An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are large, flat fields of golden-brown crops, possibly corn or soybeans, with some smaller structures and a fence line. In the middle ground, a road winds through the fields towards a small town or village with several buildings and trees. The background shows rolling hills under a vast, blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and rural.

TOWN OF GULL LAKE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2017 - 2021

Karyn Mossing Consulting

TOWN OF GULL LAKE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

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FOREWARD

Message from Mayor Blake Campbell

Our community is working on a Strategic Long-Term Plan to help us prepare for the promising future of our Town. To be successful, the planning process needs to have input from residents, Council and Staff. I want to thank the residents who participated in the Community Needs Assessment. Your valuable feedback will help guide the important planning decisions of Council.

To move forward as a community, we need to successfully identify, plan and prepare for the future opportunities and challenges that await our Town. The Strategic Plan will be used by present and future Councils to keep our community prosperous and sustainable for many years to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exciting project could not have succeeded without the dedication, commitment and vision of the Project Steering Committee:

Town Council

- Mayor Blake Campbell
- Councillor Steven Haithwaite
- Councillor Dwayne Lavoie
- Councillor Ed Lowenberger
- Councillor Tim Temoshawsky
- Councillor Mike Yates
- Councillor Nasser Zanidean

Town Administration and Operations

- Dawnette Peterson, Administrator
- Lea Stevenson, Office Assistant
- Kirtis Cooke, Town Foreman
- Doug Vold, Waterplant Operator
- Felix Ewen-Temoshawsky, Maintenance

Finally, many thanks to the citizens of the Town of Gull Lake who have contributed their comments and ideas to help make this project a reality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business and management consultant Ted Treller said that strategic planning requires careful and comprehensive planning concurrently with focussed and committed actions and that, “strategic planning in and of itself need not be overly complex since its essential foundations are neither more nor less than determining where the community or municipality is today, what it aspires to be tomorrow, and how it can best achieve those aspirations”.

The Town of Gull Lake Strategic Plan will provide direction for the Town’s future community planning and economic development efforts over the next five years. A planning process was led by Town Council and Administration in 2015, in which citizens, elected officials and administration were invited to weigh in concerning municipal priorities and strategic directives. Town Council and Administration then sought to brainstorm collective ideas and process the information gained from all sources to identify municipal strategies to foster future sustainable actions and strategies.

This comprehensive research and analysis approach forms the basis of a Strategic Plan for further developing the strategic operational actions to better manage and shape the future for the citizens of Gull Lake. The Strategic Plan is built on three themes: A Shared Vision, A Shared Mission and Purpose, and A Shared Direction:

A Shared Vision

A set of strategic imperatives represents shared cored values that articulate broad overarching aspirations to influence and shape the way in which the Town fulfills its purpose: Optimistic and Progressive, Honest and Fair, Objective and Respectful, Accountable and Reliable, and Generous and Giving.

A Shared Mission and Purpose

Municipal priorities for the Town consider citizen opinion and insight, and address anticipated future growth and the need for operational planning, implementation, and monitoring.

A Shared Direction

Strategic directives for the Town establish the basis for future operational and budgeted actions.

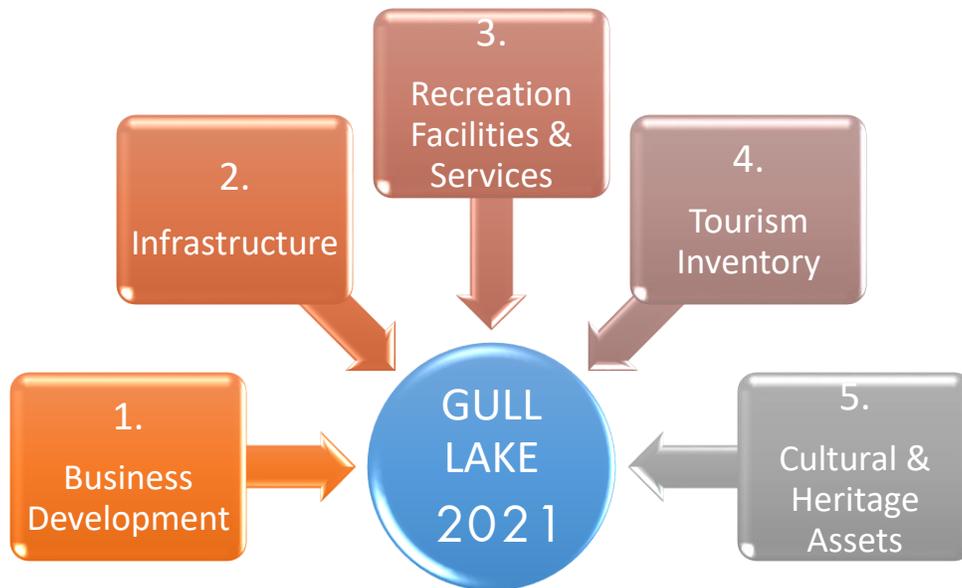
A SHARED VISION

- Optimistic and Progressive
- Honest and Fair
- Objective and Respectful
- Accountable and Reliable
- Generous and Giving

