



Source: Provided by the Municipality of South Bruce

Municipality of South Bruce Corporate Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

FINAL REPORT: PART 1 – STRATEGIC PLAN

June 9, 2014

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Message from the Mayor

This corporate strategic plan presents a five year roadmap for the Municipality of South Bruce, designed to advance the community towards prosperity, sustainable development and competitive positioning. It has been developed with input from residents, businesses, industry, staff and Council through an inclusive consultation process that included community conversations, on-line surveys, and telephone interviews.

Your input has been invaluable as it has resulted in a strong plan that will help steer us over the coming years. Our Strategic Plan is truly a reflection of the aspirations we collectively hold for our neighbourhoods and our community. On behalf of Members of Council and staff, our thanks to everyone who contributed to this important initiative.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

1 Introduction

Demonstrating a commitment to relevant, effective and fiscally-responsible management, the Municipality of South Bruce has undertaken the creation of its first Corporate Strategic Plan. This document has been crafted with input from residents and local businesses, municipal staff and members of Council. It presents the desired future vision for South Bruce and offers a strategic approach that advances actions to address key priority areas identified as important over the next four to five years. It also serves as an accountability mechanism, offering management and the public a tangible system to measure performance and achievements; in essence a check and balance to ensure that the municipality is moving forward and in the right direction.

Serving as a roadmap for Council and management, this Corporate Strategic Plan will inform on-the-ground activities and the necessary allocation of human, financial, physical resources and environmental considerations throughout the plan's implementation.

Rather than simply reacting to change, municipalities can examine issues and concerns with the goal to create a community that is sustainable, providing opportunities that support business and economic growth, create and foster healthy lifestyles, while ensuring the protection and preservation of its social and cultural heritage and connections.

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Corporate Strategic Plan is two-fold. First, it is to clearly define a common vision for the municipality that will define the success of South Bruce and the diverse and unique ward areas that collectively form the municipality. Equally important, the Plan is intended to provide Council and staff with a framework, or roadmap for decision making.

The Corporate Strategic Plan seeks to prioritize the key programs, services and initiatives based on the needs, values and aspirations of all community members and the service delivery realities of the Municipality.

A detailed action plan will provide direction for the municipality over the next 5 years and a set of performance measurements will assist South Bruce in the implementation and evaluation of activities, and ensure that the vision and mission are accomplished.

1.2 Strategic Planning Process

An important first step in the development of the Strategic Plan has been the preparation of a **Technical Report** which involved a range of research methodologies. First, a thorough review of the relevant existing policies for the municipality were assessed, including County policies that potentially impact on South Bruce as a lower tier municipality. Fundamental to the development of a municipal Corporate Strategic Plan is an understanding of the municipality in terms of its assets – business base, labour force, quality of life indicators – as well as its local and community networks and quality of place elements. This was achieved through an assessment of the local economy in the form of a demographic profile and economic base analysis. This assessment highlighted the key patterns of change in the local municipality compared with Bruce County and the Province of Ontario.

Community engagement is a vital aspect to the preparation of any strategic document. As such, during this process, an array of outreach methods were utilized to gain broad-based input from community residents, businesses, local municipal staff and Council, and key stakeholders including a special session for youth. A survey was distributed through the community using a traditional paper format, as well as an online, web-based format, and 30 resident/stakeholder interviews were conducted by telephone.

A strategic planning session was facilitated with municipal Councillors and senior staff further informing the corporate vision and identified priority areas. Three community

conversation sessions were held in Formosa, Teeswater, and Mildmay in order to gather valuable feedback from residents, businesses and the community. This also included a Youth specific session designed to give youth a voice in the future of their community.

These processes allowed community members to share their ideas and identify what they believe are key priorities and actions for the Corporate Strategic Plan which are critical to achieving the desired vision, or future state of the community as a whole.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

2 Corporate Mission, Vision and Key Principles

As a local government, the Municipality of South Bruce provides a wide range of services to its residents and businesses. As a lower tier municipality in a broader two-tier regional municipal system, this role has added complexities given that service delivery in certain areas is split between different levels of local government. However, this can also provide a structure for increased opportunity to collaborate and leverage resources for shared goals and objectives. While the strategic plan and recommendations below are in the context of the Municipality of South Bruce, and based on current needs and demands, decision making must be balanced within the context of future planning.

2.1 Mission Statement

A mission statement captures the reason that the Municipality of South Bruce exists and guides the actions of the Municipality. The following statement has emerged through the strategic planning session and been approved by Council at the May 26th Council meeting:

To provide appropriate and efficient services and programs to the residents of the Municipality of South Bruce that will enhance the quality of life, provide a safe and desirable environment to work and raise their families.

2.2 Vision

A vision statement represents the *future desired state* of the Municipality.

Based on input from residents, businesses, community organizations, municipal staff and members of Council, a comprehensive vision was created for the community. The following statement has emerged through the strategic planning session and been approved by Council at the May 26th Council meeting:

South Bruce is a growing, dynamic, agriculturally-rooted community that provides accessible and affordable amenities for residents and businesses, creating an environment supportive of growth, vibrant downtowns that foster small business, and a unique, year-round destination experience.

When the Municipality of South Bruce achieves this vision, the following seven key elements will be achieved:

▪ Population increase.	▪ Retained and expanded industries, recruited small and medium sized businesses and job creation.
▪ Multiple housing types available for seniors including affordable housing.	▪ Vibrant downtown with minimal vacancies.
▪ Enhanced opportunities for developers.	▪ Year round tourist destination.
▪ Increase in youth population.	

2.3 Key Principles

The Municipality of South Bruce Corporate Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2019 lays the foundation and direction by which the municipality will conduct its affairs, and is grounded in key principles that reflect the needs, values, aspirations and goals of the community at large.

Emerging through the strategic planning process, the following principles were selected as most important to guide actions of Council and staff:

- **Empathy, Respect and Ongoing Communication**

- Ongoing communications are established with the community in order to better understand how best to serve their needs. An empathetic approach is taken, based on respect for our neighbours and a greater appreciation of community expectations.

- **Progressive Municipality**

- The municipality is positioned well for the future in order to encourage growth and sustainability through innovative approaches. Leadership will embrace the future with integrity, and not default to the status quo.

- **Reliability & Stewardship**

- Council and staff will ensure the public are treated fairly and conduct the business of the municipality in an open, trustworthy and reliable manner that illustrates return on investment. “We do what say we are going to, and people can rely on us for our promises”.

