



# Development of an Indigenous Collaborative Hub



2011  
AMO DELEGATION

Ministry of  
Indigenous  
Affairs

August 2025



Gail Ardiel  
**Councillor**  
gardiel@thebluemountains.ca



Paula Hope  
**Councillor**  
phope@thebluemountains.ca



June Porter  
**Councillor**  
jporter@thebluemountains.ca



Adam Smith, MPA, CMO  
**Interim CAO**  
asmith@thebluemountains.ca



## Message from the Mayor

Dear Minister Rickford,

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to discuss an important and exciting initiative supporting enhanced collaboration and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

We seek your valued support in fostering meaningful partnerships and recognizing First Nations rights through the development of an Indigenous Collaborative Hub.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to a productive discussion

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Matrosovs".

Andrea Matrosovs  
**Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains**  
T: 519.599.3131 ext. 406  
E: amatrosovs@thebluemountains.ca



## Summary

### Development of an Indigenous Collaborative Hub

The Town has engaged in discussions with Shared Path to establish an Indigenous Collaborative Hub across the South Georgian Bay area, which aims to build relationships and foster collaboration with Indigenous communities to facilitate reconciliation, land management and collaborative regional dialogue.



**Background:**

- In 2024 and 2025, Town staff engaged in meetings facilitated by Shared Path, including representatives from municipalities, Indigenous communities, and conservation authorities.
- These initiatives were supported by a Heritage Canada grant, resulting in ongoing dialogue to establish an Indigenous Collaborative Hub.
- The proposed pilot is modelled after the Muskoka Area Indigenous Leadership Table (MAILT), serving as a collaborative framework for First Nations and municipalities.
- Senior municipal staff from Grey County, Simcoe County, Collingwood, and The Blue Mountains have scoped out future leadership roles with Shared Path.
- The Ontario Professional Planners’ Institute (OPPI) is making a conditional contribution of \$35,000 to support the project and matching funding is required to support this initiative.
- The Town of The Blue Mountains has offered in-kind support including dedicated staff time and facility space to support the activities of the Hub.
- Given the Hub is intending on being regional in scope and is being piloted for broader application, financial support from the Province will supplement federal and external agency support to support viability.
- Support is timely as both the Ontario Government and Government of Canada seek to accelerate major economic projects. The Hub can serve as a platform to meaningfully engage municipal and indigenous partners to move projects forward.





## Our Ask

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to request \$35,000 of financial support from the Ministry to establish an Indigenous Collaborative Hub to further honour Indigenous inherent and constitutionally protected rights and support regional economic opportunities.

## Key Messages

- **Commitment to Reconciliation:** The Indigenous Collaborative Hub embodies a dedicated effort to build meaningful partnerships and advance reconciliation with Indigenous communities, modelled after successful frameworks like the Muskoka Area Indigenous Leadership Table.
- **Regional Collaboration and Support:** With active engagement from regional municipalities and a conditional OPPI contribution of \$35,000, the project seeks additional matching funding to strengthen Indigenous participation in the planning and development process and ensure their rights are respected.
- **Economic and Environmental Opportunities:** The Hub will facilitate exploration of economic reconciliation and environmental stewardship, focusing on joint-projects between municipalities and indigenous communities while addressing cumulative impacts on Indigenous lands and waters.
- **Vision for Policy Alignment:** By promoting strategic dialogue, the Hub aims to align policies and nurture a shared vision for sustainable growth, enhancing flexibility and mutual understanding in regional development initiatives.





# Regional Transportation Opportunities



AMO DELEGATION

Ministry of  
Transportation

August 2025



Gail Ardiel  
**Councillor**  
gardiel@thebluemountains.ca



Paula Hope  
**Councillor**  
phope@thebluemountains.ca



June Porter  
**Councillor**  
jporter@thebluemountains.ca



Adam Smith, MPA CMO  
**Interim CAO**  
asmith@thebluemountains.ca



## Message from the Mayor

Dear MTO Senior Officials,

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I would like to thank you for meeting at the 2025 AMO Conference.

We are eager to discuss the need to advance regional transportation planning for South Georgian Bay, which includes the communities of The Blue Mountains, Collingwood, Clearview Township, Wasaga Beach and Meaford.

A one of the Province's top four-season tourism destinations, the Town of The Blue Mountains welcomes more than three million visitors each year and as a rural community, Provincial Highway 26 is a key connecting link for our community.

