



**Township of North Glengarry**

**Strategic Plan 2013**



## Township of North Glengarry Strategic Plan

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## **Background:**

Like many municipalities in the province of Ontario, the needs of the corporation far outstrip the resources available. This inherent challenge means that strategic planning and priority setting is critical. This Strategic Plan was developed by the Council of the Township of North Glengarry throughout the latter half of 2012 with input from senior managers and the general public.

This plan is intended to focus primarily on the Corporation of the Township of North Glengarry and is not intended to realistically address all the issues and challenges faced by all the communities within North Glengarry. That said, Council and staff recognize that the municipality plays a significant leadership and stewardship role given the financial, human and equipment resources at its disposal.

A series of Town Hall meetings in the four municipal wards and online methods were used to seek input from the public on the major components of the strategic plan as it was developing. The Strategic Plan includes an implementation plan with priorities that will be used by Council and staff as a guide for decision making in the future. As with all plans, it is a living document and will be reviewed and updated frequently over the next few years.

## **Mission Statement:**

The Township of North Glengarry is a unique and vibrant community in a strategic location, with an unsurpassed quality of life reflected in the rural and small town character and enhanced by a commitment to preserving agricultural and natural resources, historical and cultural heritage and quality municipal services.

## **Goals:**

- Address infrastructure maintenance and renewal in a cost effective and sustainable manner.
- Improve drinking water quality and quantity for those communities in need in North Glengarry.
- Ensure that the Township of North Glengarry is investment ready and addressing opportunities for economic development.
- Maintain and enhance recreational and cultural assets that contribute to the quality of life in North Glengarry.
- Ensure adequate long term financial planning and financial accountability for all ratepayers.
- Consistently provide high levels of municipal service to the ratepayers across all departments.
- Improve communications with ratepayers through a more proactive approach, providing relevant and timely information.
- Ensure that the corporation is adequately equipped with the human, financial and equipment resources needed to deliver the quality of municipal services the public requires.

## **Areas to Maintain:**

- Quality of Life:
  - Recreation and Cultural Assets
  - Small Town Feel
- Recent Momentum Addressing Infrastructure Gaps Across North Glengarry
- Strategic Use of and Support to Volunteers / Community Partners (i.e. Recreation Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Service Clubs)

## **Areas to Improve / Change:**

- Infrastructure Upgrades and Preventative Maintenance
- Financial Accountability / Reporting
- Communication with Ratepayers
- Overall Customer Service
- Financial Planning
- Economic Development Activities / Focus

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) Analysis:

### Strengths:

- Location (especially Maxville - 417 proximity)
- Agriculture
- Affordable Land Values
- Quality of Life Overall
- Attractiveness for Retirement (hospital, recreation, culture)
- RARE plant
- Available Industrial Land
- Bilingual and Available Workforce

### Weaknesses:

- History of Lack of Planning
- Fragmented Communities (Legacy from pre-amalgamation)
- Loch Garry Watershed Milfoil problem
- Location - Distance to 417 and 401
- Visibility of Island Park from Main Street / Low Profile
- Visibility / Low Profile of Loch Garry, Middle Lake
- State of Downtowns (Alexandria, Maxville and the smaller hamlets)
- Drinking Water Challenges:
  - lack of water in Maxville
  - high cost / taste and odour issues in Alexandria
- Ratepayer Disposable Income Levels / Ability to Pay Challenges
- Age and Condition of Infrastructure (sewage, bridges etc)
- Lack of Employment Opportunities / Youth Outmigration
- Lack of Skilled Labour to meet local needs
- Transportation Challenges within North Glengarry
- Challenges attracting new industry
- Resistance to change / Mindset
- Costly Landfills
- Low Levels of Municipal Reserves
- Heavy Truck Traffic in Maxville (and Alexandria)
- Municipal Township Office Building / Layout