- **Healthy and Safe Living**

- Decisions will be made in a manner that balances growth and fosters smaller town living where families can be comfortable and safe.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

3 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives contained in the plan build on the mission, vision and principles established throughout the strategic planning process and reflect the community engagement and input.

Each of the goals set the direction of the Municipality in its day-to-day operations and is supported by strategic objectives. These objectives are areas where the Municipality will focus its efforts over the next five years from 2014 to 2019. A number of specific actions will guide the Municipality in achieving its goals and objectives over the longer term and are outlined in detail in Section 7: Corporate Actions for 2014- 2019.

GOAL #1: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE CLIMATE THAT SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Establish a supportive corporate culture that strengthens business retention, expansion and attraction, entrepreneurial activity, and new industry investment (including Adaptive Phased Management considerations)

GOAL #2: CREATE AND PROMOTE A CULTURE THAT PRACTICES CLEAR COMMUNICATION, INCLUSIVENESS, TRANSPARANCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Open and transparent communication between and among employees, the community and taxpayers through regular dissemination of relevant information that is shared in an accessible, timely and inclusive manner

GOAL #3: SECURE THE FISCAL CAPACITY NECESSARY TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ADDRESS BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS, ROAD RESURFACING, AND DRAINAGE CONCERNs

Strategic Objective:

Develop and lead capital infrastructure initiatives that address community needs, reflect sustainable planning practices and future demand considerations, with a commitment to fiscal responsibility.

GOAL #4: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR MUNICIPAL STAFF

Strategic Objective:

A Corporate Succession Planning Strategy that includes a comprehensive market assessment and compensation review, municipal best practices study, and operational assessment for all levels of staff, establishing South Bruce as an “employer of choice”.

GOAL #5: SUPPORT EXISTING AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS AND RETAIN YOUNG ADULTS AND SENIOR POPULATIONS

Strategic Objective:

Establish and lead initiatives to position South Bruce as a community of choice among populations that tend to leave the community to access required services and opportunities.

Once South Bruce Municipal Council has adopted the Corporate Strategic Plan, municipal staff will begin implementation. Departmental business plans, goals and initiatives will be developed in alignment with the strategic plan.

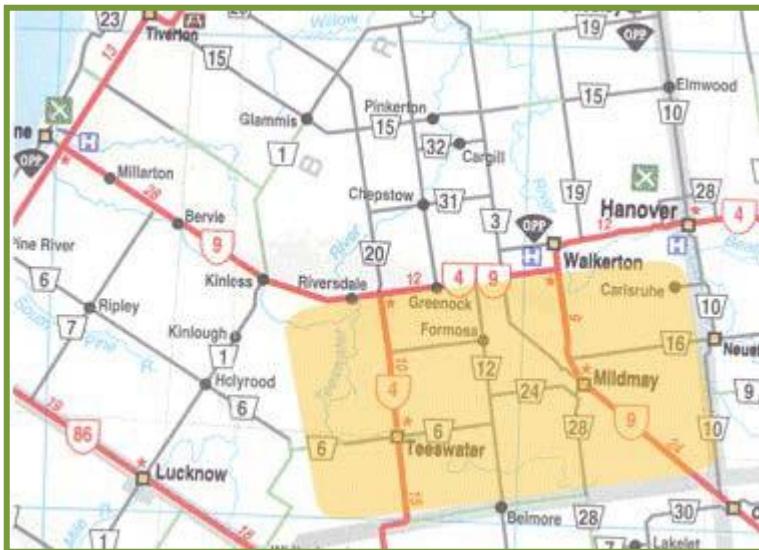
The 2015 budget will take into account the new strategic plan and will incorporate short term actions as appropriate, and progress and performance results will be monitored regularly and reported to Council.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

4 The Context for Change

4.1 Our Community



In 1999, the Municipality of South Bruce emerged from the amalgamation of various unique and closely situated communities, including the villages of Mildmay and Teeswater, as well Formosa and Carrick and Culross

Townships. Located at the southern extent of Bruce County, South Bruce is positioned as the “Gateway to the Bruce”, and is entered predominantly via highway 9 which runs through Mildmay, and provides access to the areas various natural vistas and a busy route to the beautiful beaches of Lake Huron’s eastern shores.

The economy of South Bruce is firmly rooted in a strong agricultural sector that is evidenced by its agricultural and pastoral landscapes, and grounded in its welcoming and close knit communities and vibrant farming culture. Heritage and environmental stewardship are central tenets in the community, which prides itself on its small town charm, and friendly, family oriented environment.

Between the years of 2008 and 2013, in contrast to other communities in Ontario that lost businesses as a result of the recession, South Bruce actually added over 125 firms. Seemingly insulated by macroeconomic trends affecting Ontario, South Bruce gained 60 agricultural related firms, which speaks to the strength of this local sector.

Along with being the largest employer in terms of total employment, farms were also the largest in terms of self-employment within the municipality. Of the 60 agricultural businesses added, 50 were self-employed, with 10 being employers; representing a 25% increase in both categories.

Significant increases in employed labour force were seen between the Census periods of 2006 and 2011, particularly in manufacturing (380), health care and social assistance (190) and construction (190). However, class of workers by industry in South Bruce are still predominantly farm workers, with farmers representing the highest level of self-employment; by occupation, managers in agriculture are by far the

highest.

The overall strength of South Bruce's agricultural and manufacturing sectors suggests that opportunities may exist to create valuable partnerships between sectors which could result in jobs being created in food processing. These types of partnerships already have a presence in the municipality as the dairy product manufacturing subsector is the fourth largest source for total employment in South Bruce. A prime example of this type of synergy locally is the Gay Lea Creamery¹.

However, with all of this said, the municipality faces some significant challenges. As of 2011, South Bruce had a population of 5,639 residents, experiencing a steady population decline since 2001. Between 2001 and 2006, the population decreased by 2%, and from 2006 to 2011 it contracted by more than double that rate, at 4.3%. This decline represents a significant contrast to the population trends in Bruce County and Ontario, both which saw population increases of 1.2% and 5.7% respectively, during the same period.

Further, the demographic structure in South Bruce displayed signs of an aging population and a significant gap in the prime working years of 25 to 55 years of age. The data suggests that the municipality is having difficulty attracting and retaining younger workers and young families. This could be a sign that younger cohorts may be moving to larger urban centres in search of employment, or not choosing South Bruce as a destination to live, work and raise a family due to a restricted employment environment.

This is further compounded by the fact that only 24% of South Bruce residents commuted within South Bruce to work, with the remainder daily leaving the community for work. Roughly 60% of these commuters travelled within Bruce County, suggesting higher wages and more opportunity outside of the municipality, but within the County.

