



Township of Melancthon: Strategic Plan



December 5, 2017

Township of Melancthon: Strategic Plan

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BACKGROUND

The Township of Melancthon was Incorporated on January 1, 1853. It is a rural community located in the northwest corner of Dufferin County, specifically located north and west of the Town of Shelburne. The jurisdictional boundary encompasses approximately 31,264 hectares and has a road network of approximately 400 kilometers. It includes the two hamlets of Riverview and Corbetton and the Village of Horning's Mills. The lands are mainly comprised of large rural areas and extensive prime agricultural lands. In addition to beef, dairy, sheep and horse farms the growing and marketing of potatoes is one of the major industries within the region. The Township is also home to 167 Wind Turbines. The three communities and various agricultural related industries play a key role in shaping the Township.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to examine and guide the short and long-term priorities of the Municipality.

The objectives of this strategic plan include:

- Identifying issues, constraints, opportunities and threats for the Township of Melancthon, based on consultation with the community, Council and senior staff;
- Establishing and prioritizing strategic goals and objectives for the Municipality; and
- Developing objectives and action items which captures the outcome of consultation and provides guidance for future implementation of identified goals and objectives.

This Strategic Plan was created by the community for the community and will provide guidance for future decisions from the current and future Councils.

COMMUNITY VISION

The Township developed a Vision Statement as part of the recent update of the Official Plan. This Vision is contained in Section 2.1 of the Official Plan. While the Vision is specifically related to land use planning, it is comprehensive and provides a base for the development of this broader Township Strategic Plan.

OFFICIAL PLAN VISION STATEMENT

- a) Melancthon Township is a community of 2800 (in 2011) people living in an area of over 313 square kilometers. The small villages and countryside of the Township are located in North Dufferin County, northwest of the Greater Toronto area.*
- b) The rich farmland, natural areas and small villages of the Township offer much to our residents and visitors. Melancthon Township is located at the Headwaters of three major rivers and as such water is a significant and important resource. The proximity to the GTA and GGH offers opportunities and challenges which must be addressed in a careful process of community building;*
- c) Melancthon Township Council commits itself to ensuring that existing and future residents have access to and enjoyment of:*
- Clean air*
 - Healthy and complete communities*
 - Cultural heritage*
 - Public safety*
 - Clean water*
 - Natural heritage*
 - Public health*
- d) The future will bring changes some of which are foreseen, others of which are unforeseen.*
- e) The Township will update this Plan on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant and to address new needs, opportunities and constraints.*
- f) The people of the Township will be given opportunities to guide future changes to this Plan through a public consultation process.*
- g) Melancthon Township supports certain community planning concepts recognized in Ontario and in many other parts of the world. These concepts include: Sustainable Development, Land Stewardship, Healthy Communities and Decision Making.*

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

On May 4th and May 30th, 2017, consultation sessions were held first with Council and staff and then with the public to discuss what should be included in the Township's strategy for the next five years. Participants were asked independently to provide their Vision of what the Township of Melancthon should look like in the coming years and to provide insight into how this vision could be achieved. The members of Council observed, but did not participate in the public session.

At both sessions, participants were asked to voice their opinions on opportunities and threats facing the Township, on the Township's role in the wider community, and on what the successful implementation of a strategic plan would look like. Consensus was gained from the diversity of responses by asking participants to vote on their preferred answers. A summary of the input received at these two sessions is contained in Appendix 1.

From both the Council/staff session and the public session, five general themes became evident as priorities for community members. These are outlined below.

IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES

Quality of Life

In and amongst the diversity of answers concerning everything from roads to internet access, a clear trend amongst respondents was the importance of a strategy that enhances the quality of life in the Township of Melancthon. Respondents repeatedly stressed the need for the Township to implement policies and changes that make Melancthon a desirable place not only for current residents but for new residents and visitors. Respondents suggested a vast variety of ways in which the quality of life could be improved in the Township. The most frequently mentioned was the implementation of a plan to improve and maintain the Township's infrastructure – especially its road, bridges, and drainage systems. Respondents overwhelmingly identified the need for a coherent roads and bridges plan to help fix and maintain the Township's aging infrastructure. Some also insisted not only on the need to update and maintain roads and bridges, but also on the need to allow for alternate modes of transport (including transit, pedestrian routes, and bike trails). Access to nature and the promotion of the Township's natural beauty was stressed as a key factor that could improve quality of life, and participants suggested the development of a trails system to help facilitate appreciation of the

Township's natural resources. Additionally, several respondents suggested that enhanced amenities and services within the Township's hamlets and village could not only improve quality of life but attract tourists and visitors to these small, vibrant communities.