The Town's Transportation Master Plan completed in 2022, identified critical 'pinch points' along Highway 26 and emphasized the importance of regional collaboration to address the issues. Efforts are progressing and preliminary budgets have been approved to support this work. To advance the project, the Town would like to meet with the Ministry to review opportunities regarding a proposed South Georgian Bay Transportation Environmental Assessment project.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to a productive discussion.

Best regards,

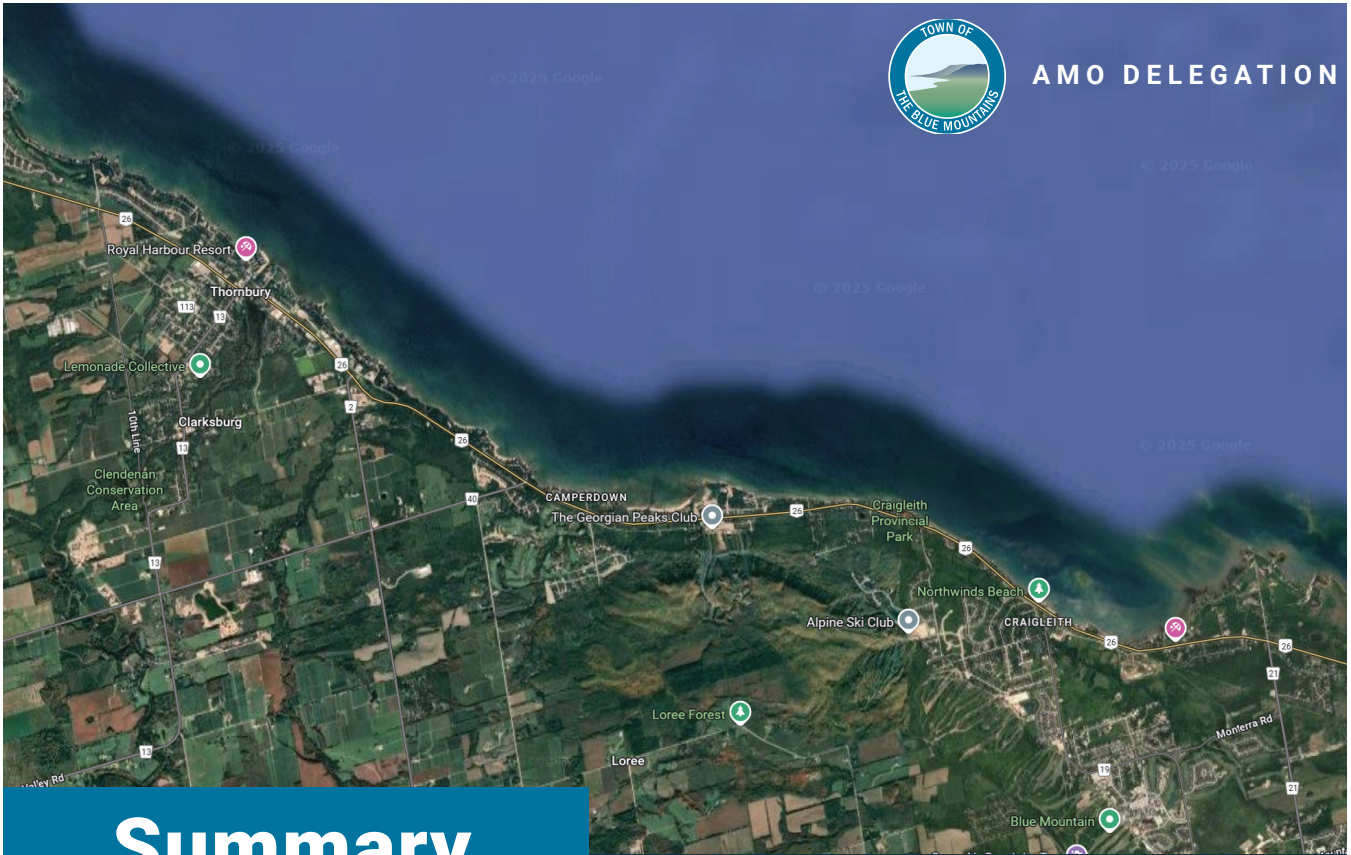
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Matrosovs".