This study also uncovered considerable sentiment on the part of the community that there was a significant lack of necessary commercial retail amenities, and that shopping often occurred outside of South Bruce. This may correlate with work related commuting patterns. This has negative impacts on the sustainability and growth of local small businesses, which rely on locals to support businesses. In addition, a considerable lack of senior's supports and services are forcing elderly to leave the community in order to access services they require, further exacerbating population decline.

Having a clear understanding of these challenges is important when developing the strategic plan, as these have longer term implications for the municipality, and therefore require strategic goals and objectives to address these matters.

The following section will review the existing policy framework in place in South Bruce, its relative impact and areas of alignment, and assess how it can be leveraged to support the Corporate Strategic Planning process.

¹ Gay Lea. Contact Us, 2013. Available at: <http://www.gaylea.com/retail-contact-form>

4.2 Planning for the Future is Underway

In developing the Corporate Strategic Plan consideration has been given to South Bruce's existing policy framework as a reflection of the current planning efforts that have a direct impact on the overall management and development of the Municipality in the next five years.

A focused review of South Bruce's current strategic planning documents, as well as relevant policies impacting on the municipality was conducted to ensure effective alignment between the Municipality's existing framework for growth and the direction provided in the Corporate Strategic Plan. A detailed overview of this review can be found in the accompanying PART 2 - Technical Report of The Plan.

More specifically, the **Municipality of South Bruce Official Plan 2005** identifies a number of goals which include:

- Positioning Formosa, Mildmay and Teeswater as local service centres for the surrounding agricultural community and as progressive, attractive communities in which to live, work and recreate.
- Maintaining downtowns as the major focus of commercial activity and promoting intensification through commercial, residential, recreational and institutional development.
- Ensuring a variety of residential housing types, densities and tenure arrangements are provided to accommodate housing options for all residents.
- Ensuring development contributes to a "small town rural environment" and encourages new recreational and outdoor amenities (multi-use trails and parks).
- Minimizing negative impacts of new development on natural and sensitive areas.
- Encouraging new industry to locate in serviced areas and provide services to new development, consistent with levels that are economically viable for the community.

The Municipality's **Accessibility Plan 2007 – 2008** provides a framework, direction, and commitment on behalf of Council and staff to incorporating accessibility into future planning and development, and to ensure that barriers to accessibility are identified and removed in South Bruce. The plan also acts as a report on the measures that the municipality has taken to achieve these aims, identification of new barriers to tackle, and strategies on removal or prevention.

South Bruce's **Community & Business Association SWOT Analysis (2013)**, although not a formal policy, illustrates a commitment on the part of the business community to support the development of a strategy to expand and attract new business to South Bruce. The *Spruce the Bruce* downtown improvement program available through Bruce County was specifically identified as beneficial and an initiative that should be capitalized on. Also identified was the concept of branding Teeswater as a Tractor Town for agri-tourism purposes.

The **Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy 2013 – 2023**, establishes a target for the creation of 445 affordable housing units over the ten year period of the plan. As the mandated provincial Service Manager for housing and social services in Bruce County, this policy builds off of existing efforts including the Housing Sustainability Fund, Community Coordinator position, awareness campaigns, a building condition assessment for public housing, as well as increased funding for 122 new affordable housing units, and the OPA 99 amendment requiring the local municipal planning

policies to support the development and maintenance of affordable and special needs housing.

With the intention of cooperatively developing an Implementation Plan with the lower tier municipalities, this policy provides a potential platform for collaboration and support in achieving South Bruce's aims to increase affordable housing and elderly/assisted living developments.

The **Bruce County Asset Management Plan 2013** acts as a strategic, financial, and tactical plan that instructs the management of the County's infrastructure based on an accurate understanding of the current condition, future requirements, and costs associated in replacing, maintaining, and supporting current and future infrastructure demand. This plan provides an opportunity for the municipality to leverage existing work and open channels of communication with the County in order to establish dialogue and potential collaboration with respect to local infrastructure improvement objectives.

As a lower tier municipality, **The County of Bruce Official Plan 2010** is of particular relevance, as it establishes a policy framework to guide the physical, social, and economic development of Bruce County to the year 2021. It is worth noting that the Plan identifies that the South Bruce Official Plan does not have extended policy coverage for the entire geographic municipal area, and that the intention of the local plan is to provide more detailed policies pertaining to urban areas and unique attributes.

The Bruce County Official Plan has sustainable development as a guiding principle, and among its objectives are to provide adequate transportation systems, encourage cooperative approaches to land use planning, protect mineral resources, affordable housing, supporting growth in the agricultural and tourism industries and energy generation as viable economic development opportunities. It is important that South Bruce look to leverage this policy in the interest of establishing collaborative approaches and support for implementing many of its strategic objectives.

All of the community's dynamics and strategic planning documents presented in this section will help inform the corporate strategic plan. Building beyond the existing plans, the next step is to provide a synopsis of the opinions and thoughts of resident and businesses within South Bruce.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

5 The Community's Voice

The perspectives of community residents, stakeholders, politicians and municipal staff have been taken into consideration in the development of the Municipality's Corporate Strategic Plan. Community engagement is a vital component of the planning process, enabling a relevant and current assessment of the Municipality's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as a broader understanding of their needs, values and aspirations.

The community was engaged in a number of ways in order to garner the most representative perspectives and reflections possible. These included an online survey (112 responses), 30 resident/stakeholder interviews by phone, and five local facilitated group conversations:

- 1 Front Line Staff Session
- 1 Facilitated Council and Senior Staff Session
- 3 Community Sessions (Mildmay, Teeswater, Formosa)

- 1 Youth Session

Summaries for these community engagement techniques are found in the accompanying PART 2 - Technical Report of The Plan. Throughout the extensive process the community was asked to provide input to a series of questions, such as

- What makes South Bruce a unique place to live or work?
- What do you think South Bruce's greatest strengths are?
- What is your vision for South Bruce?
- What are the top three priorities for South Bruce to achieve this vision?
- What are the greatest challenges to achieving these priorities?
- What is the Municipality's role in advancing the vision?

Figure 2 below illustrates the needs, values and aspirations of the municipality as expressed by participants through all aspects of the consultation process. These are further elaborated on in the key priorities and SWOT Assessment section below.

