

## SCENARIO 1

# the future of the region

### It is 2061, and the worst of times.

The tipping point of peak oil came and went without significant development of alternative energy sources. As a result, energy prices skyrocketed, and with them, the cost of everything else. Decisions taken early in the millennium failed to protect productive agricultural lands, and food is both scarce and expensive.

Similarly, denial over the potential impacts of climate change resulted in little or no action to slow global warming and mitigate its effects. Sea level rises locally have inundated what little productive farming land remains, resulting in even less food supply, and has had severe impacts on low-lying communities. Dislocation at the local level is dwarfed by a tsunami of international refugees fleeing the economic, environmental and social consequences of a changing climate.

Efforts to reduce reliance on a consumer-driven economy, with its ever expanding demand for more and more of the globe's finite resources and ever increasing volumes of waste, failed. The resulting cycle of global booms and busts exacerbated the gap between have and have-nots both in Canadian society and internationally.

Economic inequities, environmental degradation and social upheaval have served to radicalize third world populations and demoralize Canadians to the point that individual security, as well as that of society as a whole, is seriously threatened. Iron bars have replaced window boxes, compassion and notions of social justice are trumped by sheer survival, and the global economy is drowning in its own effluent.

## SCENARIO 2

# the future of the region

### It is 2061, and the best of times.

Recognizing well in advance that continued reliance on fossil fuels for the world's energy needs was not sustainable, considerable effort was expended to better meet energy demand through conservation and the emergence of renewable sources. Peak oil came and went with little noticeable effect as society shifted away from long-range transportation of goods and rationalized the urban form to promote complete communities that, among many other benefits, reduced reliance on personal motor vehicles.

Those complete communities embraced local food production at a broad range of scales – from rooftop gardens to efficient farms supported by local processing and distribution networks – that contributed to a sustainable economy and a healthier population. Land use decisions protected agriculture rather than enabling urban sprawl.

And while climate change persisted, the dire predictions of its impacts failed to materialize. Global efforts to reduce greenhouse gases bore fruit, sea level rises were small, and pre-planning coupled with timely intervention meant that mitigating impacts was easily managed.

In terms of the global economy the emphasis has shifted from exuberant consumerism towards the notion of dematerialization. Citizens actively consider the social, economic, and ecological effects of their purchasing decisions and increasingly opt for those products and services that have the lightest footprint. They focus more on the quality and durability of goods, and treasure experiences more than things. That, in turn, means finite resources are more equitably allocated and available to raise the standard of living globally.

With less competition for available resources, sufficient access to wholesome, affordable food, avoidance of catastrophic changes in climate and an economy that gives hope and opportunity to the developing and developed worlds alike, we have entered a golden age in human affairs.