A SHARED MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Town of Gull Lake is accountable to residents, meeting their needs through planning, managing assets, and promoting and fostering growth in a fiscally responsible manner.

A SHARED DIRECTION



INTRODUCTION

A Town Faces the Future

Gull Lake is a safe, friendly, and thriving community with a trading area of over 2,500 residents. Its quality facilities like the Gull Lake Recreation Complex and the modern Lyceum Theatre draw residents and visitors alike and health care and educational facilities add to its quality of life. Signature events such as the Gull Lake Winterfest provide the building blocks for spin-off events and activities.

The Town is ideally situated within a diversified agricultural and resource cluster at the centre of southwestern Saskatchewan's major road transportation routes at the intersection of Highways #1 and #37. Located along the Canadian Pacific Rail main line, the Town also boasts a municipal airport and is 50 kilometres from Swift Current. To accommodate business growth, the Town offers incentives to help existing businesses grow, and new businesses to start and become successful.

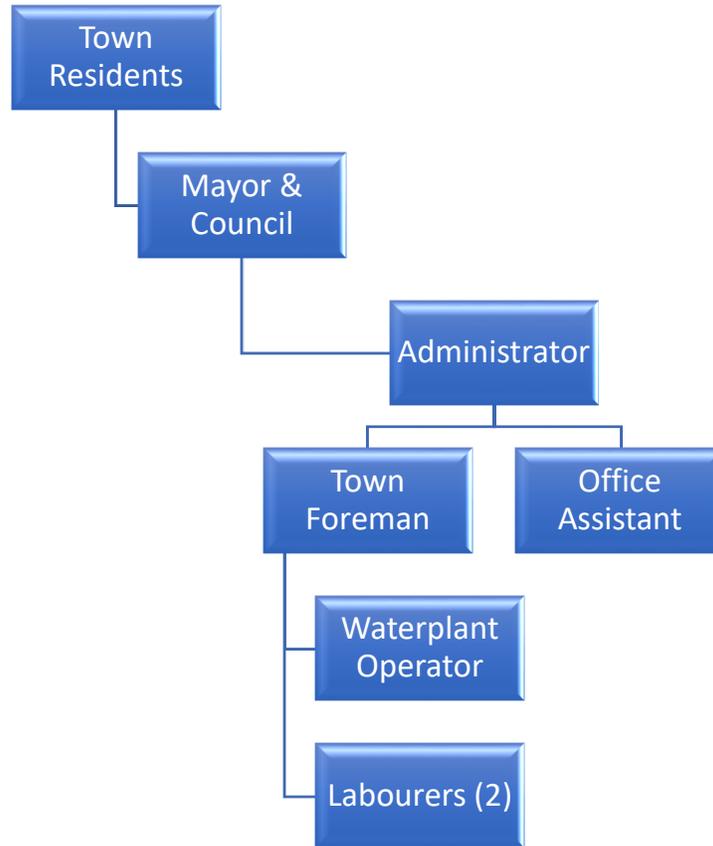
Community Leaders Respond

A Strategic Plan for Gull Lake provides the rationale and defensible basis for determining which priorities to pursue and opportunities to embrace. Gull Lake's community leaders have responded to the opportunities facing the Town by leading the way to capitalize on key opportunities for growth. A Strategic Plan promotes transparency and accountability, by reflecting local area interests and current economic realities.

Providing the environment for stakeholder participation results in a wider and shared understanding and commitment. Citizens were asked for their opinions on a full range of development options to provide insights for Town officials and administration to take forward into a Town of Gull Lake Strategic Plan for the next five years.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Town of Gull Lake



EVIDENCE BASE FOR THIS PLAN

In March, 2015, the strategic planning process began with a needs survey for citizens to complete. Town Council and Administration met together in a Strategic Planning session led by facilitator Karyn Mossing on January 18, 2017, to examine how what they were currently doing fit into the overall strategic planning process. They discussed the results of all participant input, assessed municipal priorities, and deliberated to set Strategic Directives for future action. A set of Strategic Imperatives, or shared core values, were also derived to further assist Town management in their decision-making.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning followed a process to survey stakeholders, analyze survey results, strategize priorities and strategic direction, forming a basis to develop operational plans and budgets, and implement actions.