Andrea Matrosovs

**Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains**

T: 519.599.3131 ext. 406

E: amatrosovs@thebluemountains.ca



# Summary

## Regional Transportation Opportunities

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to express our support for the funding request made by Simcoe County and Grey County to complete a transportation environmental assessment for the South Georgian Bay area.

To date, each municipality in the region has worked independently to develop and implement transportation plans to address specific needs. This approach has led to plans that lack a regional perspective for connectivity. Collaboration between all six neighbouring municipalities, including Simcoe and Grey County, is essential.



## Our Ask

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to encourage the Ministry to support the financial request made by Simcoe County and Grey County to complete a transportation environmental assessment for the South Georgian Bay area.

## Key Messages

- Each municipality in South Georgian Bay has worked independently to develop and implement transportation plans to address specific needs. Although transportation planning at the local level can help address many challenges, the plans require a broader regional perspective to ensure connectivity.
- For the project to be successful, all six municipalities, along with Simcoe County and Grey County, will need to be engaged and participate in the process. Given the focus of municipal government, the Town views Ministry support as essential to guide and support the focus on regional transportation planning.
- The goal is to ensure all municipalities and partners have buy-in from the MTO to serve as part of a collaborative committee with the goal of understanding options for regional connectivity.



## Background Information

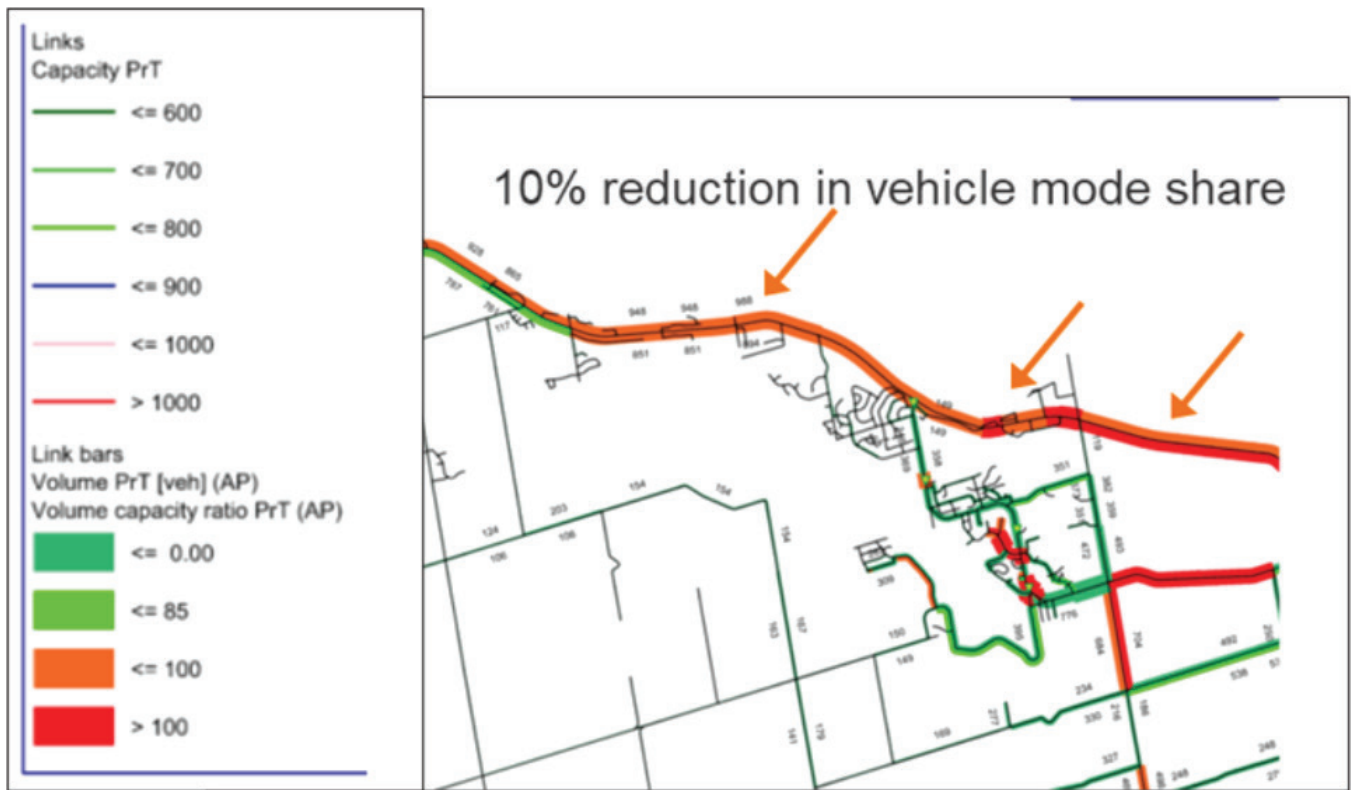
- The Town of The Blue Mountains, located on the Provincial Highway 26 corridor, serves as a key economic driver for both tourism and agriculture in Ontario. The Blue Mountains welcomes more than 2.5 million visitors annually and represents more than 14% of apple production in Ontario.
- In 2022, the Town developed a Transportation Master Plan to ensure that growth within The Blue Mountains is managed in a sustainable and forward-thinking manner. The Plan includes a series of recommendations to enhance road, transit and active transportation networks on roads owned by the Town and identifies regional linkages outside of the Town's boundaries.
- The Transportation Master Plan identified multiple 'pinch points' along the Highway 26 Corridor. This is consistent with MTO's Highway 26 Needs Assessment, which indicated a "Thornbury bypass" is expected to be required between 2020 and 2030.
- Based on visitation numbers and resident expectations, the Town is increasingly interested in ensuring that a safe, efficient and strategic approach to transportation planning is followed on both a regional and provincial level.



