



Township of
Leeds and the
Thousand Islands



Strategic Plan

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A Message from the Mayor



Mayor Corinna Smith-Gatcke

“With this plan, we will ensure that the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands will be a future-oriented and progressive community.”

Leeds and the Thousand Islands is a proud rural community with a bright future ahead.

We have created this new 10-year Strategic Plan, with input from Council, administration and more than 400 local residents and businesses.

This Strategic Plan will act as a guiding document for the Township and Council but will also give us the flexibility we need to adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges as we move forward.

Our Strategic Plan focuses on:

- Delivering effective and accountable government;
- Promoting quality of life and environmental stewardship;
- Growing a livable community with great services; and
- Fostering jobs and economic development.

Some of the actions contemplated by this plan are things that we can control and deliver ourselves, while others rely on the cooperation of other levels of government or community partners. However, everything in this Strategic Plan is important to the future and sustainability of our community.

On behalf of my Council colleagues, I want to thank our Township’s leadership team and employees for their contribution to this process and for their service to the community every day. I also thank the many residents and businesses who participated in the process and shared their perspectives on the future of our community.

With this plan, we will ensure that the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands will be a future-oriented and progressive community, surrounded in natural beauty and true to its rural values where people, the economy, and nature flourish together.

Sincerely,

Corinna Smith-Gatcke,

Mayor of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

A Message from the CAO



Chief Administrative Officer, Stephen T. Donachey

“The new Strategic Plan sets out Township priorities for the next ten years. This Plan will be linked to everything that we do.”

Under the leadership of the Mayor and Council, your Township administration works hard to operate, maintain and grow Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

Every day, we deliver services and maintain our assets with a focus on sustainability, improvement and customer service.

Looking around the community that we share, you can see the tremendous progress we have made, but there is always more work to do and more needs to meet. There is always a need to prioritize.

The new Strategic Plan sets out Township priorities for the next ten years. This Plan will be linked to everything that we do.

It will be our guide for our annual budgets and operating plans. It will be the basis on which we track and report on progress. It will ensure that the work of the Township is aligned with the strategic priorities of our community.

One of the pillars of the Strategic Plan is delivering effective and accountable government. Your administration is committed to this objective. We will work together to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the administration.

On behalf of all Township staff, I want to thank everyone who contributed to this important initiative. We look forward to the work ahead.

Sincerely,

Stephen T. Donachey,

Chief Administrative Officer of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

What's New in this Strategic Plan

In February 2021, Leeds and the Thousand Islands began a process to create a new strategic plan.

Why a Strategic Plan?



Strategic Plans are essential tools for municipalities. All municipalities must make choices regarding what services to provide and what physical assets to build.

A Strategic Plan is important because it sets out the vision of the Township and catalogues the priorities and goals of the community.

It can be used as a guide for day-to-day decision-making. By linking specific decisions back to the Strategic Plan, it can help keep the municipality on the right course. Further, by reporting on Strategic Plan commitments, it can be the anchor for performance measurement and tracking progress.

A Ten-Year Plan

A strategic plan deals with the big issues, be they opportunities like growth, or threats, such as Climate Change. Many issues do not fall neatly into four-year terms of Council and require sustained investment and commitment over time. To allow for this, Council has established a ten-year horizon for this Plan.

It is also recognized that priorities change as new realities emerge. At the time of writing, for almost two years we have all watched as the world has been changed by the global pandemic. The Strategic Plan is a snapshot of the issues as they are understood today. How this Plan will be implemented will be determined by annual choices about operating plans and budgets.



A Community Strategic Plan

Council decided that this would be a “Community Strategic Plan,” and not just a plan for the Township administration.

Most of the items in this Plan deal with matters that are directly under the control of the Township, such as how we maintain the roads or manage our Township workforce. If it were just a plan for the administration, it would stop there.

But, Leeds and the Thousand Islands is much more than what goes on in the Township office. So, the Plan also includes goals relating to issues that reach beyond the direct control of the Township, like investments in broadband and economic development.

We heard throughout the process that these priorities are critical to the future of the community. At the same time, we also know that the Township does not have the ability to directly control progress on these priorities.