Preservation

Preservation was another key theme apparent amongst the variety of responses. Generally, the sense from many of the answers was that Melancthon has wonderful aspects that should be preserved for residents and visitors, both present and future, to enjoy. A key concern was the preservation of natural resources, and particularly of water. Overuse or abuse of water was identified as a key threat. The importance of protecting water as an important asset that the Township must maintain for the future was emphasized throughout the consultations. Farmland and local food production was also frequently identified as an important aspect of Melancthon that is potentially under threat, and that must be preserved through good strategic planning. There was a sense that much of the Township's strength and appeal comes from its strong farming culture and local food, and that this economy should be preserved and promoted through policies that not only preserve the land from development but also make farming economically sustainable in the community.

Innovation and Growth

Alongside the recognition of the importance of preserving the natural and agricultural resources of the Township, however, was a strong insistence on the need to support and promote growth and innovation in the community. Respondents stressed the need to identify appropriate lands for growth and development so as to ensure that prime farmland is protected but that the Township of Melancthon continues to attract growth and development. This growth, however, should be done in a responsible, sustainable fashion and within the confines of good guiding principles and regulations. In addition to the need to allow for and encourage physical space for population growth, participants frequently mentioned the need for technological innovation, and specifically the need for high speed internet access to be available across the Township.

Economic Stability

While fiscal responsibility seemed to be a matter of more concern to the Council than to the public participants in these consultation sessions, economic stability was a theme that ran throughout many of the answers. Again, this theme took various forms. The need to make Melancthon economically viable as a whole was clear throughout. Participants stressed the need for the Township to consider strategies that would encourage businesses and small industry to move in to the communities and

flourish. Various suggestions for making farming more economically feasible were also put forth, including the promotion and support of the local food industry, which was identified as a key feature of the Township. Smaller strategies like farmer's markets were suggested alongside support for farmers seeking to grow their businesses and access training. Many saw the future of Melancthon in its farming community and therefore stressed the need to support sustainable farming practices. In addition to the need to implement strategies that will help with the overall economic health of the citizens and businesses of Melancthon, emphasis was placed on the need for the Township to maintain fiscal responsibility and to implement policies within its financial means so as to ensure that tax raises are kept reasonable and that Melancthon continues to be economically viable.

Effective Governance

The final theme evident throughout the sessions was a need for the Township to maintain its voice and influence both within and outside of the community. Concerns were expressed over the loss of local autonomy to larger governing forces and for the need for the Township's strategic plan to keep that voice prominent and effective going forward. In addition to the importance of maintaining the Township's voice in the larger sphere, many stressed the need for the Township to implement strategies to more effectively enforce policies within the Township itself. The need to maintain and improve infrastructure was an ongoing theme. The need to improve bylaw enforcement and property standards was stressed. Generally, the idea was that all policies implemented should not only be effective but also enforceable. Respondents stressed the need for the local government to take an active role in the implementation and enforcement of policies that ensure that the quality of life for all residents of Melancthon is the best that it can be.

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

Melancthon's vision for the future is as a sustainable community that embraces successful agricultural operations and vibrant villages in a rural community that manages its own future and protects its resources in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Council for the Township of Melancthon will make decisions within a strategic framework that emphasizes:

- Quality of life for all residents;
- Preservation of resources and assets;
- Innovation and sustainable growth;
- Economic stability; and
- Effective governance.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTION ITEMS

To implement the vision within the framework of the mission statement a series of strategic objectives and actions for achieving them have been established. These will be the basis for Council's actions and inform the decision-making process. The strategic objectives and related actions will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budgeting process and will be confirmed at the outset of each new term of Council.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		ACTION ITEMS
Quality of Life		
1.1 Maintain and improve local infrastructure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop both short and long-term infrastructure plans, in cooperation with the County. • Actively seek out grants and funding opportunities to improve infrastructure. • Research opportunities to partner and share resources with local business, not-for-profit groups, and neighbouring jurisdictions.
1.2 Access to trail system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create trails master plan and implement it as resources permit. • Link management of the trails system to a natural heritage preservation strategy. • Advertise and provide signage for local trails.
1.3 Enhanced amenities and services for residents and visitors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a plan specific to the development and maintenance of appropriate and affordable facilities. • Develop a more user friendly and active website, for residents and tourists. • Create a “what’s happening” page on the municipal website, advertise any fall fairs, studio tours, maple festivals, farm tours etc. • Partner with the Dufferin County Museum to optimize and support its programs.
Preservation		
2.1 Water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate all municipal decisions on the basis of potential impacts on the quality and quantity of water. • Partner with farmers and the local Conservation Authority to provide information regarding stream health. • Emphasize protection of watercourses as part of natural heritage preservation strategy. • Increase public awareness of water courses through signage and plaques.
2.2 Farming culture and local food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance Official Plan policies to support economic development and prosperous agriculture.
Innovation and Growth		
3.1 Identify lands for growth and development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate expanding light industrial designation in OP and ZBL.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		ACTION ITEMS	
3.2 Improve access to high speed internet		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) program through membership and advertisement. 	
3.3 Focus and encourage development in the 3 communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that land is available and appropriately serviced. Emphasize beautification in communities. Work with local residents to identify and promote opportunities to attract new growth. 	
Economic Stability			
4.1 Fiscal responsibility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long term financial plan that balances funding and maintaining infrastructure and social services against local economic conditions. 	
4.2 Support small businesses and industry		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ongoing communication with small business to understand and respond to their needs within the municipal mandate. Partner with local employment agencies to understand and respond to employment needs. 	
4.3 Support local farmers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support for local farmers markets. Ensure regulations are flexible and responsive to agriculture. Support sustainable farming practices and farmland preservation. 	
4.4 Keep taxes reasonable		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep taxes in line with inflation. Maintain a reserve fund that will permit adaptation to increasing emergency, regulatory and maintenance demands. 	
Effective Governance			
5.1 Improve local autonomy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with provincial and county governments to influence policies. Participate in information sharing between County and other local municipalities. 	
5.2 Policy enforcement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educational resources to residents regarding the Township's Official Plan and By-laws. Ensure by-law enforcement is consistent throughout the Township. 	

IMPLEMENTATION

Following the approval of the Township of Melancthon Strategic Plan, an effective implementation strategy should involve regular organizational communication (using the Strategic Plan to guide internal discussions, staff meetings, corporate decisions, etc.), engaging the public (seek assistance to implement the Plan, form partnerships, cost-share, etc.) and regular re-alignment with current trends or priorities (upper tier priorities, provincial funding, etc.).

When specific strategic objectives or priorities require planning and funding, Senior staff and Council should could take the lead and present a summary of the “New Strategic Initiative(s)” during the annual budget deliberations. This summary includes a brief description of the initiative, the related Strategic Objective, cost and staff compliment, funding possibilities, etc. Approval of these initiatives are included into the following year’s budget, and provide staff with the necessary direction to complete these projects.

To assist with initiating the implementation of the Plan, the Strategic Objectives were prioritized (Appendix 2), based on the current (2017) climate of the Township. These priorities were expanded to include an estimate of required funding (low, medium and high) and timing (ongoing, low or medium term). The priorities will change, and should be revisited on an annual basis.