## Transportation Master Plan Insights

At a high level, the Town’s Transportation Master Plan provided the following insights:

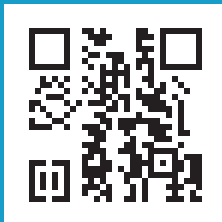
- Traffic forecasting indicates that Highway 26 pinch-points are reaching capacity during peak travel periods. This is consistent with the MTO’s Highway 26 Needs Assessment, which indicated that a “Thornbury bypass” is expected to be required between 2020 and 2030.
- Highway 26 capacity issues within The Blue Mountains will continue to worsen even with achieving mode-share targets.
- Long-term Highway 26 capacity issues cannot be effectively addressed without regional and MTO leadership.



# Thank You & Future Opportunities

The Town would like to express our gratitude to Ministry staff for the opportunity to present our request.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Ministry to create a strategic and regional approach to transportation planning for the South Georgian Bay Region.



Scan the QR Code to view the  
Transportation Master Plan





# Impact of Abandoned Orchards



**AMO DELEGATION**

**Ministries of Agriculture,  
Food and Agribusiness**

August 2025



Gail Ardiel  
**Councillor**  
gardiel@thebluemountains.ca



Paula Hope  
**Councillor**  
phope@thebluemountains.ca



June Porter  
**Councillor**  
jporter@thebluemountains.ca



Adam Smith, MPA, CMO  
**Interim CAO**  
asmith@thebluemountains.ca



## Message from the Mayor

Dear Parliamentary Assistant Vickers,

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to discuss ongoing challenges regarding the management of abandoned apple orchards.

As a premier apple-growing region in Ontario, apple production accounts for more than 2,750 acres of fruit crop production and represents a significant importance to the local economy.

Addressing abandoned orchards is crucial to support the Town's important agricultural economy and to support the livelihoods of local farmers, growers and producers. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to a productive discussion.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Matrosovs".

Andrea Matrosovs  
**Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains**  
T: 519.599.3131 ext. 406  
E: amatrosovs@thebluemountains.ca



## Summary

The Town has been dealing with ongoing challenges caused by abandoned orchards in the community. The lack of orchard management has resulted in significant agricultural and environmental challenges due to the risk of diseases and pests spreading to nearby orchards.

Through our research, the Town has identified opportunities to partner with the Ministry to intervene by working with landowners to remove orchards, which would help manage pests and diseases and potentially repurpose the land for productive use.



## Background:

- The Town faces ongoing issues due to abandoned orchards, exacerbated by recent increases in complaints and concern from the local agricultural community. These orchards pose significant agricultural and environmental challenges, primarily through spreading disease and pests to active orchards.
- The Town would like to meet with Ministry staff to discuss provincial assistance in managing this issue through collaboration with landowners.

