

The Blue Mountains  
SUSTAINABLE PATH



## **The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path**

**2010 - 2060**

*Dream. Act. Prosper.*

Created by the People of The Blue Mountains



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# FOREWARD

## OUR LEGACY

When you arrive in our community, you cannot miss our namesake, the remarkable Blue Mountains, sweeping upwards from the sparkling waters of Georgian Bay to the spectacular forests and rolling landscapes at their peak. Lying within the internationally recognized Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, these lands contain nature's vital organs – the waters, wetlands, forests and rich soils that are necessary for the survival of all living things. Then, the land drops steeply over the Escarpment's edge, revealing the productive valley farmlands of the Beaver River, which flows out to its northerly mouth in the vibrant harbour-side village of Thornbury.

An area of amazing natural beauty, The Blue Mountains is made up of many historic hamlets and villages, surrounded by almost 11,000 hectares of productive agricultural land, which has long been part of the largest apple-growing region in the country.

As early as 12 centuries ago, the industrious Paleo Indians, who crafted and exported arrowheads as far south as New York State and Ohio, inhabited our community. During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, The Blue Mountains was home to the Petun native community. In the mid 1800's, after land surveyor Charles Rankin had opened the area to settlers, European pioneers worked together to create an important economic and agricultural hub, connected by rail and boat to other parts of Ontario.

Today's residents, farmers and businesses continue to uphold the spirit of teamwork and community pride. We care for our neighbours and watch for people in need. Our urban centres and villages are brimming with boutiques, restaurants and galleries proudly showing off our talents and fare. In the rural areas, we are becoming better stewards of nature, by employing sustainable agricultural practices, conserving our woodlands and streams, and diligently managing our bountiful wildlife. We continue to be a hard-working family of communities, drawing on our history and entrepreneurship as we move forward.

The area's stunning natural features, together with clean air, vast stretches of Georgian Bay shoreline and sparkling waters, give us the privilege to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives. Annually, almost a million people share, if only briefly, our awesome four-seasons playground. Visitors come here to enjoy the world-class ski resorts and to experience the abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities – biking and hiking trails, world-class golf courses, scenic caves and crevices, cultural history, arts and theatre, water and snow sports, rock climbing, hunting and fishing - these name only a few of our attractions.

The people of The Blue Mountains treasure our heritage and have an inherent respect for the natural environment that supports us. It is our responsibility to ensure that future generations can thrive as we have.

Yet, because of these idyllic conditions, every year, hundreds of people move here to live. Our permanent and part-time population is expected to increase significantly – growing from an estimated 6,825 permanent residents today to almost 10,000 by 2031. Our population more doubled when our 8,040 semi-permanent residents are taken into account.

In the past few years, we have begun to see the impacts of this growth. Not only does it require building land and services, it has increased the demand for community facilities, local health care, education, transportation and water and sewer infrastructure. We need to take care and live lightly on the land, and conserve the use of natural resources such as energy, raw materials, and water.

Supporting our community are the valued businesses and industries that provide employment to our people. They include an eclectic mix of agricultural businesses, tourism operators, family farms, boutiques and stores, local trades and craftspeople, artist galleries, and, of course, the local restaurants and bakeries that turn our fresh, local produce into delicious, gourmet meals – they are in every corner of our community. Our world-class ski resort, Blue Mountain Resort, is our largest employer. Our community is a “food basket” for Ontario and beyond. Although tourism and agriculture are the economic drivers in the region, there is a shortage of higher paying jobs to sustain our growing population and attract future residents.

We also have the challenge of integrating our various cultures, new and old, rural and urban, into our community life. We may be experiencing a cultural divide – as our cherished village and rural lifestyles adjust to welcoming the new, urban property owners and visitors who help to fuel our economy. We are up to this challenge – together, our well-educated people are entrepreneurial, intelligent, caring and resourceful. We will work together to create a world-class model for rural sustainability.

For these reasons and more, The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path planning process was initiated. This year-long process was inspired by the leadership of Town Council and senior staff – and has engaged over 100 community partners, and hundreds of residents in a significant voluntary effort. Together, we have crafted this 50-year Local Action Plan. It is built on a long-term community vision, and contains a set of goals, strategies and actions that will ensure that our environment remains pristine, that our community is healthy, active and supported by people and services, and that we create jobs for all. We are a people with an intuitive understanding of our culture and history, which will ensure that we are a community “Built to Last” – The Blue Mountains.

## OUR DREAM FOR THE FUTURE

### VISION

In 2060, The Blue Mountains is an international showcase for rural sustainability.

We are a connected and caring community that blends our heritage with a thriving diverse economy based on the continual preservation and protection of nature.

Generations of families live work and play in our safe, happy and inclusive Town. We are a community “Built to Last.”

### Our Dream Described...

The Blue Mountains is a principled community, considerate of all living things. We are committed to ensuring that our every action finds a sustainable balance between the environment, society, culture and the economy. By aiming big and striving to become a sustainable community, we can fulfill the following dream for The Blue Mountains of the future.

- A place founded upon community values where all generations are respected
- A proud people where neighbours work and play together for the love of their families, their friends and their Community
- A caring society that provides for those in need and integrates them into the Community.
- A friendly place committed to tolerance and cultural diversity, beaming with smiles and ringing sounds of laughter
- People who are driven to keep their Escarpment green, their lakes and rivers clean, their forests pristine and their farms bountiful
- A community that remembers its history and builds on that legacy





- A people who assume responsibility for the growth and safety of their Community, working together with their local government and Community Partners to sustain The Blue Mountains, all relentlessly pushing in a common direction, building momentum all the time like a flywheel one turn at a time
- A forward thinking local government that continually engages its citizens and partners, a government renowned for regional collaboration
- A community built with pedestrian friendly designs that encourage walking and cycling, with urban and architectural designs that respect our history and with energy and water wise designs, all with the future in mind
- A people who dare to be innovative with their development, yet value healthy ecosystems
- A people committed to minimizing their carbon footprint
- A place where young people can work and raise their families, an affordable lifestyle for all, housing for all, jobs for all, all supported by local education and health care systems
- A community with a diversified economy, ever mindful of its agricultural roots and its goal of being a premier four season tourist destination
- An active vibrant people with healthy bodies and minds who epitomize the meaning of a quality lifestyle
- A creative society where music and the arts and recreation abound
- Disciplined People, Involved in Disciplined Thought, Focused on Disciplined Actions
- A community "Built to Last" – an awesome place to live - The Blue Mountains

## DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

At the outset of the planning process, community partners adopted a definition of sustainability to guide us through the process.

Based on the fundamental principle that there should be enough for all, always, we agreed “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>1</sup>.

## HOW WAS OUR SUSTAINABLE PATH CREATED?

With funding obtained from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Town, The Blue Mountains Municipal Council initiated a collaborative process that involved:

- ❖ Recruiting over 100 community partners to commit to the process through signing a “Sustainable Path” pledge
- ❖ Walking the Talk - collaboratively crafting a Community Vision that sets out our dream for the future
- ❖ Establishing 15 theme-based community partner Working Groups
- ❖ Convening workshops to brainstorm ideas with community partners and members of the public
- ❖ Reviewing the current conditions within The Blue Mountains and identifying gaps.
- ❖ Developing goals, strategies and actions and finalizing The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path

The process was led by the Town’s Chief Administrative Officer, and overseen by a **Steering Committee** with members representing the three key pillars of sustainability. Council, staff, 15 **working groups** along with members of the public, actively participated throughout the process.

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<sup>1</sup> World Commission on the Environment, known as the Brundtland Commission. Published in “Our Sustainable Future”. 1987.

## REALIZING THE DREAM – THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

#### **How will The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path be implemented?**

The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path is a living document, intended to guide us in our path to sustainability. The plan will be used as a resource to provide direction for all Community Partners in their plans and policies and provide an overarching framework within which decisions are made.

As we move forward, we can expect it to change and evolve, as we seek and realize the phenomenal opportunities that are garnered through productive partnerships and community engagement.

Setting out an approach to implementing this Plan will be an essential element in its success.

#### ***The Power of Partnerships***

During the development of our Plan, we uncovered the vast potential that can be realized by working together. By drawing on our combined strengths, we will achieve our Vision. Simply put, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”.

Recognizing both the current and future opportunities that are unleashed by the energy of people working together towards a common vision, our strategies and actions are designed to be flexible, yet accountable. This versatile approach will encourage maximum potential and creativity within each of our organizations, and enable us to take advantage of collaborative opportunities as they arise.

The Plan is built on three foundational pillars – Environment and Ecological Integrity, Community Vibrancy and Economic Prosperity. Within these three pillars lie 18 core themes accompanied by 63 goals and multiple strategies and actions. Achieving each one is important to our community. Following the Path will take discipline and determined commitment, driven by a culture of leadership that helps us all to be accountable for the end result.

## Implementation Structure and Roles

**The Town**, our local government, will continue its role as custodian of The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path, with the expectation that other community partners will continue to facilitate and provide support towards its implementation. This cohesive, working partnership will be integral to achieving success.

### Oversight for Plan Implementation

The Plan's creation was overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of Community Partner representatives. Moving forward, the Community Partners expect to:

- Continue the Steering Committee, whose role will be to monitor the progress of the Plan and facilitate its implementation;
- Initiate three Community Advisory Committees - the Steering Committee will form three committees to oversee each pillar of activity - Environment and Ecological Integrity, Community Vibrancy, and Economic Prosperity. The Chairs of these committees, representatives of the Community Partners, will be on the Steering Committee;
- Participate in Program/Project/Partner-based committees – that are established to oversee the implementation of specific projects within the pathways contained in this Plan.

As opportunities are identified, the **Community Partners** will identify and move forward with the strategies and actions contained within this Plan. Each Community Partner will participate in action initiatives as they see fit, with the recognition that supporting The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path does not obligate a Partner to implement all of the measures proposed or undertaken within the framework of the Plan.

### Assuring Program Funding

Numerous opportunities will exist for program funding as the Community Partners and various levels of government establish policies and priorities. As these opportunities arise, our Community Advisory Committees can help determine how and when the various strategies and actions will be implemented, based on available resources at the time. All initiatives must meet the conditions to ensure economic sustainability, and not place an undue financial burden on taxpayers or the partners of the present and the future.

The Town will actively assist the Steering Committee and Community Advisory Committees in identifying appropriate funding, and determine appropriate areas for municipal and/or regional funding with our neighbouring municipalities and organizations.

### **Fostering Ongoing Regional Collaboration**

Our neighbouring municipalities include Meaford, Grey Highlands, Clearview, Collingwood, Wasaga Beach and the Counties of Grey and Simcoe. We share many of the same values, cultural and community organizations, economic markets, tourism strategies and natural resources. Notably, with the exception of Grey Highlands and Clearview, we all share one of the most beautiful stretches of natural shoreline in the world – Georgian Bay.

### **Increasing Community Engagement and Action**

Active participation by the community in the implementation of The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path is an essential first step in achieving a sustainable lifestyle. The Town has identified a priority to proactively engage our community and will strive to be known as the national leader in community engagement.

- Town Staff has a mandate to work with Town residents and businesses in their daily work
- A community engagement strategy will be developed further to support The Blue Mountains initiatives
- Community members are encouraged to register on the Town's email listing to receive notifications of community events and meetings
- Workshops, think tanks, and planning sessions will be convened to provide input on Town initiatives

### **How will we measure progress and assure the success of our actions?**

Measuring the sustainability of our community as we progress with our Plan will take an ongoing and dedicated effort. We will need to consider the impact of our decisions on each of the three pillars, and measure the results as we move forward. Benchmarks to be considered include: air quality (ground level ozone), fresh water quality (government standards), greenhouse gas emissions, forest cover, extent of wetlands, and human capital and social indicators – measured by education levels<sup>2</sup>, unemployment rates, homelessness, etc. Many of these indicators are already being measured and reported on by the Town. Others (e.g. forest cover and wetlands) are identified in our Plan to be inventoried.

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<sup>2</sup> Six Indicators recommended by Canada's National Round Table on Environment and The Economy



It is important that the community develops its own measures of success. The following steps will be taken to ensure that our work leads to a sustainable Blue Mountains – a community “Built to Last”:

- Establish current conditions and targets for each goal based upon a model of continuous improvement
- Prepare Annual Report Cards which report progress on The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path while profiling results and charting future courses at an annual conference of the Community Partners and others
- Continuous improvement – engage our Community partners to continually evaluate progress, adapt strategies, and identify new initiatives, and,
- Review and modernize the Plan every five years.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR, ELLEN ANDERSON

### **Our Beacon for Community Wellbeing**

Since I took office in 2003, I have worked diligently to ensure that this special place, The Blue Mountains, remains so and thrives into the future. Together, we will be stronger, working relentlessly for our families, our friends, our neighbours and our beautiful community. We have so much to do.

Our Council has had the great pleasure to work with the hundreds of people who have created this plan. It is a truly inspirational effort, one that reflects our community's founding values and future dreams.

The people of The Blue Mountains are talented, practical, hard working and caring. This process has brought out the best in us – I send a big thank you! We have seen our community shine!

I am committed to doing all that I can to ensure that we follow "The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path".

## MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN'S CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, PAUL GRAHAM

On behalf of our Senior Management Team and dedicated staff of the Town, we confirm our commitment to the continual stewardship and implementation of Our Sustainable Path. The vision and goals presented in this Plan reflect our dream for The Blue Mountains and its people. We believe that our future is bright.

Through our work with our partners, we have discovered that we are a principled community, considerate of all living things. We are committed to actions that finds a sustainable balance among environmental, economic and community priorities. We cannot do this alone, and so we are driven to focus on the continual engagement of our community – true partners working together!

Already, our staff has started working closely with Council, incorporating sustainability into our daily work. The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path is a living document, meant to guide the development of a community that is "Built to Last". I love the dream!