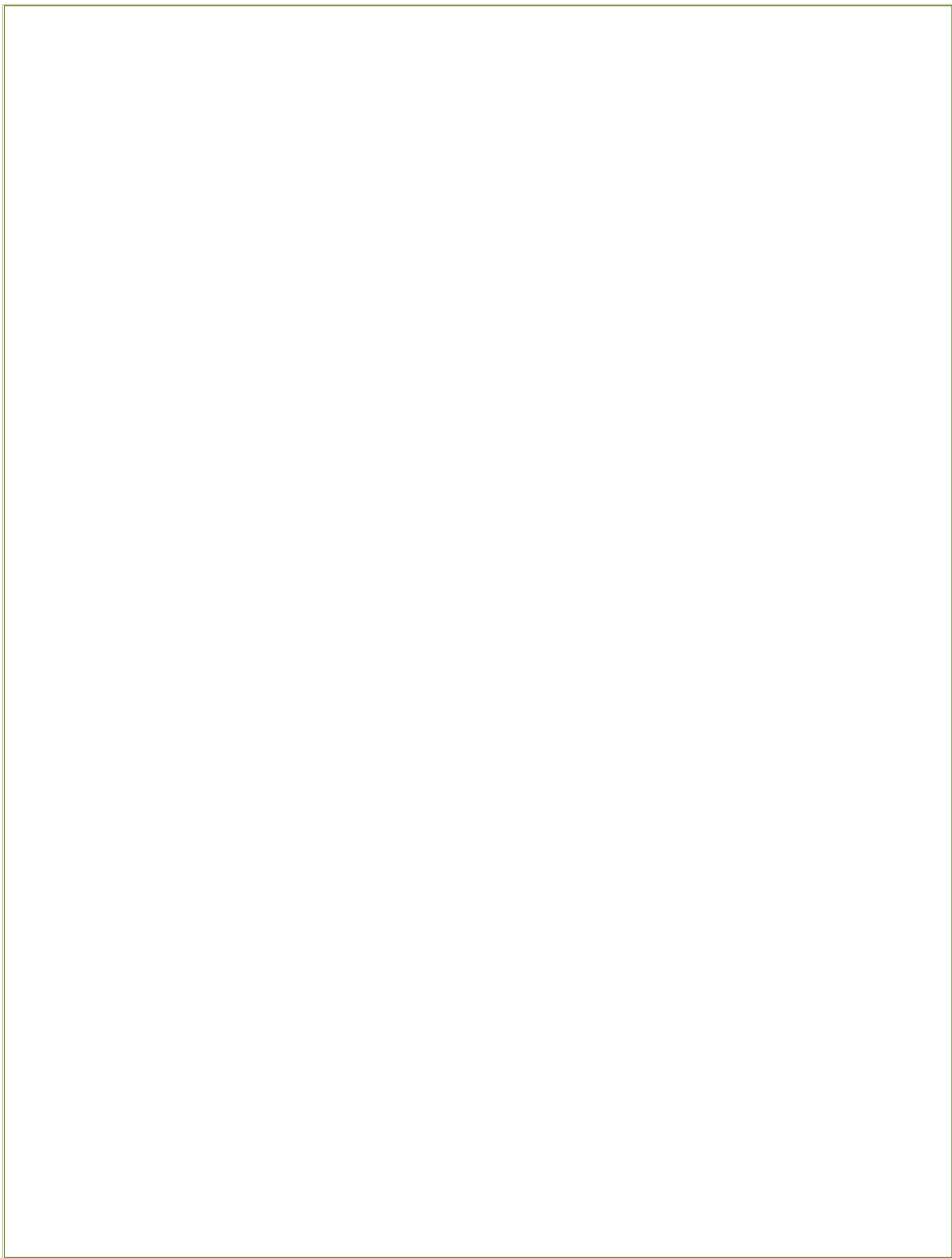
Most importantly, the Strategic Plan also provides a number of action items which are best practices and will not require additional funding. These actions can be implemented right away and will produce “quick-wins” when reporting on the Township’s accomplishments.

A successful Strategic Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis to review the current strategic objectives, set or adjust priorities and respond to factors that are beyond the Township’s control.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Annual priorities should be re-assessed at regular intervals to ensure the Strategic Objectives are being met and are still relevant. Once budgets are set and priorities confirmed, measurements should be identified and applied on a regular basis to gauge success. These measurements include tracking the status or completion of “New Strategic Initiatives”, capital projects, studies (e.g. infrastructure plan), etc.

Almost every item or topic contained in the regular Council Agendas can relate to one or more of the Strategic Objectives. A simple way to track these discussions is to place the Strategic Objective(s) beside the agenda item. The total number of discussions related to each Objective can be summarized at the end of each year, in preparation for the following year’s priorities.



APPENDIX 1

Current State Assessment

Summary of Input from:

May 4th, 2017 Council / Staff Workshop

May 30th Public Workshop

Key Opportunities	Key Threats and Risks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Food – Celebrate the food produced in Melancthon and provide access to locally grown food. 2. Population proximity – Make use of close proximity to second fastest growing cluster in Canada. Capture the economic spinoff from traffic passing through to cottage country. 3. Quality of life - Enhance and promote the quality of life in Melancthon so as to attract potential residents. 4. Demographics – Take advantage of the changing demographics of people living here/nearby. 5. Agricultural Economy – Promote a more integrated agricultural business model. Provide access to resources, technologies, crop variety, etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The destruction of water and prime farmland. 2. Loss of local autonomy: the risk the township will have little decision-making power, which will affect whether people live, work, and play here. 3. Heavy truck traffic on roads. 4. Lack of broadband. 5. Loss of younger generation.

Item	THE PURPOSE OF THE TOWNSHIP IS...	Average	#votes/8
6	To preserve the accomplishments of the past that will insure a viable future for Melancthon. This is accomplished by protecting the environment, providing future generations with a means of sustainability, and awarding opportunities for growth and for achieving an admirable quality of life.	0.88	7
1	To provide services to the residents while maintaining the assets of the municipality, and to further the goals and vision of the local residents.	0.75	6
7	To provide a local voice in decision making that concerns the day-to-day business of the Township in order to protect the assets of the municipality, to safeguard the future of the	0.75	6

Item	THE PURPOSE OF THE TOWNSHIP IS...	Average	#votes/8
	municipality, and to make it an enjoyable place to raise a family.		
2	To provide local control and influence over our area, and to achieve a better standard of services and living.	0.25	2
3	To represent our rural community/residents and protect the assets that have been given to us by past generations.	0.25	2
5	To provide a safe, healthy environment to work, play, and raise families as a rural community.	0.13	1
4	To be an organizing body or a central hub for the community-.	0.00	0

Environmental Scan

Item	Three most critical opportunities within our influence	Average	#votes/8
1.1	Celebrate the food produced in Melancthon. ... Provide access to locally grown food. ... Consider implementing agricultural branding advertising products and tourism draws.	0.75	6
1.3	Make use of close proximity to second fastest growing town in Canada. ... Capture the economic spinoff from traffic passing through to cottage country.	0.63	5
1.4	Quality of life - Enhance and promote the quality of life in Melancthon. ... Attract potential residents due to quality of life. ... People are looking to move out of urban areas.	0.63	5
1.7	Changing demographics of people living here/nearby.	0.38	3
1.2	Promote a more integrated agricultural business model (access to resources, technologies, crop variety). ...Promote new technology related to farming.	0.25	2
1.5	Ensure ability for multigenerational business-agriculture to thrive.	0.25	2
1.6	Our water -> best protected.	0.13	1

Item	Three most critical threats within our influence	Average	#votes/8
2.3	Preservation of water and prime farmland.	1.00	8
2.10	The loss of local autonomy. The risk that the township will have little decision-making power, which will affect whether people live, work, and play here.	0.63	5
2.4	Lack of broadband.	0.38	3
2.1	The quarry application and related threats (e.g. water).	0.25	2
2.2	Heavy truck traffic on roads.	0.25	2
2.8	Retention of younger generation.	0.25	2
2.6	Becoming more urban (expectations go up with growth, especially regarding amenities and services).	0.13	1
2.9	Lack of support from the Provincial and Federal Governments (i.e. downloading and dwindling grants, etc.) to improve infrastructure.	0.13	1
2.5	Lack of skilled workforce.	0.00	0
2.7	Distance from medical centre.	0.00	0

Item	IF WE COULD ONLY FOCUS ON FIVE...	Average	#votes/8
2	Make our bylaws enforceable. Create measures to enforce our by-laws. ... By-law enforcement will improve the overall appearance of the township.	0.75	6
3	Fix our aging infrastructure. Implement and prioritize a roads and bridges plan in the Township. ... Protect our paved roads. ... Develop a more integrated management plan for roads.	0.75	6
7	Encourage businesses to come to our Township for taxation income. ... Establish an economic development committee that includes stakeholders. ... Promote Melancthon through positive branding.	0.75	6
1	Support and advertise our locally produced food and agricultural community. ... Local food/farmers markets.	0.63	5
5	Continue population increase by identifying and encouraging available vacant lands for residential development.	0.63	5
10	Improve internet service for all areas of the township.	0.50	4

Item	IF WE COULD ONLY FOCUS ON FIVE...	Average	#votes/8
6	Identify vacant potential agricultural land for use.	0.38	3
4	Further engage community residents.	0.25	2
8	Build up reserve funds.	0.25	2
9	Keep tax increases at a minimum.	0.13	1

