

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF

Whitehead

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN
2025-2030



Growing our Community

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Thank You!



Message from Reeve & Council

Reeve and Council are pleased to present the RM of Whitehead Community Strategic Plan (2025-2030), a document that will guide our Council and staff decision making in the next five years. Our strategic plan represents a collective vision for the future of Whitehead, providing all our residents, landowners, businesses, community organizations, and various stakeholders with an opportunity to engage and share their ideas and priorities. With 612 homes in the RM of Whitehead and over 180 participants in the strategic planning process, Council could not be happier with the level of public engagement. Through an online survey and focus group held in Alexander, Council and staff learned about the issues and priorities that matter most to our community members.

We realize that the challenges before us, and most municipalities across the Province of Manitoba, are significant. We are tasked with providing many programs and services to our community members with limited funds and resources. As the costs to operate a municipality, provide services and programs, and invest in infrastructure improvements continue to escalate, we remain mindful of your hard-earned tax dollars. We are dedicated to providing the best possible municipal services and good governance while ensuring an affordable quality of life for our residents, agricultural sector and business community. The strategies shared in this document cover a broad range of areas - the economy, community infrastructure, our organization, and quality of life for our community members. The plan emphasizes the issues you raised with our team and our commitment to you. We look forward to getting down to work and advancing these priorities.

On behalf of Council and staff, we want to thank everyone who contributed and got involved in helping shape the future of Whitehead. We hope that you stay engaged and work with us as we realize this exciting future together. It is our great privilege to serve the community of Whitehead, and we will continue to provide updates and communicate on the progress of this plan as we transform this vision for the future into reality.

Message from Your CAO

On behalf of the RM of Whitehead staff team, we are so proud to share this comprehensive strategic planning document with our community. Your ideas and priorities brought this plan to life. The community plan provides a framework for Council, Administrative, and staff decision making. We want to assure you that this is not a plan that sits on a shelf collecting dust but represents a key document to be referenced in our budgeting, operations and daily tasks.

The priorities identified by the community and Council provide direction to ensure we make the best use of limited financial and staff resources to achieve our vision. Our team fully supports the goals identified in this planning process. We are grateful to our dedicated group of elected officials, an inclusive Council who requested our thoughts and ideas in the development of the plan. When staff are part of the process in this way, we have a full understanding of the goals and expectations.

Achieving the community vision is dependent on staff working collaboratively with Council, other levels of government, public and private partners, residents, and various other stakeholders. I am proud to say I work with a small but dedicated team at the RM of Whitehead who will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf. Let's get to work and "Grow Our Community" together!

**Chief Administrative Officer of Whitehead,
James Maxon**

—

“Sound strategy starts with having the right goal.”

MICHAEL PORTER

—





CREATING A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR WHITEHEAD TOGETHER

The Purpose of a Strategic Plan

The purpose of a strategic plan is to develop a shared vision, direction, and goals to meet the needs of our community. A comprehensive community strategic plan helps us address social, economic, environmental, and cultural challenges and identify ways to improve the lives of residents in Whitehead.

Identifying and prioritizing key strategic goals and outcomes, this community strategic plan will help shape the future of Whitehead. It provides a framework for making intentional, strategic decisions and tracking our success.

With a shared vision for the future, we can protect what we love about our community while working to enhance the quality of life and well-being of our residents. Our community strategic plan is a roadmap for decision making, planning, and budgeting to achieve our full potential.

“The essence of
strategy is choosing
what not to do.”

