

Phase 1 Report, Executive



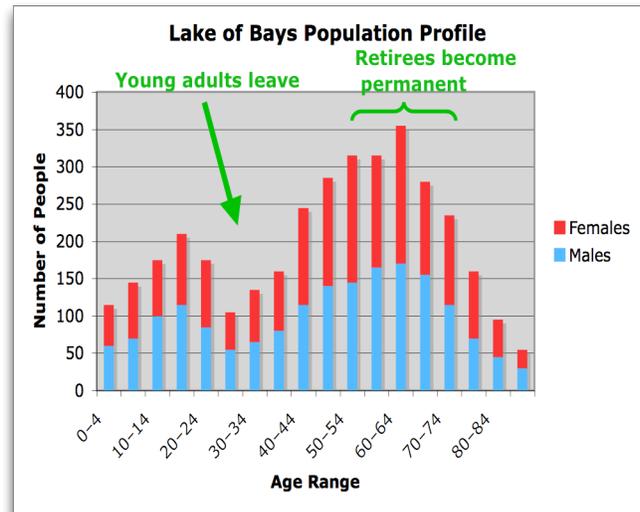
community-based strategic plan

Between May and August 2009 hundreds of citizens of the Township of Lake of Bays crafted a set of strategies to work on together as a community. As a result, the vision for the township was revised slightly to reflect a new sense of priorities and a set of seven strategies was developed to guide goal setting for years to come. The Township government has committed to ensuring the community-based strategic plan influences their actions as an organization and invites the whole community to work together on the following strategies, starting October 16th with a day of Community Action Planning.

- Engage and communicate openly with the community
- Develop a sustainable local economy that supports our vision
- Ensure sound, innovative, transparent financial planning
- Develop long-term land, lake, and community plans that are balanced and adaptive
- Protect, preserve, and promote our healthy natural environment
- Work in collaborative partnerships.
- Develop our capacity to provide social services.

The process was designed to make opportunities for lots of involvement from across the community. In May an advisory group of volunteers helped consultants design the process and open lines of communication throughout the township. Ideas were generated through face-to-face meetings and questionnaires. A demographic report was published at the end of June to provide background information in time for a series of public meetings in July. In August all the ideas generated by citizens were pulled together into

Summary



From: Community Demographic Profile, July 2009

strategies and additional input was sought from resort owners.

The process helped people clarify the issues in the community and start thinking about actions for the future. Some of the major concerns are: the protection of the natural environment while providing better employment opportunities; the rising cost of meeting increasing needs for services particularly with an aging population; retaining youth and younger adults through their employment and family years; reliance on tourism makes for highly seasonal variations in employment and income; the differing priorities between the permanent and seasonal residents; the large geographic size and dispersed population of the township; and the issues that can be avoided or forgotten, like affordable housing, drug and alcohol abuse, and the limited ability to actually enforce regulations.

Funding for the project was provided by FedNor Canada.





A Strategic Plan for Lake of Bay

Vision Statement

"The Residents of the Township of Lake of Bays will nurture and sustain clean water, fresh air, natural shorelines, healthy forests and wetlands that will be the pride of the province. We will offer an outstanding combination of economic opportunity, peaceful living and recreation. This is our dream and legacy for our grandchildren's children."

We Value...

Responsible Leadership
A Healthy Sustainable Natural Environment
A Sound Economy
Quality of Life for All
The Allure of our Surroundings
Our Heritage

Strategies:

- Engage And Communicate Openly With The Community.
- Develop A Sustainable Local Economy That Supports Our Vision.
- Ensure Sound, Innovative, Transparent Financial Planning.
- Develop Long-Term Land, Lake, And Community Plans That Are Balanced And Adaptive.
- Protect, Preserve, And Promote Our Healthy Natural Environment.
- Work In Collaborative Partnerships.
- Develop Our Capacity to Provide Social Services.

Vision Details

We value...

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

Our people want responsive local government and active community involvement. The Township Council and staff will be accountable, with a focus on customer satisfaction and no-fuss service. Township business will be conducted to allow participation of both permanent and seasonal residents. We value open and honest government, affordable taxes and access to essential services.

A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Township offers a rich landscape of lakes, forests and wetlands filled with a diversity of wildlife. We are dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of this our most important resource.

A SOUND ECONOMY

The Township will strengthen its economy through sensitive land use and development that enhances our greatest asset: the natural environment. We will promote tourism, business and light industry to ensure employment opportunities for all – especially youth and young families.

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL

The Township will collaborate on the provision of accessible, inclusive opportunities for health, housing, recreation, life-long learning and personal development to people of all ages and backgrounds.

THE ALLURE OF OUR SURROUNDINGS

The Township's un-crowded shorelines and superior landscape offer the sense of space and beauty that attracts people from all walks of life. We wish to preserve the natural panorama of the land and lakes, and the sense of community that we inherited.

OUR HERITAGE

Our heritage is the history of how the Township came to be and why people settled here, from First Nations to cottagers and residents. The Township will promote its heritage by restoring, protecting and researching the history of our area.



