

Township of
**GEORGIAN
BLUFFS**



Strategic Plan

2020-2024

Come for the views - Stay for a lifetime

This document is public and available in an accessible format upon request.



Vision

Quality of life through opportunity, beauty and adventure.

Mission

Creating economic and social opportunities through responsible leadership, innovation and partnership.

Corporate Values

Values are the governing principles that guide our organization on a daily basis. The Corporation's values have been developed through collaboration with Council and Staff to work towards the common goal of striving to be the best local government for the residents it serves.

At the Corporation of the Township of Georgian Bluffs, we believe in:

People - growing and working together

Trust - providing open and clear communications to the public

Respect – for every voice

Excellence – providing great service to our community

Integrity – being honest and fair in all we do

Accountability – being committed and accountable to our community

Stewardship – caring for the present, committed to the future

The Township is committed to doing our best and the right things for the community. We are constantly looking for ways to improve our services in striving for municipal excellence.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goals provide key areas of focus for the Strategic Plan and improve the basis for objectives that will guide the Strategic Actions by the Corporation to implement the Plan.



Strategic Goals

1. Improve Communication, Collaboration and Transparency

The Township of Georgian Bluffs wishes to become more transparent and improve communication with all ratepayers, stakeholders, and neighbouring municipalities. Communication is key in all aspects of Township governance and service.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Improve communications to foster public engagement and participation.
 - (a) Establish position of Communications and Strategic Initiatives Officer.
 - (b) Develop and implement a Communications strategy, including policies to support business/industry/tourism within the Township.
 - (c) Continued enhancement of social media presence, website and general communications.
 - (d) Establish public use computer terminals to allow for barrier free access to Township related, internet based, websites and files.
 - (e) Continually encourage stakeholder participation in public, Council and Committee meetings and host town hall style meetings on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Monitor implementation of strategic plan and assist departments with implementation of their strategic priorities.
- 1.3 Enhance collaboration with stakeholders, partners and neighbouring municipalities.
- 1.4 Initiate joint Council meetings with neighbouring municipalities to discuss items of mutual interest and benefit.

2. Foster Economic Growth

The Township of Georgian Bluffs strives to retain, expand, and attract new businesses that support employment opportunities, promote a diversified economy, support value-added agriculture and capitalize on the Township's strengths, defining natural resources, while protecting the natural environment.



Objectives:

- 2.1 Retain, expand and attract new commercial activities.
 - (a) Review planning policies to encourage farm business operations.
 - (b) Identify possible Employment Lands for Development.
- 2.2 Support increasing residential development.
 - (a) Expand existing servicing/utilities to prepare for new development.
 - (b) Accommodate new and existing utility and service providers wishing to expand their services to residents.
 - (c) Complete revised Zoning By-law, update as required.
 - (d) Complete Official Plan review.
 - (e) Streamline planning processes (and increase staffing resources) to enable development and redevelopment.
 - (f) Support development of affordable housing, lower environmental footprint housing, and higher density housing in appropriate settlement areas
- 2.3 Initiate and foster collaboration between Grey and Bruce Counties & neighbouring municipalities to promote the region.
- 2.4 Promote and support development opportunities at the airport to utilize the facility to its potential to become a transportation hub for the Grey Bruce Region, as well as attract aviation businesses that will offer employment opportunities.
- 2.5 Develop and implement strategic communication policies to support business/industry/tourism within the Township.
- 2.6 Streamline processes to encourage private expansion of internet services.

3. Demonstrate and Enhance Environmental Stewardship

The Township of Georgian Bluffs strives to become a leader in Environmental Stewardship by reducing energy consumption, reducing solid waste, increasing diversion rates of recyclable materials, and lessening the environmental impact of existing and future infrastructure through innovation and upgrading.

Objectives:



3.1 Continually strive to reduce environmental footprint by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions to minimize climate change.

- (a) Investigate and pursue opportunities to improve the Biodigester to ensure long term sustainability including the acceptance of source separated organics and a reduction in operating costs in order to attract septage waste.
- (b) Report to Council on new Provincial recycling strategy.
- (c) Increase recycling and waste diversion, and support waste reduction.
- (d) Investigate opportunities for inter-municipal waste and recycling collection contracts using efficient and clean fuel burning collection vehicles.
- (e) Investigate opportunities for green box program within secondary settlement areas within the Township.
- (f) Encourage installation of facilities that support alternative fuel vehicles.



3.2 Protect environmentally sensitive areas and habitat.

- (a) Design roads to minimize environmental impact using new technologies that reduce erosion, increase water quality from storm sewer collection/discharge.

3.3 Manage drinking and storm water.

- (a) Operate drinking water systems to maintain a high standard of public health and safety, protect the environment and ensure long term sustainability.
- (b) Investigate opportunities to extend water service to supply areas in need of potable water and increase users to ensure water systems are sustainable and economical.
- (c) Re-evaluate the current water billing model to ensure a fair equitable system that recognizes payment for all water used to promote water conservation.



- (d) Develop/expand storm water management policies to minimize outflows and improve storm water runoff quality.
- (e) Provide regular and timely maintenance of municipal drains in accordance with storm water management policies.
- (f) Develop action plans for improved drainage of the Oxenden and Balmy Beach areas.

3.4 Monitor and manage invasive species.

- (a) Continually map and manage invasive species.
- (b) Develop a plan to educate the property owners of invasive species and their obligations to manage.

4. Increase Available Community, Recreational and Social Opportunities

The Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to building community through investment in recreation and community centres, and flexible use of community centres and playgrounds.

Objectives:

4.1 Provide enhanced recreational opportunities for residents

- (a) Complete a Recreation Master Plan that includes the evaluation of recreation needs, facilities, and budget requirements with recommendations for recreational programming for all ages/abilities.
- (b) Undertake arena/community facility condition assessments as part of Master Plan in order to develop long term capital asset management plans.
- (c) Implement recommendations arising from Recreation Master Plan.
- (d) Continually improve public/open spaces to ensure accessibility and safety.

4.2 Develop and implement a community safety and wellbeing plan.

5. Deliver Effective and Cost-Efficient Services

The Township will strive to be a leader in municipal and customer service excellence. We will continue to offer remarkable service to those we serve. We will promote operational excellence by focusing on fiscal responsibility. The corporation will be fiscally prudent and we will invest in our staff to attract the best employees.



Objectives:

- 5.1 Enhance online services for more efficient customer service.
 - (a) Provide opportunity for on-line payments through the Township website.
 - (b) Allow credit card payments (not including property taxes).
 - (c) Create more online forms.
- 5.2 Create more accessible meetings to encourage citizen engagement.
 - (a) Improve agenda/meeting/minute management with appropriate technology.
 - (b) Establish audio/video streaming of Council and Committee meetings.
- 5.3 Exceed set targets for asset management planning.
 - (a) Complete condition assessments for all Township assets.
 - (b) Define service levels for Township assets and maintain assets to meet levels of service.
 - (c) Consider and implement recommendations within the Asset Management plan during annual budget process and preparation of financial forecasts.
- 5.4 Ensure proper distribution of workload and retention of staff.
 - (a) Analyze workload yearly based on department.
 - (b) Encourage work/life balance.
 - (c) Support ongoing staff education and succession planning.
 - (d) Complete compensation review every four years.
- 5.5 Manage Fire and Police Services effectively.

The Township is committed to providing a high standard of protective services according to a sound business plan, and supporting community based initiatives in all protective services.

 - (a) Develop Fire Master Plan to ensure the community and regulatory requirements are met and exceeded where possible.
 - (b) Continue to negotiate agreements for Fire Services with neighbouring municipalities, including mutual aid in the short and long term in order to ensure protective services meet the needs of the Township while ensuring fiscal and regulatory responsibility.



