



## Township of White River

# Municipal Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028

*"Small Town, Big Heart, Bright Future"*







### Mayor's Message

Over the past weeks, I and council have been diligently working through the process to develop this strategic plan. The voices from the community have provided direction for the development of White River and helped to prioritize and shape the goals for the future. In the forefront is an affordable high quality of life, continued focus on family values, and building a community we are all proud to call home. Our approach in developing the action plan involves solution-based thinking, diversification, inclusion, and asking the question 'What is best for White River'. We are embracing the opportunity to work together, reset, and step forward to the future.

Yours in community spirit,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tara Hart". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mayor Tara Hart





## Introduction

The Township of White River is at inflection point. The world is changing at an exasperating pace. White River must keep up with this global pace. To do this, it must re-imagine itself and what it wants to be. Now is the time to invest in a new strategic plan and commit to the future.

## Why Do We Need a Strategic Plan?

Strategic Planning is the cornerstone organizational management activity that we are using to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees, interest holders, and other stakeholders are working toward common goals for. The Township of White River needs to structure itself strategically to ensure it can meet the challenges of the next five (5) years and that a clear and expeditious focus is the reality.

## Planning Process

A community's strategic plan should embrace the hopes, dreams, and convictions of its residents and stakeholders. This being stated, the plan must also be achievable and time-bound, as well as fit within municipal budget constraints. To ensure that White River's plan was grounded in realities, the following initiatives were undertaken to inform the plan:

- Completion of an environmental scan;
- Two (2) Council planning sessions;
- Community engagement survey;
- Employee engagement survey;
- Community open house viewing of draft plan; and
- Online public viewing of draft plan.





## VISION

White River - the small town with a friendly family feel, where new opportunities exist, and the community comes first.

## MISSION

White River is a community that embraces diversity, is progressive in our thinking, invests in core services, and values quality of life.

## CORE VALUES

### ***Leading Effectively***

Take ownership to do what's best for the community by inspiring innovative strategies and embracing new approaches.

### ***Open Communication and Transparency***

Engage the community through honest, proactive communications and embolden community confidence through transparent decision-making.

### ***Fiscal Responsibility and Modernizing Municipal Services***

Navigate financial constraints while striking a balance between service realities and community priorities.

### ***Inclusivity and Respect***

Build trusting, collaborative partnerships and relationships by working together and welcoming diverse perspectives.





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS



### Economy and Business Growth

#### *Actions and Initiatives to Grow and Enhance Tourism*

- Strategize, plan, and complete upgrades to:
  - Winnie the Pooh Park
  - Community parks
  - Caboose at the Visitor Information Centre.
- Develop a multi-stage action plan to accentuate the pond shoreline to create a community water feature.
- Develop a community beautification action plan that includes:
  - Cleaning-up the community
  - Streetscaping (planters and flowers)
  - Enhancing viewsapes.
- Research and action tourism marketing opportunities including:
  - The Group of Seven
  - Lake Superior Circle Tour.
- Develop a framework and phase-in a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) to support local tourism development with budget amounts and project priorities identified in annual municipal operating budgets.
- Modernize the Visitor Information Centre to make it a focal point for community promotion including technology upgrades and visitor interaction displays.

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Attract New Business Development and Encourage Business Growth***

- Compile a list of municipal spaces that could be re-developed to support new business opportunities.
- Develop a strategy to capitalize on Via Rail (bud car) train traffic and encourage longer community visitations.
- Engage with Via Rail and develop a regular communications protocol to establish a working relationship.
- Develop a Front Street Streetscape Plan including action items to enhance visitor experiences.
- Develop an Industrial Park expansion plan.

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Support Major Industry***

- Establish and maintain regular communication with local industry (mills, mines) to support economic development and emergency management such as quarterly or semi-annual meetings.