Item	MY VISION FOR THE TOWNSHIP MUST INCLUDE...	Average	#votes/8
5	We are able to provide services and maintain our infrastructure with a budget that is within the Township's reach. ... Tax rates are reasonable. ...Tax increases have been kept to a minimum and we still have money in the bank!	0.75	6
2	We have fixed all of our bridges and maintained the condition of our roads. ... We have "very good roads." ... We have a roads and bridges plan and sustainable funding so that we can keep up with our road needs.	0.63	5
4	Melancthon is still a viable and vibrant township. It is a desirable community in which to live and raise a family.	0.63	5
6	There is a proportional mix of agriculture, dry industry, and residential that is able to adequately and sustainably fund the township's capital and operations budget while still providing the quality of life residents expect.	0.63	5
1	The township is known in the province as a thriving agricultural community. ... Melancthon is known for its agricultural business(es).	0.25	2
3	Melancthon has great internet service.	0.13	1

APPENDIX 2

2017 Prioritized Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	REQUIRES FUNDS	TIMELINE	PRIORITY COMMENTS
#1 Priority				
1.1 Maintain and improve local infrastructure (quality of life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop both short and long-term infrastructure plans, in cooperation with the County. Actively seek out grants and funding opportunities to improve infrastructure. Research opportunities to partner and share resources with local business, not-for-profit groups, and neighbouring jurisdictions. 	Yes High Cost	Medium Term	1
2.1 Water (preservation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate all municipal decisions on the basis of potential impacts on the quality and quantity of water. Partner with farmers and the local Conservation Authority to provide information regarding stream health. Emphasize protection of watercourses as part of natural heritage preservation strategy. Increase public awareness of water courses through signage and plaques. 	No	Ongoing	1
3.3 Focus and encourage development in the three (3) communities (innovation and growth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that land is available and appropriately serviced. Emphasize beautification in communities. Work with local residents to identify and promote opportunities to attract new growth. 	No	Medium Term	1
5.2 Policy enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educational resources to residents regarding the Township's Official Plan and By-laws. 	Yes Medium Cost	Ongoing	1

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	REQUIRES FUNDS	TIMELINE	PRIORITY COMMENTS
(effective governance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure by-law enforcement is consistent throughout the Township. 			
# 2 Priority				
1.3 Enhanced amenities and services for residents and visitors (quality of life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a plan specific to the development and maintenance of appropriate and affordable facilities. Develop a more user friendly and active website, for residents and tourists. Create a “what’s happening” page on the municipal website, advertise any fall fairs, studio tours, maple festivals, farm tours, etc. Partner with the Dufferin County Museum to optimize and support its programs. 	Yes Medium Cost	Short Term	2
2.2 Farming culture and local food (preservation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance Official Plan policies to support economic development and prosperous agriculture. 	No	Medium Term	2
3.2 Improve access to high speed internet (innovation and growth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) program through membership and advertisement. 	Yes Low Cost	Short Term	2
4.1 Fiscal responsibility (economic stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a long term financial plan that balances funding and maintaining infrastructure and social services against local economic conditions. 	Yes Medium Cost	Ongoing	2
4.3 Support local farmers (economic stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support for local farmers markets. Ensure regulations are flexible and responsive to agriculture. Support sustainable farming practices and farmland preservation. 	No	Ongoing	2

APPENDIX 2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	REQUIRES FUNDS	TIMELINE	PRIORITY COMMENTS
4.4 Keep taxes reasonable (economic stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep taxes in line with inflation. Maintain a reserve fund that will permit adaptation to increasing emergency, regulatory and maintenance demands. 	No	Ongoing	2
5.1 Improve local autonomy (effective governance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with provincial and county governments to influence policies. Participate in information sharing between County and other local municipalities. 	No	Ongoing	2
#3 Priority				
1.2 Access to trail system (quality of life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create trails master plan and implement it as resources permit. Link management of the trails system to a natural heritage preservation strategy. Advertise and provide signage for local trails. 	Yes Medium Cost	Medium Term	3
3.1 Identify lands for growth and development (innovation and growth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate expanding light industrial designation in OP and ZBL. 	Yes Low Cost	Short Term	3
#4 Priority				
4.2 Support small businesses and industry (economic stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ongoing communication with small business to understand and respond to their needs within the municipal mandate. Partner with local employment agencies to understand and respond to employment needs. 	No	Short Term	4