Town of Gore Bay Strategic Plan

Welcome to Gore Bay
Serving Western Manitoulin since 1890

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Acknowledgements

Mayor Ron Lane

Town of Gore Bay
Committee of Council

- Ron Lane - Mayor
- Jack Clark – Councilman
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- Annette Clarke – CAO/Clerk-Treasurer
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Executive Summary

The Town of Gore Bay, located on the north shore of Manitoulin Island is nestled between two tree covered bluffs, holds the judicial seat for Manitoulin region, and is the service centre for the west end of the island. Historically the town was based on farming, fishing, and the lumbering industries. By the 1940’s both the lumber and fishing industries were in decline. By the 1970’s tourism was presented as a new industry. Gore Bay has proved to be a strong community embracing new opportunities and change.

In the past studies were conducted and information was gathered. As a result a Strategic Plan was written in 2002 which Council then used to make decisions in the best interest of the town.

Projects that came to fruition from the 2002 Strategic Plan included improvements to the marina, pavilion, downtown streetscaping, and storefronts upgrades. In 2015 Council wished to re-evaluate the Town’s strategic plan to see where the Town stands today and identify what factors will influence its future.

The 2016 Strategic Plan is the result of a yearlong engagement with businesses, residents, visitors, town employees, council, and community groups. The Strategic Plan is meant to clarify the outcomes Gore Bay wishes to achieve, to form strategies that will enable Gore Bay to achieve these outcomes, and a means to measure and evaluate progress.
Community Profile Overview

A community profile was written early in the strategic planning process, gathering data on a broad range of factors. This information was used to provide a broad understanding of the context of a community so that issues and linkages can be identified and analyzed.

For a complete version of the Town of Gore Bay Community Profile go to www.gorebay.ca

The Town of Gore Bay offers its citizens and visitors all the comforts of a small town. There are a multitude of services and clubs available.

The town features one of the largest marinas on Manitoulin Island. During the summer months the population and activity of the town flourishes as boaters and visitors from around Ontario and the Great lakes flock to the area. Manitoulin Island is popular with cottagers and vacationers during the summer months. Gore Bay is an attractive town with lots to see and do.

Current Population
Population in 2011: 850
Population in 2006: 924
Population in 2001: 898

POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS
According to the Ministry of Finance population projections for 2013 to 2041 based on the 2011 census report, “the population of Northern Ontario is projected to be relatively stable over the projection horizon, with a slight decrease of 3.4 per cent, from 803,000 in 2013 to 776,000 by 2041. Within the North, the Northeast is projected to see a population decline of 23,000 or 4.2 per cent, from 564,000 to 540,000. The Northwest is projected to experience population decline of 4,000 people, or 1.7 per cent, from 240,000 to 236,000.”

Family Characteristics
Total number in census of families in private households – 235

Services and Facilities
Medical Facilities
The Medical Centre serves the population of western Manitoulin. The Gore Bay Medical Centre was built in 1985. The Centre is an up to date facility which also provides services to tourists and visitors to the west end of the island.
Fire Protection
The Joint Fire Department for Gore Bay-Gordon Barrie Island, administered by Gordon/Barrie Island, is a full service volunteer fire department capable of handling fire emergencies. The fire department is not manned on a full time basis.

Religious Services
The Town of Gore Bay has 6 churches of different denominations within its community.

Shopping & Services
All the essentials can be found in town. There are two drug stores, a variety store, a grocery store, LCBO, bank, Service Ontario branch, restaurants, airport close by, clothing stores, and many more.

Recreation
There are numerous outdoor recreation opportunities available. Winter options include, skating, hockey, curling, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, and ice fishing to name a few. During the warmer months the town has basketball, tennis, soccer, baseball, boating, swimming, walking trails, golf and many more recreation possibilities available.

Culture
There are two museums located within the Town of Gore Bay, the Gore Bay & Western Manitoulin Museum and the William Purvis Marine Centre. There is also an award winning theatre which offers numerous productions throughout the year. The Harbour Centre is a facility which houses many local artisans where you can see them at work as well as purchase their products.

Service Clubs
Western Manitoulin Lion’s Club
Gore Bay Fish and Game Club
Royal Canadian Legion
Rotary Club

Red Hat Society
Girl Guides of Canada
Manitoulin Minor Hockey Association
Masonic Lodge
Words from the Mayor
(A Moment of Reflection)

Great towns don’t just happen. It takes the joint effort of Council, Town staff and all our residents and visitors to develop a vision of what our Town should be in the future and what we need to do to get there.

Over the past year a Committee of Council has worked to develop a vision, a mission, goals and an action plan. We have sought input from residents and visitors, service organizations and businesses to help us create this vision for the future. This plan must be built on our values, culture and philosophy as a community.

In developing this Plan we have to be proactive in our thinking, going beyond the current state of affairs and traditions to see what Gore Bay should be and can be for the generations that follow us.

With limited resources at our disposal we must set priorities and be prepared to make hard decisions that will see our Plan implemented realizing that we must be innovative, use resources efficiently and effectively, anticipate issues and meet inevitable changes and challenges head on.

Gore Bay has a long and exciting history. We are located in one of the most beautiful parts of the world with nature at our doorstep. We must identify our strengths and our weaknesses so that we can use our strengths to our advantage and address our weaknesses. We must learn to promote what we have to offer knowing that in order for our community to thrive in the future we must attract new residents, visitors and businesses.