MICHAEL PORTER

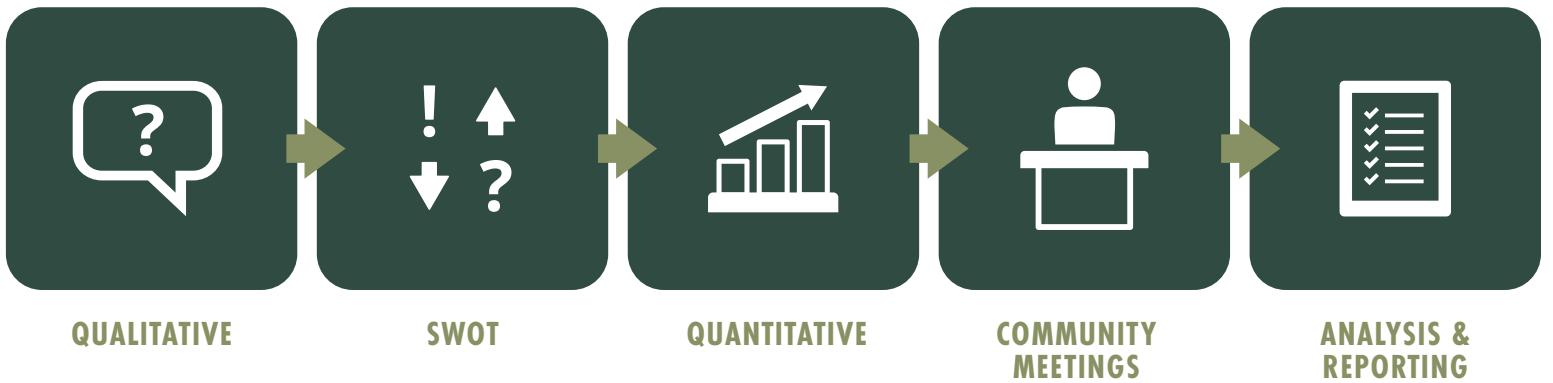


Strategic Planning Process

This plan was developed with insight from residents, business owners, members of Council, Administration and municipal staff, all stakeholders interested in sharing their ideas and expertise for the best interests of the RM of Whitehead. In 2024, the R.M. of Whitehead began the strategic planning process as an important step to better meet the needs of our community members and preparing for our future.

Over 180 people participated in this extensive community engagement process. Ideas and input from our stakeholders were truly inspiring and helpful for Council and staff. This plan incorporates all suggestions and feedback heard from the community, members of Council and municipal staff.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING



HOW?	10 interviews with Councilors/ Administration and Staff	Organization of qualitative feedback and secondary information	Online survey with 154 residents, business owners, stakeholders	In-person focus group with residents in Alexander (15)	Facilitated Council and staff session to report on community input and census data (9) Analysis of themes and key priorities for the future
WHY?	Review and create Mission and Vision statements Review past achievements Identify new priorities	Itemize and organize internal and external factors impacting the community	Receive public feedback on vision for the future, themes and priorities	Validate priorities according to residents	Organize and present priorities and goals in context

What Kind of Community Do We Want?

Friendly, Welcoming, Family-Oriented Community

A community that proudly welcomes everyone and creates opportunities to connect through recreation, programs, and community events.

Well-Maintained Infrastructure

Continuous improvements to roads with gravel and grading, ditch work that promotes drainage, and long-term maintenance of water and wastewater infrastructure.

Informed and Educated Community

Residents who are informed about municipal decisions, projects, programs and services through timely municipal communication.

Safe Community

A community that addresses all aspects of safety from low crime to support of our local volunteer fire department to flood protection and safe piped water for our residents.

Rural Identity

To welcome new residents and growth to our developed communities while, at the same time, respecting our rural way of life and proud agricultural sector.

Strong Foundations & Exciting Opportunities

In planning for the future of Whitehead, we must understand our current strategic position, where we are today, what's working, and areas for improvement. The success of our strategic plan is dependent on leveraging our strengths to our advantage, minimizing risks, and seizing opportunities that help us achieve our shared community vision.

