**THE TOWNSHIP OF TARBUTT**



**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**REVISED 2021 – TO BE REVEIWED ANNUALLY**

**Approved by Council on February 24, 2021**

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**2021 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?**

A Strategic Plan is a document that establishes the direction of an organization. It can be a single page or have multiple chapters, depending on the size and complexity of the operation and work to be done. All municipalities can benefit from having a strategic plan. The process of developing a plan helps the Municipal Council and the staff step back and examine where they are, where they want to go, and how they are most likely to get there. It also tells our stakeholders and potential funding partners that we have established goals objectives, and are working toward attainment of those goals. In the absence of a Plan, work still gets done on a day to day basis, but it may lack a sense of purpose, direction and priority.

The presence of a Strategic Plan also provides information to the residents of what the needs of the municipality are and allows for input and awareness of what the future holds, as well as timelines of when plans or growth may happen and what resources are required to reach those goals.

Working in conjunction with the Asset Management Plan, these documents allow Council to make decisions about service levels and asset investments; provide staff with planning and management abilities for all assets, present and future; and allow for the sustenance and improvement of services to taxpayers.

**COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The Township of Tarbutt is a single tier rural municipality of roughly 450 which was incorporated in 1956 as The Corporation of the Township of Tarbutt and Tarbutt Additional. Council voted to remove the “Tarbutt Additional” portion of the name in 2016.

The Township is roughly 30 km east of Sault Ste. Marie, accessed via the four lane provincial Highway 17 making it easy commuting distance from the city. The municipality is comprised mainly of rural properties, active farmland and waterfront residential properties along the northern shore of the North Channel.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES**

The residents of Tarbutt enjoy a good quality of life and consider the maintenance of the status quo to be an important aspect in protecting this quality of life over the long term. There are certain aspects and characteristics that contribute to the high quality rural lifestyle, including the natural environment, the agricultural and rural areas, the open scenic countryside, wooded areas, and the clean water shoreline of the North Channel. It is estimated that the Township’s population could increase by up to 125 people in the next twenty years, primarily due to a potential increase in the number of retirees from Sault Ste. Marie and the opportunity for lifestyle based housing and work from home options. The Township will also attract young families seeking a rural lifestyle.

In addition, recent influx of Mennonite families further emphasizes the quality of the rural and agricultural lifestyle that can be accommodated.

Proximity of the United States border and the Trans Canada Highway, running right through Tarbutt Township, are qualities that, taken together, create a culture and identity that is highly valued and desirable.

**Municipal Government and Services**

The Municipality is governed by an elected Council consisting of 5 members: a Mayor, and four Councillors, serving a four year term. The Municipality follows the rules and regulations set out by the Province of Ontario under the Municipal Act and other Provincial statutes.

Our Guiding Principles include being fiscally responsible, being Open and Transparent to receiving and respecting input from all stakeholders, and for being Accountable for our decisions.

**OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

**Financial Sustainability:** We have stable tax rates and reserves, and are able to fund our desired programs and infrastructure.

**Economic Development:** The Township has numerous thriving home-based and local businesses, resulting in sustainable jobs with work from home options.

**Infrastructure:** Our roads, bridges, trails, buildings, landfill and communications systems are efficient and well maintained.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Our residents have easy access to clean lakes and a healthy, sustainable environment.

**Population:** We continue to attract a cross section of new residents to the area, striving to attract newcomers and retain those who already live here.

**Housing:** Residents have access to a wide range of affordable and healthy housing options.

**Development:** While there is no hamlet or settlement area within Tarbutt, residential development is increasingly clustered around the shoreline. The development of additional agricultural, rural and recreational residential properties, as well as rural services and tourist related uses will continue to accommodate the needs of all residents, and contribute to the Township’s future economic outlook. With the exception of industrial or commercial uses, development is discouraged from locating adjacent to Highway 17 and 548.

**Technology:** All residents have access to cell phone coverage and affordable high speed internet. A growing number of people are able to work and study from home, and the Township anticipates an increase in the number of residents working from home as a result.

**Food and Farming:** The Township has a flourishing farming community with a large Mennonite component. Farmers are able to earn sustainable incomes and there is ample opportunity for farm gate sales, spin off businesses, and participation in local food and agricultural events. Residents have ready access to healthy local food and locally sourced products.

**Advocacy and Equity:** All residents have access to the necessities of life, eg good health care, secure properties, healthy food, education, and employment opportunities.

**VALUES**

The Township of Tarbutt is dedicated to continued improvement in all areas of service delivery and strives to be accountable, transparent and supportive to our residents. By adopting the following ongoing Key Principles, we offer the following:

Operational Performance Excellence: Council and staff will conduct itself in a manner that is affordable to local taxpayers while protecting future generations from being burdened by debts and deficits that they cannot afford.

Build a Resilient and Collaborative Community: Decisions will be made in a balanced, transparent and flexible manner that includes a broad range of interests, perspectives and community input.

Provide Value for Money Spent: Municipal services will be delivered as efficiently, effectively and economically as possible with an emphasis on continuous improvement and the integration of best practices.

Effective Planning and Development: Development in Tarbutt Township will complement our natural setting and existing built environment while providing for appropriate growth in appropriate places.

Grow our Local Economy: Community economic development initiatives will be designed to maintain and enhance a healthy community and foster the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses and enterprise to the Township.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In addition to the Vision and Values described on the preceding page, the Township strives to adhere to the following principles:

* We offer our residents the best possible services while keeping taxes reasonable and remaining financially stable.
* We manage our assets and infrastructure effectively and efficiently, and have plans in place to maintain and replace them.
* We hire and retain the best possible employees, offer competitive salaries and benefits, and plan for staff succession.
* We strive to ensure our services are accessible to all, and treat all residents, visitors and employees with respect.
* We value honest and transparent communication, and strive for accountability in everything we do.
* We value teamwork, respect others’ opinions, and seek opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and community organizations.
* We advocate on behalf of our residents to ensure their interests are considered and respected.
* We consider climate change and the environment in all decisions and operations.

**BENEFITS OF HAVING A STRATEGIC PLAN**

Having a Strategic Plan will allow Council and staff to focus on identifying the short term and long term needs of the municipality, as well as demonstrating to residents the real obstacles that must be overcome. In keeping with the ideologies of open, transparent and accountable government, a Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to receive input from residents with the end goal of a vibrant community and exceptional quality of life.

The existence of a Strategic Plan will allow Council to be able to budget for future short term and long term projects, stay focused on a goal, and show clear growth and care for the Municipality in a direction they have collectively agreed to. Initiatives brought forward by staff or members of the public can be identified as fitting in with the Plan, or being added as a longer term goal.

Following this plan will ensure municipal assets are well maintained and well managed, and allow staff to be prepared to access infrastructure funding for greater efficiency.

**HOW DOES THE PLAN WORK?**

In order to keep the Strategic Plan simple and easily understood, we first develop a list of items that we would like to see, want to have, need to have, have to have, and consider it a Municipal Wish List.

Once those items or goals are added to a list in no particular order, Council and staff will run a test on each item in order to rank them on the list by importance, but also by year when it may be financially possible to acquire those items or achieve those goals.

Some things may be of greater importance, but due to cost or preparation, may require more time to be able to accomplish. For example, getting streetlights in higher density residential areas, or replacing one lane bridges. It takes time and planning to establish a reserve or to find funding, so these become a long range plan. The important thing is that they are acknowledged as “long term goals”.

Other items may be of lower priority but still necessary, more affordable, and able to be completed sooner. Items such as mapping and development of an enhanced GIS system to improve efficiency of planning functions is one example.

**Items will not be ranked by importance but by likelihood of being able to achieve them within the time frame of the Strategic Plan. An important item may require several years of budgeting, accumulating reserves, or applying for funding before being affordable.**

**An item of lesser importance may be affordable in a shorter time period.**

It will be the obligation of Council and staff to revisit this plan annually and update it by adding new items to the list, removing items that have been completed, and changing the ranking of certain items.

**RANKING ITEMS**

Items will be evaluated and placed on a list to be reviewed annually. The list will be in chronological order when the project is needed, or when it is anticipated the project can be financed.

**THE PROCESS**

Council will use the following questions to guide them in their decision making with respect to the importance and priority of each item on the list.

**STEP 1:**

1. Do we want this? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
2. Do we need this? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. Can we afford this? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
4. Are we able to finance this? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
5. Is this a priority or urgent need? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
6. Is this consistent with our AMP? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
7. Is this consistent with our Official Plan? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If you answer NO to any of these questions, the item will not be considered in the next year’s budgeting process, but you continue to answer the following questions.

**STEP 2:**

1. Do we need to establish a reserve? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
2. Do we revisit this in \_\_\_ years? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. Do we remove it from the wish list? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Actions, measures and targets may change as we work toward our vision. Through regular monitoring, reporting and engaging residents we may modify or amend our efforts to ensure that we progress toward our goal and stay on track.

**MUNICIPAL WISH LIST**

Review of Fully Funded Reserves

* Annual review of reserves to meet short and long term plans.

Establish a Reserve for Playground Improvements, Recreational opportunities and Walking Trails that are Accessible, Signed and Barrier Free.

**MacLennan Hall**

* Significant structural and architectural upgrades are required to repair or replace renovations done 20 years ago. The hall is in need of upgrades including but not limited to roofing, stabilization, repairing structural damages, exits, accessible walkways, windows, ceiling and crawl space improvements.
* The hall provides a consistent source of revenue to the Township, and also acts as the designated Emergency Communications Centre (ECC) for the municipality and back up ECC for neighbouring municipalities.
* The hall is the designated “warming centre” and alternative meeting place for Council and district meetings. The addition of A/V equipment and a laptop would allow for greater use of the hall for various meetings and groups.
* A kitchen addition was completed in 1960, and the washroom addition in 1999. The Township’s Asset Management Plan recommends repair or replacement of both exterior and interior finishes, flooring, and necessary structural upgrades including but not limited to the following:
* All flooring is worn, inconsistent, ripped and floor requires leveling
* Vinyl siding and insulation
* Crawl space improvements
* Replace Main entry doors
* Roof sealing and vents
* Ceiling insulation upgrade
* East entrance and ramp to provide barrier free access
* Concrete walkway from rear to parking area
* Exterior doors and steps from kitchen requirement replacement
* Exterior perimeter lighting
* Window installation in storage room
* Construct accessory building to store snow blower, lawn mower, tools
* Engineering design and inspection
* As the hall is located on Government Road and is easily accessible, the property could be used for other purposes such as supportive recreational use. Government Road is a portion of the Trans Canada Trail as well as the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail and, as such, numerous cyclists pass by the hall on a regular basis. The Township could expand uses of the hall for tourists and local residents by installing amenities for cyclists such as outdoor washrooms, a covered picnic gazebo, a bike maintenance station, a water bottle refill outlet and picnic tables or benches.

**Women’s Institute Park**

* The Women’s Institute Park is located on the shoreline of the North Channel at the end of MacLennan Road. The shore and water in that area is very sandy and very shallow, making it an excellent family swimming and recreational spot. There is currently no public shoreline access anywhere in the Township. The Women’s Institute transferred the property to the Township to care for and maintain but the park has not been a budget or maintenance priority over the years, has been neglected and is in need of parking, structures, amenities and open access.
* A grant from the Great Lakes Local Action Fund in 2021 will allow the Township to re-establish the park as a waterfront recreational location for residents and visitors to enjoy access to the North Channel. The project includes a driveway and parking area, washrooms, picnic tables and benches, maintained greenspace, a BBQ pit, change rooms and outhouses.

