



2018-2022 COUNCIL TERM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

"A FOUNDATION FOR THE
FUTURE THROUGH
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT"



STRATEGIC PLAN

OFFICIAL PLAN

ASSET MANAGEMENT
PLAN

TEN YEAR
CAPITAL PLAN

FIRE MASTER PLAN

RECREATION, PARKS AND
TRAILS MASTER PLAN

ANNUAL BUDGET AND
BUSINESS PLANS

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Phil Harding
Mayor



To say this term of Council has dealt with challenging issues would be an understatement. Three months into this term we declared a state of emergency due to the 1:300 year flood. Just nine months later, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic began which caused us to pivot and change how we provided services. Through these unprecedented situations, we continued to provide services and move the business of the municipality forward. I could not be more proud of our Council and staff.

As we reflect on this term, a key takeaway has been respectful engagement. Some of the highlights from the past 4 years include: implementation of a new committee structure, introduction of webcasting for Committee and Council meetings, development of a new four year Strategic Plan and completion of the Official Plan review.

Council has spent a considerable amount of time establishing plans and strategies to guide decisions made by the municipality for the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Each of these plans will help to identify priority areas and projects, allowing the Township to direct capital project investments in a strategic manner.

While these plans and strategies have a longer-term focus, we also continued to update/enhance the core infrastructure in the Township including several large projects such as: the replacement of the Milford Bay Bridge; rehabilitation of the Bala Falls and Beaumaris Bridges and the Moon River, Baycliffe, and Portage Docks. Additionally, environmental assessments were completed for both the Burgess 1 Dam and the Bala Falls Bridge.

I think the most significant accomplishment this term is the drastic reduction in annual tax increases while also building reserves and increasing our staff compliment to meet the unprecedented increase in workload demands on our By-Law, Planning and Building Departments. Financial responsibility remains our underlying priority in everything we do.

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UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

2019 FLOOD

On April 28th, 2019 at 11:34 a.m. Mayor Phil Harding declared a State of Emergency for the Township of Muskoka Lakes under the Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act due to the rising water levels in the area. During this time, the Township activated its Emergency Plan, and the Emergency Control Group reacted accordingly. The Emergency declaration was lifted on May 16th, 2019 as water levels were receding and recovery efforts continued.



MULTIPLE ROAD AND BRIDGE CLOSURES



EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS



MEDIA AVAILABILITY & COMMUNICATIONS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In March, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a world-wide pandemic, and the Township of Muskoka Lakes responded accordingly. During this time, the Township's COVID-19 pandemic response included: program and service adaptation, staff redeployment, tax payment deferrals with no penalty, health and safety protection for staff, management of cost implications (decrease in revenue), education and enforcement to support provincial COVID-19 response, and develop and execute the COVID-19 Recovery Plan.



VIRTUAL MEETINGS



OFFICE CLOSURE & REMOTE WORK



RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

"Through these unprecedented situations, we continued to provide services and move the business of municipality forward."

2021-2024

STRATEGIC PLAN

The new strategic plan, completed in early 2021, acts as a guiding document to support Council decisions and staff activities.

VISION

Where generations live and gather in a breathtaking natural environment, enjoying recreation, history, and small-town character. These will be protected and enhanced for future generations, while encouraging thriving communities.

MISSION

The Township of Muskoka Lakes Council, residents, volunteers, and staff will be excellent stewards of the environment, set clear and respectful expectations of each other, and work together to achieve our shared vision.

GOALS



PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT



ENHANCE AND SUSTAIN PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY MUSKOKA LAKES' ECONOMY



STRENGTHEN KEY RELATIONSHIPS



Preserve and Protect the Natural and Cultural Environment

OBJECTIVES

- Preserve and protect the natural features of the Muskoka watershed found within the Township, including: water quality, heritage and cultural features.
- Leverage local and regional relationships to strengthen our response to climate change, and ensure that Muskoka Lakes remains adaptable and resilient in its effects.
- Communicate, market, and promote the use and preservation of our natural environment, including: creating dynamic downtowns that highlight the natural environment and highlighting access to the waterfront.
- Enhance the clarity of understanding and enforceability of septic management policies, practices, and infrastructure.

