

# Ripley

A Community of Huron Kinloss



## Executive Summary



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Spruce the Bruce is a local community improvement initiative sponsored by the County of Bruce. Its goal is to enact positive change to support livable, economically viable communities. This program focuses on downtown cores as Bruce County mainstreets represent over 70% of our commercial assessment and are the main point of contact with tourism dollars – our second largest industry. The Spruce the Bruce program is modelled on the National Trust for Historic Preservation “Main Street Approach®” downtown revitalization program that has helped many commercial districts become prosperous and sustainable.

This Community Design Toolkit is one step in the overall program to enhancing downtown Ripley. It showcases Ripley and its unique identities and opportunities and also provides the community with a road map to enhance its downtown both economically and aesthetically. Ripley has a niche market of artisans with differentiates it other communities in the County. Ripley’s unique shops are the foundation for creating an artisan focused community that will support Ripley in becoming a day tripping destination.

This Toolkit highlights a 5-year *Action Plan* for Ripley that begins to address the economic development and marketing and promotion pillars that were identified in the research as needing attention. Additionally, there are *The Tools* that illustrate some possibilities of how to translate the “Homemade and Hands On” identity for Ripley into practical solutions.

Ripley’s Toolkit is intended to foster leadership and creativity while providing some guidance in terms of next steps for moving forward in a consistent and coordinated manner. In order to support this coordinated approach, it is recommended that all community partners from suppliers and community groups to Town Council and staff embrace this Toolkit and follow this guide as closely as possible, recognizing that it is a living document that will evolve with time.



# Identity

The backdrop for Ripley's brand is homemade and hands on. Ripley needs to embrace the unique role that they have the potential to play - offering visitors an opportunity to experience some of the best local artisans and crafters – HANDS ON. Many communities have local artisans but few offer the opportunity for people to get their hands dirty by actually participating alongside the artist. Dalton Pottery and the Glass Hummingbird have seized this market niche by offering classes – a participatory experience to those that travel to their stores.

The opportunity to take classes and learn the trade offers a unique perspective on the traditional artisan model. Typically, whenever you go to an art studio, gallery or museum, you can't touch anything. The opposite is true for the crafters in Ripley. Come in and experience, engage and learn the craft!

The key to Ripley's approach needs to be **HOMEMADE**. The focus of the hands on experience needs to be learning the traditional, rural culture.

Quilting, knitting, pickling, butter and candle making are all examples of the traditional core skills that are experiencing resurgence. Imagine a program like the Southampton art school that focused on traditional rural skills. This in addition to the stained glass, wood working, pottery, painting and welding will put Ripley on the map.

All too often, communities get stuck promoting the place and not the activities. Visitors are far too interested in things to do than in the actual location. People will travel farther to participate than to visit a quaintly named town that sounds a lot like quaint small towns closer to their homes. Make the experience tangible for your customers.

The more Ripley has to offer, the longer people will stay. And the more likely they will be to return. Sell the experience and people will flock to downtown Ripley.



# Action Plan Timeline

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>GOAL 1:</b> To foster an environment of organization, leadership and management;					
Develop Ripley STB Sub Committee			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves business community representatives			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves Lewis Park Development Committee			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves stakeholders (i.e. Lion's, Rotary)			•		
<b>GOAL 2:</b> To investigate programs to attract a critical mass of artisan based retail;					
Create an Artist Recruitment Committee			•		
Compile a cultural inventory, and area map of artists and crafters	•	•			
Research the development of community cooperatives, incubators, galleries and markets			•	•	•
Recruitment of Compatible Artisans Program identified in the cultural inventory				•	•
<b>GOAL 3:</b> To undertake specific economic development initiatives to foster increased retailers;					
Start a Business Retention & Expansion Study (BR&E) with cultural mapping and inventory	•	•			
Implement BR & E Study		•	•		
Rehabilitation of vacant, derelict buildings and absentee landowners			•		
Implement workshops for business planning				•	
<b>GOAL 4:</b> To develop a Marketing Strategy to promote to the artisan / crafter day trip, tourism destination;					
Commence strategic and coordinated initiatives of Marketing Strategy as rural cultural hub					•
Initiate a Market Analysis to aid in the development of a targeted Marketing Strategy			•	•	
Incentive Program through a CIP for facades, signage, structural, accessibility improvements etc.	•			•	•
Create an advertising campaign for downtown businesses based on Marketing Strategy					•



## Summary

Spruce the Bruce and the community of Ripley have developed a Toolkit that creates the basis for a successful downtown revitalization program. The methods employed to create this Toolkit and the positive community feedback ensures that Ripley's Toolkit is a useful roadmap that, if followed consistently, will lead Ripley towards a more prosperous downtown.

Beginning the process of implementing the Action Plan is the next step for Ripley. Organizing local capacity is an important starting point in order to move the process forward and ownership is the key to developing an authentic and believable brand identity for the community. All members of the community have a role to play in developing and fostering the brand identity and in moving the Action Plan forward. Regular monitoring of the Action Plan, reviewing the goals and objectives as they change, developing manageable annual work plans, and addressing obstacles encountered along the way will ensure that this Toolkit continues to be relevant.

For more information or support with your local project please contact the Township of Huron Kinloss or the Spruce the Bruce team at [sprucethebruce@explorethebruce.com](mailto:sprucethebruce@explorethebruce.com).