We acknowledge, however, that it is the role of Council to be the voice of the community on these priorities. Where Council cannot control an outcome, we must advocate on behalf of the community to those who can, be it another level of government or a community partner. This Strategic Plan provides the foundation from which we will undertake those efforts.

The Strategic Planning Process

The journey to develop a Strategic Plan for Leeds and the Thousand Islands included a thorough review of the context for the plan and input from numerous stakeholders, including Mayor and Council, Township staff, and the community.

Residents were also encouraged to provide input into the Township's future directions over the next

decade. Digital surveys were available to residents and targeted community stakeholders, including the business community, and returned over 400 responses collectively.



Key Findings from the Process

A common tool in strategic planning is a SWOT analysis, that considers the strengths and weaknesses of an organization as well as the opportunities and threats that arise from outside.



Understanding Our Strengths

- Overall sense that the Township is “on the right track”
- Effective Council and staff leadership
- Strong financial position and delivery of core services
- Impressive natural environment and natural infrastructure
- Feeling of “togetherness” in the community
- Highly engaged residents
- Rural community yet close to major urban centres
- Strong seasonal tourism industry—Leeds and the Thousand Islands is a place worth visiting

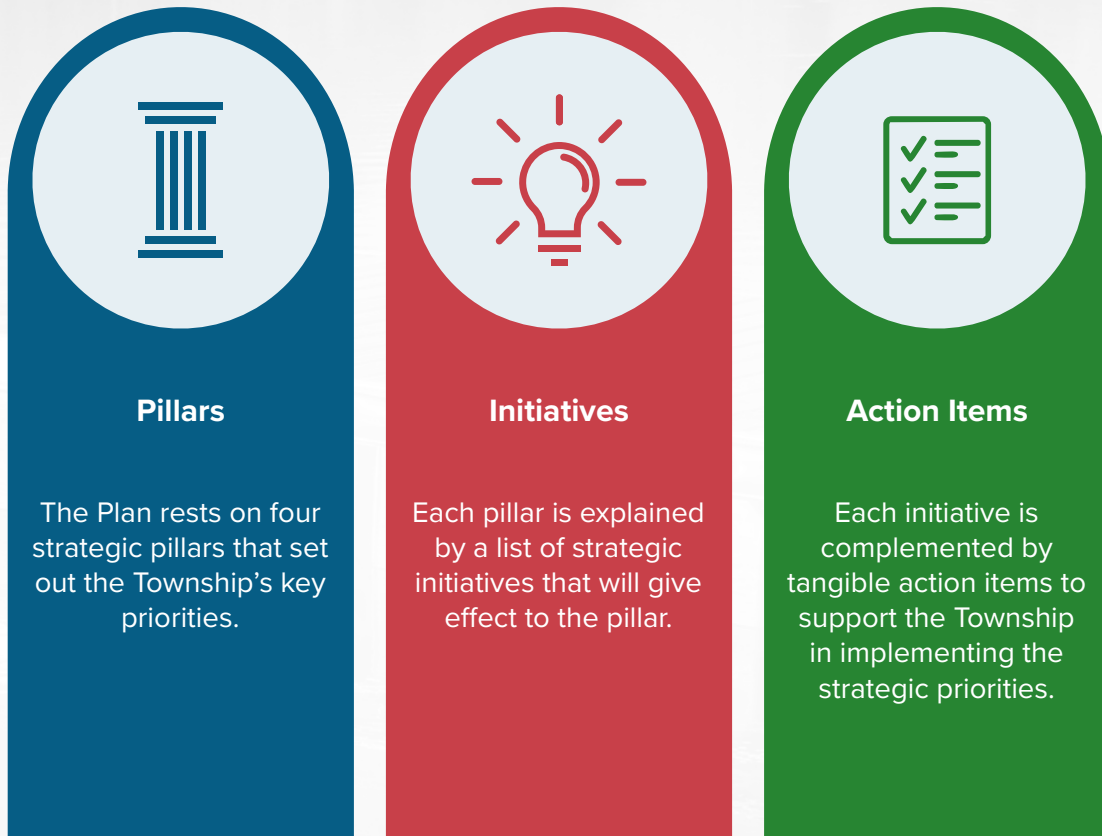
Tackling Our Challenges

- Uncertainty about future revenue
- Shifting population demographics
- Lack of affordable housing and impact of tourism on livability
- Tourism is generally seasonal, not year-round
- Different interests of seasonal and permanent residents
- Inadequate access to broadband
- Water, wastewater and waste management infrastructure
- Capital backlog and deferred maintenance of core infrastructure due to underfunded Asset Management Plan
- Climate Change impacts, especially flooding/high water
- Lack of mental health and addictions support

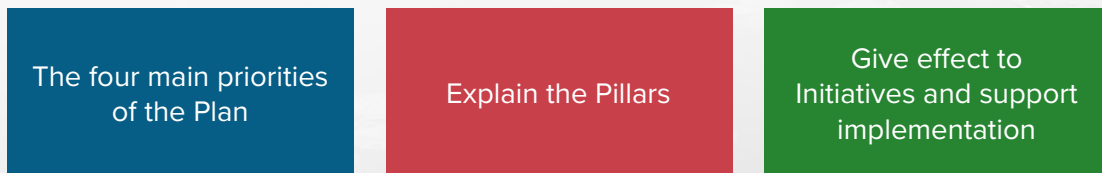
Preparing for Our Future

- Residential growth in urban boundaries and more affordable housing
- Policies and processes to set Township staff up for success (e.g. staff training, equality/diversity/inclusion, succession planning)
- Continuous improvement in service delivery and identification of service gaps (e.g. recreational programming, fire halls, collaborative purchasing)
- Collaboration with neighbouring communities on advocacy and intergovernmental affairs
- Economic diversification and broadband expansion
- Investment in green space and trails

The Structure of the Plan



Components of the Strategic Plan



Vision and Mission



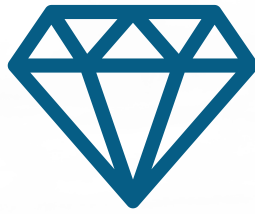
VISION

