



# **PRESERVE.**

# **STRENGTHEN.**

# **DELIVER.**

TOWNSHIP OF MUSKOKA LAKES  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2024 - 2028





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## A LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

I am pleased to introduce Muskoka Lakes' Refreshed Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 on behalf of Council and Staff. This document will serve as a roadmap for our collective future, guiding decisions that will preserve our natural beauty, strengthen our community, and deliver sustainable public services and infrastructure, all of which make Muskoka Lakes a unique and cherished place to live and gather.

Muskoka Lakes is home to a highly engaged community of residents, business owners, and local organizations who are deeply invested in our Township and are committed to positively shaping its future. Throughout the development of this Strategic Plan, we have engaged our local community to ensure that it reflects our shared values and addresses the current and future needs of our residents.

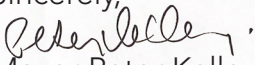
This document builds on our existing priorities and the progress we have made together over the past five years. The 2024-2028 Strategic Plan upholds many of the core principles from our last strategic plan that remain constant and key to our future: bringing generations together, cherishing our natural environment, and building a connected and engaged community.

This Plan is built on three key Strategic Priorities:

- **Enhance our Natural Environment,**
- **Strengthen our Cultural & Community Fabric, and**
- **Deliver Sustainable Public Services and Infrastructure.**

This Plan is a living document that will shape our decision-making, inform how we deliver services, and guide us in protecting what makes Muskoka Lakes special. Each strategic priority is supported by specific strategic goals and initiatives that outline how the Township will drive and report on progress towards our shared vision.

On behalf of Council, I would like to express sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in this strategic planning process and whose feedback was instrumental in shaping this document from start to finish. It is our sincere privilege to serve the community of Muskoka Lakes, and we look forward to working with you in the years ahead to put this ambitious plan into action.

Sincerely,  
  
Mayor Peter Kelley

# INTRODUCING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Township of Muskoka Lakes has refreshed its Strategic Plan to provide a clear path forward for how the municipality will create value for its residents, business owners, and local community partners over the coming years. This Plan is a living document that will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure it responds to the Township's evolving opportunities and challenges...

This Plan will:

- ▶ Inform the Township's strategies, initiatives, and budgets;
- ▶ Create a foundation for collaboration among Council, administration, and the community; and
- ▶ Connect staff's day-to-day work to the Township's overall strategic direction.

The vision, mission, and values set out in this Plan are the expression of how the Township works to create and deliver value to its residents, businesses, and local community partners.

- ▶ The **vision statement** is the Township's promise to residents and community partners.
- ▶ The **mission statement** sets out how the Township works to deliver on its promise to residents, businesses, and local community partners.
- ▶ The **values** reflect the character of the community and shape the culture, decision-making, and accountability of the municipal government.

The strategic priorities and goals in this Plan set a forward-looking direction and objectives for the Township. They define what success will look like and the activities that will make success a reality.

- ▶ **Strategic Priorities** are the key areas of strategic focus for the Township.
- ▶ **Strategic goals** set out the prioritized outcomes to be achieved and resourced under the key areas of strategic focus.

Each of the strategic goals are supported by specific **Initiatives** to deliver on the goals. In addition, as part of its regular planning, the Township will prepare and report on key performance measures for the strategy's goals.



# STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

 <b>VISION</b> A thriving community where generations live and gather in a breathtaking natural environment worth protecting.	 <b>MISSION</b> Leaders in public service value, excellence and stewardship.	 <b>VALUES</b> Respect Courage Openness Sustainability
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## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



### **ENHANCE** our Natural Environment

1. Promote sustainable land use and development to preserve Muskoka Lake's natural environment.
2. Protect the Township's water quality, forests and natural spaces through Township operations and coordination with key partners.



### **STRENGTHEN** our Cultural & Community Fabric

3. Build the Township's sense of community and belonging through proactive communication and engagement.
4. Diversify the Township's year-round economy through strategic economic development initiatives and collaborations.
5. Promote and enable local supports, resources, and cultural amenities for a safe, healthy and sustainable Township.



### **DELIVER** Sustainable Public Services & Infrastructure

6. Continuously strengthen the alignment of Township services, infrastructure and amenities with community needs and resources.
7. Ensure sustained and affordable community investment in critical public services through strong financial management.
8. Engage, develop and celebrate our Township of Muskoka Lakes team in delivering outstanding public services.



## Our Vision

*A thriving community where generations live and gather in a breathtaking natural environment worth protecting.*





## Our Mission

“Leaders in public service value, excellence and stewardship.”