Strong Foundations & Strengths

- Collaborative, "Progressive," & Respectful Council Team
- Hard Working, "Tight Knit" Municipal Staff
- Caring Community Members & Volunteers
- Unique Communities Within the Municipality
- Dedicated Volunteer Fire Department
- Excellent School
- Reasonable Taxes, Affordable Living
- Peaceful, Rural Lifestyle
- Access To Safe Water
- Pride In Our Local Businesses

More Work to Do

- Road Maintenance & Improvements
- Public Communication of Road Improvement Plan
- Slow Population Growth & Land Development
- Space for Additional Retail & Commercial Growth
- Drainage, Ditch Work & Flood Protection Measures
- Small Municipal Staff in Small Administration Office
- LUD Funding Limitations
- Aging in Place Options to be Explored
- Insufficient Communication with Community
- Ongoing Upkeep and Maintenance of Community Halls

Challenging Trends

- Limited Tax Base
- Inflation & Cost of Living
- Escalating Costs of Infrastructure Planning & Renewal
- Downloading From Other Levels of Government
- Provincial Land Use Planning Limitations
- Staff Retention & Succession Planning



Preserving Whitehead's History & Growing Our Community

Our community has a rich history, shaped by generations of families and business leaders who have come before us. Creating a community strategic plan for the future not only ensures the long-term survival of our municipality, but it also helps preserve those things we love about Whitehead. Strategic planning for our future protects and honours our unique rural heritage while creating opportunities to welcome new families and businesses.

The Rural Municipality of Whitehead became a municipality on December 22nd, 1883 and is named after Joseph Whitehead (1814-1894). Born in Yorkshire, England in 1814, Whitehead worked on the railroad and fired "The Rocket," the steam engine invented by George Stephenson, running from Darlington to Stockton in Yorkshire (1825). After some years of experience in railroad building in Scotland he emigrated to Canada in 1850, settling in Huron County, Ontario. He was awarded a contract for work on the Canadian Pacific Railway from Ontario to the Pacific Coast. While in Manitoba, he was responsible for the purchase of the first locomotive, the Countess of Dufferin, which was transported from the United States by barge on the Red River, arriving in October 1877.

The following year, a second engine and numerous flat cars were placed in service. He was elected Member of Parliament for North Huron in 1867. He is commemorated by the Rural Municipality of Whitehead. (Source: Pioneers and Early Citizens of Manitoba, Winnipeg: Manitoba Library Association, 1971).

Each of our communities within the RM of Whitehead has a unique and vibrant history to be shared and honored. The history of Whitehead is a rich, rural past to be celebrated. Early settlers adapted and overcame challenges to ensure quality of life for their families. As we look to the future, the Whitehead Community Strategic Plan

helps us achieve those same goals. Your local government is committed to working with residents, our farming community, neighboring municipalities, other levels of government, and private partners to preserve and create a strong, successful and vibrant Whitehead for current and future generations to enjoy.



Core Municipal Functions

There are a number of required and additional services that fall within our municipal jurisdiction. The strategies and goals we work to achieve as a municipality must fall within our municipal mandate.

Our core municipal functions include:



GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE POWERS



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



LAND USE PLANNING



ROAD MAINTENANCE



WATER & WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT



FIRE SERVICES



POLICE SERVICES
(PROVIDED BY PROVINCE OR RCMP)



WEED CONTROL



RECREATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES



ANIMAL CONTROL



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Role of Council

The RM of Whitehead council is responsible for leadership and governance by making decisions for the municipality about services, policies and programs. Council is required by legislation through The Manitoba Municipal Act to make decisions that are in the best interests of the municipality as a whole. Individual Council members must consider the needs of the entire municipality and not only the needs of the ward or area they represent.

In relation to strategic planning, Council's role includes:

- Developing and evaluating the policies and programs for Whitehead that align with the long-term, strategic objectives of the municipality;
- Ensuring resources are provided to achieve Council's strategic goals;
- Monitoring and evaluating the success of strategic objectives, approving adjustments as necessary;
- Reviewing the strategic plan throughout their term in office to ensure the plan is still responding well to internal and external pressures on the municipality and capturing opportunities; and,
- Communicating updates to the community regarding the status of strategic goals and celebrating success.

