



Township of Muskoka Lakes Draft Strategic Plan

Appendix I - Framework Document

September 2020

Contents

Purpose of this Framework Document	3
Strategic Planning Process: Where are We and Where We are Going?	4
Key Concepts Guiding the Development of this Strategic Plan	5
Strategic Planning Workshop Process: How We Got Here	6
The Township’s Draft Strategic Plan	6
Next Steps of the Strategic Planning Process	13
Appendix: Strategic Planning Workshop SWOT	15

Purpose of this Framework Document

- StrategyCorp facilitated a series of strategic planning workshops in January 2020, and again in August 2020, with senior staff and Council of the Township of Muskoka Lakes. The purpose of the strategic planning workshop series was to engage the Township's leadership team in an interactive session to discuss and reach an agreement on the key inputs that will inform the Township of Muskoka Lakes' new strategic plan.
- The objectives of the workshop series were as follows:



To align the Township of Muskoka Lakes' understanding of key stakeholders and stakeholder value exchange



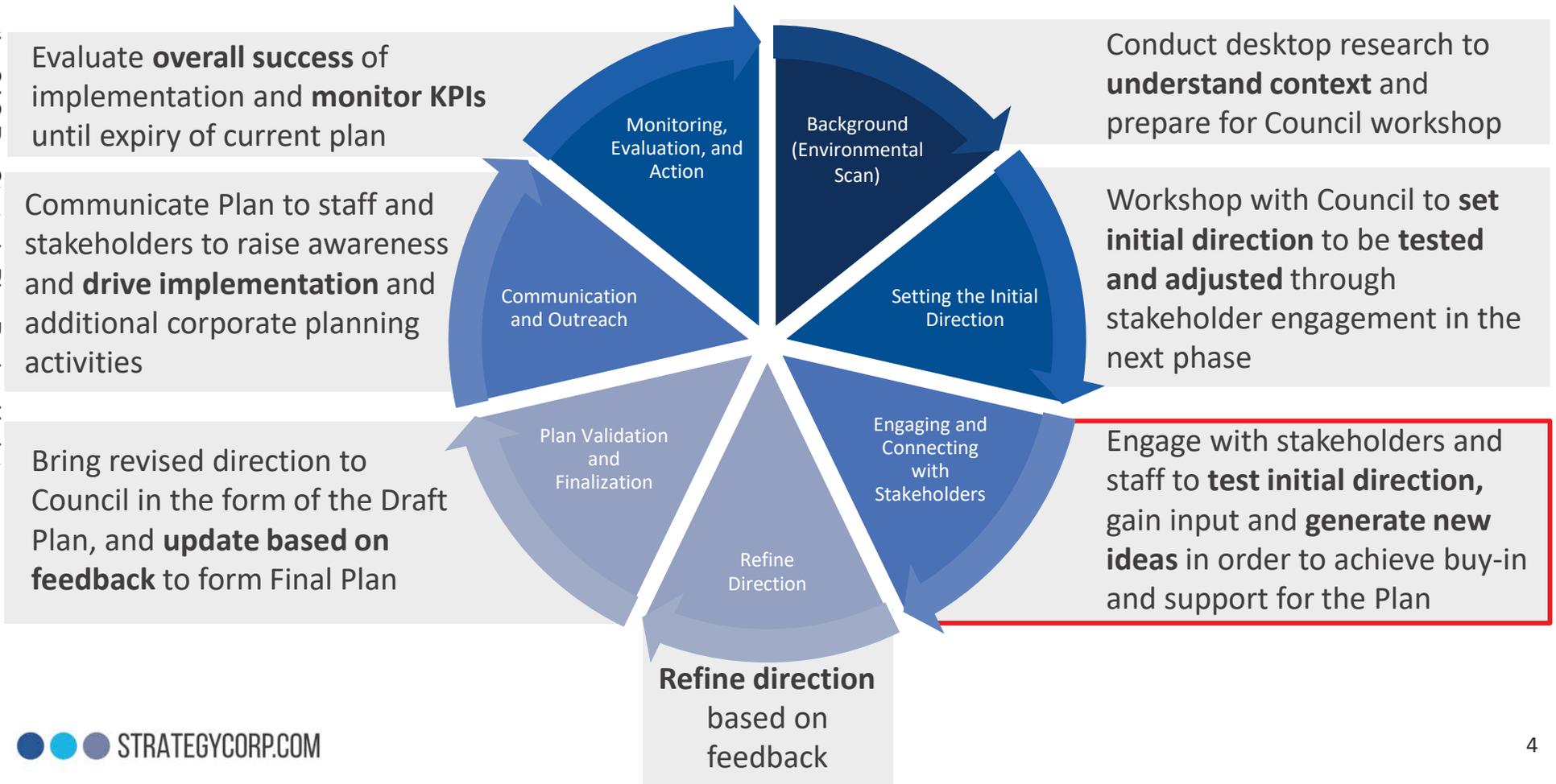
To discuss and understand Muskoka Lakes' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats



To review and update the Township's vision, mission, and values, and define 3-5 core strategic goals and associated initiatives

- This Framework Document presents the output from the strategic plan workshop series. This Framework will form the basis of ongoing discussions with leadership, staff, and key external stakeholders, to challenge and refine the key inputs into the final strategic plan.

Strategic Planning Process: Where We are and Where We are Going



Key Concepts Guiding the Development of this Strategic Plan

With the Township of Muskoka Lakes serving a diverse group of stakeholders, the need for a new strategic plan considering Muskoka Lakes' changing demographics and environmental factors was highlighted.

- ✓ The plan will help to identify and develop a long-term vision guiding the Township of Muskoka Lakes' activities, while considering how to develop a short-term operating plan that accounts for the environment, economic development opportunities and maintaining a high quality of life.
- ✓ The plan will include robust and extensive engagement with staff, stakeholders, and the community to ensure buy-in and successful implementation.
- ✓ The plan will reflect the Township of Muskoka Lakes' important relationship with both the environment and the community, while positioning it to be adaptable and successful for the future.



The Township's Draft Strategic Plan



Purpose of This Section

This section articulates the core elements of the Township's draft Strategic Plan, to be tested with stakeholders. These include the mission, vision, values, goals, initiatives, and key performance indicators:

- Together, the vision, mission, and values guide strategy development and execution, help communicate the Township's mandate, and inform the goals and objectives set to determine whether the strategy is on track.
 - The **vision statement** acts as a future oriented statement describing where we would envision the municipality ending up as a result of its strategic activities.
 - The **mission statement** communicates the day-to-day activities the Township will undertake, ultimately moving us towards our vision.
 - **Values** are what support the vision, shape the culture, and inform decisions and are based upon the values the community holds itself accountable to.
- The goals and initiatives set the direction and establish the priorities for the Township of Muskoka Lakes. They define what success will look like for the Township and the activities that will make this view a reality.
 - **Strategic goals** are the high-level goals that the Township would like to achieve as it works to implement this strategic plan.
 - The **initiatives** provide guidance on activities that the Township can work toward to achieve each of its goals.
 - **Key performance indicators** are measures that the Township can use as it implements the elements of the plan to measure its overall success.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes' Strategic Plan Architecture

Vision

Where generations live and gather in a breathtaking natural environment, enjoying recreation, history, and small town character. These will be protected and enhanced for future generations, while encouraging thriving communities.

Mission

The Township of Muskoka Lakes Council, residents, volunteers, and staff will be excellent stewards of the environment, set clear and respectful expectations of each other, and work together to achieve our shared vision.