## DECLARATION OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS' COMMITMENT

WHEREAS the Town of The Blue Mountains is committed to the ongoing health and prosperity of the Community, to addressing the Town's infrastructure needs, to preserving and enhancing its natural and environmental features, and its cultural heritage, to promoting and developing a vibrant, sustainable agricultural base, to supporting the development of its social and recreational programs and to ensuring its long-term financial sustainability; and

WHEREAS The Blue Mountains seeks to integrate the cultural, social, financial and environmental challenges into an action plan that will allow the Community to provide for the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations and living systems to flourish forever; and

WHEREAS The Blue Mountains needs the assistance of a broad range of members of the Community to develop a transformative vision and action plan;

THEREFORE WE, the undersigned Community Partners, will assist in and support the development of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that will contain ideas for innovation and implementation of initiatives aimed at guiding us along our future sustainable path

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS WHO DEVELOPED THE BLUE MOUNTAINS SUSTAINABLE PATH

Ainley Group	Affordable Housing Committee	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Arts Advisory Committee	Ashanti Coffee	Beaver Valley Athletic Association
Beaver Valley Community School	Beaver Valley Gold Honey – The Honey House	Beaver Valley Outreach
Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Georgian Triangle	Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce	Blue Mountains Community Church
Blue Mountain Police Service Board	Blue Mountain Ratepayer Association	Blue Mountain Resorts Limited
Blue Mountain Village Association	Blue Mountain Watershed Trust	Bluewater Gallery
Breaking Down Barriers	Breathing Easy	Breaker Technology Inc
Business Enterprise Centre	Business Improvement Association	C.C. Tatham





Centre for Business & Economic Development	Centre for Student Leadership	C.F. Crozier & Associates
Collingwood General & Marine Hospital	Collus Power	Community Foundation Grey Bruce
County of Grey	CQ Ellis Group	Craigleith Ski Club
DC Slade Consulting Inc.	De Corso's Fashion	Dr. Lance Burnham, DDS Dentist
Ecoinhabit	Environment Network	First Baptist Church
Free Spirit Tours	Garden Holistics	Global Fruits
Genivar Consultants	Georgian College	Georgian Cycle & Ski Trail Association
Georgian Peaks Ski Club	Georgian Planning Solutions	Georgian Trail Board of Management
Georgian Triangle Housing Resource Centre	Georgian Triangle Development Institute	Georgian Triangle Tourist Association
Georgian Triangle Earthday Celebrations	Greenland Consulting Engineers	Grey Bruce Health Services
Grey Bruce Health Unit	Grey County Children's Aid Society	Grey County Social Services
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority	Grace United Church	Hendry Farms
Hewgill Bus Lines	Hincks-Dellcrest Farm	Hindle's Clarksburg Hardware
Home Hardware	Intrawest ULC	Iron Works
Kate Esplen Studio	Kimbercote Farm	Lanktree Farms
Le Scandinave Spa	Lora Bay Corporation	Lura Consulting
Lush Realty	Marsh Street Community Centre	McNichol Farms
Meaford General Hospital Foundation	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	



My Friend's House	Niagara Escarpment Organics	North East Grey Health Clinic
Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority	Planwells Associates	Reid's Heritage Homes
Rotary Club of Clarksburg & Thornbury	Running Tide Inc.	Sampson Farms
Scenic Caves Nature Adventures	Smart Move Training & Development	Taylor Farms
Terrasan Corporation	The Blue Mountains Public Library	The Blue Mountains Fire Services
The Diamond Studio	The Garden Decorator	The Georgian Bay Club
Thornbury Laundromat	Toronto Ski Club	Town of The Blue Mountains
Tracks Employment and Resources Services	Travis & Associates Inc.	Trillium Apartments
Tyrolean Village Resorts	Union Gas Limited	Wildman Studio
Woman With Vision	95.1 The Peak FM	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following people and organizations that contributed time, funding and/or ideas to create The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path:

**The Federation of Canadian Municipalities** - for providing funding for this process

**Members of The Blue Mountains Town Council** - Mayor Ellen Anderson, Deputy Mayor Duncan McKinley, Robert Gamble, Cameron Kennedy, Michael Martin, John McGee, and John McKean

**Participants at the Sustainability Training Sessions**, facilitated by The Natural Step - April 2009

**Participants in the Sustainability Visioning Workshop**, facilitated by Lura Consulting - May 2009

**Participants at the Partners Workshops, facilitated** by Lura Consulting – November and December 2009

**Participants in the Theme-based Working Groups** - for providing their ideas, their time, and their homes and/or offices for meetings. The Working Groups were: Environment and Natural Heritage; Energy, Water and Waste; Sense of Community; Built Environment; Infrastructure; Healthy Active Community and Health; Education; Poverty and Community Support; Youth; Arts; Culture and Heritage; Economic Diversity; Agriculture and Local Food; and, Tourism.

**Participants at the Public Workshop**, facilitated by Municipal staff and volunteers – November 2009

**Steering Committee Members** - Lindsay Ayers (Chair), Norine Baron, Matt Code, R.J. Gamble, Isaac Goodings, Paul Graham, Cameron Kennedy, John McGee, Terry McKague, James McKinlay, and Rob Potter.

**Project Team members:** Paul Graham, Reg Russworm, Jeffery Fletcher, Adam McMullin (The Town of The Blue Mountains). Lura Consulting: Sally Leppard (Project Director, Facilitator and Lead Author), Liz Nield (Project Co-Director), Lindsey Goodchild (Research and Creative Writer), Olav Sibille (Research, Gap Analysis and Workshop Report Writer), Jeff Garowski (Current Conditions Research),

**The Natural Step:** Facilitation and design - Sustainability training workshops

**Graphic Design:** Jeff Domm. Photography and art work: Robert Burcher, Olav Sibille, Rob Potter, Bev Smith, Municipal Archives, and Liz Stinson.

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## ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY



The Blue Mountains is nestled within one of Canada’s most spectacular and geographically rich environments. The environmental and natural heritage within and surrounding the community makes it one of the most special places to live and visit in Ontario.

The area is rich in ecological resources – most notably the shoreline and inland ecosystems of Georgian Bay, and the internationally designated Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. Other significant natural heritage resources include the Beaver River, Craigeith and Pretty River Valley Provincial Parks, the Duncan Caves and Kolapore Uplands Nature Preserves, the historic Scenic Caves, Loree Forest and many acres of public land. Other natural resources and environmentally significant lands include ample forests, clear lakes, cold-water streams, diverse wetlands, and all of the wildlife they support. These resources are valued for the natural services they provide as well as for economic benefit and community wellbeing. They are a source for tourism, recreation, well being, healthy drinking water, hunting, agricultural productivity, forestry, fishery, mineral aggregates among others.

In order to preserve the integrity of our Area’s natural environment, it is necessary that we continue to exercise wise stewardship of our natural resources. Minimizing resource consumption – including energy, water, and raw materials – is key to ensuring the renewability and replenishment of these resources. Our actions must be sustainable to ensure The Blue Mountains will be able to maintain and enhance these valued natural assets.

The Blue Mountains  
has...  
People who are driven  
to keep their  
Escarpment green,  
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## THEME: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND NATURAL HERITAGE

The Town, Grey County, area Conservation Authorities, and other government agencies have strong mandates to protect our environment. Local environmental initiatives by volunteers and non-governmental organizations have been successful in maintaining continued vigilance to ensure its protection.

While we have been successful to a large degree in conserving areas in a pristine state, population increases and unsustainable human activities impact our land and water resources. With continued growth, we will knowingly be challenging the capacity of our natural systems.

Moving forward, initiatives such as developing a Natural Heritage Protection Plan could be developed through an alliance of interested organizations (Town, County, nature clubs, MNR) that identifies important ecological and wildlife linkage areas, and contains an action plan for stewardship and/or land acquisition. Our Municipal Official Plan can also be updated to include policies for the maintenance, protection and enhancement of natural heritage features, connectivity, and forest management. County mapping of forests, lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and significant woodlands is available to some extent; however a full inventory will aid the development of policy.

Much of the land area within The Blue Mountains is under private ownership. The largest area of public land within the community is the special Kolapore Uplands Nature Reserve (owned by the Province and the County of Grey).

Existing government policies provide limited direction for land stewardship, since this is largely a voluntary activity. Many land-owners are highly cognizant of the value of protecting natural heritage features, and it is not uncommon for property owners to purchase additional lands to ensure their protection. Protection of these areas is an underlying value of our founding families. While voluntary protection initiatives have

### In the Niagara Escarpment, you can find:

Over 325 bird species or 72% of all birds recorded in Ontario, even endangered species including the Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered hawk, Black Tern, Louisiana Waterthrush and Hooded Warbler.

55 mammal species and 34 species of reptiles and amphibians have been recorded. Rare species include the endangered North Dusky Salamander, the threatened Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, the vulnerable Southern Flying-squirrel and the rare Eastern Pipistrelle.

Over 1500 types of plants!

preserved much of The Blue Mountains’ natural heritage, further actions are needed. Increasing the profile and communicating the importance of the environment to newer and urban residents will help ensure lasting protection and respect. Environment-focused learning activities, such as the recent “how to build a bat house”, will aid in the promotion of landowner stewardship. Conservation Authorities and many local environmental groups that are currently providing invaluable education programs could provide education materials and learning activities that would aid in this communication.

Pressures on our natural systems from land use, resource consumption, and commercial/industrial activities are creating stresses on both water quality and quantity. The source of The Blue Mountains’ drinking water is a combination of municipally treated water services and private wells that draw groundwater into our households. The municipal water system uses water from Georgian Bay treated by the Town’s Thornbury Water Treatment Plant and at the Town of Collingwood’s treatment plant. The Bay’s water quality is affected by discharges from both point and diffuse sources (including treated storm and sewer discharges, industrial wastewater, runoff from agricultural lands and urban areas, erosion from development, and tributaries and rivers). Water quantity may be affected by both climate change and ground water extraction by bottling plants and industrial activities. Implementation of stringent protection measures can maintain and improve water quantity and quality in surface and groundwater sources consistent with municipal, provincial and federal standards.

To further complement conservation measures, the municipality is focused on reducing consumption of municipally treated water wherever possible. Also, our Mayor is a recognized leader in improving and enhancing the freshwater ecosystems throughout the community, demonstrated by the Great Lakes Mayors Initiative. This freshwater management strategy called “At the Shoreline Action Plan”, addresses the problems of explosive algae growth, beach closures and untreated sewage and storm waters entering the Great Lakes.

Lastly, the local government and the community are working towards reducing our carbon footprint through a myriad of energy conservation measures. A new initiative, identified through this sustainability planning process, is to become a Dark Sky Community, while respecting the needs of our recreation industry during the evening and earlier hours of the night. Through this process, The Blue Mountains can attract nature lovers, tourists, and astronomers! The Blue Mountains is already inherently recognized as an informal Dark Sky community, as it is the home to the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada’s Carr Astronomical Observatory, a state of the art, accessible observatory that runs educational programs. Currently, there is no policy level support for this emerging concept, however this Plan commits to undertaking a comprehensive lighting plan for streets and walkways, which can potentially address light pollution. Homes and businesses can also participate independently to achieve Dark Sky certification status.



In order to maintain the rich and diverse environment in The Blue Mountains, the following goals have been identified:

- Develop links between natural areas and wildlife corridors
- Achieve long-term Conservation of existing forest resources for future generations
- Provide Education and Marketing of the Value of the Local Natural Environment
- Protect Local Biodiversity and Habitat
- Preserve, Protect and Enhance the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater
- Becoming a Dark Sky Community

#### GOAL: DEVELOP LINKS BETWEEN NATURAL AREAS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

##### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop Strategy and Guidelines for the enhancement of natural heritage features
  - Complete a natural heritage study as input to revise the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws to strengthen the protection of the natural heritage areas
  - Implement enhanced minimum buffer areas around natural heritage features
  - Develop a public lands acquisition and implementation plan
    - Council to allot a percentage of Parkland budget to establish and maintain natural parks
    - Establish citizen's group to raise funds to protect and expand our natural heritage
    - Encourage partnerships among environmental groups and agencies
    - Identify specific parcels of land to enhance natural and wildlife linkages and purchase when appropriate
  - Establish landscape architectural guidelines encouraging use of native species in landscaping where applicable

- Require remediation/restoration plans for development
- Continue to require green space allocations in new developments
- Establish wildlife corridors to improve habitat connectivity
- ❖ Encourage stewardship of the land
  - Provide education, tax incentives and benefits for land stewardship
- ❖ Create a Town-led Environmental Advisory Committee and include a 'Youth Wing' on the committee

**GOAL: ACHIEVE LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF EXISTING FOREST RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Encourage and enhance protection of forested lands
  - Establish forest resource stewardship strategy and plan that includes and considers:
    - Build upon Grey County's inventory of forest resources
    - Identify an optimum target for forest cover
    - Create a mix of natural and managed forests to promote ecological and economic diversity
    - Evaluate and enhance urban canopy to better utilize nature to promote increased energy efficiency in built environment
    - Identify priority areas for conservation and buffer areas
  - Protect woodland and forest resources from incompatible adjacent uses

- Reduce development pressure by directing development away from forested areas
- Avoid fragmentation of forest habitat
- Support reforestation efforts
- Encourage partnerships, and support the efforts of agencies involved in the management and preservation of forested ecosystems
- Incorporate forest management strategies in natural heritage strategy
- Support conservation programs to reforest privately held forest lands
- Develop tree protection, replacement and enhancement policies and by-laws in urban areas
- ❖ Improve community understanding of the importance of the Town's forest resources
  - Establish annual resident tree planting event that includes an educational awareness component
  - Convene field trips to the Loree Forest and the Kolapore Uplands Nature Reserve

**GOAL: PROVIDE EDUCATION AND MARKETING OF THE VALUE OF THE LOCAL NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Instill responsibility in people as custodians of natural heritage
  - Prepare a brochure for newcomers to the community
  - Develop and implement a communications and education strategy

- Explore opportunities to educate the public about local natural heritage and biological resources (e.g. partnerships with local retailers, Landscape Ontario, local magazines)
- Engage youth to become ambassadors for the natural environment
- Work with local community, land stewardship groups and our municipal neighbours to expand stewardship efforts
- Establish annual neighborhood cleanup and environmental restoration program/event
- ❖ Nurture a 7-generation mentality in our Townspeople<sup>3</sup>
  - The Town's Event and Youth Coordinator will encourage an understanding of the 7-generation mentality with schools and youth
  - Hold Seminars in schools which are open to all persons in the community
  - Consider a procedure to ensure that the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of current and proposed initiatives are sustainable

## GOAL: PROTECT LOCAL BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Establish The Blue Mountains Biodiversity Partnership
  - Focus on the terrestrial environment as well as aquatic and wetland systems

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<sup>3</sup> Seven-generation sustainability is an ecological concept that urges the current generation of humans to live sustainably and work for the benefit of the seventh generation into the future. It is thought to have originated with the traditional Haudenosaunee Iroquois chiefs, who allegedly believed that it was appropriate to think seven generations ahead (a couple of hundred years into the future) and decide whether the decisions they make today would benefit their children seven generations into the future. (Derived from Wikipedia)

- Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan
- Focus on the protection of existing habitat
- Create new habitat and partner with environmental and agricultural partners to restore terrestrial and wetland systems
- ❖ Protect lake and riparian shoreline habitats
  - Develop collaborative shoreline protection policy (with landowners and senior levels of government)
  - Establish shoreline buffer requirements
  - Identify land, river and shoreline areas that could benefit from ecosystem restoration
  - Work with land trust groups on acquiring land for restoration projects.
  - Purchase shoreline land and convert to public use
- ❖ Protect species at risk
  - Minimize contaminants entering our water
  - Build a knowledge base that identifies local species at risk
- ❖ Ensure a naturally reproducing fishery in our rivers and Georgian Bay
  - Work with senior levels of Government, First Nations People and other partners to achieve sustainable fishing and a sustainable fishery

