



# STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

## 2010 - 2015



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## Executive Summary

Marathon is currently faced with a number of economic and social challenges. These challenges include people retention, jobs losses, and industry downsizing and closure – to name but a few. These impacts all have contingent effects on our local economy and quality of life. These impacts, while unfavorable, are reversible with a strategic and committed plan of action.

Strategic planning is a cornerstone concept to enhance our ability to manage positive and progressive change, improve our quality of life, and ensure our community remains healthy and viable into the future. Balanced strategic planning will ensure we have:

- Sufficient populations to sustain local economies;
- Reliable access to health-care services;
- Quality education close to home;
- Adequate and well-maintained infrastructure that supports economic prosperity, public safety, and a high quality of life;
- Diversified economies that provide a range of employment opportunities including well-paying, highly-skilled jobs;
- Clean and healthy natural environments that support public health and safety, economic activity, and a high quality of life;
- Active community participation and necessary leadership to build on community strengths.

## Executive Summary

The Marathon Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has undertaken a process to develop a new Strategic Action Plan for Marathon. This Plan has one keystone purpose in mind – enhance the economy and improve the quality of life for the residents and stakeholders in Marathon. To satisfy this purpose, this Strategic Action Plan will:

- Identify barriers to economic development within and around the Town of Marathon, and develop strategies to overcome such barriers;
- Facilitate the enhancement of the economic base within and around the Town of Marathon for the economic and social benefit of its citizens;
- Promote economic development and diversification objectives in line with the Town of Marathon's Strategic Plan priorities;
- Provide support for enterprises, institutions, and entrepreneurs engaged in the economic, cultural and social development within the Town of Marathon;
- Co-operate with neighbouring municipalities and First Nations in the development and implementation of economic development and diversification objectives when such agreements are beneficial to the citizens of the Town of Marathon.

This plan can be considered ambitious. A number of challenging action items are identified and will require a tremendous amount of work, human resources, partnerships, and investment to reach fruition. But these types of action are exactly the solutions that are required to ensure our community remains healthy and prosperous into the future.

# Mission and Vision

## MISSION

A mission statement defines an entity's reason for existence. It embodies its philosophies, goals, ambitions and core values.

### **The MEDC's mission is:**

**To promote economic development and diversification which will facilitate the enhancement of the economic base within and around the Town of Marathon for the economic and social benefit of the community.**

## VISION

A vision is a description of the ideal state of being which members believe is the desirable future for their community. A vision statement clarifies common values and broad goals and involves the passions, desires and hopes of individuals. The vision statement becomes the touchstone for longer-term planning. It inspires the community to take forward-thinking steps, and provides reference points for determining the direction in which those steps should be taken.

### **The MEDC's vision is:**

**Marathon is a strong resource-based community with a prosperous economy, rich cultural and natural heritage, and the capacity and leadership to enhance and sustain a high quality of life. Marathon is a proud and progressive model community that supports enterprise, institutions and entrepreneurs.**

## **Economic Themes**

Economic themes represent the broad foundation by which objectives and action items are based upon. The themes represent the areas of focus which resources will be committed to. The eight economic themes itemized below will be the cornerstones upon which Marathon's economic sustainability and future prosperity will be built and anchored.

- 1. Mining**
- 2. Forestry**
- 3. Health**
- 4. Transportation**
- 5. Energy**
- 6. Education**
- 7. Retail**
- 8. Government**

# Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives represent a specific, measurable group of activities designed to achieve time bound future results.

## Short Term (0-2 years)

### 1. First Nations Relationship Building

Work with our First Nations partners to pursue economic development projects that will have mutual benefits and create new wealth, jobs and prosperity.

Activity	Action	Timing
Build strategic relationships with our local First Nation Communities (Pic River, Pic Mobert)	Undertake joint strategy sessions with Pic River First Nation, Pic River Development Corporation, and Pic Mobert First Nation.	2nd quarter, 2010

### 2. Strategic Land Acquisition

Acquire land within municipal boundaries to facilitate development opportunities.

Activity	Action	Timing
Purchase land within municipal boundaries that can be realized for future development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile a list of available, vacant, and/or for sale properties in the public and private sectors.</li> <li>• Identify the land owners and undertake strategic discussions regarding land acquisitions and purchases.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Identify target markets and sectors, and aggressively market available land for development.	Develop a marketing package.	1st quarter, 2011

## Strategic Objectives

### 3. Staging Areas

Marathon is situated as an ideal location for mineral exploration and hydro development staging.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop relationships among exploration companies.	Meet major stakeholders and develop relationships.	2010
Promote Marathon as an ideal staging location for mineral exploration and hydro development.	Develop a Resource Inventory Guide.	3rd quarter, 2010
Participate in strategic industry conferences and shows and promote the advantages of Marathon.	Meet potential prospects and develop relationships.	Ongoing

### 4. Big Pic Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL)

In partnership with the Pic River First Nation and the Township of Manitouwadge, facilitate the transfer of the Big Pic SFL to the care and custody of the communities.

Activity	Action	Timing
Manage the Big Pic SFL through a community joint venture with Pic River First Nation and the Township of Manitouwadge.	• Develop business plan for management of the Big Pic SFL.	2010/2011
	• Submit business plan to MNDMF/MNR.	2010/2011
	• Obtain approval from MNDMF and MNR.	2010/2011
	• Implement business plan.	2010/2011

## Strategic Objectives

### 5. Business Retention and Expansion

Work to improve the competitiveness of local businesses by identifying and addressing their needs and concerns and building on business development opportunities.

Activity	Action	Timing
Build a strong partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.	Meet twice yearly with the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.	2010
Business visitations.	Conduct regular, ongoing site visits with local businesses to understand barriers to growth.	Ongoing

### 6. Marketing and Public Relations

Keep the public informed and engaged by sharing ideas, solving problems, helping businesses, and building partnerships.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop media relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release strategic media releases concerning ongoing progresses.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite media to attend public events to facilitate media coverage.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Branding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a new MEDC logo to be used in all internal and external communications.</li> </ul>	Complete.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a new website to highlight the MEDC, Marathon, and opportunities.</li> </ul>	3rd quarter, 2010
Partner with community stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with local groups and organizations to host events.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Community presentations and articles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver presentations to a diverse group of local stakeholders.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Author articles for local and regional publications.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# Strategic Objectives

## Medium Term (2-3 years)

### 1. Development of Alternative/Supportive Housing (including Long-Term Care)

Develop a framework and an action plan to create affordable housing alternatives in partnership with local community partners and stakeholders.

Activity	Action	Timing
Engage local and regional partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form an ad-hoc committee with partner representation to pursue this concept.</li> </ul>	3rd quarter, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for Government funding to undertake a gap analysis and feasibility study.</li> </ul>	1st quarter, 2012

### 2. Industrial Park Expansion

Increase the amount of industrial lands available for development.

Activity	Action	Timing
Implement the recommendations from the Industrial Park Expansion/Enhancement Study (2007).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply to NOHFC and Fednor for funding to implement the Industrial Park enhancement</li> </ul>	2nd quarter, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compile a list of primary targets with proper contact information.</li> </ul>	2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a marketing package.</li> </ul>	2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send packages and follow-up.</li> </ul>	2012
Crown Land Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Crown Land required for expansion.</li> </ul>	1st quarter, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit formal application to the Ministry of Natural Resources.</li> </ul>	3rd quarter, 2011

## Strategic Objectives

### 3. Mill Facility/Property

Explore redevelopment options for the idled Marathon mill facility and site.

Activity	Action	Timing
Work with domestic and international firms to create new economic opportunities at the mill facility.	Continue to work with Federal and Provincial Government Departments and Agencies to identify potential prospects.	Ongoing.

### 4. Mining

Develop the necessary infrastructure and support services to ensure that Marathon becomes a mining service centre.

Activity	Action	Timing
In partnership with Barrick, identify potential business development opportunities that will be mutually beneficial.	Facilitate discussions and brainstorming with key Barrick personnel to compile a list of potential business development opportunities.	2011
Develop conference schedule.	Attend provincial and national conferences to promote Marathon and identify potential prospects and gain market intelligence.	2011
Create a focus group of local mining stakeholders.	Develop an ad-hoc committee of local stakeholders to provide insight and intelligence on emerging mining opportunities.	1st quarter, 2011
Attraction of Suppliers and Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile a list of primary targets with proper contact information.</li> <li>• Develop a marketing package.</li> <li>• Send packages and follow-up</li> </ul>	1st quarter, 2011  3rd quarter, 2011  4th quarter, 2011

# Strategic Objectives

## Long Term (3-5+ years)

### 1. Energy Development

Develop alternative energy solutions that create new economic opportunities and brand Marathon as an excellent location for energy development projects.

Activity	Action	Timing
Marathon Wind Project	Undertake strategic discussions with project partners to make a go/no go decision on the project.	4th quarter, 2010
Energy	Complete feasibility study to identify alternative energy possibilities for Marathon researching both direct energy development as well as manufacturing opportunities.	2012

### 2. Waterfront Development

Develop the Marathon waterfront to enhance wealth and job creation; capitalize on a renewable resource (tourism); develop Marathon as a visitor destination; and enhance the local infrastructure that supports tourism.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop a Sustainable Waterfront Development Master Plan for Marathon's Lake Superior shoreline.	Hire a qualified consultant firm to develop a Sustainable Waterfront Development Master Plan for Marathon's Lake Superior shoreline which would include: background review/site assessment; landscape concept plan; engineered drawings; cost estimate analysis; and construction documents. A complete review of previous NOHFC funded feasibility work would be a central component of this project including the Cottage Lot Feasibility Study (2005) and the Peninsula Harbour /Carden Cove Feasibility Study (to determine if elements of those studies could be incorporated into this new vision). The Master Plan will incorporate multi-use functionality which may include: easy water access; pumpout facilities; fueling facilities; barrier-free access and pedestrian walkways; spaces to accommodate programming and special events; new leisure and recreational opportunities; viewing areas; appropriate lighting and landscaping; hiking trails; and picnic and playground areas.	2012

## Strategic Objectives

### 3. Retail Business Attraction

Increase the local retail base by attracting companies to locate/establish in Marathon through targeted approach.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop a Retail Attraction Strategy.	• Establish a steering committee based on retail nodes	2nd quarter, 2012
	• Compile a list of primary targets with proper contact information.	3rd quarter, 2012
	• Develop a marketing package.	2013
	• Send packages and follow-up.	2013

### 4. Industrial Business Attraction

Increase the industrial retail base by attracting companies to locate/establish in Marathon through targeted approach.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop an Industrial Attraction Strategy.	• Establish a steering committee.	2nd quarter, 2012
	• Compile a list of primary targets with proper contact information.	3rd quarter, 2012
	• Develop a marketing package.	2013
	• Send packages and follow-up.	2013

## Strategic Objectives

### 5. Logistics/Transportation Route Development

Based on geographic location and current logistics infrastructure, Marathon is well situated to create new business development based on these factors.

Activity	Action	Timing
Alternative transportation circle route – Marathon to Pic River.	Conduct feasibility work on the potential of this route option.	2014
Commercial Transportation Service Centre.	Conduct feasibility work on the potential of establishing a Commercial Transportation Service Centre in Marathon.	2013
Logistics Infrastructure Gap Analysis	Apply for Government Funding to undertake a gap analysis to determine what infrastructure upgrades are required to ensure that Marathon is a serviceable location for business development.	1st quarter, 2012

### 6. Airport Development

Utilize the Marathon Airport as a catalyst to attract new business development.

Activity	Action	Timing
Re-explore the potential of establishing commercial air service at the Marathon Airport.	• Seek approval from Council to pursue this initiative.	2011
	• Develop a potential prospect list.	2011
	• Make contact with identified prospects and determine their level of interest.	2012
	• Based on response levels, determine a go/no go decision.	2012

## Strategic Objectives

Activity	Action	Timing
Explore the option of utilizing vacant land at the Marathon Airport for strategic development.	• Seek approval from Council to pursue this initiative.	2011
	• Attend business functions offering prospecting potential.	2012
	• Identify businesses seeking expansion opportunities.	2012
	• Initiate a marketing campaign.	2013

### 7. Education

Create niche programming opportunities that will develop and retain local talent which in-turn will spur entrepreneurship and economic development.

Activity	Action	Timing
Develop relationships/partnerships with regional education institutions.	• Facilitate discussions with regional education providers to identify potential new programming opportunities.	2nd quarter, 2011
	• Identify and map-out processes to put new programming in place.	4th quarter, 2011

### 8. Government Job Attraction

Continuously be aware of opportunities to attract Provincial or Federal Government jobs to Marathon.

Activity	Action	Timing
Through targeted research, continually be aware of opportunities to attract new jobs to Marathon.	• Compile a list of primary targets with proper contact information.	2012
	• Develop a marketing package.	2013
	• Send packages and follow-up.	2013

# Success Measures

## Direct Measures

The MEDC will use the following benchmarks to monitor its performance on a year by year basis:

- The MEDC shall quantify the new jobs it has helped create through collaboration with its community partners.
- The MEDC shall quantify the new investments it has helped create through collaboration with its community partners.
- The MEDC shall quantify the salaries and investments it has helped create through collaboration with its community partners.

## Indirect Measures

The MEDC will use the following criteria to measure its efforts to achieve its Mission:

- The MEDC shall quantify the number of community presentations, media coverage, and web traffic generated annually.
- The MEDC shall quantify the number of business inquiries and/or clients assisted.
- The MEDC will use a win/loss scorecard to assess its ratio of qualified new business opportunities.
- The MEDC shall undertake community and/or stakeholder surveys to assess its performance and act as a strategic tool to develop new economic development strategies.

## **Marathon Economic Development Corporation**

The Marathon Economic Development Corporation is an Ontario registered, not-for-profit corporation with an independent Board of Directors funded by the Town of Marathon to promote economic development and diversification and to provide support for enterprises, institutions, and entrepreneurs engaged in the economic, cultural and social development within the Town of Marathon. The volunteer Board is comprised of Adam Brown (Chair), Chris Woodall (Vice Chair), Jamie Senese, Eugene Reid, and Roger Souckey; and the corporation is managed by Daryl Skworchinski.