NOTABLE PROJECTS



Official Plan Review

- Adopted updated Official Plan to protect the environment and water quality.



Minett Official Plan Policy Review

- Adopted Official Plan amendment to protect the environment and character of Minett.



Environmental Protection

- Amended Comprehensive Zoning through By-Law 2021-116
- Updated Site Alteration/Tree Preservation By-Law
- Reviewed Dark Sky By-law
- Updated Fireworks By-law
- Implemented Automatic Salt/Sand Controls
- Developed Telecommunication Tower Policy



Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program Update

- Updated Sewage System Maintenance Re-Inspection Program to ensure health and integrity of natural environment and water quality.



Cultural Enhancements

- Developed Public Art Policy
- Organized Community Flag Raisings
- Community Grants Program
- Supported Heritage Plaque Program



Addressing Climate Change

- Developed Climate Adaptation Plan
- Initiated Ground Work for Climate Mitigation Plan

Preserve and Protect the Natural and Cultural Environment



Dark Sky By-Law Review



Tree Preservation
By-Law Review



Sewage System
Maintenance
Inspection Program
Updates



Addressed Climate
Change



Official Plan Review

Strengthen and Diversify Muskoka Lakes' Economy

OBJECTIVES

- Prioritize the implementation of the economic development strategy, including the housing, workforce, broadband, and transportation enablers of economic development.
- Set an economic development vision, and establish criteria to assess and prioritize desired types of economic growth for the Township, particularly light industrial, commercial, knowledge-based and year-round amenities and activities.
- Leverage existing Township infrastructure to foster accessible and affordable community hubs that support a thriving community, with a focus on year-round amenities, cultural attractions, and ancillary services that contribute positively to a high quality of life.

NOTABLE PROJECTS



Economic Development Strategy

- Updated Attainable Housing Policy
- Developed Regional Job Board/Workforce Strategy
- Developed Regional Broadband Strategy



Covid-19 Economic Response

- Implemented Temporary Patio Program
- Organized Winter Fun Muskoka Lakes
- Organized Hike the Lakes Contest
- Established Muskoka Business Recovery Fund
- Implemented Covid-19 Relief Fund



Improved Business Communications

- Established Business Inventory
- Launched Annual Business Survey
- Launched Business Welcome Program/Package



Community Improvement Plan Development

- Developed Streetscape Plans
- Established Urban Design Guidelines
- Installed: Downtown Wayfinding Signage, Bike Racks/Repair Stations and New Street Furniture
- Established Business Incentive Programs



Enhanced Municipal Processes

- Updated Municipal Grants Policy
- Updated Street Banner Policy
- Developed External Grant Policy
- Developed Special Event Permit By-law



Implemented Lock St. Pedestrian Area Pilot Project

- Hosted Grand Opening BBQ
- Installed Additional Seating and Public Games
- Hosted Live Music Nights in Partnership with Chamber

Strengthen and Diversify Muskoka Lakes' Economy



Annual Hike the Lakes Contest Execution



Economic Development Strategy Development



Regional Broadband Strategy Development



Business Welcome Program Development

Enhance and Sustain Public Services and Infrastructure

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and implement an actionable Parks and Recreation Master Plan that improves community and visitor usage of the Township's infrastructure and natural features.
- Maintain a focus on organizational excellence, accountability, and responsibility, strengthen staff engagement, and support staff with training necessary to effectively deliver services to residents.
- Develop and implement a transportation master plan that identifies opportunities to maintain and enhance the Township's vital multi-modal transportation infrastructure.
- Assess the Township's current service delivery models and identify opportunities for modernization, digitization, and enhanced customer service engagement.