GOAL: PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Educate and instill in residents and visitors the importance of maintaining a healthy freshwater ecosystem within the community, including conservation and proper management of this precious resource
  - Educate the public on the importance and benefits of native and xeriscaped landscaping and provide incentives for residents and businesses to adopt such landscaping practices
  - Educate, promote and provide incentives to area residents and businesses to implement systems which use non-potable or reclaimed water instead of municipally treated water to aid in water conservation
  - Assist our agricultural community to educate, promote and provide incentives on the importance of effective water stewardship
  - Educate residents and visitors about the high quality drinking water provided within The Blue Mountains
  - Establish community based education and awareness programs, like the Yellow Fish Road program
- ❖ Implement stringent protection measures to maintain and, where possible, improve water quantity and quality in surface and groundwater sources, consistent with Provincial and Federal Standards and Objectives
  - Prohibit water extraction activities that have an adverse impact on aquifers and surface wetlands and streams
  - Continue to implement the Official Plan policy to prevent any development negatively impacting wetlands and expand existing wetlands wherever possible
  - Continue to partner with local conservation authorities to enhance the benefits of development setbacks from watercourses within The Blue Mountains
  - Continue to identify current source water protection measures and address deficiencies.
  - Initiate private sewage system re-inspection program at the Town, with the initial focus being on high-risk properties

- Require the installation of Class 4 sewage systems (septic tanks and leaching beds) on all non-municipally-serviced properties adjacent to vulnerable bodies of water and/or water courses.
- Encourage the testing of private wells to confirm their ongoing safety as a potable water source
- Educate the general public on existing pesticide related legislation, and on current and future pest management alternatives
- Identify and implement feasible opportunities to reduce the amount of salt and chemicals applied to municipal roadways
- Continually improve the quality of municipally-treated drinking water by reducing additives and integrating new technologies as they become available
- Develop water quality monitoring programs for biological and chemical contaminants in various water sources, including Georgian Bay
- Lobby senior levels of government to continue to monitor water quality, resolve shoreline contamination and other issues, and to provide financial aid relating to proposed solutions

## GOAL: BECOMING A DARK SKY COMMUNITY

### STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop a Dark Sky Action Plan
  - Examine local light use and develop Dark Sky Action Plan and implement policies within the Town Official Plan
  - Tailor the Action Plan to our community recognizing and identifying areas that require outdoor lighting
  - Consult with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
  - Collaborate with Sustainable Tourism operators in the development of the plan

## THEME: CONSERVER SOCIETY

Canada is one of the largest per capita consumers of energy and water in the world. By 2050, it is predicted that the human ecological “footprint” will require the equivalent of 2.5 planets to sustain the world’s population. The Blue Mountains is conscious of the current environmental state, and we are committed to doing our part. As The Blue Mountains continues its journey in becoming an authentic “green” community, we will meet many of our economic and environmental goals while also contributing to our destination’s appeal as a truly sustainable community. Already, the municipality has implemented green energy solutions in the Ontario Provincial Police Station, our Recreation Operations Centre has geothermal heating, infloor heating and utilizes natural heating and light through window placement and design, and the Town will achieve at least a LEED Silver designation in our new Town Hall.

The Blue Mountains  
has...  
People committed to  
minimizing their carbon  
footprint.

Using our existing programs as a solid base, The Blue Mountains is poised to become a national leader in sustainable resource management. The Town has embarked on a number of leading-edge conservation projects, supported by a Strategic Direction within their 2009 priorities to “complete a policy for renewable energy projects”. As a member of Partners for Climate Change Protection, the Town is part of a network of Canadian municipalities that have committed to reducing greenhouse gases and acting on climate change. This local government has a complete inventory of energy use, and is developing a plan for energy reduction. Through Town and community programs such as smart metering, the Town will continue to set targets to achieve energy conservation.

Community energy projects, such as solar-powered hot water systems, geothermal heating systems, community co-op energy projects, along with implementation of energy efficiencies to offset increases in energy demand as a result of growth and development should be implemented. Additionally, emerging energy technologies should be evaluated, as they become available and strategic partnerships developed in the community where feasible. The municipality’s involvement in the Partners in Climate Change Protection program can be utilized as a basis to develop an action plan to become “carbon neutral”. Government incentives for retrofitting, installation of geo-thermal and solar power systems,



along with the continuation of provincial initiatives (such as Every Kilowatt Counts, and refrigerator round-up programs), will need to be continued.

Ontario's Green Energy Act (2009) is expediting the development of alternate renewable sources of energy. Renewable energy sources – such as wind, solar, and geothermal are identified as having huge potential to partially replace oil and natural gas consumption in the future. The Green Energy Act limits municipal powers in determining the location of potential wind and solar farms. In anticipation of this, the Town released its Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment in 2009, which identified areas constrained by cultural and/or natural heritage as a guide to the location of wind or solar energy farms.

The Town will also continue to establish a common understanding of water conservation. Despite being situated so closely to the Great Lakes, our community must remain aware of the challenges we may face with future water shortages due to climate change and over consumption. Educational outreach regarding the importance of maintaining a healthy water ecosystem within the community, including the conservation and proper management of this resource is a priority.

As we continue our conservation efforts, we should seek to limit the amount of waste produced by our community. Waste reduction is paramount to achieving environmental and economic sustainability. The Town has a modern waste management system that comprises curbside recycling, waste collection, composting site (for leaf, yard, brush and agricultural organic materials) and landfill contained within The Blue Mountains boundaries. Additional programs that run seasonally include a household hazardous waste collection program, and curbside materials exchange. In 2009, the Town implemented a pilot source separated organics project, and is considering full-scale implementation across the Town. In 2009, 43% of residential solid waste was diverted from landfill. While we strive to reduce the amount of waste generated, we should also limit our consumption overall. By significantly reducing the

**Energy Consumption:** Energy requirements for The Blue Mountains are provided by the provincial Hydro One Networks and COLLUS Power. In 2005, the total residential electricity use was 21,946,687 Kwh. Commercial and industrial electricity use 86,162,455 Kwh.

**Future Reduction Targets:**

- incorporate 30% renewable energy into the Town's energy sources
- by 2050 achieve an 80% reduction in GHG (below 2005 levels)

**Community GHG Reduction Targets:**

- 6% below 2005 by 2016
- 30% below 2005 by 2025
- 80% below 2005 by 2050

**Current Target:** The Town's **Solid Waste Solution**, developed in 2008, establishes a 60%+ waste diversion target from landfill

**New Targets:** 60% by 2015, 75% by 2025, and 85% by 2050

amount of waste sent to landfill, the municipality will experience lower waste management costs while concurrently limiting our consumption of precious resources. Programs need to be in place or promoted to reduce solid waste in all sectors, including commercial, industrial and agricultural.

As we strive to become an environmentally aware and conservation focused community, our goals are to:

- Develop and promote The Blue Mountains as a Conserver Society
- Enhance Water Conservation strategies
- Create an Energy Conservation Culture
- Embrace Renewable Energy Production and Achieve Efficiencies in Energy Generation and Consumption
- Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 80% by 2050
- Move significantly towards becoming a zero waste society

**Water Reduction Target:** The Town is working towards achieving a 15% reduction in water usage per user unit below year 2000 water consumption levels by the year 2015

## GOAL: TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE BLUE MOUNTAINS AS A CONSERVER SOCIETY

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Foster conservation behavioral change among businesses, developers, builders, residents and visitors
  - Continue to develop community-based social marketing programs to foster environmental behaviour change
- ❖ Celebrate The Blue Mountains environmental achievements with both residents and visitors
  - Use local, regional and national media to acknowledge The Blue Mountains environmental achievements

## GOAL: ENHANCE WATER CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Require water conservation in residences, institutions and businesses
  - Develop and promote education programs, delivered to schools, residents, commercial establishments in water conservation and usage
  - Develop and implement a plan to investigate and resolve water loss in the water distribution system.
  - Implement a residential and commercial grey water recycling plan, that includes:
    - Target recycling of grey water within residential properties
    - Develop policies and local by-laws to enable a grey water plumbing system
    - Incorporate roof top rain water capture into development guidelines
    - Incentivize rain water capture
  - Enhance incentives to conserve water, and establish a water conservation program (including reductions in the consumption of municipal potable water where possible)

## GOAL: CREATE AN ENERGY CONSERVATION CULTURE

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Educate and empower residents of the community to make energy conservation a key priority and a way of being
  - Establish partnerships with local schools and community groups to deliver conservation awareness and education campaigns

- Provide municipal leadership by implementing various demonstration projects throughout the community, and promoting energy conservation through programs such as community conservation challenges

## GOAL: EMBRACE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION AND ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES IN ENERGY GENERATION AND CONSUMPTION

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Increase the Town's reliability on and capacity for, renewable energy sources
  - Complete a study to identify the number of local renewable energy projects currently in place within the community to establish a benchmark
  - Monitor and evaluate emerging energy technologies
  - Develop strategic partnerships throughout the community to promote and implement these technologies where feasible
  - Supply 30% of Community's energy consumption by renewable energy that is both environmentally and socially acceptable.
- ❖ Support, encourage and develop small-scale, community energy projects
  - Promote the implementation of community co-op energy projects
  - Relax planning and by-law constraints on energy generation and conservation methods (geothermal, home solar and wind power generation) while protecting our natural heritage and vistas
  - Allow flexibility in application of planning regulations where desired conservation, efficiency and generation goals can be met
- ❖ Educate the public and industry about benefits and programs offered by upper tiers of government
  - Maintain a central, up-to-date list of government programs, incentives and resources for optimum construction practices and energy efficiency

- Co-ordinate with local schools to educate the next generation on the benefits of increasing energy efficiency and conservation – coordinate with other tiers of government/boards of education
- Support local building industry by facilitating workshops on best practices for energy efficiency

**GOAL: REDUCE COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY 80% AND ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY FOR TOWN SOURCES BY 2050**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

- ❖ Adopt strategies to reduce the Community's cumulative greenhouse gas emissions
  - Develop an action plan to assist local government in becoming a "carbon neutral" corporation, with a maximum 10% of greenhouse gas emissions to be offset with carbon credits
    - Establish a three stage target: 20% below 2005 by 2016, 40% below 2005 by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050
  - Create a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan for the community with a target of 80% by 2050
    - Establish a three stage target: 6% below 2005 by 2016, 30% below 2005 by 2025 and 80% below 2005<sup>4</sup> by 2050
  - Engage experts in energy and emissions reduction to identify feasible technologies
  - In the short term chart the path towards carbon neutrality by 2050 in a comprehensive report, detailing the economic cost and benefits of such by each sector
  - Modify Official Plan, zoning by-laws and engineering standards and site plan guidelines to encourage a reduction in greenhouse gases

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<sup>4</sup> The year 2005 is selected as the base year, as it is the first year that comprehensive data is available since the amalgamation of the Town of Thornbury and the Township of Collingwood in 1998.

- Integrate greenhouse gas reduction into all aspects of Town operations and activities
- Establish and implement greenhouse gas reduction initiatives aimed at residents
- ❖ Transition to a fossil fuel free community
  - In the short term, develop an 'energy descent plan' to chart the path towards fossil fuel freedom by 2050 in a comprehensive report, detailing the economic cost and benefits of such by each sector

GOAL: ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR WASTES WITHIN REGIONAL BORDERS

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Sustainably manage waste generated within the community *as locally as possible*
- ❖ Explore alternatives to landfill to minimize the volume of wastes disposed on land, without adversely affecting local air quality
  - Determine the feasibility of establishing alternative facilities within The Blue Mountains or in partnership with other municipalities

GOAL: BECOME A COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS A MOVEMENT TOWARDS A ZERO WASTE SOCIETY

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Reduce Solid and Hazardous waste generation in the Community
  - Update the Town's Waste Reduction Action Plan with reduction targets reducing residential waste to 60% by 2015, 75% by 2025 and 85% by 2050
  - Explore incentives to encourage local organizations, businesses and industry to adopt provincially mandated Waste Reduction Action Plans
  - Expand on the success of existing reuse programs within the municipality.

- Create a permanent facility for the repair, exchange and/or sale of second-hand, reused goods
- Implement a permanent curbside organics program in urban areas throughout the municipality
- Develop local and regional waste diversion services specific to the industrial, institutional and commercial sectors
- Advocate to upper-tier governments to introduce stringent packaging regulations to eliminate packaging waste & continue implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Develop online waste exchange network
- ❖ Increase the Town's diversion rate through the implementation of various reduce, reuse and recycle programs
  - Support the creation of a diversity of recycling and re-use businesses and create jobs
  - Develop small-scale, localized educational composting centres linked with local gardening initiatives
  - Provide the information and tools necessary for residents to implement composting programs on their properties
- ❖ Educate all residents about product lifecycles to influence purchasing decisions
  - Develop and implement an outreach education program aimed at all sectors of the community on the need to reduce the purchase, use and disposal of hazardous wastes
  - Develop a program that educates the community about sustainable purchasing practices to assist with purchasing decisions that includes bartering, bulk buying, trade and exchange and encourage these practices



## COMMUNITY VIBRANCY





Set within the south eastern zone of Grey County, and bordering on the Georgian Bay, our community reflects a complex mix of influences ranging from our agricultural and resource-based rural roots, to a new and sophisticated population, migrating from urban and sub-urban centres, to gain the benefits of our four-seasons lifestyle.

Grey County’s mission recognizes that the County contains a family of distinct communities, which value heritage, natural beauty, a clean healthy environment, and rural lifestyle. Residents value freedom of the individual and the security of the “hometown” community. While we recognize that we are located within the primarily rural Grey County, we border on the County of Simcoe to the southwest, which is facing significant growth pressures from the expanding Greater Toronto Area.

Throughout the development of this Plan, participants continually identified the Town’s people, newcomers and founding residents, as being our greatest asset. We share a strong sense of the importance of family life, which underpins everything we do.

In 1998, the Town of Thornbury amalgamated with the Township of Collingwood to become The Town of The Blue Mountains. This amalgamation joined the rural valley communities and Villages of Clarksburg, Craigleith, Redwing, Duncan, Little Germany, Victoria Corners, Kolapore, Banks, Gibraltar, Castle Glen, Swiss Meadows, Camperdown, Ravenna, Loree, and Heathcote with the Georgian Bay- focused urban centre of Thornbury. In the past 10 years, newer developments have sprung up, such as Lora Bay and Intrawest’s Village at Blue – a four-season, destination offering the largest ski resort in Ontario.

Recognizing that there are many diverse communities within The Blue Mountains, and that a projected three thousand more people will make the area their home in the future

The Blue Mountains will thrive because...

We assume responsibility for the growth and safety of our Community, working together with our local government and Community Partners to sustain The Blue Mountains, all relentlessly pushing in a common direction, building momentum all the time like a flywheel one turn at a time.

#### Community Fast Facts

- Population: 6 825 permanent residents  
8040 part time residents (2006)
- A higher number of age 55+ residents than the Ontario average
- A lower number of age 25-29 residents
- 98% are Canadian citizens, with 89% speaking English as their mother tongue.
- Highly educated population – the highest level of intellectual capital in the region.
- Very low unemployment and poverty rates (4.2% unemployment rate)

\*Statistics are from the most recent Statscan survey (2006). Statistics are gained from the permanent population only.