FIGURE 1: NEEDS, VALUES, AND ASPIRATIONS MATRIX

Needs	Values	Aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Additional recreational facilities/programs for children and youth. ■ Encourage residential development. ■ Attract seniors housing and long term care. ■ Support local business and attract investment. ■ Increased population. ■ Attract and retain youth and young families. ■ Rural internet access. ■ Improve municipal infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong agricultural sector. ■ Vibrant farm culture. ■ Strong sense of community. ■ Friendly and family oriented. ■ Heritage and environmental stewardship. ■ Small town charm. ■ Beautiful natural resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Multi-generational community. ■ Revitalized and vibrant downtowns. ■ Cooperative and collaborative partnerships ■ Unique experiences for visitors. ■ Progressive community with sound political leadership. ■ Healthy and safe. ■ Year round tourism. ■ Residents buy local.

There are **seven key priorities** that were highlighted for the Municipality during the consultation process. These are listed below:

Business Attraction and Support

Business and investment attraction are paramount and needed to fill available

industrial and business parks with tenants. Business incentives need to be better utilized and leveraged. Increase support for small businesses by creating a business incubator, simplifying the planning/approvals process, and removing barriers to expansion and development.

Economic Development

Economic development and planning needs to be a priority for the community. South Bruce needs a dedicated economic development officer and economic development function within the municipality.

Tourism Opportunities and Development

Growth and development of niche tourism opportunities, such as agri-tourism and cultural/heritage tourism along with the marketing and promotion of the area and its assets are essential. Increase recreation and entertainment options to encourage longer visitor stays and to attract and retain youth.

Sound Planning Practices

Prioritize long range planning and community revival. Residents note that main streets need updating, downtown requires re-developed, and the 'red tape' preventing development needs to be removed.

Attracting a Seniors Housing/Services Development

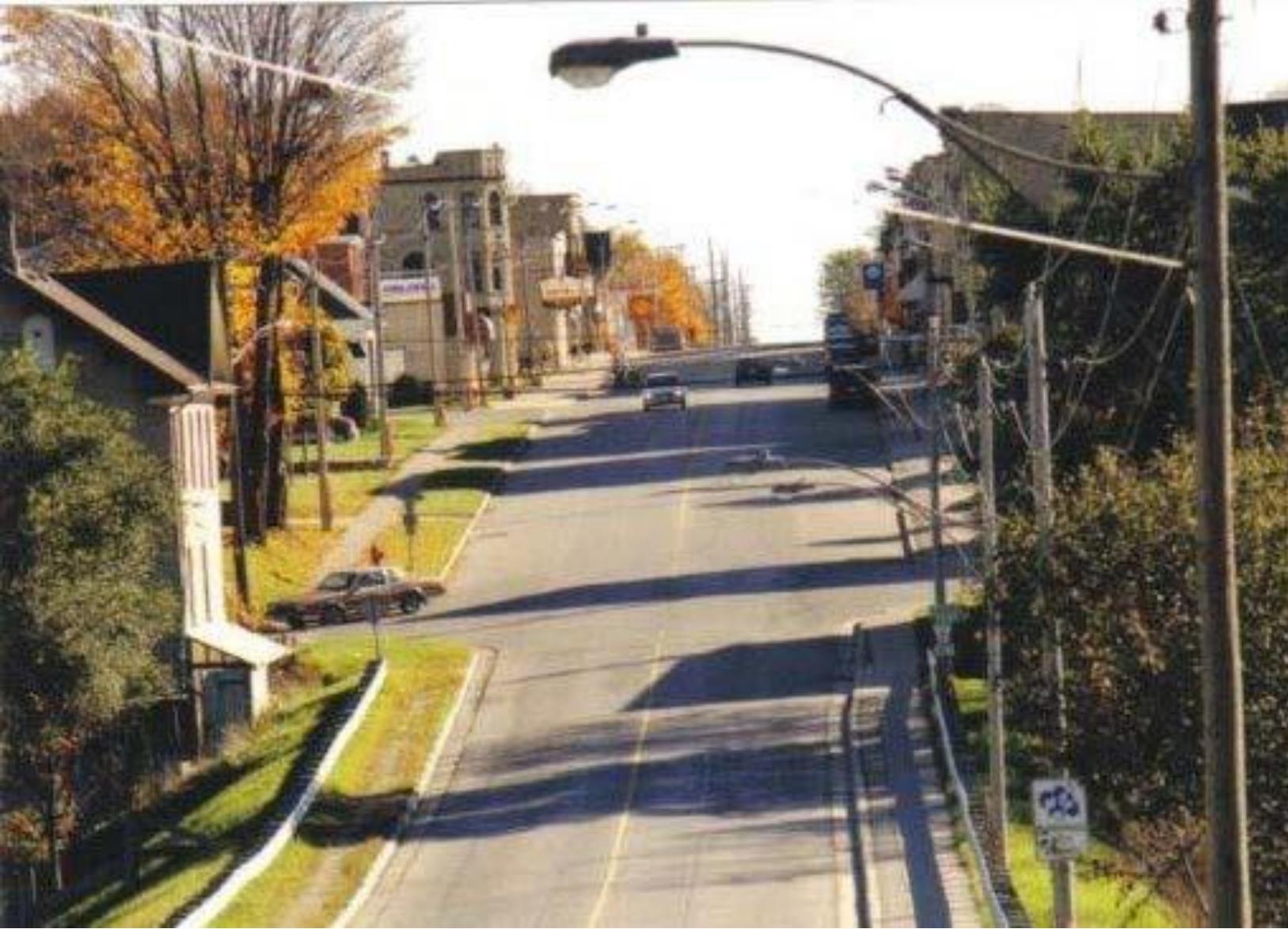
A priority among residents was the critical need for seniors housing and supportive care. It was frequently suggested that the community should attract a developer to build retirement residences and assisted living facilities.

Political Soundness

A priority among a majority of residents was the need for a new political structure, supported by a strong council vision, led by open minded leaders. Equal representation on council was stressed along with the removal of organizations restricting growth.

Community Cohesion

Unity is critical and must be fostered. There is an "us vs. them" attitude within the local communities and between South Bruce and the surrounding municipalities. In order for progress and prosperity to be achieved, South Bruce needs to work cooperatively within its own communities, and collaboratively with surrounding areas. Interestingly, exploring the idea of rearranging existing municipalities to be included in larger municipalities arose as a priority among some participants.



Source: Provided by the Municipality of South Bruce

6 SWOT Assessment

An assessment of the Municipality of South Bruce's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is intended to inform the corporate strategic plan.

Strengths are the unique factors or assets that the community can build off and capitalize on to support future growth and prosperity. Weaknesses are current areas of disadvantage which may require strengthening or repositioning. Opportunities are factors that can play an important role in determining the community's possibilities and can be leveraged to overcome challenges and effect change. They can positively influence the types of strategies developed and employed, whereas threats are external factors that present barriers to a community and may impede, or hinder the ability to effectively implement the corporate strategic plan.