Role of Municipal Administration

Your Administration, CAO and Management, is responsible for providing advice and implementing Council's strategic decisions and policies. The Whitehead Administration and staff take care of everyday operations within the municipality – delivering services, interacting with the public, and preparing advice on policies for Council to consider.

In relation to the strategic plan, Administration's role includes:

- Implementing and monitoring the strategic decisions of Council;
- Ensuring current services and programs align with the strategic plan;
- Developing policies and procedures that support the successful implementation of the strategic plan, such as the annual budget proposal;
- Managing and leading all employees to accomplish strategic goals;
- Providing advice and support to Council based on their expertise and operational experience; and,
- Ensuring the efficient use of municipal funds and resources.

About the RM of Whitehead



The Rural Municipality of Whitehead is located a short fifteen-minute drive west of Brandon. Offering the best of rural living with proximity to a thriving urban centre, the RM of Whitehead is the ideal location to raise a family and locate a business.

A family-oriented community, the RM of Whitehead offers an affordable lifestyle, access to safe, potable water throughout the municipality and recreation opportunities for all ages. Encompassing over 570 square kilometers of land, the municipality includes the communities of Alexander, Kemnay, Roseland and Beresford. Helping to develop young minds and support young families, the RM of Whitehead proudly supports its local school, known throughout the region to be a "great school with an established art program."

The Rural Municipality of Whitehead is home to more than 1,600 residents living in 612 homes throughout the municipality. These residents along with business owners, landowners and the farming community proudly support all services and programs throughout the municipality with their tax dollars, volunteer time, and community pride! For developers and businesses looking to invest in the RM of Whitehead, our location off the TransCanada Highway, our proximity to Brandon and the Brandon airport, and affordable taxes makes us an ideal destination!



Rural Municipality of Whitehead Community Profile

LAND AREA

577.60 km²

AGE OF POPULATION

38.9 Years

13.4% of residents are over the age of 65
Largest age group is 10-14, 12%

OCCUPIED DWELLINGS

612

Average 2.7 people per household
Population Density is 2.9 people per km

AVERAGE AFTER TAX INCOME

90k

Unemployment rate of 4.7%

POPULATION

1679

Men: 50.4%
Women: 49.8%

HOUSE VALUE

396k

DISTANCE TO NEAREST AIRPORT

19 km

(Brandon)

COMMUNITY CENTRES

3



Vision

The RM of Whitehead will provide a welcoming and safe rural community for residents, businesses, and the agricultural industry by improving our infrastructure, growing our population and being fiscally responsible with a transparent and strategic governance model.

Mission

Our mission at the Rural Municipality of Whitehead is to foster a thriving community that balances rural living with modern conveniences.

We aim to:

1. Grow our population while maintaining our small-town charm;
2. Provide a safe and affordable environment for families;
3. Support both residential and agricultural development; and,
4. Enhance our role as a welcoming bedroom community near our neighboring city.

We are committed to creating a place where people can enjoy the best of rural life while having access to urban amenities, making Whitehead an ideal home for generations to come.

Core Values

These are the guiding principles. They define what we stand for as a community, Council, and Administration. They are the beliefs, behaviors and actions that anchor and guide our decision making.

Progress & Growth

- Commitment to growing our population
- Focus on long-term health and sustainability of Whitehead
- Responsible growth to keep our taxes reasonable
- Well-planned growth in strategic locations
- Respect for agricultural industry

Family-Oriented

- Ensure quality of life for all families, in all life stages
- Safe and vibrant community
- Welcoming, connected community

Integrity

- Deliver what we promise
- Commitment to building trust between council and community
- Fiscally responsible decisions
- Legal, ethical, fair and respectful governance

Communication & Transparency

- Communicate regularly with updates to our community
- Open decision making, with all relevant information considered
- Provide opportunities for community engagement

Best Municipal Service Delivery We Can Provide

- Provide exceptional municipal services to all
- Best use of limited resources
- Ensure current and future residents, landowners, businesses and community organizations at the center of all decision making

Community Engagement

The municipality conducted an online survey and (1) focus group in Alexander to gather information on key priorities and issues from the community perspective.