(by 2031), it is paramount that we create a unique identity – The Blue Mountains Brand - that contributes to enhancing and sustaining the vibrancy of our Community.

This section, the largest in our plan, sets out 11 major themes for community vibrancy – covering topics as diverse as nurturing our sense of identity, ensuring that our built environment is sustainable, setting goals for sustainable infrastructure and transportation, and respecting and nurturing the value of our seniors, families and youth.

## THEME: COMMUNITY DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

The Blue Mountains communities and neighbourhoods each hold their own identities, mixing small town beauty and charm with rural lifestyles. With the continued influx of new residents and businesses, it is a priority to reflect and respect our different backgrounds and cultures – old and new, rural and urban, permanent and part-time. By working together, our residents, local government, businesses, and other partners will aid all members of our community in developing a unique sense of place. Through the creation of a unifying Blue Mountains Brand, we can promote this wonderful place to visitors and future residents, and nurture the unique identities of the communities within it to ensure our communities collectively thrive and prosper.

The Blue Mountains is...  
A friendly place committed to tolerance  
and cultural diversity, beaming with smiles  
and ringing sounds of laughter.

GOAL: ALL RESIDENTS AND THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IDENTIFY STRONGLY WITH THE BLUE MOUNTAINS' COMMUNITY CULTURE AND FEEL BOTH A SENSE OF PRIDE IN, AND A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR SUCCESS

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Promote social inclusion and equal opportunity for community involvement
  - Engage residents and community partners in developing and promoting a unique brand for The Blue Mountains that the entire community will identify with and promote
  - Establish a “Resource Group” of volunteers from as many different sectors as possible that can act as a forum for discussion and as a resource for anyone wanting to test the appeal of new or old ideas
  - Continue to build partnerships that bring residents, businesses and tourists together such as our Fall Fair, Olde Fashioned Christmas and Applefest

- Continue to promote The Blue Mountains, both internally and externally, as a green community, with more signage, attractive multi-unit containers for waste management (eg. at harbour area and trails) and improve our green identity
- ❖ Improve communications among residents and community partners
  - Create a “Community Guide Book” that informs all residents and visitors about the Town’s community services, recreational and tourism amenities, cultural amenities and volunteer opportunities
  - Create and publish a community calendar so that event planners can avoid conflicting dates
  - Conduct on-going usability testing on the Town’s webpage
  - Reintroduce community information bulletin boards at key places around the community
  - Led by local government, develop an ongoing community engagement and communication plan to deal with any cultural tensions and issues in the community, and to create an understanding of the benefit of partnering among community groups
- ❖ Support and enhance taxpayer supported services, and promote them to both the local population and tourists (e.g. Library, arena)
  - Ensure that the budget reflects a priority for existing services that continue to meet community needs
- ❖ Welcome new residents (full time, part time, seasonal renters) to the community
  - Interview new residents and realtors to identify information gaps
  - Create and distribute a package for new residents about The Blue Mountains, community services and amenities and locate the packages in key areas of the community and on the Town’s website
- ❖ Educate both tourists and residents about our community culture
  - Interview tourists and residents to discover recurring questions and information gaps

- Create information material that communicates our community culture (e.g. courtesy on the roads, especially for agricultural vehicles, horses, and horse drawn vehicles)
  - Create marketing materials, both printed and pictorial, that capture the history of our community (e.g. a video that will instil a sense of pride and belonging)
  - Create an oral history resource of our area through interviews with long-time residents. Including personal histories and stories
- ❖ Encourage local communities to establish unique identities within the umbrella identity of The Blue Mountains
- Meet with representatives from various communities to begin dialogue to identify the attractions and histories of each
  - Develop a marketing strategy that clearly identifies the different communities within The Blue Mountains that incorporates them within the overall umbrella of The Blue Mountains Brand
  - Create ways to market communities (e.g. historical driving/biking route through The Blue Mountains with stops at each attraction)
  - Create signage to advertise communities and their attractions that is visually consistent and linked to The Blue Mountains Brand
  - Open The Depot museum on weekends all year, when more people are available to visit (tourists and locals)
- ❖ Become known as the friendliest Town in Ontario
- ❖ Promote an appreciation for the working needs and contributions of the community's agricultural sector
- Organize farm tours, such as the current studio tours, in concert with other community events
  - Post additional signs on local roads reminding users to watch for farm vehicles
  - Investigate programs like Community Shared Agriculture (e.g. investment in agriculture)
  - Create a list of "where to buy local" and promote in community media



- Expand our farmers' market in Clarksburg
  - Solicit participation from the agricultural community in the Blue Mountains Library and Town's Green Fair
  - Take advantage of the "buy local" trends by creating signage in local restaurants to enable local residents and tourists to identify those participating
  - Ensure off-shore and seasonal workers have opportunities to participate in community events
- ❖ Ensure that our Economic Development Strategy supports community diversity

## THEME: COMMUNITY EVENTS AND VOLUNTEERISM

Community service and caring for our neighbours underpins the culture of the people of The Blue Mountains. A strong volunteer community exists within The Blue Mountains with numerous community groups and churches hosting community events, providing support to those in need and running social and cultural programs. The Town is very supportive of volunteering, and this appreciation is demonstrated annually during the Community Volunteer Awards. We must continue our efforts to draw together and work cooperatively, to expand the effects of our efforts.

The following goals have been developed to enhance community events and volunteering:

- To enhance community life and pride by providing a wide range of community events
- Service groups and agencies engage with each other and community members to enhance community life
- Facilitate a strong volunteer force to support community events and services

## GOAL: TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY LIFE AND PRIDE BY PROVIDING A WIDE RANGE OF COMMUNITY EVENTS

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Plan community events that appeal to a broad range of the population including our visitors
  - Create a group of Community Partners, including the Town, to promote and coordinate events throughout The Blue Mountains
  - Encourage community groups to co-sponsor and co-promote community events
  - Seek proposals for inter-generational programs and fund good ideas
  - Use the Resource Group as a sounding board for ideas and planning
  - Revive events from the past, support current events

- Survey community members for ideas and comments regarding future community events
- Promote activities such as: community gardens, planting a crop for Foodshare combined with a community supper, and family best ball (a 4 club limit golf tournament at Tomahawk)
- Consider accessibility issues when planning events
- Engage week-enders and part-time residents in community events

**GOAL: SERVICE GROUPS AND AGENCIES ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY LIFE**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Provide opportunities for community groups to learn about each other and the programs, services and events that they offer
  - Hold “idea and information exchange” workshops to identify unique and overlapping areas
  - Provide accurate and complete data for community services on the Town’s website and in marketing publications
  - Provide a forum for service groups and agencies to network in order to pool resources and partner for grants

**GOAL: FACILITATE A STRONG VOLUNTEER FORCE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SERVICES**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Support volunteer organizations within the community and facilitate connections between organizations
  - Engage the Faith Communities



- Create initiatives to encourage volunteerism
- Organizations needing volunteers will promote themselves to both youth and seniors and involve them in projects
- ❖ Support the community's volunteer organizations in their efforts to recruit, retain and recognize volunteers
  - Support and expand the Chamber of Commerce's community volunteer bureau
  - Establish a volunteer web portal that can be accessed by organizations to recruit volunteers
  - Continue to provide forums where volunteers can be recognized for their community contributions (e.g. Order of the Blue Mountains)
  - The local government and businesses will encourage and enable employees to volunteer their time in our community
  - Create a communications strategy that achieves the expansion, recognition and promotion of volunteer opportunities

## THEME: BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING FOR ALL

Land use policies and plans are needed to ensure that our urban areas continue to support healthy and vibrant communities. County and local government land use plans are guided by the Provincial Policy Statement, issued under Ontario's Planning Act in 2005 that promotes "Complete Communities". "Complete communities" are areas that are connected to others by public transit, and provide a mixture of housing at all income levels. Through their design, stores, recreation areas, employment areas, schools, and other essential amenities are located within walking or cycling distance of people's homes. They are as self-sufficient as possible.

Housing affordability is a key issue in the community. Income levels are reportedly higher than the national average and thus the demand for high-end housing. Young families and workers who support our vibrant tourism, retail and agricultural industries are facing a shortage of attainable housing<sup>5</sup>. The ideal housing mix would contain attainable entry level housing both rental and purchase), then moving up to larger homes, right through to smaller, senior friendly suites.

It is our desire to retain and attract more young adults and families. To this end, it is vital that the Local Government continues to move forward and ensure that attainable housing is available. The ongoing Housing Study will enable this issue to be fully discussed and addressed in the future, and will provide the foundation for us to create mixed use

The Blue Mountains is.

A community built with pedestrian friendly designs that encourage walking and cycling, with urban and architectural designs that respect our history and with energy and water wise designs, all with the future in mind.

### Quick Facts:

- The Town anticipates its permanent population to increase by 38.5% from 2006 to 2031 (from 7,000 to 9,700)
- In 2006, there were 8,040 part-time residents and 6,825 full-time residents.
- Settlement areas in 2006 consisted of 4,183 hectares, an increase of 54% from the 2001 area.
- Efforts to create more attainable housing stock are underway through the Town's Affordable Housing Committee.

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<sup>5</sup> "Attainable Housing" means ensuring that housing is available for people of all income levels

neighbourhoods, with a wide range of housing, for all income levels, and convenient access to necessary services.

The following goals have been identified for this theme:

- Build strong neighbourhoods through sustainable neighbourhood design
- Encourage a mix of housing types and uses accommodating the need for attainable housing for families and seniors
- Promote smart use of recycled and re-used materials within the built environment and provide for new technologies in waste management
- Protect, Preserve and Enhance agricultural, natural and environmentally sensitive lands
- Require a mix of housing types and uses accommodating the need for attainable housing for all income groups

**Housing Statistics:**

- In 2006, our Town had over 5,600 private dwellings - 52% of which were occupied by permanent residents and 48% occupied by part-time residents
- 290 new residences were constructed in 2007 and 2008, of which 84.2% are single detached homes.
- Our house prices are roughly 33% higher than the average in Ontario,
- Only 50 social housing units are available in the Town for adults and seniors

**GOAL: BUILD STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Build compact neighbourhoods with maximum and minimum density regulations within select areas of the community
  - Revise the Official Plan and new Zoning by-law to create new policies that increase the minimum density in several new developments
  - Revise planning and development processes to tier development charges to lot and/or dwelling sizes
- ❖ Provide alternative transportation infrastructure
  - Include pedestrian and cyclist friendly design in development standards

- Connect active transportation links to local and regional transportation systems
- ❖ Evaluate and enhance urban canopy to better utilize nature to promote increased energy efficiency in built environment
  - Implement green space policies in development standards to ensure native plantings of shade trees particularly around park and play areas
- ❖ Protect and preserve natural environment and green space within walking distance of neighbourhoods
  - Revise the Official Plan and zoning by-laws to strengthen the protection of the natural heritage areas by implementing minimum buffer areas around natural heritage features;
  - Maintain the existing “green space” character of The Blue Mountains
- ❖ Ensure that residents of new neighbourhoods have self-propelled access (walking, biking) to community services such as food, financial, recreation, education, and culture.
- ❖ Improve energy efficiencies to offset any increases in energy demand as a result of growth and development in the municipality. Promote energy efficiency and conservation practices in both existing and new buildings
  - Require all new developments to incorporate a *minimum* number of energy conservation measures and/or renewable energy elements that reduce the overall environmental footprint of the proposed development
    - Establish and mandate *minimum* building standards of LEED Silver (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), or equivalent, for all newly built municipally owned buildings
    - Create a tiered incentive system for developments that implement additional energy conservation initiatives beyond the required minimum
  - Establish building standards to promote the most achievable EnerGuide ratings in new homes, while ensuring that energy-wise housing is affordable
  - Establish and/or promote existing incentives (e.g. rebates, density bonusing) for the public and industry to increase energy efficiency when renovating or adding to existing buildings, and in new buildings

- Incorporate all feasible green building design principles and building materials into new Town buildings and major renovations of Town properties
- Use Town building projects as green demonstration sites
- Offer incentives to builders who can demonstrate that green/natural building techniques are used
- ❖ Require low-impact development approach to site development that incorporates water conservation and preservation measures

GOAL: PROMOTE SMART USE OF RECYCLED AND RE-USED MATERIALS WITHIN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PROVIDE FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Promote natural building techniques
  - Promote the use of alternative, natural building materials (Durosil or straw/clay)
  - Offer incentives to natural building by reducing permit fees
- ❖ Charge additional fees for disposal of recyclable/reusable materials. Manage landfill materials more efficiently
- ❖ Reduce materials such as wood, gypsum, concrete, steel from our landfill
- ❖ Implement a web-based *materials exchange network* to enable homeowners to have access to materials
  - Develop networks with building materials companies to encourage recycling
  - Develop and implement programs (sorting technologies, etc) for the processing of sorted construction and demolition waste to increase diversion of this particular waste stream

- Explore incentives for construction and demolition projects to maximize reuse of building materials. Refuse unsorted construction waste at Town landfill site and require copies of weigh bill(s) to have building/demolition permit security deposit(s) refunded to ensure construction/demolition waste is sorted properly
- ❖ Encourage industry to utilize re-used and recycled materials
  - Encourage establishment of local recycling business (e.g. gypsum)
  - Encourage establishment of recycled building materials businesses (e.g. counter tops made from recycled glass and concrete)
  - Explore partnerships with companies that specialize in recycling building materials (e.g. The New West Gypsum Recycling Inc.)
  - Continue to work with local retailers to promote green building goods and services

**GOAL: PROTECT, PRESERVE AND ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

- ❖ Promote an increase in density within settlement areas to mitigate and reduce need to expand development into agricultural, natural and environmentally sensitive lands
  - Review the Official Plan and policies to consider new zoning by-law standards to allow secondary residential units within existing stock, and introduce variable density zones
  - Adjust planning and engineering standards to allow intensification in core areas to encourage active transportation, such as bike parking in lieu of car parking requirements and maintaining urban trails in the winter
  - Consider development charge by-law provisions that would exempt (or vastly reduce) fees for additional units on lots of record
- ❖ Enhance existing built environments to reduce pressure to develop outside defined settlement area boundaries

- Ensure adequate capacity at Town's water supply systems and wastewater collection/treatment systems to allow planned developments to proceed
- Town to investigate alternative technologies and policies with regards to development standards to meet this goal
- Extend services in existing built areas to promote intensity and development within urban boundaries
- ❖ Inform and educate the public on the benefits of infilling, intensification and density increases in an effort to decrease NIMBYism as a roadblock to change and expansion within existing urban built areas
  - At public meetings – educate the public on how these approaches conform to the provincial policy, Official Plan and Our Sustainable Path to provide a context
  - Provide 1-page synopsis report to help educate the public on policy considerations
  - Town to seek the support of upper-tiers of government in promoting intensification practice
  - Town Staff to support intensification practices to the public, council and commenting agencies as warranted

**GOAL: REQUIRE A MIX OF HOUSING TYPES AND USES ACCOMMODATING THE NEED FOR ATTAINABLE HOUSING FOR ALL INCOME GROUPS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