This SWOT assessment has been compiled based on the background research, socio-economic profile and the results of the community engagement process.

6.1 Strengths

A critical element in the development of a municipal corporate strategic plan is that it reflects and leverages the unique characteristics and assets within the community in a way that will lead to long term sustainability.

Strong Sense of Community:

South Bruce is a cohesive rural community where people are friendly and help each other out during times of need. There are plenty of sports and local organizations for residents to participate in. The local community organizations do a lot of work in the municipality and residents donate their time and money to local charities and causes. The rural setting is attractive and helps to create a strong sense of family.

Beautiful Natural Environment

The community's landscapes, hills, beaches and lake create a beautiful rural setting. The natural beauty of the area can attract visitors from the urban centre that are looking to escape their urban environment. Respondents overwhelmingly identified that green-space and the natural environment where significant assets. Access to plenty of open space, nature parks, trails, clean air and a lack of pollution is what makes South Bruce a place where visitors and residents can enjoy outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hiking, and skiing.

Strong Agricultural Sector and Diversified Industry

The area has productive farmland that has created a strong agricultural base with a diversity of businesses and supportive supply chain. The area is well known for its beef cattle and dairy production and an environment that supports local foods and homegrown products. Respondents often referred to a diverse set of businesses involved in the aggregate and forestry industries and supporting services. There are also a variety of shops in the area that create a unique retail shopping experience.

Location

South Bruce is located in close proximity to the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant which provides significant, well-paying job opportunities. There are two highways (9 and 4) running through the municipality which help position South Bruce as "far enough from big cities to be quiet" but, close enough to urban centres to have access to services and amenities that they provide.

Recreational and Sports Amenities

It was identified by residents that South Bruce is well service by recreational facilities, such as arenas, swimming pools, soccer fields, and trails. There are three recreation complexes and baseball diamonds, one in each of the three communities, and numerous parks across the municipality that provide green and open space for residents and groups to enjoy organized sports and outdoor activities. Youth commented on the positive sports culture in the area, and identified the recreation

centres, parks and variety of sports as key elements that make South Bruce a great place to live.

6.2 Weaknesses

The following section identifies certain weaknesses, or factors internal to South Bruce that place it at potential disadvantage relative to other areas. They also represent barriers to growth and potential constraints on the municipality. It is critically important that action is taken to address these barriers and limitations.

Insufficient Wireless/Internet Infrastructure in Rural Areas

Internet access that is fast and reliable was mentioned frequently in various forms of community engagement. For the most part, there was recognition that the more developed areas and townships had adequate high speed internet access. However, it was identified frequently that rural areas did not have sufficient internet, and that this should be a municipal priority.

Vacancies on Main Streets and Depressed Downtowns

There was a general sense of dissatisfaction with the viability of the downtowns and their main streets. Retail shopping was very limited, there were too many empty stores, and Youth identified a need for the downtowns to be cleaner and better maintained. It was suggested the lack of businesses was due to the improvements on Highways 9 and 86 which resulted in decrease vehicular traffic on the main streets.

Lack of Retail/Commercial Amenities

Although there are some amenities locally on the main streets, most big box stores are located outside of the area forcing residents to leave South Bruce to shop. It was noted frequently that a lack of choice, and more retail variety, even for basic necessities was needed to encourage more local shopping. This problem is compounded by those who work outside of South Bruce, in neighbouring areas that provide greater retail and do their shopping outside of the municipality before returning.

Complexity of Government

The increased complexity of government, funding reductions, and challenge to balance competing community priorities were articulated. A priority voiced by many residents was the desire to support a political structure that offered a strong council vision, led by open minded leaders. Equal representation on council was stressed.

Insufficient Seniors Supports and Services

The increasing aging population needs services geared towards seniors. Some seniors are facing transportation issues and have to travel outside the municipality to receive health services. This also results in seniors moving to neighbouring communities for housing and supports. The aging and declining population is limiting

access to volunteers for the local organizations, causing some to close down. Accessibility remains an ongoing and increasingly important issue.

Labour Market Challenges

Many participants expressed their concern for the local labour market. Major employers that are leaving the area are increasing unemployment, as demand for the products made in the community has fallen. The number of jobs available in the community has been decreasing, while employment opportunities are increasing in urban centres, and the jobs that remain in South Bruce are less competitive with lower wages than surrounding areas. Farms have been getting larger, while smaller farms are disappearing, decreasing the number of jobs in agriculture and lowering wages.

6.3 Opportunities

The following opportunities will influence the direction of the corporate strategic plan.

Attracting a Seniors Housing/Assisted Living Development

Actively attracting a developer to build (and perhaps operate) a quality, yet affordable, retirement residence and assisted living facility was a common thread across all forms of community and staff engagement. A development of this nature would provide current and growing demand for senior's housing and aging-in-place services, while also creating potential employment (both temporary through construction, part and full time). It also has the potential to support small business growth in local private health and alternative care services, and could be leveraged to attract needed local amenities such as a pharmacy and nursing.

Encouraging Increased Residential Development

The vast majority of residents agreed that residential development should be encouraged, using a balanced manner to ensure affordability, variety and choice, and follow sound planning practices. Increased housing options could be leveraged to encourage more commercial retail amenities in demand locally, and work to reverse population decline with new, younger families and lessen the need to leave the community for shopping. The higher the population, the greater the potential benefit to the existing business base, as well as the municipal benefit of greater revenue potential through an increased property tax base.

Partnerships and Collaboration with Business Community

There is significant appetite on the part of the business community to collaborate with the local municipality, along with other stakeholders, communities, and levels of government to support economic development. Self-employment and entrepreneurship is widespread in the community across agriculture, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and small businesses with increases in professional services. The local business

association and developers can be leveraged to support attracting new industry, encouraging development, and expanding existing operations.

Adventure, Culinary, and Agri-Tourism Potential

South Bruce has the potential to capitalize on its strengths of a beautiful natural environment, as well as its agricultural and farming heritage to develop a strong culinary and agri-tourism potential. It is well positioned as a gateway to “The Bruce” and can leverage well entrenched adventure tourism campaigns such as the “Explore the Bruce” initiative in order to increase visitation, traffic and local commerce. Both the business and residential community indicated high levels of support for developing niche tourism opportunities that showcase and celebrate local culture and heritage.