## Potential solutions for discussion:

### 1. Financial Incentives for Orchard Removal:

- The Ministry could establish a grant or subsidy program to financially support landowners to remove abandoned orchards. This could help offset costs related to orchard clearance, pest control, and land repurposing.

### 2. Technical Assistance and Expertise:

- The Ministry could provide access to expert consultants who can guide landowners and municipal officials through best practices for managing and repurposing abandoned orchards, including training sessions or workshops for By-law Officers to enhance their ability to identify and manage abandoned orchards.

### 3. Collaborative Pest and Disease Management Programs:

- The Ministry could launch regional initiatives to collectively manage and mitigate the spread of diseases and pests from abandoned orchards and offer support for integrated pest management (IPM) strategies involving neighbouring active orchards.

### 4. Land Use and Repurposing Initiatives:

- Facilitate discussions to explore potential productive uses of abandoned orchard lands, such as converting them into recreational spaces, community gardens, or renewable energy sites.



# Our Ask

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to request a meeting with Ministry staff to discuss potential solutions to help manage abandoned apple orchards and for the Ministry to consider actioning one of the proposed options as outlined.







# Family Health Team Expansion & Physician Recruitment



2011  
AMO DELEGATION

Ministry  
of Health

August 2025



Gail Ardiel  
**Councillor**  
gardiel@thebluemountains.ca



Paula Hope  
**Councillor**  
phope@thebluemountains.ca



June Porter  
**Councillor**  
jporter@thebluemountains.ca



Adam Smith, MPA, CMO  
**Interim CAO**  
asmith@thebluemountains.ca



## Message from the Mayor

Dear Parliamentary Assistant Leardi,

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I want to thank you for meeting with us at the 2025 AMO Conference. We are eager to highlight and discuss the local healthcare challenges that our community is continuing to face due to ongoing difficulty attracting Family Physicians.

From our understanding, a key challenge for doctors interested in our community is the lack of a Family Health Team. Without the support of a Family Health Team, physicians are reluctant to open a new practice. This is especially important as all Medical Schools' curriculum incorporates interprofessional education and collaboration with other healthcare professionals for the purpose of providing comprehensive team-based care.

As the second fastest-growing community in Canada, we would like to share our perspective on how best to address the issue, resulting in the opportunity to welcome new Family Physicians to our community. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to a productive discussion.

Best regards,

Andrea Matrosovs  
**Mayor, Town of The Blue Mountains**  
T: 519.599.3131 ext. 406  
E: amatrosovs@thebluemountains.ca



# Summary

## Expansion of the Family Health Team

Attracting family physicians to our community is our top priority. Since 2022, use of local emergency departments has increased by over 26% and the number of family physicians needed in the region is now more than 20.

The Town of The Blue Mountains is not served by a Family Health Team. There are two established Family Health Teams nearby, but they do not provide service within The Blue Mountains. In addition, there are two Ontario Health Teams nearby, neither one provides benefit through coverage in the community.

- South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team - Collingwood, Clarksburg, Wasaga Beach and Clearview
- Grey/Bruce Ontario Health Team – Grey and Bruce Counties
- Georgian Bay Family Health Team – Collingwood, Clarksburg, Wasaga Beach and Clearview
- Owen Sound Family Health Team – Owen Sound Area

Attracting Family Physicians is our top priority. The Town's 2024 Resident Satisfaction Survey ranked Family Physician recruitment as the number one community priority (81%), an increase from 76% reported through the previous survey. Most recently, a public survey undertaken as part of the Corporate Strategic Plan project identified healthcare access as the fifth top priority (53%).

The Town has spent significant time and effort trying to attract Family Physicians. Despite best efforts, the lack of a Family Health Team has made the prospect of attracting a new doctor to the community very low.



## Our Ask

The Town of The Blue Mountains would like to request that the Ministry support the Town's request to expand Family Health Team coverage to support The Blue Mountains community, through one of the following three options:

- 1) Expand the Georgian Bay Family Health Team
- 2) Expand the Owen Sound Family Health Team
- 3) Divide the Town into Family Health Team regions (east region aligns with the Georgian Bay Family Health Team and the west region aligns with the Owen Sound Family Health Team)

## Key Messages

The expansion of a Family Health Team will provide the following benefits:

- ✓ Optimized quality, cost-effectiveness, convenience and appropriate access to primary care with reduced wait and travel times for residents.
- ✓ Reduced local reliance on an after hours clinic, emergency department visits, and decreased length of stay in acute care.
- ✓ Enable existing family physicians to increase their roster size as they will have access to nurse practitioners and other allied health professionals.
- ✓ Not every problem needs to be seen by a family doctor. Allied health professionals have the skills to assess, treat and connect patients to programs in their community – faster.
- ✓ Patients in primary care teams are seen by a broad range of health professionals – including nurse practitioners, pharmacists and physiotherapists – they often have better continuity of care as well.
- ✓ Support recruitment efforts as new family physicians prefer a Family Health Team setting for access to support services.
- ✓ Recruitment efforts would increase the number of family physicians available to support local emergency department coverage and long-term care needs.



NOT ACCEPTING  
NEW PATIENTS



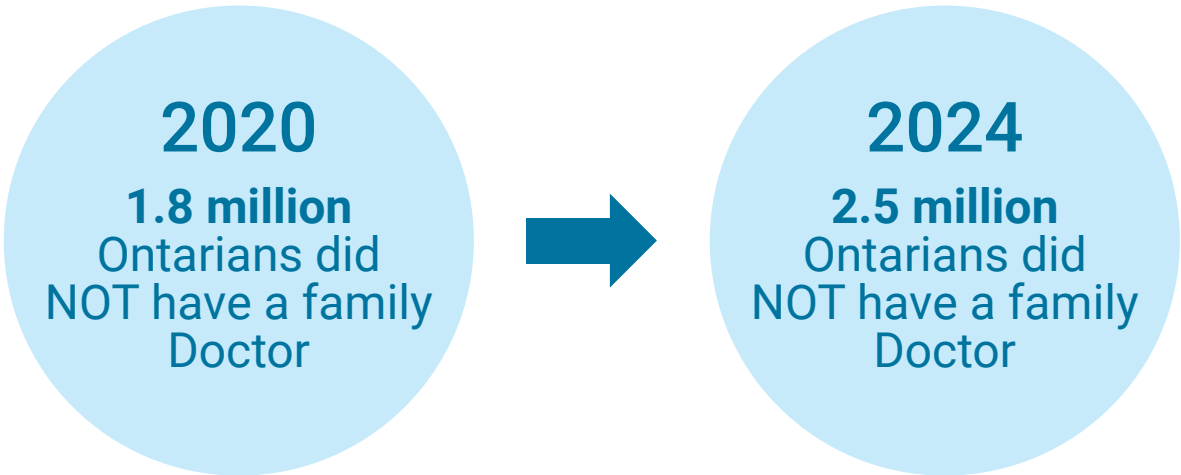
## Lack of Access to Local Primary Care

- **Physician Need:** Recent studies have identified the need for more than 20 new doctors in the South Georgian Bay area, and this number does not account for future population growth. No family physicians are accepting new patients, except in very rare cases. The replacement of retiring Family Physicians is not as simple as a 1:1.
- **Local Nurse Practitioner:** One local NP has over 800 rostered patients as a result of lack of access to local Primary Care.
- **Aging Workforce:** 29% of the family physicians in our region are aged 60 or older, indicating a looming retirement wave. This demographic shift intensifies the challenge of maintaining the healthcare workforce.
- **Roster Limitations:** The typical patient roster size makes direct replacement of retiring doctors impractical, complicating healthcare delivery as they exit the system.
- **Limited After-Hours Support:** Our region relies on a single After Hours Clinic for a regional population of 95,000+ residents. Rostered patients are reluctant to use After Hours Clinic as their distant Family Physicians experience deductions and therefore access increasing wait times at local emergency departments.
- **Geographical Disparity:** Approximately 71% of local residents are registered with family physicians located hours away.
- **Health Care Connect Hesitancy:** Residents actively resist de-registering from their current physician to join Health Care Connect to find a local physician due to the unacceptable risk of being without a family physician.
- **Stagnant New Physician Recruitment:** For over twelve years, no 'net' new family physicians have opened in The Blue Mountains to serve unattached patients. All new doctors have replaced existing doctors.