## Opportunities:

- Community Improvement Planning (Facades) / Downtown Improvement
- Glengarry Regional Water Supply Project
- Ottawa / Montreal Commuters -- Take Advantage of Land Values, rail line
- Maximize Legacy and Assets in Arts & Culture
- Residential Development on Rural Land (when not suitable for farming)
- Milfoil Mitigation to Improve Garry River Watershed
- Economic Development Planning and Investment Readiness
- Industrial and Other Municipal Land Development
- Address Sewage Capacity Issues to Stimulate / Accommodate Growth
- Golf Course Lagoon Project
- Pursue Retail Expansion in Maxville and Alexandria
- Retirement Living Potential
- Tap into Locals with Investment Potential / know-how
- Maximize RARE Plant Value
- Mixed Residential / Commercial Development in Downtowns
- Improve Use of Landfill Material Capture / Revenues (including review of potential weigh station)
- Niche Market Businesses / Cultural Tourism
- Increased Marketing of Existing Assets
- Joint Purchasing / Sharing Services with Counties, Neighbouring Municipalities / Agencies
- Maintain Rural Character of Landscape
- Investigate Merging Roads Shops (or otherwise moving the Alexandria shop)
- Low Cost Podcasting / Video uploads of Council meetings
- Physician Recruitment
- Expand Youth Centre Programming in Maxville
- Focus on Education
- Green Public Space on Main Street in Alexandria
- Improved Gateway Signage / Entrances to Communities
- Permanent and Improved Location for Farmer's Markets
- Revisit the Ward System
- Lights at Maxville Soccer Fields
- Improved Signage to Raise Loch Garry Profile and Use
- Revisit Charging Water Arrears to Tax Roll
- Improve Ease of Access and Use of Landfill

## **Threats:**

- Trend of Population Decline in North Glengarry
- Ongoing School Closings
- Decreasing Grants from Senior Levels of Govt (overall and re. regional water)
- Ecological Threats - Millfoil, Garry River Watershed
- Escalating Costs especially re. HR (WSIB, Benefits, Salaries)
- Aging Infrastructure / Slowing Growth and Development
- Long Term Debt Carrying Costs
- Tax Arrears
- Another Recession
- Ever Increasing Regulatory pressures / Downloading from Province (Source Water Protection, MoE etc)
- Inappropriate Use of Solar Farms, Wind Turbines, Cell Towers
- VIA Rail Service Levels

## **Implementation Plan / Priorities:**

The following pages outline the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan includes priorities to guide Council and administration in their decision making over the next 3 to 5 years. As with the Strategic Plan overall, the Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually, at the beginning of the annual budgeting cycle. The plan will also guide any significant decisions on issues that arise throughout the year outside of the budget process and as opportunities arise.

The Implementation Plan supports the strategic plan mission and goals, SWOT analysis and areas to change / maintain as outlined in 2012 with public input.

<b>Action Item: Finances</b>	<b>Priority: (High / Med &amp; Ongoing)</b>	<b>Lead Role</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Review investments to maximize interest revenue potential	O	TREASURER	nil	
Review options for improved tax / water arrears collection *	O	TREASURER	low	some legal and registered mail costs less than \$10k / yr
Shut off water for non-payment (and/or stop charging water arrears to tax roll)	TBD	PWs	nil	to be reviewed as a potential policy Q1 2013
Increase taxes / user fees to increase revenue	TBD	COUNCIL / TREASURER	TBD	to be addressed as part of the draft 5 yr financial plan
Rebuild reserves	H	COUNCIL / TREASURER	TBD	to be addressed as part of the draft 5 yr financial plan
Sell Surplus municipal land (potentially to rebuild reserves)*	H	CAO	nil	Real estate tender issued, many properties listed currently
Post-Mortem on 2011 deficit / improve budget accountability*	H	CAO / TREASURER	nil	Done with Q4 2012 forecasts but still room for improvement
Improve quarterly or monthly reports / mid year budget forecasts, adjustments*	H	TREASURER	nil	Done with Q4 2012 forecasts but still room for improvement
Look for cost savings line by line / dept. by dept. (IT, office supplies, phones and long distance calls)	O	CAO / TREASURER	nil	staff time
Business Plan style analysis of key areas with revenue generation potential (arenas, field rentals) - challenge staff with targets to increase revenue / reduce costs without sacrificing service	M	CAO / SMT	nil	mostly simply staff time unless 3 rd party reviews desired
Revisit Level of Support to 3rd party groups	H	COUNCIL	nil	to be done as part of 2013 and annual budget processes
Complete Fire Master Plan*	H	CAO / FIRE	MED (\$25-30k)	\$10k to start in late 2012, may escalate depending on scope

