



Staff Report

Strategic Initiatives

Report To: Special Meeting of Council
Meeting Date: February 9, 2026
Report Number: SI.25.040
Title: Draft Corporate Strategic Plan for Council Consideration
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.040, entitled “Draft Corporate Strategic Plan for Council Consideration”;

AND THAT Council approves Our Path Forward: 2026-2027 Town of The Blue Mountains Corporate Strategic Plan and directs staff to proceed with implementation;

AND THAT Council directs staff to provide progress updates on a quarterly basis, beginning in July 2026 along with the other progress reporting commitments as detailed in the report;

AND THAT Council acknowledges that the work plan and costs associated with implementation will be included within Towns annual budget process.

B. Overview

This report seeks Council approval of Our Path Forward, the Town’s Corporate Strategic Plan for 2026 – 2027. The report provides a summary of the process undertaken to develop the plan, including details of public engagement and consultation efforts, Council workshops, and validation exercises to confirm key elements, including the vision, mission, values and strategic pillars and priorities.

C. Background

The process to develop the Corporate Strategic Plan began in mid-2024 when a task force was established to research and establish a proposed work plan to guide the project. The task force was supported by Councillor Ardiel, Councillor Porter and Mayor Matrosovs, along with key staff. Internally, the project was led by the Strategic Initiatives Department with support from the CAO’s Office and communications leadership provided by Communications Coordinator Lauren Potter.

In early 2025, the project work plan was approved by Council and direction was provided to initiate the request-for-proposal process to hire a consultant to lead the plan's development. Through the RFP process, StrategyCorp was selected as the successful consultant.

The project was formally launched in May 2025 and was guided by a four-step process:

1. **Initiation:** Alignment on project scope, goals, timelines, work plan, and engagement opportunities
2. **Current State Assessment:** Review of the Town's operating landscape and conduct internal and external consultations
3. **Development:** Mapping out the strategic plan with Council and validating through community consultation
4. **Finalization:** Draft and finalize the Corporate Strategic Plan for Council approval

To introduce the Corporate Strategic Plan project to the community and build awareness, Town staff developed a robust [Communications Plan](#), which was endorsed by the Accountability and Transparency Committee on June 12, 2025. The plan included a dedicated project webpage, media release, social media campaign, Spotify ad campaign, mailed postcards, Curbex signs, Town Hall information hub, and a dedicated pre-paid return mail campaign to rural residents.

To formally kick off the project, an open house was held in June 2025 at Town Hall. Following the open house, a community survey was conducted, which received 822 responses, with additional public feedback collected through pop-up activations at six community events and 12 focus group sessions with various community groups and organizations.

Internally, members of Council and staff were engaged by StrategyCorp throughout the process through 1:1 interviews to gather initial input on key priorities, opportunities, and challenges facing the Town. StrategyCorp also designed and deployed a survey to all Town staff, which received 76 complete responses.

In addition, members of Council participated in four public workshops facilitated by StrategyCorp to shape, refine and confirm the draft framework. An overview of the workshops is included below:

- **Council Workshop #1** – July 17, 2025: The first workshop focused on reviewing the findings of the Current State Review, and StrategyCorp led a discussion on visioning and goal setting to shape the development of the draft framework.
- **Council Workshop #2** – September 9, 2025: The second workshop focused on confirming the vision of the plan, refining draft priorities from the first workshop and reviewing potential actions that could be included in the draft framework.
- **Council Workshop #3** - October 8, 2025: The third workshop focused on reviewing and discussing the draft framework and performance measures prior to finalization.

- **Council Workshop #4** – January 27, 2026: The final workshop focused on fine-tuning the strategic plan framework based on feedback received through the validation phase of the process.

As the Council workshops progressed, the draft framework was released on October 17, 2025, for public review, comment and validation with two Public Information Sessions held to receive public input. The Public Information Sessions provided further opportunities for StrategyCorp and Council to receive public input.

- **Session #1:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.
- **Session #2:** Saturday, November 15, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

In addition to the formal Public Information Sessions, StrategyCorp also conducted additional focus groups with the Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association and Community Matters to provide the groups with the opportunity to share feedback directly with the project team.

Two interim progress reports (September and November 2025) were provided to Council, along with verbal and email updates shared as needed.

D. Analysis

Our Path Forward renews the Town's strategic direction and Council's commitment to priorities over the next two years. The Corporate Strategic Plan not only reflects Council's priorities but also the community's long-term vision, informed by community engagement and public input.

Importantly, the strategic plan provides direction that guides staff decision-making and aligns department actions with the strategic priorities, objectives and initiatives established by Council. Overall, the Corporate Strategic Plan aims to align and strengthen all organizational plans, from master plans and strategies through to performance reporting. The final draft of the Corporate Strategic Plan is included as Attachment #1.

The plan is comprised of the corporate vision, mission and values and is organized into four strategic priority areas. Each strategic priority area is further supported by strategic objectives, which will be actioned by department work plans and the annual Town budget.

Alignment with Mater Plans and Strategies

The Corporate Strategic Plan is an important policy document that provides direction to guide decision-making aligned with Council's priorities. The strategic plan is intended to complement and strengthen the Town's other master plans and strategies. At a high level, the Corporate Strategic Plan serves as the Town's guiding direction, with implementation supported by actions identified in subject-specific master plans, strategies, and operational plans, each fueled by the annual budget process, which sets the pace of implementation. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Importantly, all Town-led decisions, projects and initiatives, aside from legislated changes and requirements, should be clearly linked to advancing goals and objectives of the Corporate

Strategic Plan. If the connection is unclear, the activity should be reviewed to assess if effort is being directed appropriately. With that said, it's important to highlight that the corporate strategic plan is intended to be flexible, so long as the general course of direction is maintained.