The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands will be a future-oriented and progressive community, surrounded in natural beauty, true to its rural values where people, the economy, and nature flourish together.



MISSION

We operate, maintain and grow Leeds and the Thousand Islands, its services and assets, with a focus on sustainability, improvement and customer service.



VALUES

Values to promote in the Community

- Balance between Environmental Sustainability and Growth
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Caring and Empathy

Values to promote in the Township

- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Professionalism
- Health and Safety
- Compliance
- Communication

Values to promote in the Public Service

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Sustainability
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Customer Service
- Continuous Improvement

Strategic Pillars

Delivering Effective and Accountable Government

- Continue Continuous Improvement
- Commit to Asset Management Plan and Prudent Funding
- Advocate for the Community
- Invest in a Communications Strategy and Capacity
- Enhance Customer Service Experience

Promoting Quality of Life and Environmental Stewardship

- Address Solid Waste Management Issues
- Maintain and Improve Water Quality
- Promote Natural Landscapes through Community/Agency Partnerships
- Mitigate Climate Change Impacts



Growing a Livable Community with Great Services

- Enhance Community Safety and Well Being
- Promote New Residential Growth
- Explore Opportunities for Affordable Housing
- Preserve and Promote Heritage and Culture
- Improve Trails, Lookouts, and Waterfront Access

Fostering Jobs and Economic Development

- Promote Economic Development Attraction, Expansion and Retention
- Promote New Tourism Investment
- Accelerate Investment in Broadband

Strategic Pillar #1: Delivering Effective and Accountable Government



Continue Continuous Improvement

Action

- Corporate review/update of HR policies and practices including training, performance management, policy manual, and employee records
- Standardize and implement programs, policy, processes, and tools to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency
- Develop and implement a corporate risk management strategy

Commit to Asset Management Plan and Prudent Funding

Action

- Integrate asset management/work order management system to centralize asset data, streamline and automate processes, and meet customer and technical levels of services
- Review of financial policies to keep pace with changing financial environment
- Regular reporting on financial health
- Employ financial strategies to leverage all available funding sources to meet the infrastructure requirements as outlined in the Asset Management Plan and to ensure long term financial sustainability



Advocate for the Community

Action

- Foster relationships within all levels of government, municipal associations and stakeholder groups to advance the interests of the Township and its residents
- Lobby for funding, projects, services, etc.