- 5.6 Develop inter-municipal/inter-local agreements to ensure efficient delivery of services for mutual benefit.



Implementation

The strategic plan should remain an active document of the Township. To ensure the document remains active, the following practices should apply to municipal initiatives:

- Core business areas and objectives will be referenced in major written reports, documents and initiatives of the Township,
- The document will set the framework for annual budget deliberations, financial plans, and other business plans,
- Major new initiatives of the Township not in the Plan shall be included and considered by formal amendment.
- Changes in timing and priorities for existing initiatives may occur without amendment to the plan.

Monitoring

In addition to the implementation practices outlined above, the following monitoring strategy shall apply to the Strategic Plan:

- A minimum of one public meeting shall be held every two years to assess the progress on core business area and objectives and to consider the validity of the plan,
- Every five years a comprehensive plan review will be conducted and feedback and input from the public will be sought.



Background:

In 2008 the Township of Georgian Bluffs adopted its first strategic plan. Following the election of 2018, the new council decided to complete a new strategic plan and, ensure that measures were in place to implement the intent of that plan.

The first step in that process was for council and senior staff to meet for a full day to review the stated vision and mission in the 2008 strategic plan, to update its strategic areas of focus following a thorough environmental scan and an analysis of the township’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

In a strategic planning process, the term environmental scan refers to significantly more than just a review of the physical environment at the Township operations are subject to. It also includes a demographic scan, that is the population composition and projections affecting the Township, thoughts with respect to technological change, factors influencing social change in the Township, economic conditions and projections, and the broader regional and provincial political change that can have an effect on the municipality.

Environmental Scan

Demographics

The following table gives an indication of Township’s population change since 2006 based on statistics Canada census data.

	Population 2006 to 2016	
	Georgian Bluffs	Ontario
2006	10,506	12,100,285
2011	10,404	12,851,821
2016	10,479	13,448,494

It's evident that in the last decade Georgian Bluffs has been relatively static while Ontario as a province has grown approximately 1% per year

Georgian Bluffs’ growth or lack thereof is like its larger urban neighbour Owen Sound. Owen Sound in 2016 is roughly the same size in terms of population as it was in 1996 and while it grew slightly to 2006, it subsequently showed an even greater reduction between 2006 and 2016 than did Georgian Bluffs.



But even if a municipality's population is stable, changes within the total distribution by age can have a profound effect on local service demands.

The population distribution in Ontario has been changing in recent decades as the baby boom generation ages and family size has declined.

Rural areas and areas outside of the greater Toronto area have seen the most significant change in distribution of population by age.

It's no surprise that there is a higher percentage of retirement age residents in northern Grey County than in Ontario generally and again no surprise that the city with its amenities would attract a higher proportion of the population over 65 than would Georgian Bluffs.

2016 Population Distribution

	Owen Sound		Georgian Bluffs		Ontario	
Total	21,341	100.0%	10,479	100.0%	14.45 M	100.0%
0-14	3,075	14.4%	1,460	13.9%	2.21 M	16.4%
65+	5,325	25.0%	2,365	22.6%	2.55 M	19.0%
Working Age		60.6%		63.5%		64.6%

What does the future hold for Georgian Bluffs and area?

Using projections from Ontario statistics we see that Ontario will generally age, and that Georgian Bluffs and northern Grey will not escape this transition.

Population to 2040

- Canada and Ontario will age
- Grey County growth projected at ½% per year to 2040
- Ontario will have Owen Sound's current profile in 2040
- Over 65 25%
- 0-14 15%
- Working age 60%
- Georgian Bluffs

Likely will be somewhere between 25% and 30% over 65 and 10% to 12% in the 0-14 age group



Economic Trends

The group determined that the following were the most important considerations from an economic perspective as we move towards 2040.

