making ventures and the Foundation from private funding raising sources. One essential element of the relationship between the organizations was that a portion of the Corporation's profits would be channeled into the Foundation, in support of the mutual aims of both

organizations in the realm of community cultural conservation.

Abstract

Lunenburg and Koper were at crossroads! Traditional industries connecting them with the sea, and dating from their more prosperous periods of fishing, international trade, and maritime crafts were gone. Their traditional economic base had left them in decline.

World Heritage attention presented both communities with tremendous opportunities for new economic development...international marketing, tourism, cultural industries, and rejuvenation of local business.

However, recognition produced the considerable challenge of protecting the historic character and assuring that new development and increased tourism would not diminish the community's integrity, both as a place to live and as international cultural sites.

Wide community participation was needed in order to mitigate problems and manage the historic resources for the benefit of all. The communities could not stop change, but they could influence change. Each community produced a clear vision, a clearly defined game plan, and a strong commitment to achieving the plan. It made a real difference to the kind of change occurring.

Without resisting change, the communities found that they could direct change. Instead of fighting inevitable pressures beyond its control, they realized they must replace them with new initiatives that were traditional to the history and sustainability of each town. The plans are working...

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Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3