The purpose of the Facilitator’s interaction was to support Town Council and Administration through the first three steps of the strategic planning process, which was to survey stakeholders, analyze survey results, and strategize priorities and direction.

Step 1: Survey

To engage participants in planning for their collective future, the Town Council and Administration led the development and implementation of a participant survey directed to citizens to identify municipal priorities for Town Council and Administration to consider.

Step 2: Analyze

In the Strategic Planning session, Town Council and Administration analyzed survey input from citizens to gauge interest and adoption of local services, support services, sports, recreation, and culture facilities, and to identify priority issues for Council to address. At this stage of the planning process, the top municipal priorities included infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks and streets), facilities/services (e.g. walking trail, water supply), and community development (e.g. seniors housing, recycling).

Step 3: Strategize

As an urban municipality, the Town of Gull Lake Council and Administration establishes the foundation to establish Municipal Priorities and set the community's future Strategic Directives. During the strategic planning session, Council and Administration developed strategies and actions to undertake to achieve Municipal Priorities based on the Town's mission, why it exists, and what future state is desired.

Steps 4 and 5: Develop and Implement

Town Council and Administration will continue with Step 4 of the strategic planning process by considering all available information in the current context to develop operational plans for each Strategic Directive, containing actions/tactics and budgets in alignment with operational goals and shared Strategic Imperatives. Developing results-oriented operational action plans with action steps, roles/responsibilities, targets, timelines, and resources, and evaluation metrics, provides solid avenues for cooperation and partnerships.

In Step 5, operational plans for each strategic directive will be implemented at the final stage of the Strategic Plan, to be continually monitored for relevancy and currency. This approach allows for adjustment to the action steps and other factors to reflect changing conditions.



STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES (Shared Core Values)

In the Strategic Planning session, Town Council and Administration contemplated their shared beliefs, known as Strategic Imperatives or shared core values. These shared core values represent broad overarching aspirations that influence and shape the way in which the Town fulfills its purpose and behaves as an organization, and are demonstrated through how it will make decisions. The following shared core values can act as the parameters for what is and isn't allowed in terms of decisions and actions (listed in no particular order of importance):

Optimistic and Progressive
Honest and Fair
Objective and Respectful
Accountable and Reliable
Generous and Giving

These shared core values can be defined more fully, and will act as real substantive values that influence behaviours and set a moral compass to guide decision-making. They can also guide the Town to articulate its vision, or what it wants to become in the future.

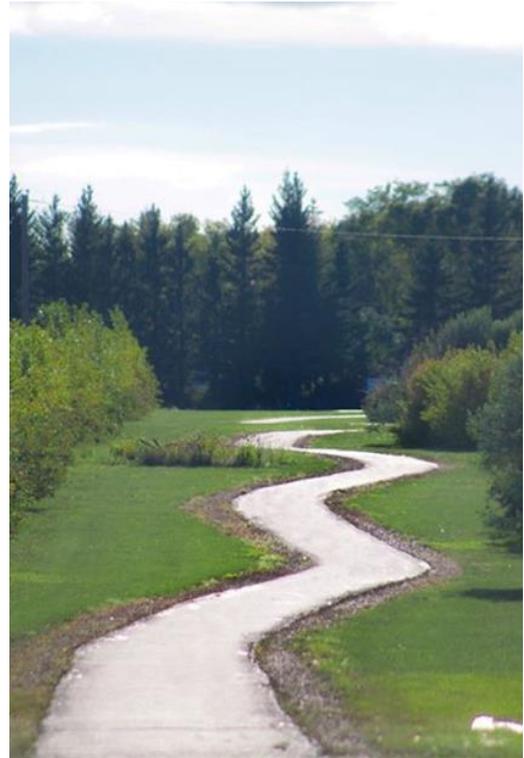
For example, the shared core value of being Objective and Respectful could be determined to mean Town Council and Administration value engagement of stakeholders in a meaningful respectful dialogue and objectively consider the opinions of others.