Values

Respect:

through transparent and accountable governance and administrative processes, open and meaningful community engagement, and inclusion of community perspectives in decisions and actions

Excellence:

in environmental stewardship, responsible governance, and customer service delivery

Leadership:

that brings the community together on decisions and actions that will move the Township forward

Resilience:

in our ability to adapt to change in a manner that is true to our natural environment and community culture and traditions

Sustainability:

in our decisions and actions that protect and enhance services to people, environment, culture, history, and economy

Strategic Goals

Preserve and Protect the Natural and Cultural Environment

Continue to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, environmental, and wildlife characteristics that make Muskoka Lakes unique

Strengthen and Diversify Muskoka Lakes' Economy

Leverage Muskoka Lakes' competitive advantages to grow and diversify the economy

Enhance and Sustain Public Services and Infrastructure

Prioritize high quality local services and infrastructure through continuous internal improvement and strong relationships with other government partners

Strengthen Key Relationships

Strengthen relationships with the District, the Province, the Federal Government, and other municipalities to advance the Township's strategic interests and priorities

Goal: Preserve, Protect, and Promote the Natural and Cultural Environment

Continue to Preserve and protect the natural, cultural, environmental, and wildlife characteristics that make Muskoka Lakes unique

Strategic Initiatives

to support the Township in Achieving this Goal

- Continue to preserve and protect the natural and cultural heritage features of the Muskoka watershed found within the Township, including water quality
- Leverage local and regional relationships to strengthen our response to climate change, and ensure that Muskoka Lakes remains adaptable and resilient to its effects
- Communicate, market, and promote the use and preservation of our natural environment, including creating dynamic downtowns that highlight the natural environment
- Enhance septic management policies, practices, and infrastructure, and support these through greater education of, and communication, to users

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (to be validated and/or refined)

- Water quality testing (number of tests and areas tested)
- Shoreline quality testing (quality and health of the first 25 feet of shoreline)
- Septic system infractions (seeking a downward trend)
- Use of natural recreation facilities, specifically parks and trails (seeking an upward trend)

Goal: Strengthen and Diversify Muskoka Lakes' Economy

Leverage Muskoka Lakes' competitive advantages to grow and diversify the economy

Strategic Initiatives

to support the Township in Achieving this Goal

- Implement the economic development strategy, including housing, workforce, broadband, and transportation enablers of economic development
- Establish criteria to assess and prioritize desired types of economic growth for the Township, particularly light industrial, commercial, and year-round amenities and activities
- Leverage existing Township infrastructure to establish community hubs that support a thriving community, with a focus on year-round amenities, cultural attractions, and ancillary services that contribute positively to a high quality of life

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (to be validated and/or refined)

- Median and average family income among permanent residents (seeking an upward trend)
- Number of year-round businesses
- Overall success of the implementation of the economic development strategy (tied to its KPIs)
- Number of events outside of the summer/waterfront season

Goal: Sustain and Enhance Public Services and Infrastructure

Prioritize high quality local services and infrastructure through continuous internal improvement

Strategic Initiatives

to support the Township in Achieving this Goal

- Develop and implement an actionable recreation and trails master plan that improves community and visitor usage of the Township's infrastructure and natural features
- Develop and implement a transportation master plan that identifies opportunities to maintain and enhance the Township's vital multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- Maintain a focus on organizational excellence and supporting staff to effectively deliver services to residents
- Assess the Township's current service delivery models and identify opportunities for modernization, digitization, and enhanced customer service engagement

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (to be validated and/or refined)

- Customer service scorecard (tied to customer service requests, responsiveness, etc.)
- Number and diversity of resident-facing communications and interactions annually
- Transportation infrastructure assessment quality across modes (civil linear, water, trails, etc.)

Goal: Strengthen Key Relationships

Strengthen relationships with the District, the Province, the Federal Government, and other municipalities to advance the Township’s strategic interests and priorities

Strategic Initiatives

to support the Township in Achieving this Goal

- Conduct a thorough review of existing government relationships at all levels, including level of influence, financial impact analysis, and opportunities for increased collaboration
- Improve communications activities between the Township and other governments to facilitate better working relationships and information-sharing in support of legislated mandates and strategic priorities
- Identify specific measures that, if achieved, will improve the Township’s governance, fiscal, and programmatic relationship with the District

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (to be validated and/or refined)

- Understanding of landscape (tied to research, reviews, and reports)
- Amount of money received from other levels of government
- Assessed ‘value’ for taxpayer dollars

Next Steps of the Strategic Planning Process

Next Steps

StrategyCorp will maintain ongoing communications with the Lura Consulting team to discuss any overlap heard during the consultations regarding the Strategic Plan and the Official Plan.

1. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Key elements and concepts from this document will be taken to the public to solicit feedback that will provide insight into the final Strategic Plan document through the following channels:
 - **Community survey:** Available to anyone who would like to provide feedback via the *EngageMuskokaLakes* site (launch date – September 26, and promoted by Lura Consulting at the community session that day)
 - **Community engagement:** One virtual town-hall session to be held in mid-October, followed by a second town-hall session if deemed needed (dependent on participation in the 1st session) late-October
 - **Focus groups and one-on-one interviews:** Up to six sessions will be held virtually with key stakeholders (late-October), facilitated by StrategyCorp (stakeholder list to be confirmed with Council)
- Findings from the stakeholder engagement phase will be anonymized and consolidated into a Feedback and Recommendations Report, which will be presented to Council in early-November

2. Finalization

- Approved changes based on the Feedback and Recommendations report will be put into the final public-facing Strategic Plan ‘narrative’ document
- A high-level implementation plan will be developed with the Senior Management Team to be submitted with the final Strategic Plan ‘narrative’ document
- A final presentation to Council for approval of documents will be held in late November 2020

Appendix: Strategic Planning Workshop SWOT

Purpose of This Section

- This section provides an overview of the Township of Muskoka Lakes' current operating environment impacting its stakeholder relationships and its ability to govern responsibly. The SWOT analysis was initially developed during the January workshop, and subsequently updated during the August workshop series.
- The following section will outline the following:

- **SWOT Analysis**

In this section, we outline what we heard from the goal setting workshop and staff survey identifying internal strengths and weaknesses of the corporation of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, as well as threats and opportunities that are external to the organization.

- The **“So What?”** impacting client operations.

Identifying Core Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

- A SWOT analysis is a study undertaken by an organization to identify its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and threats.
 - Strengths and weakness are internal to the Corporation (e.g., talent, governance, operations)
 - Opportunities and threats are external to the Corporation (e.g., legislation, consumer preferences, stakeholder attitudes)
- The objective is to focus the SWOT discussion on internal and external issues that are, or may, impact an organization's ability to successfully deliver its vision and mission.

SWOT Analysis Findings

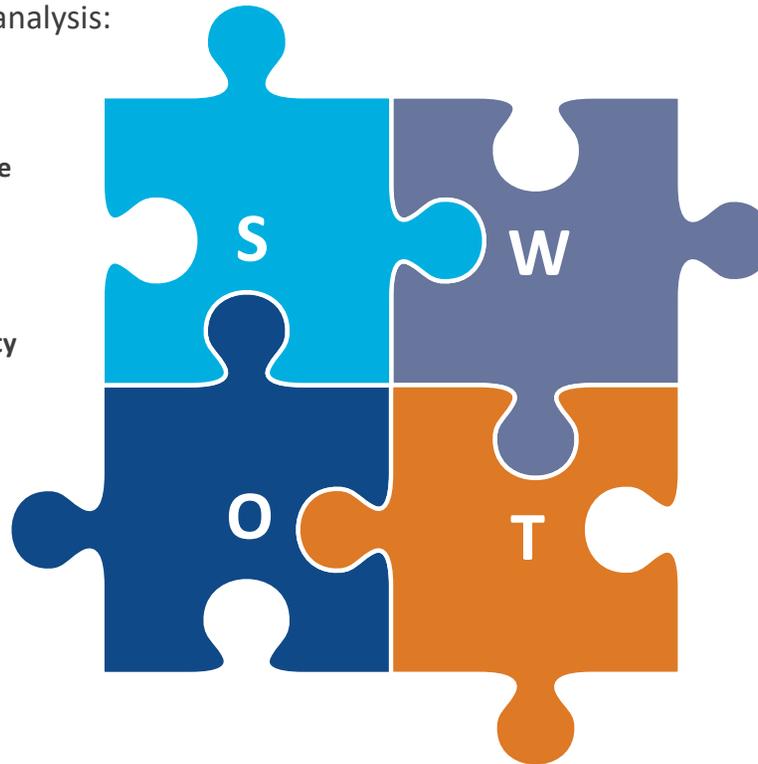
- The Township of Muskoka Lakes' strategic plan will need to leverage or resolve and mitigate the following key conclusions – the “So What?” – from the SWOT analysis:

Strengths

Muskoka Lakes' core strengths to be leveraged are its staff's strong commitment to continuous organizational improvement, focus on preserving the natural environment, and strong community and service delivery focus.

Opportunities

Muskoka Lakes has an opportunity to be a leader in balancing environmental considerations with the need to develop innovative strategies for community development.



Weaknesses

Muskoka Lakes' weaknesses to be mitigated are human resourcing constraints, aging infrastructure, and a sometimes disjointed perspective on how to approach environmental policies.

Threats

Muskoka Lakes' major threats to be mitigated are the lack of economic diversification, high cost of living, and a changing natural environment.

Strengths



Strengths

Muskoka Lakes' core strengths to be leveraged are its staff's strong commitment to continuous organizational improvement, focus on preserving the natural environment, and strong community and service delivery focus.



Participant Contributions

- *Commitment to the natural environment*
- *Strong sense of teamwork – both internally within the Township and externally*
- *Our high-quality service delivery – specifically road maintenance*
- *We pride ourselves on providing great customer service*
- *Transparent communication and strong engagement practices with the local community*
- *The Corporation is fiscally responsible and financially stable*
- *Effective control bylaws that prioritize environmental preservation – great water quality, maintenance of the waterfront and “Dark Sky” bylaws*
- *Staff is passionate about the environment, and the environment is a core piece of the value of Muskoka Lakes*
- *Many parks and access points to the waterfront – brings people water access who may not be able to otherwise afford it*
- *Strong tourism industry*
- *Diversity – there are a range of economic and social classes that make Muskoka Lakes a beautifully diverse place to live*

Weaknesses



Weaknesses

Muskoka Lakes' weaknesses to be mitigated are human resourcing constraints, aging infrastructure, and a sometimes disjointed perspective on how to approach environmental policies.

Participant Contributions

- *Lack of internal communication between different departments*
- *Difficulty delivering services to topographically challenging areas*
- *Lack of consensus on strategic environmental policies*
- *Lack of partnerships with training/trade institutions*
- *There is a distinct lack of engagement with young people within the community – no forum for them to facilitate a discussion with the Township*
- *The Township is staffed at the bare minimum and does not have the human resources to keep up with the changing times*
- *Planning department is overwhelmed due to high-workload*
- *High reliance on part-time and seasonal workers*
- *The Township of Muskoka Lakes website is not very accessible – desire to look at avenues to make the community website a better tool for community empowerment and access to services*
- *Lack of measurable targets for service delivery*
- *Aging infrastructure within the Township*

Opportunities



Opportunities

Muskoka Lakes has an opportunity to be a leader in balancing environmental considerations with the need to develop innovative strategies for community development.

Participant Contributions

- *There is an opportunity for the Township to leverage its natural environment by having it be an opportunity to benefit the economy (e.g., eco tourism) and increase equitable access*
- *Be a leader in freshwater management and the environmental preservation space*
- *Build out progressive housing options accounting for seasonal shifts in population and different economic classes*
- *Assess opportunities to regulate AirBnb to develop more robust and stronger regulations*
- *Capitalizing on the rise of the internet economy and have Muskoka appeal to more to individuals who work from home through improved broadband*
- *Opportunity to be an innovator in municipal service delivery*

Threats



Threats

Muskoka Lakes' major threats to be mitigated are the lack of economic diversification, high cost of living, and a changing natural environment.