Spruce the Bruce Downtown Revitalization Program

The Spruce the Bruce downtown improvement program available through Bruce County is an opportunity that should be leveraged to facilitate and satisfy the demand for increased business supports, downtown revitalization, and increased tourism potential. Teeswater and Mildmay are currently tapping into these benefits, albeit at lower levels compared to other Bruce County municipalities. Leveraging programs that help develop downtown commercial areas into more attractive, pedestrian friendly, and dynamic social and cultural spaces will support attracting younger families and professionals as they afford desired lifestyle environments and amenities.

Appetite for Investment Attraction and Business Support

Many residents emphasized the need for business attraction as they wanted to see the available industrial and business parks filled with tenants. It was suggested that existing business incentives had to be better utilized and incentives could be used to entice businesses to fill the vacant buildings in the community. Stakeholders also wanted to see services to support small businesses through the creation of a business incubator and reduction in red tape to create an easier planning process.

6.4 Threats

South Bruce will need to address and manage the external threats identified below that may impede implementation of the corporate strategy. The following section outlines key threats facing the Municipality.

No Dedicated Economic Development Function

Lack of competitiveness was identified frequently as a threat facing South Bruce. This was attributed to a declining population, a poor manufacturing climate, limited access, lack of industry and training facilities, and the need for improved infrastructure. It was noted that there was a lack of initiative to attract businesses which are needed to grow local industries and generate jobs. It was recognized that in order to attract investment,

support local business and steer the economy, South Bruce requires an economic development department and dedicated personnel to carry out these functions.

Perception of Inadequate Planning and Onerous Approvals Process

There is an overarching concern related to long range planning and community revival. Many participants noted that main streets need updating and the downtowns needs to be revitalized. There was a common perception that municipal planning activities could be more efficient and that red tape impeded development.

Insufficient Supports for Small Business

The downtown has suffered and the number and variety of retail stores have been declining as people travel outside of the community for shopping. A shared perception that was identified was that due to the rural nature of South Bruce, preference to improve rural areas won out over the downtown.

Administrative Structure

Since amalgamation, the community is split along former community lines which have created an “us vs. them” mentality. Some residents view amalgamation as a positive, allowing greater collaboration, fostering a collective identity, and enabling South Bruce to market itself as a whole. Others felt that it further divided the communities and restricted access to resources and funding.

Limited or Inadequate Funding

Although there was a recognition, and even appreciation that the municipality has done a good job of providing services despite financial restraints, the ability to adequately fund or finance growth and change was identified regularly as an impediment.

Youth Out-migration

The population in South Bruce is slowly aging and declining. Stakeholders stressed the need to grow the residential base, particularly with youth and young families. Young people are moving away to go to university and do not come back as they cannot find jobs in South Bruce. There is also a lack of young workers as they are also moving away to large urban centres in search of work.



Source: South Bruce Tourism, <http://southbrucetourism.org/>

7 Corporate Actions for 2014-2019

The development and implementation of a corporate strategic plan will create significant benefits for the Municipality of South Bruce. It identifies key steps that build on the input and insight received during the extensive background review and the community engagement process. The plan helps to improve coordination between departments and staff involved in the implementation effort. In addition, the plan contributes to consensus building across the community.

Through a commitment to achieve the outlined goals, South Bruce will make visible progress in a number of areas that impact the long term sustainability of the Municipality. These include:

GOAL #1: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE CLIMATE THAT SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Establish a supportive corporate culture that strengthens business retention, expansion and attraction, entrepreneurial activity, and new industry investment (including Adaptive Phased Management considerations)

- **Action 1:** Position the economic development function within the corporate structure of the municipality.
- **Action 2:** Ensure appropriate budget allocations are in place to support economic development activities.
- **Action 3:** Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy with clear directions, goals and objectives.
- **Action 4:** Undertake a comprehensive place branding exercise and develop a unique brand for South Bruce to promote inward investment, expansion and increased economic opportunity.
- **Action 5:** Actively pursue niche tourism opportunities in eco/adventure tourism, culinary and agri-tourism, and cultural/heritage tourism that reflect unique community assets and elements.
- **Action 6:** Focus internal efforts on creating the necessary policy and regulatory environment to enable shovel ready industrial lands and develop a strategic marketing plan to promote them.
- **Action 7:** Encourage greater adoption of the Spruce the Bruce downtown revitalization program and liaise with Bruce County to facilitate greater local access to funding program.
- **Action 8:** Explore ways to improve local access to small business support and entrepreneurship programming available through partner organizations (CFDCs) including examining feasibility of a satellite office.
- **Action 9:** Undertake an internal review aimed at simplifying the planning and approvals process, removing barriers to expansion and development and creating a business friendly environment.
- **Action 10:** Develop and maintain positive, ongoing relationships with key community/economic development actors in private and public sectors to leverage and foster investment opportunities.

GOAL #2: CREATE AND PROMOTE A CULTURE THAT PRACTICES CLEAR COMMUNICATION, INCLUSIVENESS, TRANSPARANCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Open and transparent communication between and among employees, the community and taxpayers is achieved through regular dissemination of relevant information that is disseminated in an accessible, timely and inclusive manner.

- **Action 1:** Develop a Corporate Communications Strategy (with internal and external elements) which establishes the required resources, and provides direction, guidelines, and processes to govern effective and consistent communications across all levels of the organization and with the public.
- **Action 2:** Adopt and refine various methods of external outreach including e-newsletters, interactive website formats, social media, target mailings and town hall meetings in order to ensure communications are accessible and inclusive.
- **Action 3:** Ensure that the necessary human and capital resources are allocated in the annual budget and roles and responsibilities are aligned with departmental business plans to ensure effective implementation.
- **Action 4:** Establish regular meetings of management across departments to increase awareness of activities and priorities and ensure that guiding principles, goals and objectives in the Corporate Strategic plan are aligned with communications.
- **Action 5:** Conduct corporate wide communication and public relations training (staff and Council) to ensure consistency in message and delivery, and understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- **Action 6:** Administer community surveys on an annual basis to create an ongoing loop of community feedback to inform continuous improvement and best practices in service delivery and strategic direction.
- **Action 7:** Inform residents, through an annual report card, on Municipal activities – how taxes are spent, new initiatives, successes, upcoming priorities, etc.
- **Action 8:** Establish mechanisms to support citizens being more engaged in key issues.
- **Action 9:** Support strong relationship building and cooperation among the municipality's wards to promote municipal cohesiveness.

GOAL #3: SECURE THE FISCAL CAPACITY NECESSARY TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ADDRESS BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS, ROAD RESURFACING, AND DRAINAGE CONCERNS

Strategic Objective:

Develop and lead capital infrastructure initiatives that address community needs, reflect sustainable planning practices and future demand considerations, with a commitment to fiscal responsibility.