- ❖ Increase attainable housing stock
  - Develop an attainable housing strategy to provide an adequate supply of housing that is accessible to all income levels (rental and ownership)
  - The Town's Affordable Housing Committee to explore avenues of revenue to establish an affordable housing fund (e.g. lot levy based on square footage, and certain user fees for service)

- Proactively acquire suitable housing stock for retrofit to multiple housing units with attainable rents suitable for low income persons, seniors and/or persons with disabilities
  - Ensure housing stock meets accessibility standards
  - Obtain a Town “fast track” policy commitment for attainable housing projects
  - Assess current housing policies and adjust to allow for more rental housing as needed and implement a “rent-to-own” housing option
- ❖ Increase housing densities within selected existing and future built areas to enable families in all income groups to live together as neighbours
- Consider new zoning by-law regulations to further enable and require multi-residential and/or smaller footprint housing
  - Promote mixed use developments with pedestrian friendly transportation infrastructure
  - Develop mixed use development planning policy within the Town Official Plan
  - Encourage Official Plan amendments that permit accessory apartments within existing housing
  - Encourage housing development that attracts a diverse mix of people and income levels
  - Encourage Official Plan amendments for residential units above commercial developments. Consider incentive plans such as waiving all or a portion of parking in levy
  - Encourage reclamation and development of “brown lands” sites (formerly used industrial sites) and infill properties to promote walkability to urban centres
- ❖ Prioritize support for the work of the Affordable Housing Committee and provide needed resources
- Support the Town’s Affordable Housing Committee to identify and acquire properties
  - Create building plans that meet housing objectives



- Network with other South Georgian Bay and County housing committees
- Research and adopt best practices in other communities
- Partner with builder/developer willing to start as funding permits
- ❖ Promote partnerships with housing agencies to increase the supply of attainable housing
  - Explore the acquisition of an “Options for Homes” franchise
  - Meet with Habitat For Humanity Regional Director to coordinate future activity
  - Identify and recruit a high visibility project director to spearhead development
- ❖ Create the political and community will to move attainable housing development forward
  - Develop and implement a thoughtful anti-NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) education program
  - Hold an education training program for elected leaders
  - Host an intergovernmental workshop on contemporary attainable housing for developers, buildings and social leaders within the community
  - Arrange a tour of successful attainable housing developments in other communities

## THEME: ACCESSIBLE AND INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Moving people from their homes to school, work and recreational pursuits has been identified as a high priority for The Blue Mountains as we continue to grow. Getting connected within our area, to surrounding regions and the Greater Toronto Area is of paramount importance if we are to achieve our vision and goals to be a sustainable community. Similar to many rural communities that are distant from major cities, our livelihoods are almost completely dependent on the automobile for our transportation, as there is no public transit available in our community. According to Statistics Canada, only 6.7% walked or biked to their places of employment in 2006.

The Town has developed a robust and well-maintained road network that connects to County Roads and to Provincial Highway 26 that runs along the Nottawasaga Bay shoreline from Collingwood, through Craigeleith and Thornbury to Meaford and beyond. Provincially routed traffic on Highway 26 causes safety and traffic congestion issues, particularly in downtown Thornbury. While an essential transportation corridor, this highway limits our ability to achieve our sustainable future, particularly in its current location as it forms a barrier to accessing our amenities for those walking and cycling.

Currently an excellent network of trails exists with 296 kilometers of trails and cycling routes in The Blue Mountains. Notable components of this regionally coordinated network include the Georgian Trail and Bruce Trail, which span several municipalities. Recent initiatives to connect a trail from Slabtown, along the Beaver River to Thornbury are underway. A significant amount of expertise and commitment exists within the Town to ensure that, in the future, the trail networks are improved and enhanced. Implementing an enhanced trail network would assist the community in achieving its greenhouse gas emission targets. On-street bicycle lanes in certain parts of the Town also exist. This network is currently designed primarily for leisure activities, rather than satisfying daily transportation needs. The Town has also experimented with providing the free use of bicycles for visitors to Thornbury. The use of alternative transportation methods (to the automobile) to get around will be challenging due to the rural nature of the community, snow and ice conditions during five months of the year, and the distances between settlements. For example a bicycle ride from Craigeleith to Thornbury would take approximately 30 minutes, and a walk would take approximately 4 hours.

With the focus shifting to sustainable, connected communities, our future efforts will focus on achieving a hierarchy of transportation modes that are accessible to all. We will begin at the neighbourhood level with the encouragement of self-propelled transportation (walking, biking),

evaluate opportunities over the short and longer term for public transportation and create transportation hubs that connect to trails and car pool lots. Our broader focus is on connecting our area to the adjacent regions and the GTA through efficient public rail and bus systems. Public transportation system must facilitate passengers bringing bicycles along for the ride.

Our decisions will take into account the level of services that is needed to sustain the community's growth, while minimizing the ecological and economic impact of these decisions.

Strategies and actions have been developed for the following goals:

- Eliminate provincially significant traffic passing through the urban areas of the municipality
- Develop an integrated public transportation system
- Improve access to the area for a wide range of tourists

#### GOAL: ELIMINATE PROVINCIALY SIGNIFICANT TRAFFIC PASSING THROUGH THE URBAN AREAS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

##### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop a new long term Provincial Highway Corridor Strategy through the community
  - Continually urge the Province and their Ministry of Transportation to identify any future highway corridors
  - Encourage the Province to commit the funds to purchase any new corridors and the building of new highway infrastructure
  - Develop interim strategies to mitigate Highway 26 traffic through Thornbury in order to establish a congestion-free downtown

#### GOAL: DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

##### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Provide Public transportation that would better connect The Bleu Mountains internally and regionally

- The Town will demonstrate leadership and promote, to Grey County and the Province of Ontario, transportation programs which emphasize alternatives to car use
- Explore the implementation of a public transit system between the Thornbury, Clarksburg and the Craigeleith areas for implementation within the next decade. Vehicles should be as carbon-neutral as possible and practical
- Study future alternative transportation infrastructure requirements (e.g. electric car charging depots)
- Establish joint municipal transit agreement between neighbouring areas
- In the shorter term, consider using school buses or other vehicles that are idle during parts of the day or evening
- In the longer term, establish a reliable, convenient, central system with frequent transit/bus/light rail service
- ❖ Create strategies for car pooling and shuttles
  - Enhance Town parking lots to accommodate recreation parking and carpooling to and from employment.
  - Create a transportation hub or shuttle system at the community Centre to minimize downtown traffic
  - Connect to bus schedules
  - Investigate programs like Carshare ([hamiltoncarshare.ca](http://hamiltoncarshare.ca)) and Rideshare
  - License “on call shuttle service” and invite employers and land developers to participate
  - Develop incentive program for employers and employees to encourage mass transportation
  - Collaborate with partners (e.g. Chamber, businesses in The Blue Mountains, Collingwood, and Meaford), to develop a car pooling plan to provide limited transportation between communities
- ❖ Create and implement policies to ensure accessibility and user safety for all transportation venues and all users
- ❖ Develop an Active Transportation Plan

- Address connectivity/linkages of walking/cycling routes, density and commercial/residential mix, to increase walkable/cycleable access to daily amenities, safety and accessibility
  - Revise the new Official Plan and zoning by-law to require all new developments to provide bicycle and pedestrian pathways and linkages, to provide residents with access to daily amenities
  - Consider plans and programs to create bicycle and pedestrian pathways and linkages in existing neighbourhoods
  - Enhance current “shared bicycle” program for all residents in the Thornbury/Clarksburg/Craigleith area. Battery powered, motor assisted bicycles will be included for seniors and others with reduced capabilities
  - Establish bike lanes on all new road construction within The Blue Mountains
  - Improve bike lane connectivity, including looping trails to support greenhouse gas reduction initiatives
  - Develop incentives for trail connectivity. Provide property tax exemptions for easements over private lands
  - Initiate Local government-led transportation policies and programs which de-emphasize automobile use and promote public transit, bicycle use, walking and other non-carbon dioxide releasing forms of transportation
- ❖ Improve trail networks, awareness and accessibility
- Establish a Master Trail Plan within the Active Transportation Plan
  - Enhance safety and aesthetics of walking and cycling routes
  - Improve signage and coordinate with other municipalities and regional governments
  - Include trail maps on website and distribute throughout the community and tourism offices
  - Ensure trail connections link to higher forms of public transportation.
  - Ensure bike and walking trail network is included in development agreements and connective trails are completed
  - Create parking areas to access trails

- Create secure climate protected bike lockup areas

GOAL: IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE AREA FOR A WIDE RANGE OF TOURISTS

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Enhance connections to the existing major rail and road networks
  - Assess the feasibility and work with regional and senior levels of government to enhance the regional transportation infrastructure, including consideration of the following:
    - Extension of Highways 410 and 427
    - Connect with GO transit system
    - Establish a Barrie to Collingwood rail system
    - Establish a rail system from Toronto to Collingwood
  - Consider economic benefits versus environmental goals when determining The Blue Mountain's support for regional airports

## THEME: MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER SERVICES

The treatment and management of wastewater and storm water is an integral part of our responsible management of precious water resources. The local government maintains an effective and efficient municipal wastewater system that meets all provincial water quality requirements. Each resident and business within The Blue Mountains is responsible for ensuring that they care for their lakes and rivers, by avoiding disposal of undesirable items in the wastewater stream. Through education, and the promotion of collection and recycling of these products (e.g. waste oil, detergents, pesticides and cleaning agents), widespread ecosystem and community health, along with economic benefits can be realized.

Wastewater treatment is handled by the municipally owned Craigleith and Thornbury Waste Water Treatment Plants, as well as by many privately owned septic systems. A total of 1,826,423 cubic metres of wastewater were treated in 2009. The Craigleith Plant underwent an Environmental Assessment to expand the rated capacity to accommodate growth from developments in Castle Glen, Osler and areas in Collingwood. The Town is considering how best to bring both water and sewer services to Clarksburg. Sewage services are provided throughout existing Thornbury, and currently run to the original Thornbury/Clarksburg Townline. Source control best management practices are encouraged for stormwater management. Plans are required for all major developments (e.g. resorts, golf courses, etc.) and as part of plans for subdivisions.

A key goal of The Blue Mountains Sustainable Path is to optimize the municipal wastewater and stormwater systems.

## GOAL: OPTIMIZE THE MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER SYSTEMS

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Continue investing in best technologies
  - Ensure any plant or infrastructure construction, replacement or upgrade is completed using best available and practicable technology to maximize life cycle value

- Ensure wastewater treatment plants are producing high quality treated effluent to ensure compliance with appropriate standards
- Encourage the reuse of treated water, water effluent and grey water where practical
- Encourage regular testing of septic systems and wells to ensure groundwater protection
- ❖ Reduce and eliminate undesirable products in sewage systems
  - Review and update sewer use by-law to address industrial, commercial and institutional discharges, as necessary
  - Implement a community-based education, awareness and marketing strategy and other initiatives to reduce or eliminate undesirable products in the wastewater stream
  - Promote the collection and recycling of these undesirable products
- ❖ Storm Water Management
  - Work collaboratively with other municipalities and the senior levels of government to develop new approaches and innovations to implement integrated storm water management plans that prioritize reduction and reuse over treatment and retention
  - Ensure that the Town's Engineering Standards reflect best practices and require designs that maximize infiltration of storm water into each local site



## THEME: HEALTHY, ACTIVE COMMUNITY AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE

A healthy community is an active community that has access to appropriate levels of health care for all its population. Health is a state of physical, mental, and social well being that allows people to realize their fullest potential.

Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living presents four key strategies to make healthy eating and active living easier for all Ontarians, including growing healthy children and youth, building healthy communities, championing healthy public policy and promoting public awareness and engagement.

A key threat to the health and wellbeing of our community is the emergence of high obesity levels in our youth. There are a number of programs in the area that are targeted towards nutrition. The Grey Bruce Health Unit promotes healthy living and nutrition by serving as an information resource for residents as well as running several programs to assist the community and specifically children to eat nutritiously. This goal is not only essential for the health of our population in Blue Mountains, but it is also an economic priority to promote awareness and access to locally produced food. As such, there is a need for a cohesive nutritious food program, which includes the promotion and marketing of food to all segments of our community – both urban and rural - with an emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income families. The municipality has indicated its desire to assist with health promotion initiatives and programs (e.g. healthy eating courses and cooking classes). It is currently not fully understood how well our existing programs reach the population in need.

Ample recreational opportunities exist within the area, including hiking, biking, skiing, golf and many more, which attract large number of tourists. There are active and growing sports programs in The Blue Mountains, including both hockey and soccer, which play a major role in the activities for our children and youth. The Town's Strategic Plan supports this goal and makes provisions for "Supporting the development of social and recreational programs to meet the broad range of needs in the community". Our Official Plan has specific objectives regarding maintaining existing recreational uses and establishing new recreational facilities.

The Blue Mountains has.

An active vibrant people  
with healthy bodies and minds  
who epitomize the meaning  
of a quality lifestyle.

An assessment of leisure facilities and programming is provided in the Leisure Activities Plan and uses participant-based guidelines, where possible, as the basis for its needs analysis. It is crucial that community needs continue to be identified and monitored, to ensure that the facilities and programming offered by the Town and volunteer organizations continues to be adaptable to changing community needs.

#### Existing Facilities

- 3 recreation centres
- 1 Library
- 296 kms of trails
- Bike lanes on roads in some areas

Three hospitals in nearby municipalities service The Blue Mountains: the Meaford General Hospital (54 beds), Markdale Hospital (18 beds), and the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital (76 beds, 24-hour emergency wing). Regional services are provided by the Owen Sound Regional Hospital, as well as the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie. Many local and regional organizations and groups provide community-based services. Mental Health and Addiction Services in Grey-Bruce Counties is a collaborative effort of service provider organizations providing adult mental health and addiction programs. Support groups and organizations are available to members of the community who suffer from alcohol and/or drug abuse, withdrawal management, gambling, and other youth addictions. Crisis and distress services cover children suffering from abuse, sexual assault and women's services, as well as victims of crime and tragic circumstances. Services for mental health include community treatment teams, family and legal support services, and leisure activities programs for adults with serious mental illness.