NOTABLE PROJECTS



Enhanced Customer Service

- Introduced New Municipal Website
- Introduced Community Engagement Platform
- Began Webcasting Meetings
- Initiated E-Permitting
- Increased Capacity in Building and Planning Services



Plan/Strategy Development

- Asset Management Plan
- Fire Master Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- IT Strategy
- Parks & Recreation Master
- Regional Broadband Strategy



Infrastructure Improvements

- Beaumaris Bridge Rehabilitation
- Milford Bay Rd. Bridge Replacement
- Bala Falls Rd. Bridge Replacement
- Trail Improvements
- Office Renovation
- Multiple Dock Replacements
- 40.43 km of Road Reconstruction



Fleet Upgrades

- Pumper 7 Windermere
- New Grader and Street Sweeper
- Pumper 1 Glen Orchard
- Marine 6 Port Carling
- Tanker 4 Torrance
- Wildland 5 Minett
- 5 Plow Trucks
- Tanker 77 Raymond



Completed Environmental Assessments

- Burgess Dam Environmental Assessment
- Bala Falls Bridge Environmental Assessment



Enhanced By-law Enforcement

- Ongoing By-Law Reviews
- Increased Staff Capacity
- Developed By-Law Enforcement Policy
- Increased Enforcement Presence and Activity

Enhance and Sustain Public Services and Infrastructure



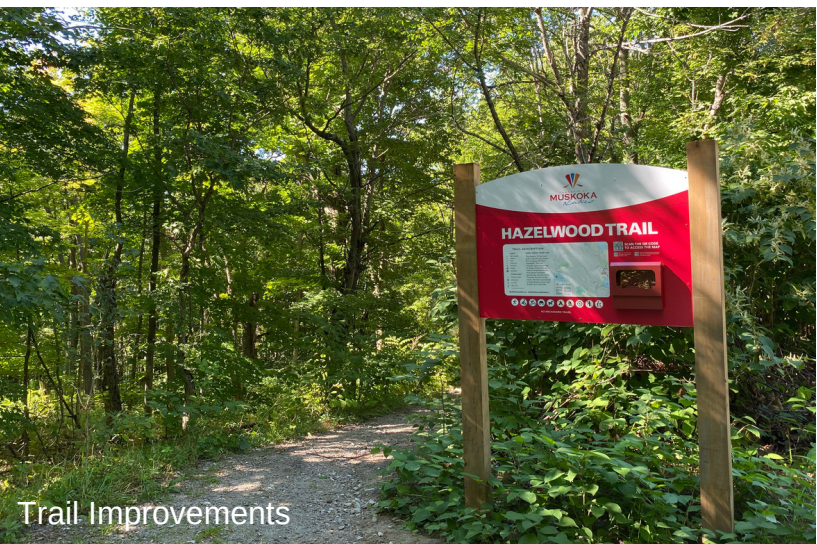
Moon River Dock Upgrade



Baycliffe Park Dock Upgrade



Parks & Recreation Master Plan Development



Trail Improvements



Milford Bay Road Bridge Construction

Strengthen Key Relationships

OBJECTIVES

- Conduct a thorough review of the Township's existing Municipal, Provincial, Federal and Indigenous government relationships that includes an assessment of influence (on the Township), financial impact (e.g. how designations affect funding opportunities), and opportunities for increased collaboration.
- Improve communications activities between the Township and other governments to facilitate better working relationships and information-sharing in support of legislated mandates and strategic priorities.
- Identify specific measures that, if achieved, will improve the Township's governance, fiscal, and programmatic relationship with the District.

NOTABLE PROJECTS



Inter-Tier Relations

- Participated in District Council Composition Review
- Developed Inter-Tier Strategy to Improve Relationship with the District of Muskoka



Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

- Muskoka Area Indigenous Leadership Table (MAILT) Member
- Signed MAILT Friendship Accord
- Inclusion of Land Acknowledgement Statements at the Beginning of Meetings
- Participation in Renaming MR 38



Watershed Protection

- Issued Beach Advisory Notices
- Provided Blue Green Algae Updates
- Reported on Water Levels
- Completed Causation Studies
- Collaborated with Muskoka Watershed Council



Advocacy

- Muskoka River Watershed Initiative/Flooding Prevention
- Broadband Development
- Andy's House Support
- Port Sandfield Dock
- Torrance Barrens Reserve
- Hardy Lake Provincial Park

Strengthen Key Relationships



Inter-Tier Strategy Development



Indigenous Leadership Table Participation



Watershed Protection



Muskoka River Watershed Initiative/Flooding Prevention