



Staff Report

Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: September 15, 2025
Report Number: SI.25.029
Title: Progress Update #1 - Status of the Corporate Strategic Plan Update
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.029, entitled "Progress Update #1 - Status of the Corporate Strategic Plan Update" for information;

B. Overview

This report provides Council and members of the public with an update on the status of the Corporate Strategic Plan update project.

C. Background

In June 2025, the Town launched a project to update the Corporate Strategic Plan. The purpose of the update is to effectively guide the community's future direction and to align the Town's strategic goals with current needs and priorities. Branded as 'Our Path Forward' the updated Strategic Plan aims to reconfirm the Town's long-term vision, mission, and priorities, ensuring effective resource allocation and a comprehensive strategic management framework.




The work to date has been informed by engaging residents and various stakeholders through a meticulous and inclusive planning process, including a community open house, an opportunity-based community survey, multiple focus group sessions and various public engagement pop-ups at community events.


The development of the strategic plan is led by Strategy Corp, a leading strategic management consultant for Canadian municipalities. The project team is led by Sabine Matheson and Stacy Hushion, both with extensive municipal and government experience across Canada.

Internally, the project is being managed by Adam Smith, Interim Chief Administrative Officer and Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives. The project has been implemented by the Communications Division, with support and guidance from the Town's Senior Management Team.

D. Analysis

The Corporate Strategic Plan project is progressing well and is on track for completion and approval in December 2025. The following chart provides a summary of the status of the project phases.

Project Phase	Status	Comments
<p>1. Project Initiation Align on project scope, goals, timelines, work plan, and engagement opportunities</p>	 Completed	<p>This phase of the project focused on collaboration with StrategyCorp to ensure alignment with the confirmed scope, objectives, and plan for public and stakeholder engagement. A significant deliverable of this phase was the creation of a public-facing brand, 'Our Path Forward', which was developed to enhance accessibility and community understanding of the project.</p>
<p>2. Current State Assessment Review the Town's operating landscape and conduct internal and external consultations</p>	 Completed	<p>This phase of the project included StrategyCorp completing a comprehensive current state assessment, utilizing SWOT and PESTEL analyses to evaluate both internal circumstances and external influences. The assessment also included one-on-one discussions between StrategyCorp and Council Members and Senior Management Team members to map out existing challenges and opportunities. Various engagement activities, including a public open house, community survey and community focus group sessions, also informed the assessment. This phase of the project concluded with a Special Council Workshop where StrategyCorp presented the findings and facilitated a discussion with Council to preliminarily establish a vision and goals aligning with the identified community priorities.</p>
<p>3. Strategy Development & Validation Map out the strategic plan with Council and validate through community consultation</p>	 In Progress	<p>This phase of the project will include mapping the strategic objectives and priorities as informed by the current state assessment and as outlined by Council in the first workshop.</p> <p>The phase will also include various activities to validate the framework through community consultation, including a workshop with</p>

		Council that will be scheduled for mid-September.
4. Finalization Draft and finalize the Corporate Strategic Plan for Council approval	 Pending	This phase will include the final draft strategy being presented to Council for approval, along with the development of the Key Performance Indicators and associated workplan to implement the strategy.

Additional Detail – Project Phase 2: Current State Assessment

The Corporate Strategic Plan project was [formally launched](#) on June 3, 2025, with the announcement of a public open house. The open house was held on Tuesday, June 17, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., at Town Hall. The meeting provided the first opportunity for residents to learn about the project, share feedback with StrategyCorp and ask questions through an open-mic question-and-answer session.

Leading up to the open house, a community survey was launched to gather public feedback, help inform and establish long-term goals and strategically allocate resources to guide the Town’s future. The survey received 822 responses and was open from Monday, June 16, 2025 to Monday, July 7, 2025. The survey was conducted online with paper copies available at Town facilities and with physical paper copies directly mailed to rural properties throughout the community with pre-paid postage. The opportunity for residents to complete the survey was supported by a robust promotional campaign as detailed below:

Promotional Activity	Results
Project Webpage Update	The Corporate Strategic Plan project webpage was updated to prominently feature the Digital Community Survey at the top of the page. During the survey period, the webpage received a total of 1,156 views.
Media Release: Residents Invited to Help Shape The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Future	To officially launch the community survey, a media release was published on June 16, 2025, inviting residents to help shape the Corporate Strategic Plan by completing the digital survey. The media release also included details about the Public Open House scheduled for the following day. During the survey period, the media release received 88 views on the Town’s website. Additionally, the contents of the release was published in <i>CollingwoodToday.ca</i> on June 17, 2025 , and again on June 18, 2025 .