We have developed 4 goals for this theme, which are to:

- Ensure that all residents have access to healthy, nutritious foods
- Secure facilities and programming that are adaptable to changing community needs
- Provide accessible and equitable health care services to all residents
- Explore alternative mechanisms to provide health care

GOAL: ENSURE THAT ALL RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS FOODS

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Develop and enhance existing community food programs
  - Evaluate impact of existing food programs
  - Develop a plan to enhance community food programs, and gain support from residents
  - Initiate a community kitchen program
  - Develop programs targeted at vulnerable populations
- ❖ Develop and enhance local food networks to increase accessibility in all neighbourhoods
  - Enhance the local “farmer’s markets” network to be considered as part of daily amenities
  - Develop and implement the “community gardens” concept
  - Revise Official Plan and Zoning by-law where needed to ensure support of community gardens and fresh food markets in new and existing developments

GOAL: SECURE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING THAT ARE ADAPTABLE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Implement a demographic and age-based approach to program development and advocacy
  - Develop a demographic-based recreational needs strategy based on future demand (including youth, families, seniors and elders)

- Increase availability and access to age-specific social services, recreational/physical education facilities and programs for youth, seniors and elders.
- ❖ Secure continued revenue sources to sustain local recreational programming
  - Build a collaborative framework to leverage resources and grant applications to support local recreational initiatives
  - Consider a recreation levy on property taxes that can be waived through community volunteer hours
- ❖ Enhance public and private partnerships in recreation and programming
  - Create synergies between municipal and private recreational services
  - Develop a discount program for local residents to improve access to amenities

## GOAL: PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE AND EQUITABLE HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO ALL RESIDENTS

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Promote Health Prevention Programs in the community
- ❖ Develop an integrated community health plan tailored to meet the needs of our rural community
  - Collaborate with health service providers to develop an integrated community-based health services plan/strategy incorporating health prevention, mental and physical health.
  - Assess current levels of awareness of health services within The Blue Mountains
- ❖ Ensure access to health services
  - Identify real and perceived barriers to accessing health care services within The Blue Mountains



- Develop a physician recruitment and retention plan
- Ensure 911 calls are handled by customer service representatives familiar with the community
- Discuss emergency medical service response with the County to continually improve service and identify improvement opportunities
- Collaborate with Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) to better understand how to remove barriers to health care
- Establish community partnerships to implement a sophisticated physician recruitment and retention program
- Consider the needs of the growing retirement community
- Develop transportation system if services are not available locally
- Enhance the use of technology based communication to improve access to specialized health

GOAL: EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE MECHANISMS

STRATEGY AND ACTION:

- ❖ Encourage alternative health care providers and practitioners to locate within The Blue Mountains
- ❖ Encourage professional health care providers to communicate the importance of holistic care for our residents

## THEME: AN EDUCATED COMMUNITY

Education is a cornerstone of community development. The types, characteristics, supply and reach of educational opportunities that are and will be locally available have a direct impact in the sustainable development of The Blue Mountains.

The current demand for primary and secondary education is serviced within the region. At the elementary level, The Beaver Valley Community School in Thornbury had an enrollment of 479 students for the 2007/08 school year. This school is a vital part of our community and it is critical that it continues to serve our population. Secondary level students commute (by school bus or car) to either Meaford or Collingwood to attend secondary school. The Blue Mountains is served by the Bluewater Board of Education, which is responsible for public schools. Catholic schools (in Collingwood) fall under the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. The Simcoe County District School Board runs The Learning Centres, offering lifelong learning courses for adults. Locally, the Beaver Valley Association for Lifelong Learning provides opportunities for people to gain knowledge, expand horizons, and fulfill the desire for learning throughout their lives. The Association organizes lecture series by scholars and professionals in their field of study. Opportunities exist for these educational bodies to reinforce communication and coordination to better serve the local population. In terms of higher education, Georgian College is actively seeking to expand its program offerings in the area, and can see the merit in locating in The Blue Mountains, subject to property availability and improved accessibility by local transit.

Our community has a very highly educated population compared to the rest of Ontario. As such, there is a continual demand for lifelong learning opportunities, and a very rich pool of expertise to provide mentoring and information educational opportunities. It is a priority to ensure that provision of both formal and informal education is available within and adjacent to the Town. Of particular importance is the need to create post-secondary learning opportunities and facilities to promote the attraction and retention of youth. By investigating the various types of educational institutions available, the municipality will be able to identify which are best suited to contribute to the formal and informal learning of those in the community. Formal learning could include school programs, distance learning, professional learning, and learning to enhance personal fulfillment.

The following goals have been developed to assist us in continuing to be an educated community:

- All residents shall have access to education opportunities that assist in attaining life-long learning aspirations

- All residents have a heightened awareness of the education opportunities available
- Achieve collaboration, co-ordination and communications among many education-related organizations and groups
- Establish a local education facility

**GOAL: ALL RESIDENTS SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT ASSIST IN ATTAINING LIFE-LONG LEARNING ASPIRATIONS**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop a strategy to enhance educational opportunities for the community
- ❖ Provide all residents with opportunities for life-long learning
- ❖ Ensure educational information and opportunities are easily accessible to users in a single location
- ❖ Promote and encourage distance education
- ❖ Consider expanding the Library Services to include education services, such as distance education
- ❖ Educate children through interactive programming with seniors
- ❖ Provide transportation for students to get to educational facilities where transportation is identified as a barrier to access

GOAL: ALL RESIDENTS HAVE A HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF THE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Ensure all residents can be easily informed of the education opportunities in the area
  - Develop an up-to-date education directory
  - Distribute educational information and ensure that it is readily accessible to users
  - Provide an introductory letter to set up a meet and greet session for new residents
  - Increase awareness of educational opportunities available locally

GOAL: ACHIEVE COLLABORATION, CO-ORDINATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AMONG MANY EDUCATION-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Within 1 year, establish a forum for stakeholders to meet and discuss educational needs that are identified and acted on quickly
- ❖ Create a community learning network with stakeholders and groups
- ❖ Convene a local government-led forum for stakeholders to meet and discuss educational needs and literacy
- ❖ Promote and enhance outdoor education opportunities among schools, agriculture organizations, outdoor educators and tourist organizations



GOAL: ESTABLISH A LOCAL EDUCATION FACILITY

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- Conduct a feasibility study to consider the need, type and nature of a local education facility. Consider: Arts Centre, Agricultural Centre, Centre of Excellence, Culinary School, Ecotourism, Hospitality Management, etc.
- Consider economic diversity and the needs of the employment business and industrial community

## THEME: OUR CARING AND SAFE COMMUNITY

The Blue Mountains takes pride in our close-knitted social fabric that includes several layers of community support networks ranging from public to non-profit and volunteered-based organization. There are a variety of social and support programs in the Grey Bruce Region such as local food banks and church programs. The main food bank in community is the Beaver Valley Outreach Emergency Needs Food Bank in Thornbury. Grey County Housing is responsible for the direct management of 888 social housing units at 32 sites in ten communities in the County. Two of those sites are in Thornbury with a total of 60 units for adults and seniors. The County also administers Provincial affordable housing funding for affordable homeownership, rental units, and social housing renovations and retrofits.

The Blue Mountains is.  
A caring society that provides  
for, and integrates those in  
need into our society.

By developing programs that support social inclusion, we will become a community that is responsive to all members of society.

The Community Partners will plan for the needs of the aging demographic shift within The Blue Mountains. While this community remains an attractive retirement destination, there is a need to provide the specialized services for seniors and elders that this generation will surely require.

Our sustainable community will continue to have the strength of the family unit at our core. We will ensure that young families have access to desirable living conditions and the necessary services to ensure our wellbeing.

Our community is one of the safest in Ontario. The Collingwood and The Blue Mountains Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) provide police services. The OPP offers a number of community programs and services such as Crime Stoppers, 911, and driver safety. The total crime rate in The Blue Mountains was 13 incidents per 1000 people in 2007 with no youth offences. Grey County provides emergency and ambulance services. Two fire halls are located here and a mix of full time and volunteer firefighters provides fire protection services. The Council's 2009 Priorities focused on enhancing fire services and completing a Master Fire Plan. The Master Fire Plan proposes changes to ensure

that Fire Services are positioned with adequate resources to provide a safe, quality service to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. A key component of the Plan is public education and prevention measures.

In order to remain an accessible and safe community, we need to consider the needs and abilities of all those who reside here. As a community, we will strive to identify and remove any barriers that would limit a person's participation in community life.

The Blue Mountains continues to be a caring and safe environment for all people and we will strive to meet the following goals:

- All residents shall have access to community services that meet psychological, social and physical needs that promote long-term prosperity within a safe and secure community
- To meet the social and community service needs of our seniors
- Meet the social, employment and community service needs of our families
- Encourage youth to remain in, or to return to, the community
- Provide adequate daycare services within the community
- Develop and implement programs that address long-term systemic social issues
- Foster a safe environment for all members of the community considering their particular risk factors and needs

**GOAL: ALL RESIDENTS SHALL HAVE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT MEET PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS THAT PROMOTE LONG-TERM PROSPERITY WITHIN A SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY**

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#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Establish partnerships to deliver social services not covered by Grey County
  - Research initiatives in other communities
  - Set up a formal, ongoing partnership with Beaver Valley Outreach to assist the Local government with social services not covered by Grey County
  - Enhance relationships with local agencies that provide relief to those in crisis

- Ensure that the Local government is receiving all eligible services
- ❖ Enhance integration and communication among various social service agencies
  - Establish annual conference with participation of all the local and regional service agencies to promote communication and collaboration
- ❖ Enhance the Local Government's current support for community agencies whose mandate includes supporting vulnerable populations
  - Enhance the Town Communications Officer's responsibility and mandate to include support to these agencies
- ❖ Provide affordable safe transportation services for vulnerable populations
  - Develop a strategy to offset transportation costs associated with recreational, education, daily amenities and employment opportunities and activities
- ❖ Maintain, enhance and develop funding opportunities for recreational opportunities
  - Provide a variety of affordable or no cost recreational activities
- ❖ Promote 2-1-1 service (a comprehensive informational phone service that provides information on local services) to all residents

**GOAL: MEET THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS OF OUR SENIORS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Ensure there is a variety of programs for seniors that meet their needs
  - Undertake a comprehensive assessment to determine seniors' social and community service needs and develop an Action Plan to provide desirable services
  - Develop a partnership between the BVO, the Town and other community groups to monitor seniors' needs

- Engage seniors in community dialogues, storytelling and volunteerism
- Provide educational activities and facilities for seniors
- Encourage seniors to mentor others (e.g. retired-CEOs clubs)

GOAL: TO MEET THE SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS OF OUR FAMILIES

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Provide a diverse mix and range of housing types to meet the needs of our current and future populations
- ❖ Attract families to live and stay in our community by offering accessible recreation and education programs
- ❖ Create the Economic Development Strategy to target the creation of well-paying jobs
- ❖ Establish a comprehensive development program focused on employment, education and life skills

GOAL: ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO REMAIN IN, OR RETURN TO, OUR COMMUNITY

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Create employment and training opportunities for youth
  - Encourage businesses and local agencies to develop employment and training opportunities for our youth (e.g. co-op, internships, apprenticeships, Passport to Restaurant Careers)
  - Liaise with Blue Water School Board and other agencies (e.g. Tracks, YMCA)
  - Support existing youth agency efforts

- ❖ Create a communications strategy to stay connected as a community, with youth who are attending post-secondary education or otherwise have left The Blue Mountains, either temporarily or permanently
- ❖ Ensure availability of affordable accommodation and housing
  - Include the youth's needs in the Town's housing policies and strategies
- ❖ Provide activities and opportunities for youth
  - The Town to continue to support and fund a full time Youth Coordinator position
  - Encourage youth to grow and sell their own produce at the Farmer's Markets
  - Involve students in development of a marketing film to promote The Blue Mountains
  - Encourage youth to participate in the implementation of Our Sustainable Path

**GOAL: PROVIDE ADEQUATE DAYCARE SERVICES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

- ❖ Enhance affordable daycare spaces for all ages with extended availability
  - Assess current daycare services within the Town and identify gaps
  - Develop plan to fill service gaps
  - Provide daycare for children from 0-4 years

GOAL: FOSTER A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY CONSIDERING THEIR PARTICULAR RISK FACTORS AND NEEDS

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Ensure accessibility to services throughout the local built environment
  - Establish accessibility-conscious signage throughout the community
  - Build sidewalks where needed
- ❖ Build awareness of needs of groups under particular risk factors
  - Undertake a safety risk assessment of all built, natural and social aspects of the community
    - Identify any applicable legislation and best practices for measuring community safety
    - Identify gaps in safety and take action to resolve
- ❖ Maintain and enhance fire, security and emergency services and public safety
  - Continue support of fire services and our volunteer firefighters
  - Focus on Fire Prevention and other life safety programs
  - Work closely with Grey County to ensure high quality emergency services in the community
  - Market The Blue Mountains as a safe community and apply for Safe Community Designation
  - Promote safe indoor environments by encouraging the use of environmentally friendly products and green building design



- Work with the cycling community to create long-term solutions to increase the safety of cyclists on the roads. Erect directional signage from roads to the Georgian Trail for bikers, walkers, etc.
- Resolve neighbourhood disturbance and safety issues with vacant homes and tourist rentals
- Continue to support environmental initiatives to improve air and water quality and to protect sensitive land areas
- Work with the municipality, OPP and community stakeholders to implement community policing initiatives such as Community Watch, Neighbourhood Watch, Block Parents and Rudolph Ride



## THEME: ENGAGING YOUTH IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

The young people in The Blue Mountains are creative, resourceful, fun loving and intelligent. They have been raised with good, strong family values. Our youth have created social networks, enjoy our recreational services and natural amenities, and they love our community for its natural setting, freedom of spirit, and outdoors opportunities. In light of the heavy focus on tourism, retail services and agriculture employment, well-paying, employment opportunities are not sufficiently available to enable many of our young people to stay and raise their families here.

Over one quarter of our population is made up of young adults under 30. Over the past decade, with the advent of electronic and mobile communications and Web 2.0, younger people are using electronic social networks. These networks present such a distinctly different form of communications and relationship building that it has become even more important that we find ways to recognize the value our community's places on youth, and how vital it is that we find ways to provide them with interesting employment, social, cultural and recreation opportunities.

This can be achieved by working together with our partners to develop internship programs, summer job placements, mentorships, and other occupational support programs.

To stay attune to the needs and wants of our youth population, effective communication must exist between youth and Town Council. In order to facilitate this discussion, a Youth Council has been organized. The goal of the Youth Council is to encourage youth to get involved in the community while simultaneously making the community more youth-friendly. To further enhance communication amongst youth, social media will be utilized. This platform has proven to be engaging for this demographic and allows them to comfortably voice their opinions. The Town is committed to supporting the Community Youth Initiative with an Events and Youth Coordinator. One of the Coordinator's responsibilities is to develop a sustainable youth engagement plan to connect with youth and engage in meaningful dialogue to determine needs – this work includes the creation of a vision for a youth friendly environment, as well as provide direction to all staff in the interest of youth, ensuring appropriate programs, processes, and effective communication are put in place.