## Our Values

Muskoka Lakes is a special place that is knitted together through a shared set of values that guides how its local government works, how residents and partners treat each other, and how everyone works together to build the community. The values shared across the Township are:

- ▶ **Respect** for each other and the community we serve.
- ▶ **Courage** to advance the community's shared interests.
- ▶ **Openness** to new ideas and ways of doing things.
- ▶ **Sustainability** of our environment and community.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS

1

## PRIORITY

### ENHANCE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

#### OBJECTIVE

Preserve, protect and enhance the natural heritage features that make Muskoka Lakes a unique community in which to live.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## STRATEGIC GOALS



### PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TO PRESERVE MUSKOKA LAKES' NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

To do this, the Township will:



**Review and update** the Township's planning policies and bylaws in accordance with the Township's 2023 Official Plan.



**Continue to update and enforce** regulatory land-use and development by-laws.



**Develop and implement** a Short-Term Rental Licensing by-law.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## PROTECT THE TOWNSHIP'S WATER QUALITY, FORESTS AND NATURAL SPACES THROUGH TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS AND COORDINATION WITH KEY PARTNERS.

To do this, the Township will:



**Work with regional partners** to develop the Regional Climate Mitigation Plan and implement local recommendations.



**Prioritize and implement** local recommendations within the Regional Climate Adaptation Plan.



**Continue to implement** the Township's Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program.



**Explore opportunities to collaborate** with local, regional, and provincial partners on flood protection and integrated watershed management.



**Set out a specific GHG reduction target** for municipal operations.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS

<b>2</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>STRENGTHEN OUR CULTURAL &amp; COMMUNITY FABRIC</b>
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OBJECTIVE	Enhance residents' quality of life and build community through proactive communications and value-creating partnerships.
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# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## STRATEGIC GOALS



### **BUILD THE TOWNSHIP'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING THROUGH PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT.**

To do this, the Township will:



**Develop and implement** a Communications Strategy for the Township including specific investment in strengthening two-way engagement with the community and increasing awareness of local bylaws.



**Proactively share and engage** with residents on Township of Muskoka Lakes' stories that recognize and celebrate Township successes and foster a greater sense of community.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



### DIVERSIFY THE TOWNSHIP'S YEAR-ROUND ECONOMY THROUGH STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATIONS.

To do this, the Township will:



**Implement** the Township's approved Community Improvement Plan including through the development and implementation of supporting marketing and education strategies.



**Review and update** the Township's Economic Development Strategy in cooperation with local businesses, associations, and community groups.



**Participate** in collaborative regional economic development projects and opportunities including the Regional Workforce Development Strategy.



**Continue to implement** the Township's Community Grant Program including supporting local year-round events and initiatives.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## 5

### PROMOTE AND ENABLE LOCAL SUPPORTS, RESOURCES AND CULTURAL AMENITIES FOR A SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE TOWNSHIP.

To do this, the Township will:



**Harmonize and consolidate** Township support programs for attainable housing for residents and employees.



**Investigate** options for improving local healthcare access through the Port Carling Community Health Hub.



**Continue to advocate and partner** with District and Provincial governments to address local health and wellbeing needs of community members.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS

3

## PRIORITY

### DELIVER SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

#### OBJECTIVE

Ensure municipal services and infrastructure are appropriate and sustainable through effective and efficient planning, resourcing and delivery that matches the needs of the community.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## CONTINUOUSLY STRENGTHEN THE ALIGNMENT OF TOWNSHIP SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND RESOURCES.

To do this, the Township will:



**Prioritize and implement** recommendations from the Level of Service Study including service level adjustments.



**Implement** condition-based assessment, inspection, and performance evaluation strategies for all relevant assets.



**Identify and begin** monitoring key performance measures to monitor and report on core service levels and performance of the organization.



**Establish** regular resident satisfaction consultation and engagement tools.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## ENSURE SUSTAINED AND AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT IN CRITICAL PUBLIC SERVICES THROUGH STRONG FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

To do this, the Township will:



**Update and implement** the Township's Inter-Tier Engagement and Advocacy Strategy.



**Develop** long-term financial planning tools to identify and plan for future or large-scale investments.



**Resource and implement** priority items in the Township's approved Master Plans including continued investment in parks, recreation, transportation, fire services and the Township's cultural heritage.