## **Infrastructure and Municipal Services**

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Support Municipal Service Development and Enhancement***

- Modernize the Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw including researching a Community Improvement Plan.
- Research the feasibility and cost of implementing a By-law enforcement position and services.
- Develop a formal municipal succession plan which includes building supervisory, infrastructure and project management depth in the Public Works Department.
- Review and update long-term capital infrastructure plans on an annual basis.
- Use real-time data to develop responsible and progressive municipal budgets on an annual basis.

- Complete a review of all municipal third-party contracts to ensure efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities.
- Develop and implement proper policies and procedures for tax and utility arrears collection.
- Develop shelf-ready grant and funding applications (utilizing professionals) to support municipal project development.
- Modernize municipal information technology – in stages – including:
  - New municipal office phone system
  - Upgrade Council Chambers to livestream meetings.



## **Community Services and Quality of Life**

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Improve Local Quality of Life***

- Engage with the Ministry of Transportation to encourage highway corridor lighting to enhance community safety.
- Develop a Housing Needs Assessment that will lead to developing a prepared and approved Plan of Subdivision.
- Undertake advocacy efforts to encourage local medical service establishment with an immediate focus on dental services.
- Research the potential of incenting medical service establishment such as dental services by using underutilized municipal buildings as potential service locations.

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Support and Grow Recreation***

- Support the local Recreation and Events Committee through Council participation and annual budget allocation.
- Develop a list of potential new recreation programming opportunities through an annual community survey.

- Utilize vacant municipal spaces to support local volunteer groups (i.e. Curling Club).
- Identify funding programs and apply for funding for identified municipal recreation upgrades (i.e. arena roof).
- Continue to support the Recreation Coordinator position through annual budgets.
- Support Seniors recreation programming by engaging with the local Seniors Club and seniors groups.



## **People and Partnerships**

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Support Collaborative Partnership Development***

- Establish regular Council to Council meetings with Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg.
- Establish joint recreation programming with Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg.
- Establish a relationship with Confederation College with a focus on local workforce development.
- Research potential immigration pathways to support local workforce development.

### ***Actions and Initiatives to Support Strategic Regional Partnerships***

- Participate in and support regional partnerships including:
  - Superior East Mayors Group
  - Superior East Community Futures Development Corporation
  - Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association
  - Thunder Bay District Municipal League
  - Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities
  - Algoma District Municipal Association.
- Include Council advocacy/networking (ROMA/OGRA/AMO/NOMA) in yearly municipal budgets.



## About the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan not only identifies the Township of White River's vision and goals for the municipality for the next five years, but it is also supported by strategies and action plans that will ultimately transform them into realities.

The Plan is not only the Township of White River's, but also representative of the entire community's hopes and aspirations. It is the Corporation's mission and values that will motivate our abilities and drive our commitment to action. Progress will be communicated back to Council every six months through a report to Council.

## Implementation

A plan is only as good as the resources in place to support it. To this end, the Township of White River's Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for developing and putting into action an Implementation Plan that will set out project leads, milestones, and accomplishments. This will serve to measure the progress of the Plan and ultimately its success.





## Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factors are those things that must go well to ensure success for an organization and, therefore, they represent those managerial areas that must be given special and continual attention to bring about high performance. Critical Success Factors include issues vital to an organization's current operating activities and to its future success. Upon review of White River's plan, the elements critical to our success include:

1. Implementing a plan that is not only realistic but is achievable.
2. Undertaking transformative leadership that will spur action and positive results.
3. Understanding fiscal realities facing White River and budgeting appropriately and responsibly.
4. Forming and embracing partnerships and joint ventures that are mutually and economically beneficial.
5. Communication that is open, transparent, and respectful.

**Township of White River  
Contact Information**

**Mayor**  
Tara Hart

**Councillor**  
Dwijen Bharad

**Councillor**  
Rodney Swarek

**Councillor**  
Raymond St. Louis

**Councillor**  
Rob Sedore



**Corporation of the  
Township of White River**

102 Durham Street  
P.O. Box 307  
White River, ON P0M 3G0  
Phone: (807) 822-2450  
[www.whiteriver.ca](http://www.whiteriver.ca)