In order to ensure that The Blue Mountains promotes a youth friendly atmosphere, and a strong sense of community amongst its young people, the following two goals have been established:

- Create employment opportunities for youth
- Improve and enhance communications and engagement of local youth

#### GOAL: CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

##### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Connect students and mentors who share similar interests and objectives
  - Encourage local employers to invest heavily in our youth by creating employment opportunities
  - Establish and enhance current funding initiatives to allow businesses and local agencies to development employment and training opportunities for youth (e.g. co-op, apprenticeships, liaison with the Blue Water School Board and other agencies)
  - Coordinate with tourism, industry, business, retail and agricultural needs.
  - Advertise local opportunities and actively recruit the youth demographic
  - Develop a local mentorship program
  - Strengthen outreach at the high school and grades 7 and 8 levels

## GOAL: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL YOUTH

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Improve and enhance communications with local youth
  - Support the promotion and launch of the youth component of the new Town website
  - Develop an edgier youth specific website with material appealing and helpful to youth
  - Ensure that students have input into the initial and ongoing development of both websites
  - Utilize networking and other communication forums to engage youth (Twitter, Facebook)
- ❖ Continue to support the Town's Event and Youth Coordinator position
- ❖ Community Partners will work together on a broad range of community initiatives
- ❖ Provide a youth meeting facility
  - Establish a steering committee comprised of the municipality's Event and Youth Coordinator, youth leaders and other Community Partners to assess needs for youth facilities
  - Research location and funding sources to establish youth facilities
  - Approach organizations about possibility of applying for Trillium or other grants with the Town
  - In the short term, make school gyms and public facilities available for youth sports (ie. volleyball, basketball, soccer, etc.)

## THEME: FORWARD THINKING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Blue Mountains is becoming known as a green community, and a national leader in community engagement. This reputation has come as a result of hard work, dedication and a commitment to the principles of sustainable participatory communities.

The Town of the Blue Mountains is.  
A community 'built to last' – an  
awesome place to live.

We must continue to “walk the talk” by getting our own house in order. The Town intends to continue to pursue best practice in sustainability and planning within the organization<sup>6</sup>. These best practices include:

- Creating a shared understanding of sustainability that can be integrated into the long term goals of the community;
- Establishing sustainability as a corporate strategic priority, meaning it is a priority of the Council/CAO, signaling that all departmental business plans need to reflect how they address it;
- Constantly and persistently communicating the sustainability need, vision, strategies and actions within Our Sustainable Path
- Establishing the sustainability initiative within a part of the organization that has credibility with the rest of the organization to lead it, so the sustainability initiative is not seen as “one department telling another what to do”.
- Conducting a corporate-wide sustainability analysis to identify key priorities and cross-cutting themes that act as a focus for multi-departmental initiatives.
- Establishing teams consisting of people across the organization and from different levels of management to support the analysis and its implementation;
- Establishing a sustainability training program to help people understand what sustainability is, why it is important and how to integrate it into their work; and,
- Integrate sustainability into policies and procedures so that sustainability becomes “the way things are done”.

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<sup>6</sup> 2009, May. Best Practices Scan of Sustainability Decision-Making and Planning for the Municipal Sector. The Natural Step Canada.

Already, the Town's leadership has embedded triple bottom line decision-making in our every day actions. On a regular basis, staff connects with residents, engages people in think tanks, workshops and online polling. The Town is committed to ensuring that our legacy of participation is enhanced into the future, as more residents become engaged with the Local Government in planning and implementing our model of rural sustainability.

Our goal is to ensure that The Town continues to assume a leadership role in implementing sustainable actions.

## GOAL: TOWN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSUMES A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE ACTION

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Committing Local Government staff to sustainable thinking
  - Ensure all senior manager's job descriptions require them to help 'Build a Sustainable Community'
  - Ensure that policies and practices such as life-cycle cost analysis lead to sustainable outcomes
  - Use ongoing training and professional development to instill sustainable thinking into the culture of the organization
  - Succession planning recording sustainable leadership
  
- ❖ Work closely with our residents and community partners
  - Develop a multi-faceted 'Community Engagement Plan'
  - Hire talented staff that are friendly and problem solvers
  - Ensure that sustainability remains a primary focus for the Community and the Plan is updated by the partners at least every five years
  
- ❖ Council and staff continue to support, promote and participate in community events
  - Continue and enhance the Beaver Valley Fall Fair, Olde Fashioned Christmas, Green Fair, Community Thanksgiving Dinner, church suppers



- Host the community calendar to help planners avoid conflicting dates; post the calendar on line and in various places around The Blue Mountains
- Develop a booth showing our community's environmental initiatives and display at the Fall Fair
- Host an activity at Olde Fashioned Christmas, Applefest, etc

## THEME: REGIONAL THINKING

Sustainability will require cooperation among several local municipalities that share the stewardship for issues such as air quality, transportation, economic development, cultural activities and so on. Regional links must be developed and nurtured to address issues that extend beyond the political boundaries. The development of innovative regional collaborative planning efforts can lead to benefits in other areas. The municipality will actively seek to:

- Create a strong vibrant regional community
- Explore the option of future amalgamated single tier community and its local government

### GOAL: CREATE A STRONG VIBRANT REGIONAL COMMUNITY

#### STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Establish a collective of area Municipal Partners to explore regional opportunities
  - Identify the common trends that can bond the Municipal Partners to their mutual advantage
  - Consider economic development and tourism influenced by the Great Lakes and the Coastal Route
  - Work together to attract Institutions of Higher Learning and Training Centres
  - Develop region-wide communication systems to attract new knowledge based business
  - Openly discuss the sharing of municipal services such as water, wastewater, public transportation system, fire services, etc.

The Blue Mountains has.  
A forward thinking government that continually engages its citizens and partners; a government renowned for regional collaboration.

GOAL: EXPLORE THE OPTION OF FUTURE AMALGAMATED SINGLE TIER COMMUNITY

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Discuss the merits of partnering to create a larger, more sustainable community
  - Create a communication strategy and identify critical decision points
  - Discuss the core values of each municipal partner to find the common threads and to identify the major barriers
  - When appropriate, involve community residents and partners including the senior levels of government



## THEME: ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE

The Blue Mountains enjoys a culturally vibrant community with numerous arts and cultural events and activities held throughout the year. Our growing interest in the benefits of arts and culture has led to many local artists and artisans operating small businesses to showcase and sell their work, especially in the “Gallery District” located in Clarksburg. Thornbury presents The Blue Mountains rich heritage through walking tours of its architecture and history. Not only does the region house newly discovered archaeological resources, it also has a plethora of other unique heritage features. The Craigleith Heritage Depot celebrates our history and provides the opportunity to showcase this to local residents and visitors.

The Blue Mountains is.  
A creative society where  
music and the arts and  
recreation ‘abound’.

There is significant momentum to continue to cultivate the arts, culture and heritage facets of our community. Not only will this reap economic rewards and employment opportunities, but it will also instill pride in our community heritage, and showcase our talented and creative people. The goals and strategies within this pillar focus on harnessing this momentum and organizing it through the development of an Arts, Culture and Heritage committee. Our current Official Plan supports this initiative. The directions contained in our Official Plan to develop heritage conservation guidelines and plans will support heritage conservation.

There will be efforts to improve the collaboration, communication and coordination among the different stakeholders in the Arts Community, both locally and regionally. This is an important component of the strategy, and should provide enhanced entrepreneurial opportunities for art stakeholders and engage youth in participating and developing this sector of our economy and community. Engaging youth in arts and culture programs for the region will provide them with more extra-curricular activities, while concurrently demonstrating that there are a variety of creative opportunities.

Local arts groups organize numerous events, exhibits, and productions. There are concerns around the availability of funding to provide continued support for initiatives, therefore jeopardizing the implementation of these events. A permanent stream of funds could make a difference for the expansion and development of the arts locally.

The community has identified six goals, covering the importance of arts, culture and heritage to our community. These are:

- To celebrate and support the development of the arts and culture sector in The Blue Mountains
- Create a vision that inspires and calls everyone to action, including the Town Council, staff and volunteers, the arts and culture community, residents and visitors, to support and develop arts and culture in The Blue Mountains
- Encourage youth participation in culture, heritage and the arts
- Provide funding for the arts community to engage and act in partnership with the municipality
- Position The Blue Mountains Community as a cultural and heritage destination
- Community Partners to preserve local cultural and heritage resources

**GOAL: TO CELEBRATE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS**

#### STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Provide a framework for Council's consideration, decision-making and allocation of municipal support for arts and culture
  - Establish a dedicated qualified management position at the Town with a mandate focused on Arts and Culture development and to act as a delegate/liaison with the arts community
  - Define what Arts and Culture means in The Blue Mountains
  - Execute a marketing and advertising plan
  - Establish a program that facilitates and streamlines the grant application process
  - Establish and coordinate a resource sharing program
  - Establish lecture series, school cooperative, and apprenticeship programs

GOAL: CREATE A VISION THAT INSPIRES AND CALLS EVERYONE TO ACTION, INCLUDING THE TOWN COUNCIL, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, THE ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY, RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, TO SUPPORT AND DEVELOP ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

#### STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Improve collaboration, communication and coordination among the different players in the Arts Community both locally and regionally
  - Town Council appoint and endorse an Arts Committee and a Cultural Heritage Committee with mandates to oversee and fulfill the goals, strategies and actions of this section
  - Dedicate a manager to attend all committee meetings and report to Town Council
  - Establish an annual operating budget for arts and culture approved by Town Council
  - Establish incubator business program to be administered by the Arts Committee

GOAL: ENCOURAGE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE ARTS

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Create and/or encourage youth to lead and participate in cultural heritage and arts programs
  - Include youth representation on the Arts and Cultural Heritage Councils
  - Investigate and develop program opportunities for youth

GOAL: PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE ARTS COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE AND ACT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOWN

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Identify, enhance, revitalize, improve the use of, and add infrastructure specific to the Arts Community
- ❖ Encourage youth involvement in the Arts Community
- ❖ Encourage and enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for arts stakeholders.
  - Establish and develop an arts acquisition fund
- ❖ Establish business start-up and support program for artists

GOAL: POSITION THE BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY AS A CULTURAL AND HERITAGE DESTINATION

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop infrastructure that supports culture and heritage activities
  - Obtain funding for, and prepare a community-driven municipal cultural plan that identifies infrastructure deficiencies and opportunities
  - Encourage community participation, at all levels, in cultural and heritage programs and organizations
- ❖ Develop culture and heritage as economic drivers for the community
  - Include cultural and heritage tourism in economic planning

- ❖ Promote and attract investment to develop cultural heritage capacity
  - Establish a community cultural heritage fund
  - Enable tracking of funding opportunities from other levels of government, charitable foundations and the private sector
  - Encourage incorporation of locally-produced arts, culture and heritage in development including Town facilities, in particular the new Town Hall
- ❖ Develop a framework that encourages cultural and heritage partnerships and cooperation
  - Ensure the proposed Cultural Heritage Committee has broad representation from the community and a strong link to Local Government
  - Adopt a pro-active municipal policy to protect and promote culture and heritage and encourage the public and private sector to do likewise
- ❖ Promote and market the community's cultural and heritage assets
  - Identify cultural heritage assets through cultural mapping
  - Implement education and advertising campaign to promote region's cultural heritage attractions

## GOAL: TOWN TO PRESERVE LOCAL CULTURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES

### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Incorporate cultural heritage preservation within the Town's planning mandate
  - Prepare a Municipal Cultural Plan that identifies the municipal role with respect to Cultural Heritage preservation
  - Utilize proposed Cultural Heritage Committee to advise and work with the Town to maintain and preserve cultural heritage assets

- Develop a merit-based cultural heritage oriented way finding program
- Provide tools and resources to encourage cultural heritage assets to meet their potential
- ❖ Enable culture and heritage assets to develop long-term sustainability
  - Investigate models for long-term funding and implement a sustainable funding program
  - Include culture and heritage in consideration of Official Plan, Zoning and other bylaws as necessary
  - Develop an on-going, systemic review of culture and heritage and report annually to Council and The Town's Senior Management Team



## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



The Blue Mountains' economy is currently driven by tourism, agriculture (based on a vibrant apple industry), and a strong retail sector including boutiques and restaurants. A variety of outdoor recreational activities are the major force behind the tourism economy, including skiing, biking, hiking, and golf. The Blue Mountains is a tourist destination point year round. Our growing arts and culture community has also led to a rich diversity of artisans promoting their work in galleries around The Blue Mountains.

The service sector and trades are important to employment in The Blue Mountains. The largest employment categories in The Blue Mountains are: business services (19.6%); construction (12.7%); wholesale and retail trade (10.7%); and health and social services (9%). Other services accounted for almost 17.0% of the local employment. Employment statistics indicate that the service sector is a cornerstone of the local economy, accounting for 55.1 % of the total labour force (5395 people). The unemployment rate was quite low – at 4.2% in 2006, lower than the provincial rate, which was 6.4%. The average income in 2005 was \$74,190, which was about 7% higher than the provincial median income of \$69,156.

Our economy is intrinsically linked to our neighbours in Grey County and Simcoe County, and further afield to Barrie and the Greater Toronto Area. Many employees in our businesses live outside the community, to take advantage of more affordable housing in Collingwood and Meaford.

In order to increase the livability of The Blue Mountains, we need to address the current economic challenges. An Economic Development Strategy is being developed with an expected completion in Spring 2010. This strategy will seek to identify opportunities and establish ways to help The Blue Mountains grow in ways that complement the Community Partner's Vision and goals contained in Our Sustainable Path.

The economic development priority is housed at the highest level, in the Town Chief Administrative Officer's mandate. The Communications and Economic Development Coordinator helps build programs to enhance the economic and social well being of the community.

The Blue Mountains is...

A community with a diversified economy, ever mindful of its agricultural roots and its goal of being a premier four season tourist destination.

The Town of The Blue Mountains Economic Development Strategy will help aid the community in achieving a healthy and prosperous future. The strategy will be available for public review in April 2010



## THEME: BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

The Town is currently undertaking an Economic Development Strategy that will aid in the identification of economic potential and prosperity within the community. The Economic Development Plan considers the strategic strengths of the region, and recognizes how these strengths and core economic drivers have the capability to contribute to a prosperous future.

Using the data from the Economic Development Plan, The Blue Mountains will be positioned to identify the upcoming economic opportunities that will create local employment. The community needs to attract those businesses/industries through the provision of employment lands. The type of industry must fit within other elements contained in the long-term municipal planning. Further, having an increased understanding of the economic sectors and the associated job market will provide insight into future employment opportunities. By understanding our local economy, and its future, our residents can respond to future needs by ensuring that they have the capabilities and training to succeed in these roles.

In order to attract and retain new business, the Town needs to develop an environment that is supportive of new opportunities and local entrepreneurship ventures. By providing business incubation services, along with the necessary infrastructure (connectivity), The Blue Mountains will be better positioned to attract and maintain small businesses. Further, the Community Partners needs to ensure that services and retail are affordable and will cater to all residents of the community.