**Continue to explore** revenue generating opportunities for the Township.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS



## ENGAGE, DEVELOP AND CELEBRATE OUR TML TEAM IN DELIVERING OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICES.

To do this, the Township will:



**Develop and implement** a comprehensive Human Resources Strategy to help attract, recruit, retain, develop and succeed municipal staff while creating an inclusive, equitable and diverse workplace.



**Develop and implement** an employee engagement survey to obtain feedback on culture, leadership, supports, and benefits which will support a comprehensive benefit review and complement the compensation review.



# MUSKOKA LAKES' STRATEGIC PLAN ON A PAGE

## VISION

A thriving community where generations live and gather in a breathtaking natural environment worth protecting.

## MISSION

Leaders in public service value, excellence and stewardship.

## VALUES

► RESPECT

► COURAGE

► OPENNESS

► SUSTAINABILITY

### PRIORITY 1 | ENHANCE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

*Preserve, protect and enhance the natural heritage features that make Muskoka Lakes a unique community in which to live.*

- 1 | Promote sustainable land use and development to preserve Muskoka Lakes' natural environment.
  - Review and update the Township's planning policies and bylaws in accordance with the Township's 2023 Official Plan.
  - Continue to update and enforce regulatory land-use and development by-laws.
  - Develop and implement a Short-Term Rental Licensing by-law.
- 2 | Protect the Township's water quality, forests and natural spaces through Township operations and coordination with key partners.
  - Work with regional partners to develop the Regional Climate Mitigation Plan and implement local recommendations.
  - Prioritize and implement local recommendations within the Regional Climate Adaptation Plan.
  - Continue to implement the Township's Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program.
  - Explore opportunities to collaborate with local, regional, and provincial partners on flood protection and integrated watershed management.
  - Set out a specific GHG reduction target for municipal operations.

### PRIORITY 2 | STRENGTHEN OUR CULTURAL & COMMUNITY FABRIC:

*Enhance residents' quality of life and build community through proactive communications and value-creating partnerships.*

- 3 | Build the Township's sense of community and belonging through proactive communication and engagement.
  - Develop and implement a Communications Strategy for the Township including specific investment in strengthening two-way engagement with the community and increasing awareness of local bylaws.
  - Proactively share and engage with residents on TML stories that recognize and celebrate Township successes and foster a greater sense of community.
- 4 | Diversify the Township's year-round economy through strategic economic development initiatives and collaborations.
  - Implement the Township's approved Community Improvement Plan including through the development and implementation of supporting marketing and education strategies.
  - Review and update the Township's Economic Development Strategy in cooperation with local businesses, associations and community groups.
  - Participate in collaborative regional economic development projects and opportunities including the Regional Workforce Development Strategy.
  - Continue to implement the Township's Community Grant Program including supporting local year-round events and initiatives.
- 5 | Promote and enable local supports, resources, and cultural amenities for a safe, healthy and sustainable Township.
  - Harmonize and consolidate Township support programs for attainable housing for residents and employees.
  - Investigate options for improving local healthcare access through the Port Carling Community Health Hub.
  - Continue to advocate and partner with District and Provincial governments to address local health and wellbeing needs of community members.

### PRIORITY 3 | DELIVER SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE:

*Ensure municipal services and infrastructure are appropriate and sustainable through effective and efficient planning, resourcing and delivery that matches the needs of the community.*

- 6 | Continuously strengthen the alignment of Township services, infrastructure and amenities with community needs and resources.
  - Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Level of Service Study including service level Implement condition-based assessment, inspection and performance evaluation strategies for all relevant assets.
  - Identify and begin monitoring key performance measures to monitor and report on core service levels and performance of the organization.
  - Establish regular resident satisfaction consultation and engagement tools.
- 7 | Ensure sustained and affordable community investment in critical public services through strong financial management.
  - Update and implement the Township's Inter-Tier Engagement and Advocacy Strategy.
  - Develop long-term financial planning tools to identify and plan for future or large-scale investments.
  - Resource and implement priority items in the Township's approved Master Plans including continued investment in parks, recreation, transportation, fire services and the Township's cultural heritage.
  - Continue to explore revenue generating opportunities for the Township.
- 8 | Engage, develop and celebrate our TML team in delivering outstanding public services.
  - Develop and implement a comprehensive Human Resources Strategy to help attract, recruit, retain, develop and succeed municipal staff while creating an inclusive, equitable and diverse workplace.
  - Develop and implement an employee engagement survey to obtain feedback on culture, leadership, supports, and benefits which will support a comprehensive benefit review and complement the compensation review.





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