**Tarbutt/Johnson Shared Sand Dome**

* A sand dome located on lands shared by both Tarbutt and Johnson Townships on Government Road would be a shared project between the two Townships, benefitting both communities.
* Significant time savings for Roads crew who are required to drive to Hilton Beach to collect sand from the MTO depot, load same, drive back and sand roads. ON a heavy snow day this takes four trips at four hours out of time that should be spent maintaining the roads.
* Significant cost savings in labour and time.
* Direct purchase of sand would allow competitive bidding for materials.
* The sander could fill more quickly, therefore having the roads sanded in less time.
* Reduced liability for Tarbutt employees and equipment traveling on MTO highways, and into other municipalities to collect sand.
* COVID-19 precautionary measures require additional time for disinfection and sanitizing of shared equipment at sand dome located in another Township.

**Birch Hill Park**

* This park and playground equipment is aging and should be updated. The playground would be enhanced with the addition of a covered picnic structure to provide shelter from sun and rain.
* The purchase of a rotary hoe to provide for safe ground space in the playground should be considered.

**Shared Tarbutt Johnson Landfill Site**

* Significant capital work is required at the joint landfill site. The cage needs replacing, cover material is constantly required to meet MOE requirements. Closing the cell could be upwards of $200,000, and construction of a new cell could exceed $300,000. The approved footprint or active fill area needs to be increased and new monitoring wells drilled before a third cell can be constructed, all requiring MOE approval.
* Increasing the footprint and the installation of new test wells will require MOE approval, and an amendment to the Certificate of Approval, which will require extensive environmental assessment and surveying by an environmental engineer. The active fill area can only be moved westward.
* The purchase of compactors or compacting/excavation equipment will be required.
* The construction of a garage on site will be required to house the equipment.

**Surface Treatment**

Lakeshore Drive, Partridge Drive, Lily Pond Lane, Mill Road

**Puddingstone Road**

* This boundary road, shared with Johnson Township, will eventually require upgrading. A reserve should be established for prep work on the road surface, ditching, brushing, etc.

**Dry Hydrants**

* These are pipes in an L shape that are mounted on guide rails on edges of flowing creeks, placed facing down stream and capped. When the fire department needs to access water in an emergency, they remove the cap allowing the water back into the pipe through a hose and collect water into the tanker. Installing dry hydrants allows multiple access points to get water, rather than having the tanker drive to Pine Island for refills.

**Buried water tanks**

* Buried water tanks negate the need to have fire fighting equipment drive to the lake for refills. In a fire emergency the fire tanker can pull up to the buried tank, open the cap and draw the stored water out of the tank. It would be hugely beneficial to bury more and larger tanks around the Township, providing ready access to water for firefighting away from the shore. There are two locations with flowing springs that could be set up to automatically keep the tanks full.

**Holland Village Bridge**

* The bridge linking Barr Road S. with Creek Road washed out several years ago and has never been replaced. A Reserve has been established but this will be a multi year, million dollar project. Funding from other sources would be required, along with MNR approval for two culverts rather than a free span bailey bridge.
* Re establishing this bridge would provide vehicular access to the East end of Lakeshore Road and Barr Road and allow direct access to Hwy 548 or traveling East. It would also provide additional emergency access to the area and quicker fire and emergency response times to Port Findlay.

**Port Findlay Cemetery**

* The Columbarium at this active cemetery requires walking paths and the entire site requires landscaping and fencing to make it more serviceable and appealing.

**Stickney Cemetery**

* The Pioneer Cemetery requires ongoing upkeep and maintenance. Mapping of the site would provide additional historical value and interest.
* The site has been secured in recent years, and independent access has been created. Dedicated parking should be allocated to ensure the safety of the public.
* Many headstones are broken or fallen over and an estimate to repair and clean the stones is expected to exceed $40,000. Once the headstones have been properly set the ground needs to be leveled and maintenance of the site will be much easier.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Fire Chief has requested a new service vehicle to replace the 1992 4x4 currently in use. Estimates for a new truck are in the area of $150,000.

**Replace 1997 half ton** – No Fire reserve has been established to replace the half ton which is completely outfitted as an emergency vehicle.

**Replace daily used equipment** – Fire budget consideration must be given for the eventual replacement of all daily used equipment and maintain all infrastructures.

Adoption date: February 24, 2021