<p>Media Release E-Blast to Subscribers</p>	<p>In accordance with the Town’s standard newsroom protocol, the media release was emailed to all “Press Release & Town News subscribers (1,392 contacts) on June 16, 2025. The E-Blast received a 77% open rate, with 1,067 recipients opening the email and 150 contacts clicking the link to visit the project webpage.</p>
<p>E-Newsletter (July)</p>	<p>The July 2025 E-Newsletter, sent on July 2, 2025, featured a brief article titled “Final Days to Have Your Say,” encouraging those who had not yet completed the survey to share their input before it closed. The E-Newsletter was sent to 1,707 contacts and achieved a 77% open rate, with 1,321 recipients opening the email and 61 people clicking the link to complete the survey.</p>
<p>Spotify Ad</p>	<p>A paid Spotify ad campaign promoting the community survey to listeners ran from June 17, 2025, to July 6, 2025. The ad generated 32,737 impressions, reached 5,100 unique users, and received 92 link clicks. The ad engaged a broad audience with 28.01% of listeners aged 13-24, 39.82% aged 25-44 and 32.17% aged 45+. Notably, 54.36% of the link clicks came from users aged 13-34.</p>
<p>Mailed Postcards</p>	<p>A total of 7,000 printed postcards promoting the community survey were mailed directly to households throughout the Town.</p>
<p>Rural Survey Mail Out</p>	<p>To engage rural and digitally disconnected households, physical copies of the survey, accompanied by pre-paid return postage, were mailed to rural postage routes in Ravenna and Clarksburg. A total of 1,293 surveys were mailed, resulting in 122 completed surveys returned by mail, representing a 9.4% response rate.</p>
<p>Social Media Promotion</p>	<p>Several social media posts were published across the Town’s channels throughout the survey period, with some directly promoting the survey, and other tying survey promotion in with additional promotion of engagement efforts at pop-up events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarksburg Kids Fest - June 22, 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook: 1,156 views 3 link clicks ● Survey Promo #1 - June 26, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook: 529 views 11 link clicks ○ X: 218 views 2 link clicks ● Foodland SampleFest - June 27, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook: 1,157 views 4 link clicks ● Survey Promo #2 - July 3, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook: 398 views 8 link clicks ○ X: 138 views 1 link click ● Survey Promo #3 - July 7, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook: 386 views 5 link clicks ○ X: 84 views 4 link clicks
Signage	<p>To raise awareness of the community survey, and the project in general, a variety of physical promotional materials were installed across the Town:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curbex Signs: Nine large-format Curbex signs were placed at key locations, including Town Hall, the BVCC, L.E. Shore Library, Tomahawk, the Tees Please property, Craigleith Heritage Depot, Lora Bay, Heathcote Park and Ravenna Roads Depot. ● Project Posters: Posters were displayed at Town facilities, including Town Hall, the BVCC, L.E. Shore Library, Craigleith Heritage Depot, Tomahawk and Ravenna Roads Depot. ● Lawn Signs: Smaller lawn signs were installed at popular trails and parks throughout the community, including Kolapore, Metcalfe Rock, Loree Forest, Swiss Meadows, 6th Street Extension, Duncan Extension, 10th Line & County Road 119 (Red Wing), Heritage Park and Nipissing Ridge.

As the survey was being conducted, StrategyCorp was actively working on the current state assessment, which included a comprehensive current state assessment, utilizing SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) analyses to evaluate both internal circumstances and external influences. The assessment also included one-on-one discussions between StrategyCorp and Council Members and Senior Management Team members to map out existing challenges and opportunities.

Various engagement activities, including a public open house, community survey, pop-up engagement events and community focus group sessions, also informed the assessment. Details regarding public engagement efforts completed are detailed below:

Public Engagement Activity	Results
Open House	The open house was attended by approximately 30 individuals with a recording of the meeting posted to the project webpage and emailed to project subscribers.
Focus Group Sessions	<p>12 focus group sessions were conducted either by StrategyCorp or Town staff. A list of the groups engaged in the sessions has been included below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Blue Mountains Ratepayers Association • Craigleith Community Working Group • Climate Action Now Network • Team Blue (Local Business Associations) • Georgian Bay Youth Roots • Blue Mountain Seniors Network • Beaver Valley Outreach • South Georgian Bay Innovation Fund • The Blue Mountains Public Library Board • Community Matters • Fruit Growers Association • Blue Mountain Short Term Accommodation Association
Community Pop Up Events	<p>Six community pop-up events were held to provide an informal opportunity for residents to share feedback and engage directly with the project team. A list of the events has been included below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarksburg Kids Fest – June 22, 2025 • Foodland Sample Fest – June 27, 2025 • Arts Walk – July 12, 2025 • Senior Fitness Class – July 21, 2025 • Summer Reading Club – July 23, 2025 • Music in the Park – July 27, 2025

The Current State Assessment phase of the project concluded with a Special Council Workshop where StrategyCorp [presented the findings](#) and facilitated a discussion with Council to preliminarily establish a vision and goals aligning with the identified community priorities.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

The budget for the Corporate Strategic Plan project is \$100,000, which was approved in 2024. When the project was awarded, Council approved an additional \$20,000 as a contingency to allow for greater flexibility and agility within the project to address evolving needs, such as additional public engagement sessions or facilitated Council workshops.

As of August 15, 2025, \$4,029.00 of the contingency budget has been spent, which leaves an available balance of \$15,971.00. The contingency budget was used to accommodate two additional focus group sessions conducted by Strategy Corp as detailed below:

- Community Matters (In Person): \$3,340.00
- Craigleith Community Working Group (Virtual): \$689.00

For clarity, although both expenses are for focus groups, the price difference is due to one focus group being conducted in person and the other being conducted virtually. The extra cost was primarily due to travel time and additional meeting length as a result of the in-person format.

H. In Consultation With

Adam Smith, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications & Customer Service
Lauren Potter, Communications Coordinator

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives si@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.029 Progress Update 1 - Status of the Corporate Strategic Plan Update.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Aug 21, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tim Hendry - Aug 21, 2025 - 10:57 AM