\*progress on this item has begun or in some cases is complete

ACTION ITEM: Staffing	Priority: (High Med & Ongoing)	Lead Role	Cost Estimate	Notes
New Customer Service / complaints processing standards / policy	M	CAO	low	may be done in-house or 3rd party assistance to speed up process
Review property standards complaints process ( policy re: active vs. passive enforcement / investigation, use of a public committee)	M	BLDG DEPT	nil	mostly just staff time and research
Review after-hours bylaw enforcement calls process / policy*	M			
Review use of Twp. trucks after hours by all depts.*	H	CAO		DONE
Review personal vehicle per diem use vs. use of corporate vehicles (cost benefit analysis)	H	TREASURER	nil	
Revisit Landfill Revenue Potential (use of weigh station?)*	H	CAO / PWs	low	may be done in-house or 3rd party assistance to speed up process
Review and decide on a corporate structure re: PWs vs. Environmental Services	H	CAO / COUNCIL	nil	
Review Priorities / Projects for Community Events	H	CAO / COUNCIL	nil	
Investigate merging roads shops (or moving Alexandria shop)	O	CAO / PWs	nil	no cost to research, relocation may be costly

\*progress on this item has begun or in some cases is complete

<b>ACTION ITEM: Economic Development</b>	<b>Priority: (High, Med &amp; Ongoing)</b>	<b>Lead Role</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Promote "Open for Business" corporate culture	O	CAO / COUNCIL	NIL	
Be more active with investment opportunities with regional economical development partners	M	CAO	LOW	mostly staff time but limited staff availability for these types of projects with current level of resources
Support Cultural Tourism opportunities (i.e. cultural mapping / database project*)	O	CAO	LOW	limited staff availability for these types of projects with current resources
Support Arts, Culture & Heritage as a method of supporting local economic development	O	CAO / VOLUNTEERS	LOW	limited staff availability for these types of projects with current resources reliance on arts and culture committee
Address infrastructure constraints	H	CAO / PWs	HIGH 200k - \$1M	high capital cost, high impact and high priority
Sell surplus municipal land and buildings	H	CAO	LOW	
Entrance Signage, Downtown Revitalization, Improve Loch Garry Profile	M		HIGH	need planning, consultation and community buy-in, partners, EDO staff to drive process
Address investment readiness / data gaps	H	CAO	MED (\$25-\$50k)	studies and consultant research needed, good potential for grants

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<b>ACTION ITEM: Infrastructure</b>	<b>Priority: High Med &amp; Ongoing</b>	<b>Lead Role</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Review need for development charges or similar special area rate bylaws to address infrastructure gaps/finances	H	CAO / TREASURER	LOW	can be done in house but 3rd party assistance would speed up process
Identify / confirm lagoon capacity issue and next steps*	H	CAO / PWs	MED	work ongoing
Confirm details and proceed on golf course lagoon project*	H	CAO	MED (\$50k to \$100k)	capital work on lagoons and funds needed to leverage grants
Sewage Master Plan Process	O	PWs		some of this part of lagoon capacity and ongoing work
Keep focus on bridge / roads infrastructure	O	TREASURER / PWs	HIGH (\$300-750K)	ongoing part of 5 yr plan and gas tax revenue/reserves
5-year capital plans for all infrastructure*	H	TREASURER	LOW (\$7 - 10K)	DONE but draft plan needs to be reviewed Q1 2013
Improve focus / create capital plan for sidewalks	M	PWs / TREASURER	TBD	
Assess impact / risk of ash tree damage - Emerald Ash Borer	O	CAO / PWs	LOW (\$7 - 10K)	ongoing costs to be determined after initial survey
Investigate selective cuts of municipal land for logging revenue*	H	CAO	LOW	inventory commissioned as first step, Q1 2013
Confirm options for a new OPP detachment building in North Glengarry	M	CAO	NIL	
Streetlights on hwy 34 (and/or review use of LED lights)*	M	CAO / PWs	TBD	

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<b>ACTION ITEM: Communications</b>	<b>Priority: High Med &amp; Ongoing</b>	<b>Lead Role</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Host more town hall meetings in the various hamlets across North Glengarry*	O	CAO / COUNCIL	nil	Done but must maintain process in future
Include pertinent info / newsletter in all tax / water bills*	O	CAO / SMT	nil	Done bust must maintain process
Streaming Council meetings online	M	CAO / IT MGR	TBD	
Potential for email newsletters	O	CAO	nil	rudimentary beginning launched, needs more work
Increase use of press releases	H	CAO	nil	
Social media	M	CAO	nil	
Improve timeliness of response to inquiries from Council / public	H	CAO	nil	
More frequent updates to Council from staff outside of council meetings (more emails, different staff members at council meetings for briefings/updates)	O	CAO	nil	some modest improvements done in-house

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