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

The Strategic Planning Workgroup established the following Municipal Priorities to aid the Town in determining where and when to allocate its resources:

- 1. Business Development**
- 2. Infrastructure**
- 3. Recreation Facilities and Services**
- 4. Tourism Inventory**
- 5. Culture and Heritage**

Business development creates a climate for growth and investment to enhance the community's economic vitality. Business development priorities include retail services, commercial/industrial development, and incentives.



Well-planned and maintained infrastructure benefits current/future residents and visitors to the Town. Infrastructure priorities include sidewalks, curbs, streets, drinking water supply, landfill, lot development and increasing housing options for a range of incomes.

Facilities and services increase the community's quality of life associated with recreation, arts, culture and heritage. Municipal priorities include constructing or upgrading recreation facilities, parks and greenspaces, walking and biking paths and designating a public gathering place.

Enhancing the Town's tourism inventory by marketing special events and offering services in association with the Cypress Hills Destination Area can attract tourists to dine, stay, and shop. Promoting Gull Lake's rich history can include a plan to preserve, rehabilitate or restore existing heritage buildings for adaptive reuse which contributes to environmental sustainability through

viable and continuing use of existing structures and the infrastructure that serves them. This can include completing preservation of the Wong Guy Shoe Shop and other heritage landmarks.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES

In the Strategic Planning session, Town Council and Administration considered all stakeholder input to further explore the validity of a list of Strategic Directives, which are categorized by Municipal Priority:

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MUNICIPAL PRIORITY)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES:

- Design a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program to suit the needs of local businesses and encourage growth and investment; increase the inventory of serviced, shovel ready commercial and industrial development sites as demand dictates; and increase the inventory of a variety of serviced and residential development lots.
- Revisit the Official Community Plan and clearly define the community “brand” and establish a plan to implement it in neighbourhood development, future planning and marketing efforts.
- Explore the addition of desired retail services that are not currently offered in the Town.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE (MUNICIPAL PRIORITY)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES:

- Improve existing infrastructure (such as streets, water and wastewater, sidewalks, landfill) to meet current and future needs.
- Become “grant ready” and ensure a sufficient level of capital investment to deliver sustainable infrastructure services to current and future residents.

3. RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES (MUNICIPAL PRIORITY)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES:

- Establish landscape policies to enhance existing greenspaces/streetscapes, and establish new greenspace/streetscape initiatives to encourage growth and investment; including construction of a recreational trail and plan for ongoing trail maintenance.
- Lead expansion of environmental initiatives such as renewable energy, recycling and reclamation of contaminated sites.
- Plan for the upgrading of facilities and enhancing existing recreation facilities such as the recreation complex, curling rink, pool, and tennis courts.

4. TOURISM INVENTORY (MUNICIPAL PRIORITY)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES:

- Explore partnership opportunities with the Cypress Hills Destination Area Inc.
- Host signature events such as a motorcycle rally and ride to capitalize on marketing and promotions by the Cypress Hills Destination Area Inc.
- Relocate the campground to offer more space, better access and utilities.

5. CULTURE AND HERITAGE (MUNICIPAL PRIORITY)

STRATEGIC DIRECTIVES:

- Identify buildings with potential heritage value and plan to preserve, rehabilitate or restore for adaptive reuse.
- Complete restoration of the Wong Guy Shoe Shop.
- Explore supports regarding conservation of cultural property.

Gull Lake is a small Town that is a Town on the move, with all of the amenities of a larger Town. We take pride in the friendliness of our citizens and in the safe environment of our community.

- Mayor Blake Campbell

OPERATIONAL PLANS

To guide the Town in developing operational plans, each specific Strategic Directive is grouped under a respective Municipal Priority, to become operationalized in the budget process. Each operational plan can feature key planning elements:

- Strategic Directive
- Action Steps
- Year/Completion
- Human Resources
- Budget Allocation
- Outcomes

EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

To ensure outcomes are consistent with specific objectives, Strategic Directives can be tied back to the Town's Vision, Mission and Purpose guided by its Strategic Imperatives, thus demonstrating what has, or has not, been achieved insofar as the Strategic Plan is concerned. Evaluation may identify factors such as key stakeholders, evaluation questions, evaluation methods, ethics, risk assessment, evaluation management, and dissemination.

The Strategic Directives stated in this Strategic Plan declare what future state is desired, while the Strategic Imperatives guide how decisions will be made to reach the desired future state. Operational plans and budgets, when assigned to each Strategic Directive, will define what changes are desired to enable the Town to move beyond the current state and into its promising future.