MOST POPULAR ATTRIBUTES USED TO DESCRIBE WHITEHEAD:



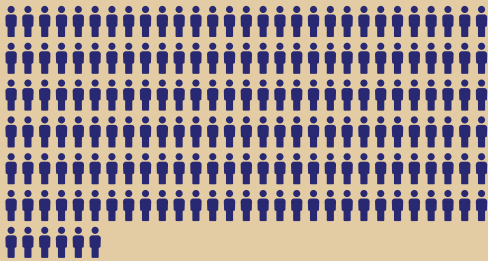
RURAL LIFESTYLE



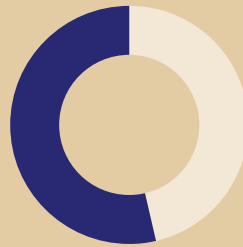
FAMILY-ORIENTED



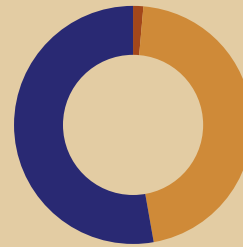
UNIQUE COMMUNITIES



Participants: 181













Lived in Whitehead for 16+ Years: 43%



Live in rural areas: 53%
Live in the communities of Alexander, Kemnay, Roseland, Beresford: 45.7%
Do not live in Whitehead: 1.3%

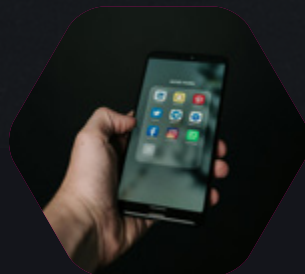
KEY THEMES & INSIGHTS

-  **95%-100% said the defining characteristics of Whitehead included rural lifestyle, strong agricultural sector, proximity to Brandon and access to safe water.**
-  **95% of participants would like to see road improvements.**
-  **85% would like to see more communication from council.**
-  **78% would like to see improvements in the areas of crime and safety.**
-  **71% want to see improvements to drainage and flood protection.**
-  **68% are supportive of residential growth.**
-  **63% are supportive of additional recreation programs and services for families.**
-  **60% of participants thought a municipal newsletter would benefit the municipality.**
-  **58% would like to see improvements to existing rinks and community centres.**
-  **57% would like to see community trails.**

A Community Vision for Success

Through the public consultation process and input from Council and staff, the municipality's six major strategic areas of responsibility were identified. These are referred to as strategic pillars and were developed through a comprehensive understanding of Whitehead's purpose, vision, stakeholder needs, and competitive landscape we operate within. These pillars represent the core elements of our plan, six key areas our municipality must focus on to be successful now and in the future.

KEY STRATEGIC PILLARS



COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION



LONG-RANGE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING



RESPONSIBLE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



STRONG FINANCIAL HEALTH



GOOD GOVERNANCE & MUNICIPAL SERVICE



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Strategic Priorities & Goals

Strategic priorities are the broad activities required to fulfill our major responsibilities and achieve our community vision. Strategic initiatives are the actions required based on input from the community, Council and staff.



Communication & Collaboration

Strategic Priority: To proactively communicate with our residents, business owners and the agricultural sector to update, inform and educate on municipal business, programs, services and the status of our strategic goals. To collaborate and build positive relationships with all levels of government, private and public partners to learn about and pursue opportunities for the benefit of Whitehead.