- **Action 1:** Create a South Bruce Asset Management Plan to inform current state, future requirements, and capital costs associated in replacing, maintaining, and supporting current and future infrastructure demand.
- **Action 2:** Open dialogue with Bruce County and leverage the Bruce County Asset Management Plan 2013 in order to explore cooperative approaches to addressing key infrastructure needs.
- **Action 3:** Engage with senior levels of government to identify partnerships that will result in financial support and funding opportunities for local infrastructure projects.
- **Action 4:** Undertake a comprehensive commercial/industrial and residential growth plan to inform and advise future capital infrastructure needs to support development objectives in the Corporate Strategic Plan.
- **Action 5:** Negotiate opportunities for partnership and collaboration with local and area developers interested in residential development and explore cost-sharing.
- **Action 6:** Initiate a best practices review of other “like” municipalities to identify new and creative approaches or models for increasing municipal revenues.

GOAL #4: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR MUNICIPAL STAFF

Strategic Objective:

A Corporate Succession Planning Strategy that includes a comprehensive market assessment and compensation review, municipal best practices study, and operational assessment for all levels of staff, establishing South Bruce as an “employer of choice”.

- **Action 1:** Conduct an Organizational Assessment that informs current state, future needs and capacity requirements for human resources across the municipality at all levels.

- **Action 2:** Develop and implement a comprehensive Succession and Retention Strategy focused on attracting and retaining talent to support municipal operations.
- **Action 3:** Research best practices in municipal government to inform the development of institutional learning systems to support building capacity and corporate memory.
- **Action 4:** Create mechanisms for ongoing performance measurement across all levels of the organization.

GOAL #5: SUPPORT EXISTING AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS AND RETAIN OUR YOUNG ADULTS AND SENIOR POPULATIONS

Strategic Objective:

Establish and lead initiatives to position South Bruce as a community of choice among populations that tend to leave the community to access required services and opportunities

- **Action 1:** Strike a multi-disciplinary Steering Committee of staff, Council, residents, businesses, local developers, and stakeholders (including Bruce County) to advise/inform strategic approach for the establishment of an assisted living/long-term care facility for seniors.
- **Action 2:** Undertake a feasibility study and environmental assessment to inform the availability, suitability, infrastructure and policy requirements and potential impacts of an assisted living facility.
- **Action 3:** Undertake a comprehensive workforce attraction and retention strategy for the municipality, potentially in partnership with the county.
- **Action 4:** Establish relationship with Bruce County staff as the provincial Service Manager in order to align policy objectives and work collaboratively to meet shared affordable housing objectives.
- **Action 5:** Establish a Youth/Young Professionals Sub-Committee to promote ongoing involvement of young residents to share their perspectives, vision, and ideas for South Bruce.



Source: Explore The Bruce, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/explorethebruce>

8 Implementation Plan

To ensure that the Corporate Strategic Plan is a living document that directs decision making for the Municipality of South Bruce, a detailed implementation plan is necessary.

The intent of the implementation plan is to identify the timeline in which the actions will be initiated, the department lead and the potential partners who can contribute to the success of the goal. The implementation plan also considers performance measures that are necessary to achieve the goal. The performance measures attached to each goal in this implementation plan are intended to gauge the progress of each action.

Goal 1: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE CLIMATE THAT SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Establish a supportive corporate culture that strengthens business retention, expansion and attraction, entrepreneurial activity, and new industry investment (including Adaptive Phased Management considerations)

Municipality-Led Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Position the economic development function within the corporate structure of the municipality.	Short-term		
2. Ensure appropriate budget allocations are in place to support economic development activities.	Short-term		
3. Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy with clear directions, goals and objectives.	Medium-term-		
1. Undertake a comprehensive place branding exercise and develop a unique brand for South Bruce to promote inward investment, expansion and increased economic opportunity.	Medium-term		
2. Actively pursue niche tourism opportunities in eco/adventure tourism, culinary and agri-tourism, and cultural/heritage tourism that reflect unique community assets and elements.	Ongoing		
3. Focus internal efforts on creating the necessary policy and regulatory environment to enable shovel ready industrial lands and develop a strategic marketing plan to promote them.	Medium-term - Ongoing		
4. Encourage greater adoption of the Spruce the Bruce downtown revitalization program and liaise with Bruce County to facilitate greater local access to funding program.	Short-term – Ongoing		
5. Explore ways to improve local access to small business support programming available through partner organizations (CFDCs) and examine feasibility of a satellite office.	Short-term -Ongoing		
6. Undertake an internal review aimed at simplifying the planning and approvals process, removing barriers to expansion and development and creating a business friendly environment.	Medium-term - Ongoing		
7. Develop and maintain positive, ongoing relationships with key community/economic development actors in private and public sectors to leverage and foster investment opportunities.	ongoing		

Goal 1 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Economic Development a permanent and budgeted function in municipal service delivery
- Economic Development Strategy developed and implemented
- Branding exercise underway with community/business collaboration
- Niche tourism opportunities are initiated
- Cross-departmental effort underway to improve investment readiness
- Greater adoption of Spruce the Bruce program in local downtowns
- Internal review conducted and more business friendly policy environment created

Goal 2: CREATE AND PROMOTE A CULTURE THAT PRACTICES CLEAR COMMUNICATION, INCLUSIVENESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic Objective:

Open and transparent communication between and among employees, the community and taxpayers is achieved through regular dissemination of relevant information that is disseminated in an accessible, timely and inclusive manner.

Municipality-Led Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Develop a Corporate Communications Strategy (with internal and external elements) which establishes the required resources, and provides direction, guidelines, and processes to govern effective and consistent communications across all levels of the organization and with the public.	Short-term - Ongoing		
4. Adopt and refine various methods of external outreach including e-newsletters, interactive website formats, social media, target mailings and town hall meetings in order to ensure communications are accessible and inclusive	Medium-term - Ongoing		
2. Ensure that the necessary human and capital resources are allocated in the annual budget and roles and responsibilities are aligned with departmental business plans to ensure effective implementation.	Ongoing		
3. Establish regular meetings of management across departments to increase awareness of activities and priorities and ensure that guiding principles, goals and objectives in the Corporate Strategic plan are aligned with communications.	Ongoing		
4. Conduct corporate wide communication and public relations training (staff and Council) to ensure consistency in message and delivery, and understanding of roles and responsibilities.	Short-term		
5. Administer community surveys on an annual basis to create an ongoing loop of community feedback to inform continuous improvement and best practices in service delivery and strategic direction.	Short-term - Ongoing		
6. Inform residents, through an annual report card, on Municipal activities – how taxes are spent, new initiatives, successes, upcoming priorities, etc.			
7. Establish mechanisms to support citizens being more engaged in key issues.			
8. Support strong relationship building and cooperation among the municipality's wards to promote municipal cohesiveness.			