Invest in a Communications Strategy and Capacity

Action

- Improve communications visibility and local identity
- Develop strategies for external and internal communications
- Develop common “look and feel” templates and style guides

Enhance Customer Service Experience

Action

- Develop Engagement Strategy (Terms of Engagement/Rules of Engagement)
- Establish Customer Service Standard
- Regular staff training
- Online payments – streamline customer interface

Strategic Pillar #2: Promoting Quality of Life and Environmental Stewardship



Address Solid Waste Management Issues

Action

- Establish and foster Waste Management Working Group
- Align with blue box regulations
- Programming for waste diversion and waste reduction
- Address waste disposal site closures and next steps

Mitigate Climate Change Impacts

Action

- Promote shoreline stewardship
- Support waste diversion programs
- Develop a Climate Change strategy
- Include environmental considerations in policy development
- Protect wetland areas

Maintain and Improve Water Quality

Action

- Support source water protection
- Support external / create internal educational and awareness programs (e.g., lake associations, Centre for Sustainable Watersheds, Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority)
- Champion healthy shoreline development (new development)
- Clean / green boating campaign (in partnership with local marinas)
- Support responsible water and wastewater management
- Establish effective storm water management systems

Promote Natural Landscapes Through Community Agency Partnerships

Action

- Support/propose joint initiatives within the Township with Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, Parks Canada, Frontenac Arch Biosphere St. Lawrence Parks Commission, Ontario Parks
- Promote public use of outdoor environment (trails, look-outs, waterways)

Strategic #3: Growing a Livable Community with Great Services



Enhance Community Safety and Well Being

Action

- Adopt regional Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Support Fire Services activities on prevention, recruitment, retention and recognition
- Strengthen relationship with Library and other program providers
- Enhance access to public facilities (AODA)
- Deliver recreation and leisure programming to contribute to an active, healthy lifestyle

Promote New Residential Growth

Action

- Develop / update effective development approval process
- Advocate for infrastructure improvements to support new development
- Develop and implement 'in-migration' strategy

Explore Opportunities for Affordable Housing

Action

- Document, standardize and communicate processes to assist developer
- Create guidelines for consistent development standards
- Pursue development of Township-owned property for residential development

Preserve and Promote Heritage and Culture

Action

- Work with Municipal Heritage Committee to advance heritage initiatives
- Maintain partnership regarding Archives with local Library and 1000 Islands Historic Society
- Recognize local Indigenous culture and traditional lands
- Support local events and initiatives to bring the community together (e.g., Frostfest, Turkey Fair, Lansdowne Fair)

Improve Trails, Lookouts, and Waterfront Access

Action

- Develop and implement sustainable parks maintenance program
- Invest in park infrastructure in alignment with the Township Asset Management Plan
- Work with external agencies to improve/enhance access to and maintenance of green spaces and trails



Strategic Pillar #4: Fostering Jobs and Economic Development



Promote Economic Development: Attraction, Expansion and Retention

Action

- Foster partnerships with stakeholders
- Employ technology to promote the Township and local businesses
- Develop a light industrial strategy including examination of feasibility of developing a light industrial park
- Support identified Economic Development Committee priorities
- Develop resiliency among local business community
- Continue business outreach and support



Promote New Tourism Investment

Action

- Develop a strategy to support tourism and sports tourism
- Explore new technologies to promote and support tourism-based businesses
- Explore opportunities to extend the tourist season

Accelerate Investment in Broadband

Action

- Support initiatives to expand broadband within the Township
- Lobby for funding of broadband expansion
- Support firms seeking to expand broadband services within the Township

How We Will Use the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will provide the direction and foundation for further plans that will enable the Township and community to collaboratively achieve their Vision. The Strategic Plan:





Township of
Leeds and the
Thousand Islands

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