- Less manufacturing in Ontario
- Housing supply and price challenges continue
- Smaller household size
- Farm labour will decline
- Farm size will increase
- Rural incomes will not keep pace with urban
- Retiree services will be in greater demand
- Technology can encourage knowledge work from anywhere
- Health care spending will increase faster than other areas
- Service demands will shift
- Accessible transit more in demand

Technology towards 2040

- Universal internet must be here long before 2025
- Communications will be heavily oriented to internet
- Transportation will change, more so in urban centres
- Technology will lead the green revolution
- Farming will be even more tech reliant
- Remote health care will be substantially enhanced
- Retail shopping will largely be online
- More home occupations possible

Physical Environment to 2040

- Climate change will continue
- Built environment needs different forms of housing types
- Recreation uses will increase for lands
- Environmental protection demands will grow
- More snow, more rural storm water, altered growing conditions
- Weather volatility
- Roads will need improvement
- More demand for stone and aggregate
- Less ability to dispose of waste
- More invasive species



Political Considerations to 2040

- Funding shifts to municipal governments
- Greater pressure on user pay
- Local government structures will change
- Accountability structures will also change
- Local service collaboration between communities must improve
- Federal and Provincial governments will demand greater accountability
- International events will lead to greater local volatility
- Local councils will be responsible for fewer services if they still exist

Social Factors to 2040

- Increased cultural diversity
- Tourism and leisure will increase in society
- Urban concentration in GTHA will continue
- Demand for community spaces and activities will increase
- Accessibility will be a given
- Income disparity will continue to be a concern
- Religious activities will not rebound and will likely decline
- Social service demands will be high

The group clearly expected that there would be significant change over the next 20 years that Councils and staff would have to anticipate and respond to.

“SWOT” Analysis

The workshop then turned to consideration of the inherent Strengths and Weakness of the community in relation to the trends/factors that were identified, and the Opportunities and Threats posed by the changes anticipated over the next 20 years.

Strengths

- Capable and professional staff
- Natural attractions, proximity to GTA and Bruce Nuclear
- We are a safe community
- Increased political will in Council for change
- Financially responsible
- “Outsized attractions”-Cobble Beach, Biodigester, Airport, Shoreline, Natural Areas



Weaknesses

- Limited recreation programming
- Limited responsiveness to using technology
- Reactive instead of proactive
- Limited designated employment lands
- Citizen engagement and communication not strong
- Facilities need attention
- Joint boards need review to be more effective....
- Limited attention paid in past to tourism potential
- We aren't large and have limited resources



Opportunities

- Expanded airport activity
- Tourism for seniors
- Greater use of internet for communications with community
- Expansion of collaboration with neighbours
- Heritage assets
- Encouragement of more community activity

Threats

- Reduced senior government funding
- Being late in meeting environmental change
- Forced amalgamation of unlike communities
- First nations litigation result
- Getting caught up in competition vs collaboration with others
- Neglecting risk management



Strategic Areas of Focus

No municipality can be all things to all people. Priorities must be set that are realistic and in areas where accomplishments are achievable and measurable.

To these ends the Workshop developed five areas where it thought efforts should be focused over the balance of this term of Council and into the next term, with an update due for the entire plan in 2023.

Following considerable discussion, the group reached consensus on five Areas of Focus to take to the public for their consideration.

They were:

- Economic growth
- Environmental stewardship
- Accessible recreational and social opportunities for residents
- Effective and cost-efficient service delivery to adopted standards
- Collaboration with others for mutual benefit

The next step in the process was to take the foregoing to a public meeting for input. Questions to be posed were, was the future scan realistic, was the SWOT analysis reasonable and were the strategic areas of focus appropriate and to please add to, subtract from, and to rank them.

That meeting was held at the Township Community Centre in Shallow Lake and twenty members of the public attended along with Council and senior staff.

Over the course of two hours, the public reviewed the work done by the Council and staff, debated in small groups the assumptions and conclusions, and reached a consensus of their own.

It was agreed that generally, the work that had been done was valuable and interesting, and that the strategic areas of focus were so interdependent on one another that ranking was not possible, none needed to be added, and that Council should proceed to develop implementation plans for them.