In order to increase business retention and expansion in The Blue Mountains, we need to achieve the following goals:

- Encourage economic development that is compatible with the community's values and priorities and attracts new business initiatives that support economic diversity
- Develop a strategy that clearly defines the current and future economic opportunities
- Attract a diversified mix of retail service for all income levels
- Attract and retain small businesses
- Identify emerging new business opportunities to create permanent well-paying employment

GOAL: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE TOWN'S VALUES AND PRIORITIES AND ATTRACTS NEW BUSINESS INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Develop an Economic Development Strategy and update it every 5 years that aligns with and builds on:
  - Our Regional Tourism Strategy
  - The economic goals of the agricultural community
  - Culture and Heritage plans
  - Business retention and expansion strategy
  - Youth retention plans
  - The need to be an educated community
  - Our existing entrepreneurial businesses
  - Our existing economic base
- ❖ Foster economic development within a framework of complete sustainable community. Such a framework incorporates land use planning, educational opportunities, housing and development, active transportation and other supporting elements
  - Engage residents and Community Partners in all phases of economic development
  - Identify desirable characteristics for the various economic sectors including the need for higher paying employment opportunities

- ❖ Develop an environment that is supportive of new business initiatives and provides plenty of opportunities for local entrepreneurship
  - Provide one-stop information and support services to assist current and potential businesses regarding regulatory, bureaucratic obligations and access to grants and assistance programs

**GOAL: DEVELOP A STRATEGY THAT CLEARLY DEFINES THE CURRENT AND FUTURE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BLUE MOUNTAINS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Identify a target industrial/commercial mix for The Blue Mountains
  - Institute an industry-led working group(s) to define desirable business types (through consideration of land, energy, transportation and ecological requirements) that are compatible with the community's identity and natural environment
  - Attract and negotiate educational/technical institute to locate satellite facility within The Blue Mountains to fulfill identified professional gaps
  - Enhance a mentorship/apprenticeship program among common business types
  - Implement planning policy that encourages the development of appropriate infrastructure to attract target business
  - Identify the existing education, technical and expertise gaps needed to support business
  - Focus recruitment efforts and resources on specific businesses that have potential to diversify the existing economic base
  - Assist in the retention and expansion of existing businesses through incentive and support programs

**GOAL: ATTRACT A DIVERSIFIED MIX OF RETAIL SERVICE FOR ALL INCOME LEVELS**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Identify and develop balanced retail needs in The Blue Mountains
  - Apply to Mainstreet Ontario Program which will give retail market data on retail needs
  - Develop an appropriate and balanced retail mix to meet the needs of permanent and visiting populations
  - Improve access to employment for youth and students in retail business through mentorship/apprenticeship program among common business types

**GOAL: ATTRACT AND RETAIN SMALL BUSINESSES**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Foster strong communication channels within the business community that support the building of synergies and allows for information sharing
  - Encourage business associations to develop a strategy for more effective communication and define roles and responsibilities of each organization
- ❖ Improve internet servicing throughout the community
  - Work with Senior Level of Government to bring broadband to all areas of The Blue Mountains
- ❖ Encourage a variety of new small business start-ups
  - The Town to establish a local business incubator program to provide small business rental space to help foster new business initiatives

GOAL: IDENTIFY EMERGING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE PERMANENT WELL-PAYING EMPLOYMENT

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Consider the following opportunities:
  - Support the creation of diverse recycling and re-use businesses
  - Promote Employment Opportunities for Health Care Service Providers
  - Implement actions from the Cultural, Heritage and Arts strategies to promote economic diversity
  - Identify desirable businesses to attract to The Blue Mountains
  - Attract business, restaurants, cooking schools and/or hotels that will promote local food, wineries, and cook with local products
  - Create new agriculture/business opportunities
  - Harness economic opportunities based on our natural setting (boat building, sailing, water sports, etc.)
  - Rural medicine, medical diagnosis
  - Evaluate feasibility of developing education facilities/opportunities to provide programs such as:
    - Rural medicine
    - Hospitality training
    - Holistic educational health, wellness and wellbeing
    - Agriculture – youth training, Co-op courses

## THEME: AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL FOOD

Agriculture in The Blue Mountains and Grey County is more than just an industry - it is a way of life. In 2006, The Blue Mountains was home to 140 farms, with a total of 10,768 hectares (average of 77 hectares). Those farms employed 185 people, however, during harvest, seasonable employment swells significantly, employing local and migrant workers.

Our agricultural economy is driven by a strong apple industry. The Blue Mountains is considered one of the largest apple producers in the country. Processing and storage facilities have emerged to complement the apple industry; the area is also known for its fabulous apple pies. Recently, the Village Cidery in Thornbury began production of the delicious 'Peeler' Hard Apple Cider, which is distributed to local bars and restaurants. Other significant agricultural economies include livestock and cash crop farming, as well as an emerging niche in organic farming and vineyards for local wine production.

Festivals and fairs celebrating agriculture and rural life are important community events. To further community enthusiasm for agriculture, communication regarding the importance and value of family farming needs to be articulated to the younger demographic. Marketing, awareness and education are all key components in maintaining a viable agricultural sector and lifestyle.

All across Canada, in Ontario, and in The Blue Mountains, farming viability is becoming increasingly difficult due to the high cost of farmland and the presence of various policy barriers that inhibit entrepreneurial pursuits. The local farm community advises that the family farm may be non-existent in the future – as income levels cannot compete with other areas of our economy. This means that children of farming families are leaving the family farm to realize sustainable incomes elsewhere, and farmers need to take every advantage of high property values to secure their retirements. Through our agricultural working group and consultations with farmers, we realize that very little is documented about the extent of farm operations, the number of people employed, the challenges being faced by agriculture, and the potential for growth and expansion. It is a priority of this plan to support agriculture and ensure its sustainability.

### Farm Facts:

- In 2006, TBM had 140 farms, with a total of 10,768 hectares (average of 77 hectares per farm).
- There were 185 people employed in the industry in 2006

Policies are needed that encourage the use of land to support these farming activities. Farming could be further sustained by increasing the agricultural community's involvement within the municipal planning and operational process, reducing regulatory and bureaucratic barriers to enhance the entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers and promoting municipal support of the agricultural industry.

Agriculture is such a significant part of our rural lifestyle that we must make every effort to preserve and enhance it. Farming is a self-reliant, hard-working and talented pursuit, and we need to continue the recognition that "Farmers Feed Cities". Our community is determined to provide more support to ensure the future sustainability of our abundant food-producing region, and protect our important agricultural heritage.

In order to ensure that this pillar industry remains a part of our economy, we set out the following three goals:

- Maintain and improve the economic viability of agriculture
- Enhance sustainable agriculture within The Blue Mountains community that promotes prosperous family farming and encourages youth engagement in the farming profession.
- Enhance education, marketing and promotion of the local agricultural industry and lifestyle

#### GOAL: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURE

##### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Implement policies that support and encourage farming
  - Consider reduced municipal taxes to maintain agricultural land use and improve profitability
  - Consider reduced municipal permit rates relating to agricultural use to 25% of the current rate
  - Promote Youth participation within the agricultural industry
  - Establish start-up business fund for local farmers

- Partner with local employment agencies to provide subsidized wages for employees
- Support wineries in developing VQA status
- ❖ Preserve and protect agricultural land from non-agricultural use

**GOAL: ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WITHIN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY THAT PROMOTES PROSPEROUS FAMILY FARMING AND ENCOURAGES YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE FARMING PROFESSION.**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Enhance the agricultural community's involvement within the municipal planning and operational process
  - Establish a notification mechanism/policy that ensures the Agricultural Advisory Committee is notified and solicited for comment and input regarding planning, environmental, economic, and regulatory and policy initiatives (e.g. zoning by-law review, infrastructure planning, transportation, etc.)
  - Improve infrastructure design, with consideration of the agriculture uses, to improve safety and accessibility
  - Identify hot spots and corridors that inhibit accessibility and pose safety issues
  - Ensure the agricultural community participates in the development of community brochures and marketing materials to advise visitors of agricultural needs (access, road use, etc.)
  - Take inventory of the current farming operations, with a particular focus on local food growers and markets
- ❖ Reduce regulatory and bureaucratic barriers to enhance the entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers
  - Enable ancillary businesses to operate on farm properties without encroaching on farm productivity
  - Promote local farm stands and small scale commercial/agricultural opportunities



- Undertake comprehensive review of applicable official plan policies and zoning bylaws and identify areas of inconsistency and modify these in an effort to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers
- Provide land use policies that add value to farming as a land use
- ❖ Promote environmentally sustainable farming practices
  - Promote Environmental Farm Plans
  - Enhance utilization of alternative pest management techniques
  - Enhance biodiversity of farm operations by growing mixed crops at a human scale (less mechanized)
  - Reduce non-renewable (fossil fuel based) inputs for farming operations
  - Establish local seed bank partnership among farmers in the Georgian Bay area

GOAL: ENHANCE EDUCATION, MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND LIFESTYLE

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STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Enhance municipal support for local food
  - Develop and implement a municipal local food policy
  - Send resolution to Federation of Canadian Municipalities to lobby the implementation of a provincial local food policy
  - Work with the agricultural community to lobby the federal government to enable local food labeling

❖ Promote local food production and consumption

- Connect agricultural operations with local food distribution outlets
- Promote the high quality and availability of local food in marketing and promotion materials and recognize efforts of local farmers with respect to fulfilling the stringent safety and regulatory requirements
- Investigate local and regional agricultural marketing opportunities
- Develop “buy-local” branding and marketing materials
- Permit the local agricultural sector to include fruits, nuts, vegetables, oils, herbs and value added food products derived from these
- Educate consumers on labeling certification
- Promote growing food and consuming local food at school
- Encourage a better understanding between urban dwellers and the farming community
- Encourage farmers to participate in The Blue Mountains Library and Town’s Green Fair
- Sponsor farmers markets and other related activities that promote local farming and agriculture
- Develop signage for agricultural areas (for safety and promotion)

❖ Preserve our agricultural lifestyle

- Enhance agricultural tours and establish regional marketing initiatives
- Provide safety and promotional signage for agricultural areas
- Enhance Clarksburg Market and Fall Festival through improved participation, advertisement, communications, marketing and funding



- Partner with local organizations and regional education institutions to establish cooperative and apprenticeship programs
- Provide access to affordable high speed internet
- Explore opportunities for transition housing for new and retiring farmers

## THEME: TOURISM

Tourism is the key economic activity in the region. Yearly tourist visits to Grey County totaled 1,840,000 visitors in 2007; a considerable portion of these visits included The Blue Mountains. Total visitor spending in Grey County was \$241,158,000 in 2007 with the average visitor spending \$131 per person, per visit (\$201 for overnight visits). While The Blue Mountains is considered a “four-seasons” destination, busier periods occur in the winter and the summer with recreational activities providing the main draw. Throughout the shoulder seasons (Mid-March-Late May; and Mid-October to mid-December) festivals and farmers markets help to maintain a more consistent level of visitors. Successful events have included the apple pie trail, the blossom festival, apple harvest festival, and maple syrup festival.

The Town’s Official Plan encourages tourism industry and development. Although the Town does not currently have a tourism strategy, the new Economic Development Strategy will provide tourism development guidelines. Product development is a key strategy to be implemented. It will be addressed by the Town, the Destination Management Organization (DMO) and industry partners on both a long and short-term basis to ensure success. Special emphasis will be put towards the growth and development of additional products and partnerships that are consistent with The Blue Mountains four-season outdoor experiences. Also of importance is the Regional Tourism Plan that is currently being developed by The Georgian Triangle Tourism Association (GTTA). This strategy is a collaborative effort involving municipalities and tourism operators with an end result that increases the exposure of the Georgian Triangle region overall. The Regional Tourism Plan is also expected to contain a sustainability section that will include specific requirements for tourism operators.

The Town believes in sustainability and is working towards its sustainable vision. Opportunities exist to link the long-term strategic planning direction with the development of local economic development actions that would promote the image of The Blue Mountains as one of the most eco-friendly, sustainable and progressive towns in Ontario. We will further contribute to our unique identity as we pursue the reputation of being the friendliest town in Ontario. We will strive to embrace visitors with friendly service and visitor-oriented attitude that is unparalleled by any other tourism community.

The overall vision for tourism in The Blue Mountains is “The Blue Mountains will provide the ultimate four season tourism experience in Ontario”. To achieve this vision; these key objectives must be met.

- Support the Development of a Regional Tourism Plan that guides the achievement of the Vision
- Create an economic plan that will welcome sustainable and appropriate tourism investment
- Be part of a tourism destination that distinguishes itself by its sustainable focus thereby creating a competitive market advantage as well as serving its community
- To become a tourism destination renowned for its truly friendly service and people

**GOAL: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL TOURISM PLAN THAT GUIDES THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE VISION**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:

- ❖ Develop a collaborative regional tourism plan
  - Identify gaps in tourism products and services
  - Clarify roles and responsibilities
  - Encourage tourism clusters
  - Develop destination management and marketing best practices
  - Provide for a marketing plan including performance measurements
  - Ensure sustainability is central to the plan
  - Develop long-term financial sustainability
  - Consider both local and tourism needs in building infrastructure
  - Align the Town's Economic Development Plan with the Regional Tourism Plan

**GOAL: CREATE AN ECONOMIC PLAN THAT WILL WELCOME SUSTAINABLE AND APPROPRIATE TOURISM INVESTMENT**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS:**

- ❖ Develop tourism products in alignment with the Town, the Destination Marketing Organization, and industry partners on both a short and long term basis to ensure success
  - Align municipal planning and development policies to be supportive of appropriate sustainable tourism investments;
  - Consider equally both local and visitor needs in building infrastructure (e.g. parking for visitors, biking shoulder and bike racks)
  - Regional consideration for staff housing for tourism industry
  - Regional signage coordination to address way-finding for current and future tourism product
  - A regional approach to highway development that addresses both visitor and local needs
  - Align the Town's Economic Development Plan with the Regional Tourism Plan

**GOAL: BE PART OF A TOURISM DESTINATION THAT DISTINGUISHES ITSELF BY ITS SUSTAINABLE FOCUS THEREBY CREATING A COMPETITIVE MARKET ADVANTAGE AS WELL AS SERVING ITS COMMUNITY**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

- ❖ Incorporate sustainable tourism focus in the Regional Tourism Plan, including:
  - Ski operators operate to Sustainable Slopes
  - Golf operators obtain Internal Audubon certification
  - Lodging operators operate to a recognized environmental program
  - Events and festivals follow sustainable standards

- Marinas and beaches obtain Blue Flag certification
- Trails are built and operated to sustainable standards
- Small tourism operators follow the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) sustainable tool kit
- Visitors will be encouraged to follow the TIAC code of ethics for tourists
- Promote The Blue Mountains as a cultural heritage destination
- Educate local residents regarding local tourist attractions
  - Local tourist associations to provide promotional programs for the local market
- Strengthen off-season tourism attractions
  - Provide multi-activity vouchers for off-season tourist attractions
  - Host spring and fall festivals, tournaments, sports events, utilize current social capital
- Promote Georgian Bay as a major tourist attraction and acquire public land along the bay, to provide large contiguous public and tourist access to the lakeshore

**GOAL: TO BECOME A TOURISM DESTINATION RENOWN FOR ITS TRULY FRIENDLY SERVICE AND PEOPLE**

#### STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- ❖ Engage all community groups in becoming a friendly place that truly welcomes its visitors
  - Develop a long term strategy to utilize attributes such as community pride, local history, natural heritage, storytelling and commitment to build a reputation as a friendly place



## EARLY ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

PLACEHOLDER FOR EARLY ACTION ITEMS