Strategy Detailed Statements

Preamble. The people of the Lake of Bays Township want leadership in the politics and administration of the Township itself and throughout the community's volunteer organizations, businesses, and other governments and agencies. Everything relies on developing *leadership that has a collaborative style, meaningful goals, fiscal prudence and transparent accountability*. To achieve a shared Vision and deal with the underlying issues in the community, the following strategies shall be used to guide goal setting. These strategies will keep the Township's departments aligned with the community priorities and ensure that community actions keep moving in the same directions for years to come.

1. **ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE OPENLY WITH THE COMMUNITY.** It is essential for the Township to focus on improving communication because it will improve service, and deal with the perception of different needs between seasonal and permanent residents and among the various geographic communities. Open communication and dialogue equips people to work together on building a sound, sustainable community that enhances quality of life for all.
2. **DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY THAT SUPPORTS OUR VISION.** There is a shortage of meaningful year-round employment in the area and a growing gap between rich and poor. Economic development is essential but must not come at the expense of our clean, natural environment. The two goals can work hand-in-hand. We need to be pro-active about sustainable economic development to meet the increasing need for services and to diversify tax sources away from 97% residential.
3. **ENSURE SOUND, INNOVATIVE, TRANSPARENT FINANCIAL PLANNING.** With a small population spread over a large geographic area, a limited tax base, and increasing demands for services, priorities need to be set with trade-offs acknowledged. Making sure peoples' needs are addressed

(Executive Summary, 22 September 2009)

requires both a hard-nosed attention to controlled spending *and* an openness to new funding ideas and cost-sharing partnerships.

4. **DEVELOP LONG-TERM LAND, LAKE AND COMMUNITY PLANS THAT ARE BALANCED AND ADAPTIVE.** We need to protect and enhance our character, identity, and "sense of place." Plans provide guidance, flexibility and fairness for the different needs of residents. Good plans enable our vision for a healthy sustainable natural environment, a sound economy, improved quality of life for all, and add to our heritage.
5. **PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND PROMOTE OUR HEALTHY, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.** The environment remains our most important asset yet we risk destroying it with inappropriate or poorly planned development. While development is essential to the local economy, citizens insist that the environment be treated with great respect.
6. **WORK IN COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS.** Citizens want to see results. To be effective requires a new level of cooperation and collaboration that focuses on results. Partnerships help the whole community afford the programs and services that people need. Collaboration helps us share in our vision of a healthy environment, the allure of our surroundings, responsible leadership, and quality of life for all.
7. **DEVELOP OUR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE SOCIAL SERVICES.** Lake of Bays has issues like everywhere else: an aging population, lack of affordable housing, substance abuse, and mental health problems. Just because these issues fall outside the jurisdiction of the Township government does not mean we can afford to ignore them. Dealing with the social issues creates economic opportunities as well as costs while helping us achieve a healthy, safe, sustainable community and improved quality of life for all

Examples of Possible Actions for Each Strategy

Among all the ideas for action, here is a *diverse sampling* from hundreds of online and paper questionnaires, and the public meetings. Community volunteers can decide for themselves what they are prepared to do using the original documents for inspiration. Township staff can make operational plans using the strategies as firm guidelines and the hundreds of ideas under each for additional inspiration.

Strategy	Examples of actions (there are more)
<p>Engage and Communicate Openly with the Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish progress reports regarding “vision”. • Public relations training for Township employees. • Create asset list.
<p>Develop a Sustainable Local Economy that Supports Our Vision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire an economic development person or form advisory group of business people. • Shared Economic Development Officer. • Encourage “creative economy” jobs.
<p>Ensure Sound, Innovative, Transparent Financial Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek outside funding: Provincial/Federal government grants; Corporate sponsorship for projects • Seek money for low impact tourism infrastructure. • Start charging cottagers doing private rentals but not paying commercial costs (fees, taxes, regulations).
<p>Develop Long-Term Land, Lake, and Community Plans that are Balanced and Adaptive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bend the rules in some “pockets” where it makes sense. Be flexible but reasonable. • Develop community plans for Dwight, Dorset, and Baysville. • Recognize that life here is essentially rural. Strive to be distinct. Preserve what is distinctive and develop policy/rules that enhance those features.
<p>Protect, Preserve, and Promote Our Healthy Natural Environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Lake of Bays a leader in setting and enforcing the highest environmental standards. • Restrict boat speed, size, and noise. • Create Lake of Bays as an “eco” destination. “Green Communities Canada” partnership.
<p>Work in Collaborative Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local “champions” and talent for partnerships. • Establish community advisory committees. • Online citizens’ forum. • Attitude: cooperate, not compete. Everyone benefits from each other’s success.
<p>Develop Our Capacity to Provide Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement affordable housing in all villages. • Deal with the social, housing, health, drug issues. • Change DPS to allow kitchenettes in auxiliary buildings that can house seasonal students & employees and give them affordable accommodation.