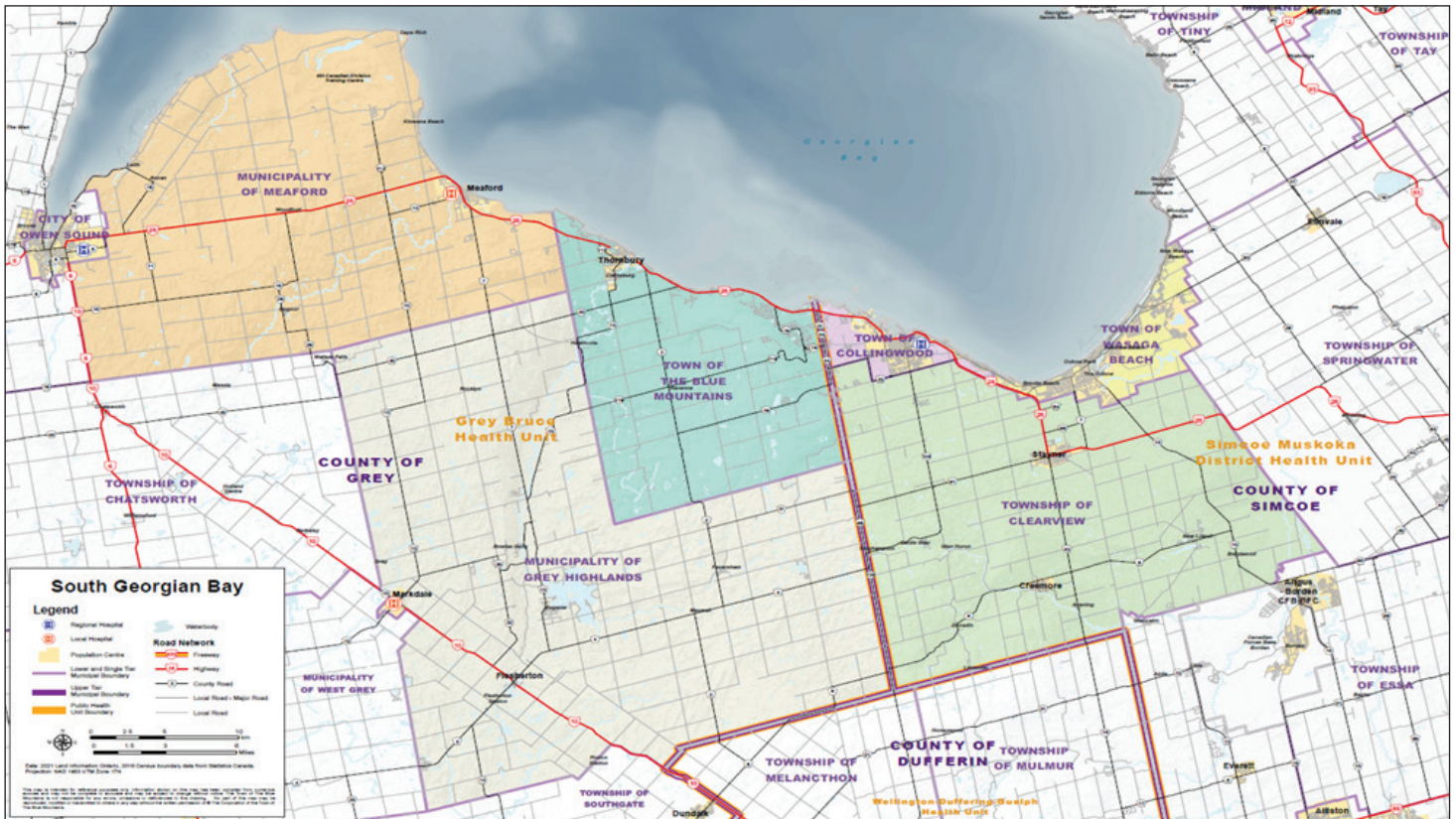
# 2020 vs 2024

According to the Ontario College of Physicians...



Ontario's population increased by 13.4% from 2020 to 2024.

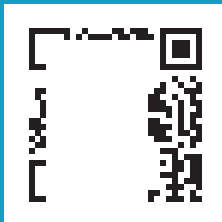
The number of Ontarians without a family doctor increased by 38.9%



# Thank You & Future Opportunities

The Town would like to express our gratitude to the Ministry for its attention to help address the critical community need to attract new family physicians through the expansion of a Family Health Team.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Ministry to review and assess the merits of the three recommended options for consideration.



Scan the QR Code to view supplemental information to support the Town's request for a Family Health Team