Goal 2 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Communications Strategy developed and implemented
- New communications tools adopted and reaching intended audiences
- Human and capital resources allocated to support implementation
- Inter-departmental Management meetings established
- Communications/public relations training delivered organization-wide

Goal 3: SECURE THE FISCAL CAPACITY NECESSARY TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS THAT ADDRESS BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS, ROAD RESURFACING, AND DRAINAGE CONCERN*Strategic Objective:*

Secure the fiscal capacity NECESSARY to develop and maintain Infrastructure Improvements that Address Bridge Replacements, Road Resurfacing, and Drainage Concerns

Municipality-Led Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Create a South Bruce Asset Management Plan in order to inform current state, future requirements, and capital costs associated in replacing, maintaining, and supporting current and future infrastructure demand.	Short-term		
2. Open dialogue with Bruce County and leverage the Bruce County Asset Management Plan 2013 in order to explore cooperative approaches to addressing key infrastructure needs.	Short-term		
3. Engage with senior levels of government to identify partnerships that will result in financial support and funding opportunities for local infrastructure projects.	Medium-term-Long-term		
4. Undertake a comprehensive commercial/industrial and residential growth plan to inform and advise future capital infrastructure needs in order to support development objectives in the Corporate Strategic Plan.	Medium - term		
5. Negotiate opportunities for partnership and collaboration with local and area developers interested in residential development and explore cost-sharing.	Medium - term		
6. Initiate a best practices review of other “like” municipalities to identify new and creative approaches or models for increasing municipal revenues.	Short-term – Medium-term		

Goal 3 - Measuring Our Performance:

- South Bruce Asset Management Plan developed
- Dialogue opened with Bruce County regarding cooperation/support on infrastructure needs
- Relationships established with senior governments and infrastructure funds/projects explored
- Commercial/Industrial Lands and Residential Development Study completed
- Relationships established with local developers regarding partnerships

Goal 4: CREATE A STRONG CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR MUNICIPAL STAFF*Strategic Objective:*

A Corporate Succession Planning Strategy that includes a comprehensive market assessment and compensation review, municipal best practices study, and operational assessment for all levels of staff, establishing South Bruce as an “employer of choice”.

Municipality-Led Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Conduct an Organizational Assessment that informs current state, future needs and capacity requirements for human resources across the municipality at all levels.	Short-term		
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive Succession and Retention Strategy focused on attracting and retaining talent to support municipal operations.	Medium-term		
3. Research best practices in municipal government to inform the development of institutional learning systems to support building capacity and corporate memory.	Medium-term-Ongoing		
4. Create mechanisms for ongoing performance measurement across all levels of the organization.	Ongoing		
6. Create mechanisms for ongoing performance measurement across all levels of the organization.	Ongoing		

Goal 4 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Organizational Assessment completed
- Municipal Succession and Retention Strategy implemented
- Municipal Compensation Review conducted and employee satisfaction surveys implemented
- Best practices researched and plans laid for knowledge transfer systems
- Performance measurement systems in place and reflected in departmental business plans

Goal 5: SUPPORT EXISTING AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS AND RETAIN OUR YOUNG ADULTS AND SENIOR POPULATIONS

Strategic Objective:

Establish and lead initiatives to position South Bruce as a community of choice among populations that tend to leave the community to access required services and opportunities

Municipality-Led Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Strike a multi-disciplinary Steering Committee of staff, Council, residents, businesses, local developers, and stakeholders (including Bruce County) to advise/inform strategic approach for the establishment of an assisted living/long-term care facility for seniors.	Short-term		
2. Undertake a feasibility study and environmental assessment to inform the availability, suitability, infrastructure and policy requirements and potential impacts of an assisted living facility.	Medium-term		
3. Undertake a comprehensive workforce attraction and retention strategy for the municipality, potentially in partnership with the county.	Medium-term-Ongoing		
4. Establish relationship with Bruce County staff as the provincial Service Manager in order to align policy objectives and work collaboratively to meet shared affordable housing objectives.	Ongoing		
5. Establish a Youth/Young Professionals Committee to promote ongoing involvement of young residents to share their perspectives, vision, and ideas for South Bruce.	Ongoing		

Goal 5 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment completed
- Workforce Strategy is developed and implemented
- Youth Engagement is supported through Young Professionals Committee
- Working relationship established with Bruce County 'Service Manager'

Monitoring the progress of each action will be the responsibility of the lead department identified in this implementation plan and will be reported out through two mechanisms:

- **An Annual Corporate Strategic Plan Report Card**
- **A Community Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report**

8.1 Departmental Business Plan Report Cards

Implementation of the strategy will be strengthened through aligned business plans across all municipal departments. An annual review of these plans will clearly identify actions and activities that have been initiated and/or completed. Monitoring performance is an important stage in the strategic planning process as it offers evidence that the plan has moved beyond development to implementation. Collectively a presentation of an Annual Report Card to communicate the progress of priority actions to Council can serve to inform progress and to support the budgeting process.

The suggested content for each departmental business plan's Annual Report Card consists of the following sections:

1. Departmental mandate and core values
2. Key department priorities/main service areas
3. Alignment with the goals and objectives of the corporate strategic plan
4. A list of major initiatives for the report timeframe (e.g. 2 years)
5. A matrix outlining the progress or completion of particular initiatives/actions
6. Use of allocated resources in that year and resource requirements for major initiatives

8.2 Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report

In addition to internal communication of progress, it is equally important to ensure that the community is kept informed. Departmental report cards will support the creation of a Corporate Annual Report for the municipality's Corporate Strategic Plan, sharing the status of priority actions, identifying changes in priorities due to significant changes, and telling the story of success that has positively impacted the community. This ensures that the Municipality is fulfilling its commitment for open and ongoing communications, transparency, and accountability.

The suggested content for the Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report consists of the following sections:

1. Key areas of focus for the Municipality of South Bruce.
2. Major community initiatives and events in the report year.
3. From vision to action: a matrix of accomplishments based on the goals and objectives in the corporate strategic plan.
4. Case studies of successful implementation (profiling major accomplishments based in, and celebrating South Bruce).
5. Maintaining momentum: initiatives and actions for the upcoming year.