In order to implement our Plan for the future we need the support of all members of our community. We need to forge partnerships with our service organizations, businesses and other municipalities on Manitoulin.

This Plan will be a living document, to be reviewed and evaluated and modified if necessary as time goes on. We must be positive and forward thinking to be successful. Only by doing all of these things can we give our Town and its citizens the promising future that it deserves.
Strategic Plan Process

The steps outlined in the strategic planning process are outlined below. Although the steps may seem simplistic and systematic, the process is involved and evolves over time.
As part of the visioning process, a situational analysis was performed in order to discover where the town is at presently. A SWOT analysis was conducted to determine the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Strengths**
- Location, natural setting
- Range of services and amenities
- Our community, proud and caring
- Commitment to Improvement

**Weaknesses**
- Aging population
- Brain drain
- Limited senior housing space
- Lack of rental spaces
- Limited accommodations in town for visitors

**Opportunities**
- Marketing and Promotion
- Increase presence as a medical hub for Western Manitoulin
- Partnerships
- Changing demographics in ON

**Threats**
- Aging infrastructure
- Available land for development
- Government Legislation
- Economic uncertainties
- Limited resources
What do the Residents and Visitors Value?

Over the summer of 2015, a visitor survey was conducted. The survey was available at various locations throughout Gore Bay as well as online. The survey’s intent was to gather information to get a picture as to who our visitors are, and to evaluate their experience visiting Gore Bay.

A resident survey was also conducted. The survey provided a point of reference to assess what Gore Bay’s community feels is important, and what they believe to be the weaknesses and strengths of Gore Bay.

The responses received by both surveys helped to form the areas of focus and priorities for the strategic plan.

The results of the resident survey and stakeholders sessions echoed the SWOT analysis that was conducted by the committee of council. Consistently throughout the survey and stakeholders session residents expressed an overall satisfaction with living in Gore Bay.

Residents expressed a sense of pride felt in Gore Bay, and that the town is an active, busy community, that it is also well serviced. The all-embracing theme conveyed was a sense of community expressed through the amount of volunteerism and participation in special events.

A high percentage of residents expressed concern over an aging infrastructure system. When residents were asked what they felt the town should prioritize over the next 3 to 5 years, the answers were as follows;
Other needs or weaknesses were identified when residents were asked what type of businesses the town should try to attract.

The visitor survey helped to highlight what attracts people to the Town and what else visitors would like. Visitors were asked what three things they liked about their visit.

The results clearly identifies what is missing from Gore Bay but also what is valued by its visitors.

Two separate stakeholders’ sessions were held in the fall. The first was for service clubs and not-for-profit groups, the second was for businesses. Each session was facilitated by LAMBAC. The questions asked were geared towards finding solutions providing focus and priorities for the strategic plan.

The next stage in the process took all the gathered information into consideration. The feedback received help shape our mission, vision, values and areas of focus to give a foundation for our goals and objectives.
Our Vision

“A leading example of a thriving community in which to live, work, and play.”
Our Mission

“To provide a positive environment that supports an engaged, healthy, and prosperous community.”
Our Values

Courage
To take chances to make change for the better of the community.

Accountability
We accept responsibility for our decisions, actions and overall performance and take corrective action where required.

Respect
We embrace diversity and treat everyone with courtesy, dignity, and fairness.

Community Spirit
We foster a culture that allows citizens to take pride in their community. We promote our unique community identity, and friendly, supportive environment.
Our Guiding Principles

- Service
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Integrity
Areas of Focus and Priorities

- Social Responsibility
- Infrastructure
- Tourism
- Partnerships
- Business
Goals

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Govern in a responsible manner and attending to the wellbeing of stakeholders, while meeting all legislative requirements.

a) Provide and improve on senior and youth programs.

b) Achieve a balance of public policy and private interest.

c) Be the health care centre for Western Manitoulin.

d) Develop recreational programs and facilities that meet the needs of the community.

e) Develop a plan for newcomers, both before they arrive and after.
Goals

INFRASTRUCTURE

Have a modern and efficient infrastructure system for the town.

a) Ensure our streets, curbs, and sidewalks meet the current and future needs of the town.

b) Ensure our public buildings meet the current and future needs of the town.

c) Ensure the marina facilities are meeting the needs of the boating community.

d) Maintain and expand on existing fire services.
Goals

TOURISM

Maximize our potential in attracting and retaining visitors.

a) Develop a marketing strategy for the town.

b) Develop a 4 season tourism plan.
Goals

PARTNERSHIPS

Maximize our opportunities through effective use of partnerships.

a) Foster public-private partnerships.

b) Develop public-public partnerships.
Goals

BUSINESS

Foster an environment that stimulates business prosperity.

a) Be an information hub.

b) Have an open door policy to assist businesses in any way possible.
Next Steps

Council is committed to the successful implementation of the Town of Gore Bay Strategic Plan.

The information gathered in this plan will be used to begin implementation by assigning goals and objectives for individuals to accomplish.

The Town of Gore Bay’s Strategic Plan is a living document, meaning it is a document that is not final but is to be reviewed and adapted or modified as needed. Key performance indicators will be used to make sure the Town is staying on task and true to the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. The plan will be reviewed annually, reporting on each goal outlined in the plan.

Gore Bay Council will continue to seek input from its community to keep communication channels open.