Figure 1 - Strategic Plan Relationship



Understanding the relationship and connections among the strategic documents will require careful coordination and consideration by the Town's leadership teams. An effort will be made to demonstrate these connections in the quarterly reports provided to Council.

Progress Reporting

Recognizing the importance of accountability and transparency as core values of the strategic plan, the Town's leadership team has committed to a robust progress reporting schedule, including quarterly implementation reports to Council and an annual highlights report to share updates on the plan's implementation.

The quarterly reports will be presented to Council in the month following the end of each quarter (Q2 Report in July, Q3 Report in October and Q4 Report in January). Beginning in Q2 will allow staff sufficient time to recalibrate under the new strategic plan and fulfill expectations associated with the reporting. The annual highlights report will be developed following the full year of implementation and released by the end of February each year.

In addition to the quarterly implementation reports and the annual highlights report, Town staff are continuing to work with StrategyCorp to assess the feasibility of creating a public-facing performance reporting dashboard. More details will be presented through a future staff report.

The Town's Strategic Planning Process

The 2026 – 2027 Corporate Strategic Plan is intended to realign the Town's strategic planning cycle with each term of Council. Following approval, the plan will be implemented throughout 2026 and 2027, with the understanding that an update and review exercise will be conducted

by the next term of Council in 2027. This process provides continuity in the Town’s strategic direction for staff throughout the election cycle and allows each term of Council to review and adjust the strategic direction and objectives within the first year of their respective terms.

The continuity and realignment of the Town’s strategic planning cycle is extremely important, as the Corporate Strategic Plan serves as the ‘north star’ direction that should be maintained as the Town’s long-term vision. The strategic plan is then implemented through specific actions, with the pace of implementation supported by the Town’s annual budget and aligned with the consistent understanding of the long-term vision for the community.

The strategic plan update process that will be completed in 2027 is not envisioned to be a comprehensive rewrite, but rather an opportunity for each term of Council to leave its mark and define/confirm the strategic priorities and objectives for its term. Further details regarding this process will be provided to the next term of Council following inauguration and orientation.

Consideration of Nature Based Wellness

At the October 6, 2025 meeting, Council provided direction to staff in response to the deputation of Larry Hall and Martin Rydlo of South Georgian Bay Innovation Fund regarding the integration of Nature Based Wellness as a component of the Corporate Strategic Plan. Through the deputation, Council directed staff to investigate the request and to provide a follow-up report. Given the connection between the request and the direction provided by Council through the strategic plan workshops, staff opted to include a summary in this report rather than a separate report.

Specifically, the direction from Council asked staff to review two items, outlined in the following chart, along with the response from staff.

Request	Staff Response
1. Include nature-based wellness in the vision section of the plan	Although Nature Based Wellness is not specifically included in the vision statement, endorsed in principle by Council, staff believe that the general intent behind the objectives of Nature Based Wellness is reflected in the acknowledgement and commitment to the natural and cultural environments, with the clear statement of nurturing a thriving community and future for all.
2. Collaborate with the efforts of other organizations in nature-based wellness programming and related economic development in Georgian Bay	Similarly, although nature-based wellness programming is not specifically included in the strategic priorities, the general intent is captured in the ‘ <i>Resilient Growth</i> ’ pillar through the objective to protect and enhance the natural environment. In addition, the general intent is also captured through the ‘ <i>Community for Everyone</i> ’ pillar through the objective to support greater access to services that promote community wellbeing and health and through the objective to continue to create

	opportunities for active living, leisure, and community building.
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Further to the responses provided above, in speaking further with Mr. Hall and Mr. Rydlo, it's evident that the intent of the Nature Based Wellness initiative aligns well with the goals and objectives established by Council within the Corporate Strategic Plan. As a result, staff and Strategy Corp are not recommending any changes to the Corporate Strategic Plan framework, but rather a commitment to continue discussions and to explore partnerships with the South Georgian Bay Innovation Fund.

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

Although no direct environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report, the strategic priorities and objectives endorsed by Council in the Corporate Strategic Plan aim to strengthen the Town's commitment to the natural environment. This commitment is directly integrated into the vision statement, values and strategic priorities/objectives.

G. Financial Impacts

The budget for the Corporate Strategic Plan project is \$100,000, which was approved in 2024. StrategyCorp was retained through a competitive request-for-proposal process with a successful bid of \$99,849.00.

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.

Updates regarding the use of the contingency budget were provided through process update reports ([SI.25.029](#) and [SI.25.037](#)). As of January 30, 2026, \$16,735.00 of the contingency budget has been spent, which leaves an available balance of \$3,265.00. The contingency budget was used to accommodate additional open houses and focus group sessions with Community Matters and the Craighleith Community Working Group, as well as an additional Council workshop not included in the original project scope.

H. In Consultation With

Adam Smith, Chief Administrative Officer
Senior Management Team

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

1. Attachment 1 – Draft – Our Path Forward: 2026-2027 Town of The Blue Mountains Corporate Strategic Plan (As presented at the Special Committee of the Whole meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2026)
2. Attachment 2 – Final – Our Path Forward: 2026-2027 Town of The Blue Mountains Corporate Strategic Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.040 Draft Corporate Strategic Plan for Council Consideration.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - Draft - Our Path Forward 2026-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan.pdf - Attachment 2 - Final - Our Path Forward 2026-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 4, 2026

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

Tim Hendry - Feb 4, 2026 - 12:05 PM

Corrina Giles - Feb 4, 2026 - 12:42 PM

Adam Smith - Feb 4, 2026 - 3:45 PM