INITIATIVES

Residents

- More visible presence from Council and accessible Council members for questions and ideas.
- Focus on community relationship building activities.
- Create easy access to information for residents, online, through e-mail blasts.
- More frequent, timely and relevant information from council and staff to inform, update and educate the community.
- Provide project updates to the community, specifically relating to road work and snow clearing.
- Greater use of social media for updates and informing community members.
- Continued public engagement with the community for feedback to Council and staff.
- Development of municipal newsletter.
- Establishing a communication plan with specific targets, recognizing and respecting the limitations of a small municipal staff.
- Provide more detailed information on where tax dollars are spent and value for limited tax base.
- Help advertise community centre activities.

Public/Private Partners

- Explore options to cooperate across organizations to solve problems and improve community benefits.
- Foster stronger relationships between elected leaders at the local, provincial and federal levels with minimum bi-annual meetings to discuss various issues including provincial roads.
- Schedule meetings and hold community tours with potential developers and business leaders to promote the municipality.
- Enhanced marketing and promotion of the municipality throughout the region and beyond to communicate that we are “growing our community.”





Long-Range Infrastructure Planning

Strategic Priority: Maintain safe and reliable municipal infrastructure by facilitating improvements and enhancements to all local infrastructure for the benefit of existing residents and addressing the needs of a growing community.

INITIATIVES

- Develop a five-year road management plan, with the help of trained front-line staff to advise and update the plan as needed.
- Share the road improvement plan with the community seasonally with updates to inform on where limited resources are being directly as well as any changes based on changing road conditions.
- Creation of a community hall and community rink long-term improvement plan to assist with budgeting and inform the community of planned improvements.
- Develop a drainage master plan for culvert replacement and ditch work with long-range timeline.
- Ensure a sustainable water supply that can support municipal growth and commercial development.
- Plan for wastewater maintenance and expansion that can support municipal growth and development.





Responsible Growth & Development

Strategic Priority: To ensure the resilience and long-term survival of our community through residential development, populations growth, and economic development.

INITIATIVES

- Support existing local businesses and attract new business activity to the community.
- Direct budget and staff resources to economic development and growth.
- Ensure taxes, levies, charges and fees allow the RM to retain a competitive advantage.
- Create a favorable development climate, identifying opportunities for development and helping address challenges and barriers that would prevent responsible development, consistent with the strategic plan.
- Increase inventory of retail and commercial land.
- Ensure land use planning policies and zoning support housing, residential growth and commercial growth in the community.
- Create a land inventory of land ready and suitable for development to share with prospective developers.
- A plan for specific areas of development and how that development can contribute to infrastructure benefits such as lagoon expansion, trails and parks.
- Consider population target to ensure reasonable, planned population growth.
- Residential growth that is consistent with our rural lifestyle, creating guidelines for expected development.
- Development of marketing plan as a community and in partnership with regional organizations.
- To protect and promote both rural lifestyle and agricultural industry.





Strong Financial Health

Strategic Priority: Council and staff are committed to ensuring the strong financial health of the RM of Whitehead by spending taxpayer money with consideration and in accordance with the best interests of the community, and that the long-term financial prosperity for Whitehead is always part of our decision making.

INITIATIVES

- Financial decision-making considers short and long-term costs as well as the value to the community within the context of the strategic plan.
- Financial plan presentations to the community that informs and educates on municipal operating and capital expenses and limitations of current funding.
- Create healthy utility reserves for upkeep and renewal.
- Ensure healthy reserves for long-term financial planning, infrastructure and equipment renewal.
- Pursue funding partnerships and grant opportunities for all municipal programs and services.
- Help the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the provincial government for additional funding for road maintenance and improvements.
- Enhance our ability to attract commercial and residential development for growth in the tax base.
- Explore revenue generating opportunities.





Good Governance & Municipal Service Excellence

Strategic Priority: To ensure a strong municipal organization, where Council relies on strategic decision making, transparent, accountable and effective governance practices to achieve our priorities. A community where well-trained, supported staff are equipped to provide excellent service to the public.

