

# *TOWNSHIP OF MAPLETON*

*Building our Future Together*



*Community-Based Strategic Plan 2013*

# Index

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1	Purpose of the Plan	1
1.2	Background	2
1.3	What is the Township’s Role	3
1.4	Building the Plan	3
<b>2.</b>	<b>STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>CORPORATE VISION</b>	
3.1	Community Engagement	5
3.2	Elected Official’s Perspective	6
3.3	Issues, Priorities, Challenges	7
3.4	Our Mission	8
3.5	Vision Statement	8
<b>4.</b>	<b>GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	
	Appendix “A” - SWOT Analysis	14
	Appendix “B” - Survey Results	16

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The Township of Mapleton has undertaken the task to develop a Community Based Strategic Plan through an open and transparent public engagement process.

The Plan includes an implementation strategy (Action Plan) that extends to the operations of the Township and will be aligned with the goals of respective departments that deliver municipal services.

The strategic plan will also align itself to planning documents and budget processes to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and reported upon annually to identify progress, measure success and establish future goals where needed.

The Township's strategic plan will provide a roadmap for success and the framework for what the Corporation intends to accomplish over the next five years. It represents a set of prioritized corporate objectives that can be both monitored and measured. Feedback from the community on whether or not the plan meets its needs and expectations will be instrumental in measuring the success of the plan.

Further, the plan is necessary to align available financial and staff resources to meet Council and community objectives.

#### **More specifically the plan will:**

- ✓ Focus resources and provide clear direction to employees; defining roles and responsibilities
- ✓ Ensure accountability to the public
- ✓ Represent a management tool to evaluate operations
- ✓ Ensure corporate objectives align with council/community vision
- ✓ Connect priorities with annual budget

## 1.2 Background

Considerable growth has been realized in the Township over the past ten years and numerous large infrastructure projects have been completed since that time. The Township has been successful in partnering with various levels of government as well as key community partners such as MAX Committee, Alma and Moorefield Optimist Clubs, Kinsmen Club of Drayton and Drayton Rotary Club.

Some of the projects completed include the following:

Expansion to PMD Arena

Construction of Mapleton Community Health Centre

Construction of Alma Community Hall

Replacement of two large bridges, each in excess of one million dollars.

Extensive upgrades to historic Drayton Festival Theatre

Water and Wastewater Services to over 150 residences and businesses in Moorefield

Aging infrastructure, resident demands for services and reduced funding from upper levels of government will create challenges for the Township in years to come.

The Strategic Plan will include the necessary steps to protect our infrastructure and provide the quality of life desired by our residents.

### **1.3 What is the Corporation's Role**

The Township of Mapleton is a predominantly rural municipality offering many different types of services to the community. The municipality must continually balance quality of life and community needs with limited resources. Without a corporate strategic plan the Corporation could be at risk of underperforming or being unable to manage fiscal responsibilities.

Council performs an important role in establishing policies for services provided. Staff have been tasked with implementing those policies in a manner that is community and service based, with fiscal responsibility in mind.

### **1.4 Building the Plan**

The Township's Strategic Plan has been shaped by the priorities of Council, a Community vision, our corporate mission, vision and values.

Initial meetings with Council and Management Team were carried out early in 2012. These meetings included a review of existing services, identifying source documentation such as official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Annual Budgets. A SWOT Analysis and Visioning Exercise was carried out firstly with Council, followed by a community engagement session on July 12, 2012. In August Council met again to identify its goals and priorities that will lead the municipality through the next five years.

A community survey was also conducted that included questions on what residents valued most about the Township and what they felt were the most distinguishing features. The survey also allowed residents to provide feedback on what they did not like about the Township and the biggest challenges facing the municipality. The surveys were made available through the Township's weekly community information page of the Drayton Community News, Survey Monkey and the Township's web-site. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix C. Eighty-two surveys were completed.

## 2. STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan has been developed based on what was heard by community members, staff and council throughout the planning process. The framework is set out below:

**Vision** – the Vision Statement is a general statement that presents a timeless and inspirational view for the ideal future of the municipality.

**Goals** – Goals are qualitative statements that highlight key issues raised during the planning process, add depth to the vision statement and chart the direction for the plan

**Objectives** - Objectives are more specific statements of the general goals and describe how the goals will be achieved. One goal may have multiple objectives.

**Actions** – The actions refer to specific tasks that need to be taken to achieve the objective. This section also includes the steps necessary to ensure that the proposed actions are implemented by the Township – progress should be monitored and successes measured throughout the implementation period. The implementation should be tied to the annual operating and capital budgets

### 3. CORPORATE VISION

#### 3.1 Community Engagement

The Township of Mapleton is made up of distinct and unique communities that are close knit and are mainly driven by community initiatives. The residents and volunteers work very hard to create the communities they desire to live in.

A community engagement meeting was held at the PMD Arena in Drayton. A conversation café was part of the engagement process with members of the Public, Council and Staff participating in a SWOT analysis of the municipality. Participants put forth ideas and priorities and then chose the top five priorities.

**A more friendly community with everyone working together (young and old)** Residents would like to see opportunities where multi-generations work together on Township initiatives such as recreation planning and community projects

**Engage the Community to take Ownership of the Community** - Residents indicated that they often do not know what is with various projects and often don't know until the shovel is in the ground – they would like to more informed and be more engaged in decision making. Residents also indicated that better relationships need to be built between the public, Council and staff.

**Co-Operative Approach in Business Development** Participants at the community engagement meeting identified the need for the municipality to be more proactive in supporting local business. Business owners expressed frustration with the processing of development applications.

**Maintain and enhance services, facilities and infrastructure** - Residents feel the current level of service they receive is good. But are concerned about costs in replacing infrastructure in the future. Concern

was expressed about our aging halls. They need to be updated if we want to rent them out. Washrooms at our halls were identified as particularly needing upgrading. Participants identified the need to balance growth with the rural community that they currently enjoy.

**Develop a Township where people of all ages have a place to live, work and play** The Township has a good mix of housing and welcome the addition of the new apartment building for seniors. More needs to be done to keep younger generation in the community and not move to larger centres.

**Promote and develop an active community (biking, trails, golf)** Residents in the urban areas make good use of the Township's various walking trails. We need to promote them to the rural residents active and enjoy various types of recreation. . Mapleton is a relatively "young" municipality according to the 2011 census data. Residents wish to remain active in numerous types of recreation activities. The Township has recently adopted a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Consideration of that plan should also be given when adopting long range plans.

### **3.2 Elected Officials' Perspective**

Council had an opportunity to come together in round table discussions on three occasions during the Strategic Planning Process in January, March and August.

**Business Retention and Attraction** – With Mapleton's close proximity to larger centres, more needs to be done to support local businesses to ensure sustainability. The Township has excellent policies and strategies through the County Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law to support business growth. Industrial Land in Drayton will also support both expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new business. However, Council recognizes the need to improve communication technology for long term business viability. The Township owns approximately 30 acres of industrial land, 25 of which are

not currently serviced. Council will need to determine whether it is appropriate to be the developer of these lands or sell the land to a developer.

**Encourage an Active Community** – Continued work on enhancing a positive senior lifestyle, both social and physical is important to Council. Ongoing support of the Seniors Centre for Excellence, recreation opportunities for all ages including indoor facilities, trails and parks will be vital to community sustainability. Council also sees Conestogo Lake as an opportunity to market Mapleton as a “recreation destination.

**Determine Level of Service and at What Cost** Council will need to find the a balanced approach to service delivery and look to innovative ways to funding services.

### **3.3 Issues, Priorities and Challenges for the Next Ten Years**

- ❖ Funding Challenges
- ❖ Communications – IT , fibre optics
- ❖ Economic Development – potential for increased work
- ❖ How to maintain our infrastructure
- ❖ Sustainability
- ❖ Need to be forward thinking
- ❖ Impacts on services/infrastructure as a result of growth

### 3.4 Our Mission

Council and staff are dedicated to fostering a safe, vibrant and sustainable municipality through excellence in municipal services.

- To work collaboratively with citizens to plan for and respond to citizen needs and provide timely, efficient, effective and consumer friendly services
- To have good infrastructure that meets the needs of citizens, businesses and industries
- To pursue sustainable opportunities for growth, while preserving and promoting our historic resources and rural community
- To maintain a sustainable annual budget that ensures uninterrupted delivery of public safety, fire and other quality services and to have stable reserves to meet our future needs

### 3.5 The Vision

Where history, heritage and hospitality create a community that is proud of its past and looks to the future. We encourage residents and visitors to our community to become integral participants in ensuring that Mapleton is the best place to live, work and play.

## 4. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

This section presents the goals, objectives and actions proposed to achieve the Vision Statement of the Township of Mapleton. They are presented in order of priority.

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### GOAL 1: Long Term Planning for Sustainable Infrastructure

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**Objective:**      **Development of Local infrastructure that is viable and sustainable through a wide range of opportunities and partnerships.**

**Action:**            **Adopt 5 or 10 year capital infrastructure budgets**

**Seek public input on key decisions such as budget, long term plans through town hall meetings and/or use of Survey Monkey.**

**Adopt a policy to promote and encourage public/private partnership opportunities to be explored as part of funding considerations.**

**Objective:**      **To undertake revitalization initiatives to maintain and/or establish vibrant areas.**

**Action:**            **Explore opportunities and partnerships for downtown revitalization for Moorefield and Alma.**

**Objective:**      **To promote investment in parks, trails and recreation**

**Action:**            **Establish partnerships with private sector and service clubs in recreation development.**

**Objective:** Ensure that the municipality's water and wastewater capacity will accommodate future land use changes and/or population growth.

**Action:** Prepare and adopt a long term strategy that will meet the growth projects outlined in the County of Wellington Official Plan

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## **GOAL 2: Healthy and Vibrant Communities**

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**Objective:** To promote and enhance a family oriented community including recreation and leisure services that encourage active living for all ages.

**Action:** Follow through on key initiatives and recommendations as set out in the in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan adopted in 2012.

**Action:** Promote Mapleton/Wellington County as the safest community in Canada (MacLean's Magazine, January, 2013)

**Action:** Continue to support and expand Seniors Centre for Excellence including new programming and coordination of services.

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### GOAL 3: Sustain Local Economy

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Both Council and the Public identified the need to support existing local business

**Objective:** To be supportive of local farms and agricultural activities

**Action:** Create and encourage farm gate sales, farmer's markets, continuation of Taste Real product development. Explore and promote agri-tourism opportunities.

**Objective:** To retain existing Mapleton businesses and assist with expansion initiatives where feasible.

**Action:** Utilize Economic Development Officer to reach out to Mapleton businesses through business retention and expansion program.

Develop façade improvement loans and grants programs for store front businesses in downtown cores.

Promote buy local initiatives to increase awareness of local goods and services through community guide, promotional print material.

Explore opportunities to develop skilled trade work force

**Objective:** Promote municipality as business friendly – be supportive to business community

**Action:** Simplify forms and application information – both written and web-based.  
Promote pre-consultation process for developers and entrepreneurs

Create brochure for developers including clearer information on process, timeliness, fees (ie. What the developer pays for).

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#### **GOAL 4: Supportive and Accountable for all Municipal Operations and Governance**

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**Objective:** To improve Communications and outreach to support a strong team of Municipal Staff and Council

**Action:** Create an effective communication plan including policies to support the plan. will include social media policies, establishing timelines for website updates, effective use of newspaper and other media

Town Hall meetings and “breakfast with the Mayor” will be used to strengthen communication and outreach to the community.

**Objective:** To be recognized as a well-run municipality with staff who are seen as high performing, customer focused, strategic, innovative and responsive to the needs of the community.

**Action:** Create an annual Newsletter/Report card on services provided – Tell the Story!

Adopt “Principles that Guide Us – Integrity, Fairness and Cooperation”. Put this on letter head, on signs at township owned facilities and on the back of staff and council business cards.

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**GOAL 5: Identify and Maintain who we are:**

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**Objective: to Protect our Past, Plan for the Future**

**Action: Undertake and complete a branding exercise for the Township to identify who we are. New brand to be promoted on letterhead, promotional material.**

**Erect “Township of Mapleton” signage at municipal office – we are proud of who we are.**

**Participate in cultural mapping and planning with OMAFRA.**

**Objective: Celebrate and promote the arts and culture in our community**

**Action: Encourage volunteerism and community engagement in arts and culture events. Explore other opportunities for promoting arts and culture such as the Moorefield mural project.**

## APPENDIX “A”

### SWOT ANALYSIS

#### Strengths

- ❖ Mapleton’s natural and rural setting is seen as it’s foremost important strength.
- ❖ Mapleton has a strong sense of community, evidenced by high levels of volunteerism in local service clubs, sports organizations and special events in the Township.
- ❖ Much potential for Residential Growth due to its close proximity to larger centres such as Kitchener, Waterloo and Elmira
- ❖ Community minded – strong sense of community pride
- ❖ Diverse culture
- ❖ Excellent theatre – one of the top in Canada
- ❖ First class farmland
- ❖ Close to larger centres
- ❖ Stable Governance – good staff, leadership
- ❖ Comparable taxes
- ❖ Excellent health care facilities, new library
- ❖ Good stewardship – Trees for Mapleton, Green Legacy
- ❖ Reasonable/competitive land development costs
- ❖ Industrial land available
- ❖ Numerous established agricultural industries
- ❖ Tourism
- ❖ Create Mapleton as a “destination”
- ❖ Promote Agriculture Products
- ❖ Promote Conestogo Lake

## Opportunities

- ❖ Encourage Small Business
- ❖ Develop trails further and promote as destination
- ❖ Niche retail opportunities
- ❖ Promote local businesses to cottagers
- ❖ Partnerships with service groups on community projects
- ❖ Develop mural program throughout township
- ❖ Opportunity to Attract retired Seniors
- ❖ Industrial/Commercial Growth
- ❖ Create Mapleton as a destination – agri-tours, recreation and cultural opportunities
- ❖ Develop mural program throughout township
- ❖

## Threats and Weaknesses

- ❖ Cost of agricultural land
- ❖ Proximity to larger centres
- ❖ Difficult to become successful in a small town
- ❖ Lack of retail businesses
- ❖ Communication with Ratepayers
- ❖ Way finding signs lacking for visitors
- ❖ Cost of infrastructure – too many bridges
- ❖ Competition from Guelph, Waterloo, Kitchener to attract new business
- ❖ Theatre – head office moving – does that threaten presence of theatre in Drayton
- ❖ Regulations – difficult to navigate planning processes
- ❖ Public apathy/public expectations – what do residents want?

## APPENDIX “B”

### SURVEY RESULTS

**1. What do you value most about living in the Township of Mapleton.**

Small town atmosphere

Good infrastructure – schools, roads, bridges, community halls

Friendly people

Natural features (ie. Conestogo River)

Nice Trails

**2. What is the most distinguishing feature of the Township of Mapleton? How could it be made better (opportunities)?**

Theatre – need to offer other things such as retail gift shops for a full destination experience

Conestogo River

Conestogo Lake

Agriculture – Best farmland in Ontario

Well kept farms

Large lots in urban areas for most part

**3. Are there features that you don’t like about the Township (threats/weaknesses)?**

Too much red tape to get approvals

Township doesn't support buying local

Taxes are too high

Cost of development is too high

Not enough retail stores – poor downtowns, but revitalization project in Drayton has made it much more appealing. Other urban areas need revitalizing too.

**4. What do you think will be the biggest challenge facing the Township over the next 10 years?**

Paying for aging infrastructure and keeping taxes down

Meeting everyone's demands – we can't have everything

Competing with larger centres like Listowel, Waterloo and Guelph

Keeping young people here is a problem now and will only get worse

**5. How would you like to see the Township in 10 years (your vision for the future)?**

Vibrant colourful downtowns with nice retail stores

More outdoor recreation facilities – skateboarding, seniors exercise equipment

More collaboration between Council/Staff/Public

**6. Is there anything else important that we should know or consider when developing the Community-Based Strategic Plan?**

Involve community more – why do we hire staff that don't live here?

Staff need to support local businesses when purchasing