Participant Contributions

- *Lack of growth and connectivity with other municipalities*
- *Climate change and its impacts (e.g. flooding, erosion)*
- *The physical environment makes service delivery challenging*
- *Lack of economic diversification*
- *High spectrum of economic complexity lending itself to residents being either very wealthy, or poor*
- *Not keeping up with the rate of change in the external environment leaves Muskoka Lakes behind neighbouring municipalities*
- *High cost of living within the Township*
- *Threat of AirBnB – this brings more tourists who are unfamiliar with municipal regulations and bylaws and potential disruptions for residents*
- *Muskoka is far behind the times – both in protecting the environment and in services like broadband/telecommunications*



Toronto

145 King Street East, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5C 2Y7
416-864-7112

Ottawa

100 rue Queen Street, Suite 850
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J9
613-231-2630

strategycorp.com



Appendix II - Memorandum

To: Township of Muskoka Lakes
 From: StrategyCorp Inc.
 Date: September 2020
 Re: Strategic Planning Community Engagement - Next Steps

Summary of Engagement Activities

StrategyCorp has updated the Strategic Plan Framework document based on the outputs of the August 2020 Council engagement sessions. The next phase of the engagement is to connect with the community and other key stakeholders to solicit feedback on elements contained in the Strategic Plan Framework. Feedback solicited from these stakeholders will be included in the draft final Strategic Plan document that will go to Council for approval later this fall. StrategyCorp will maintain ongoing communication with the Lura Consulting team to discuss any overlap that might be heard regarding the Official Plan and Strategic Plan consultation processes.

Specific Engagement Activities

Elements of the Strategic Plan Framework (contained in slides 8-13 of the Strategic Plan Framework) will be tested with stakeholders and the community through the following channels:

- **Late-September 2020:** StrategyCorp will develop a public-facing survey which will be open to all residents and stakeholders through the *EngageMuskokaLakes* portal. This will launch on September 26th, and will be promoted by Lura Consulting during their engagement session that day.
- **Mid-October 2020:** StrategyCorp will host a public town-hall session to consult on aspects of the Strategic Plan. A second town-hall session may be held in late-October, dependent on attendance at the first town-hall session.
- **Late-October 2020:** StrategyCorp will conduct virtual focus groups and one-on-one interviews (up to a total of 6) with key stakeholders to test and validate the elements of the Strategic Plan Framework. StrategyCorp will develop a discussion guide to support these interviews and focus groups.

Item	Timeline	Stakeholders
Survey	Launch: September 26, 2020	All
Town-Hall Sessions	Mid-October (Late-October - TBC)	All
Interviews and Focus Groups	Late-October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muskoka Tourism / Muskoka Chamber of Commerce • Muskoka Lakes Association

100 RUE QUEEN STREET, SUITE 850
 OTTAWA, ONTARIO K1P 1J9
 613-231-2630

145 KING STREET EAST, 2ND FLOOR
 TORONTO, ONTARIO M5C 2Y7
 416-864-7112





		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muskoka Ratepayers’ Association • Friends of Muskoka • Watershed Council
--	--	--

A Feedback and Recommendations report containing the consolidated and anonymized feedback, alongside recommended changes to the elements of the Strategic Plan Framework will be brought to Council for approval following the conclusion of the stakeholder engagement process.

Sample Engagement Questions

As mentioned above, StrategyCorp will be engaging the community on elements of the Strategic Plan Framework. To facilitate a good discussion with the community and stakeholders, possible questions could include, among others:

1. What is your vision for the Township of Muskoka Lakes?
2. What do you think are the greatest external opportunities and threats facing the Township of Muskoka Lakes at present, and over the next 5 – 10 years?
3. What initiatives do you think the Township of Muskoka Lakes should pursue to address these opportunities and threats?
4. Using a scale of High, Medium, and Low, how much of a strategic focus should the Township put on:
 - The Environment
 - Diversifying our Economy
 - Improving Relationships with Other Levels of Government
 - Improving Access to Recreation and Trails
 - Improving Service Delivery
 - Increased Communication to Residents

Next Steps

Following Council’s approval of the recommended changes to the Strategic Plan Framework as identified in the Feedback and Recommendations Report and an update to the Framework document, StrategyCorp will proceed with the finalization stage of this process, which will include:

- Development of a high-level implementation plan, in consultation with SMT;
- A public-facing Strategic Plan ‘narrative’ document that contains the updated elements of the strategic plan, identified during the stakeholder engagement phase and approved by Council; and
- A final presentation to Council in late November or early December 2020.