INITIATIVES

Council

- Promoting forward-thinking, progressive leadership.
- Maintain and encourage continued teamwork, respect, and collaboration among Council members and municipal staff.
- Focus on strategic, transparent and accountable decision making.
- Respect for and consideration of administrative recommendations.
- Review and update municipal by-laws, policies and plans with legislative requirements, strategic goals and community vision in mind.
- Consider various ways to increase resident participation in formal decision-making process by encouraging participation in meetings, the formation of committees and public engagement.

Staff

- Commitment to high standard of professionalism with Council and the community.
- Provide best value for municipal tax dollars, optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs.
- Maintain strong, positive and supportive organizational/staff culture.
- Create a high-performing workforce that is well-trained, well-informed and adequately resourced to respond to service expectations.
- Set response time standards, aligned with resident expectations, relevant government regulations and budget and staffing restrictions.
- Communicate timelines with the community.
- Respond to resident requests with email or phone call acknowledgment within 24 hours.





Community Well-Being

Strategic Priority: The RM of Whitehead is a safe and secure community where resident can thrive with affordable housing, access to nearby employment, and opportunities to build a high quality of life through recreation, sport, arts and culture, and various programs and services that meet the needs of current residents.

INITIATIVES

- Development and promotion of recreation and community programs that respond to current resident's needs.
- Encourage community ambassadors and volunteers.
- Continue efforts to enhance community safety through education, communication and awareness.
- Ongoing support for our Whitehead Volunteer Fire Department and understanding of their needs and future demands on their services.
- Strengthening emergency preparedness, sharing emergency management information, identifying threats/hazards and plans to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts.
- Preserve our rural identify by gathering and preserving historical photographs, documents and communicating our history to future generations.
- Proudly celebrating our agricultural history and continued importance for the community.
- Encourage and support community events as opportunities for residents to build connections and improve quality of life.
- Consider areas where active trails could be created within the community.

“The future of every community lies in capturing the passion, imagination, and resources of its people.”

ERNESTO SIROLI

THE PATH FORWARD

The Whitehead Community Strategic Plan was created with a forward-looking focus to guide the municipality as we make decisions and invest in the future. The strategic plan will help us seize new opportunities and tackle challenges. A living document, Council and staff will periodically review the plan in the coming years to ensure it remains relevant, helps us address unforeseen challenges and opportunities, and continues to be aligned with community goals.

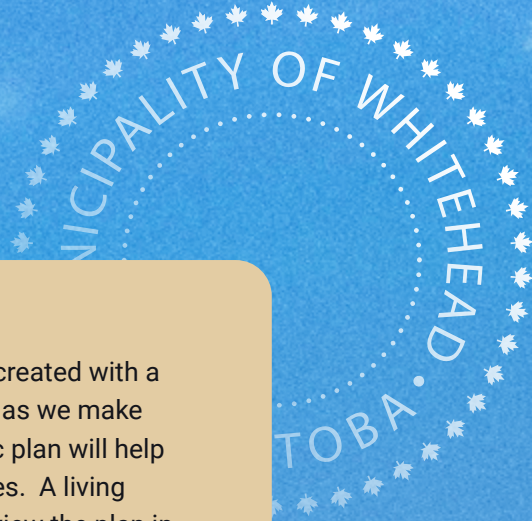
As we put this plan into action, there will be several next steps for Council, Administration and staff.

These steps include:

- Developing a more detailed work plan and department plans.
- Ensuring we have the budget and staffing resources required to meet our main strategic initiatives.
- Monitoring and measuring our progress against our strategic goals, sharing updates with Council and the community on an annual basis.
- Celebrating our success and achievements with all our stakeholders as we work together at “Growing Our Community” and achieving the best for Whitehead!

Thank You!

A big thank you to all community stakeholders, Council members and employees of Whitehead for your invaluable input during the development of this strategic plan. Your contribution and hard work are valued and appreciated!





SERVICES

To submit a service request,
please visit our website at
Whitehead.ca

CONTACT

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STAY IN TOUCH

Facebook
X (formerly Twitter)
Instagram

PREPARED BY:

