

# TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2022

March 15, 2017



"Proud History - Progressive Future"



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# Message from the Mayor

The Township of Ramara is extremely pleased to present its Strategic Plan. This document identifies key priorities that are important to the Township as a whole. As with any organization, one needs to have long term goals – a path to follow. Council and Township staff have made an unwavering commitment to work together for the best interests of our ratepayers, our partners and our community as we address challenges facing the Township. In an ever-changing and fast-paced world our goals need to be adjusted to meet these new challenges.

This document is a reflection of the insights of the people that live in this community, combined with the realities relating to our strengths, challenges and opportunities, as seen through the eyes of Council, Township staff and pertinent experts having studied where we come from and where we need to go in the future years if we are to have continued success. We will turn these restructuring challenges into opportunities and we will be clearly focused in our efforts to bring about positive, lasting change.

This Plan – Our Strategic Plan – is our directive for the future here in the beautiful Township of Ramara.

Sincerely,  
Basil Clarke, Mayor

*“The significant challenges we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”*

*- Albert Einstein*

**Structure  
of this Plan**

**Vision**

**Mission**

**Values**

**Strategic Priority Areas**

**Plan for  
Growth and  
Development**

Goals

Actions

**Deliver  
Efficient  
Municipal  
Services**

Goals

Actions

**Support  
Economic &  
Tourism  
Development**

Goals

Actions

**Protect  
Significant  
Natural  
Heritage  
Features**

Goals

Actions

**Foster  
Community  
Connection  
&  
Engagement**

Goals

Actions

**Support a  
Thriving  
Agricultural  
Sector**

Goals

Actions

# Vision and Mission

## **Vision:**

A diverse community living in harmony and preserving Ramara's country setting. Whether permanent or seasonal, with urban or rural roots, all inhabitants are committed to conserving Ramara's natural and cultural heritage, natural resources and lifestyle.

## **Mission:**

The Township of Ramara will achieve the Vision by working cooperatively. Ramara staff and Council will provide guidance through the Township's Official Plan, policies, budget process and service delivery to help assist and direct all community stakeholders. Our Vision will remain foremost in our minds as we provide services for our community and plan for growth.

# Values

Open and  
transparent  
communication

Growing our local  
economy to  
support strong and  
vibrant  
communities

Respecting our  
heritage while  
planning for the  
future

Respecting our  
unique rural setting,  
including our lakes  
and waterways

Responsible and  
responsive  
government

# Our Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

The Township of Ramara has many strengths which can support a vibrant and sustainable future. Through public consultation, the lakes and waterways were identified as the most distinctive and important features in the Township for both permanent and seasonal residents. The Township's rural setting with its strong agricultural history was also identified as an important element of the Township.

The Township faces challenges, primarily in promoting and attracting new growth and development prospects. The Township needs to focus on continuous improvement of efficient and effective delivery of municipal services as well as communication with ratepayers. By working collaboratively with the County of Simcoe and other neighbouring municipalities, the Township of Ramara will be able to develop new opportunities for economic development and build stronger community engagement.

# Our Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats

## Strengths

- Proximity/Access to Lakes & Rivers
- Rural Setting
- Diverse Landscape
- Sense of Community
- Recreational Activities
- Proximity to essential service (neighbouring urban centres)
- Rich Agricultural Landscape
- Abundance of natural resources (aggregate/farmland)

## Challenges

- Large geographical area (difficult to adequately maintain infrastructure)
- Small tax base
- Limited growth & development opportunities
- Lacks a 'community hub'
- Limited broadband internet services
- Communication between Township and Ratepayers

## Opportunities

- Tourism & Recreation (including agri-tourism)
- Rama Road Corridor Development
- Improving internet access for residents & businesses
- Collaboration with County & neighbouring municipalities
- Promote growth & development through marketing & incentives

## Threats

- Lack of economic opportunities for youth or to attract new residents
- Balancing the needs of permanent and seasonal residents
- Balancing growth and development with natural heritage preservation.



# Strategic Priority Areas

The strategic priority areas provide the Township of Ramara with a roadmap to the future. These strategic priorities have been developed through consultation with ratepayers, community leaders, Township Council and Staff. The six areas are reflective of initiatives that go beyond the important and ongoing work currently undertaken by the Township. These priority areas will be a collective focus for the Township and will help shape the future by providing guidance for resource allocation, and project prioritization. Each of these strategic priority areas is accompanied by goals and recommended actions that represent a five-year action plan for Council.

# Strategic Priority Areas

- 1. Plan for Growth and Development:** Ensure the Township is 'business-ready' and build prosperity through business attraction and retention.
- 2. Deliver Efficient Municipal Services:** Demonstrate good governance and value through effective and efficient management of Township assets and resources.
- 3. Support Economic and Tourism Development:** Through economic growth and tourism development, attract new businesses and residents to Ramara Township.
- 4. Protect Significant Natural Heritage Features:** The Township will continue to protect significant natural heritage features and recognize the importance of sustaining these key features that contribute to environmental sustainability of the area.
- 5. Foster Community Connection and Engagement:** Enhance communication between Township Council, staff and ratepayers to ensure transparent and inclusive decision making.
- 6. Support a Thriving Agricultural Sector:** Support and protect the Township's agricultural sector while continuing to seek out new opportunities for innovation and growth.

# Strategic Priorities, Goals and Actions

PRIORITIES					
<b>Plan for Growth and Development</b>	<b>Deliver Efficient Municipal Services</b>	<b>Support Economic and Tourism Development</b>	<b>Protect Significant Natural Heritage Features</b>	<b>Foster Community Connection and Engagement</b>	<b>Support a Thriving Agricultural Sector</b>
GOALS					
<p>Be 'business ready' for growth</p> <p>Develop long term Growth and Development plan for the Township</p> <p>Revitalize settlement areas</p> <p>Improve the quality of municipal infrastructure</p>	<p>Improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery</p> <p>Open, accountable and responsible government</p> <p>Build organizational resilience</p>	<p>Grow the local economy</p> <p>Strengthen local businesses</p> <p>Promote natural assets in the Township</p>	<p>Protect important natural heritage features</p> <p>Promote a clean and sustainable environment</p> <p>Align local policies with provincial policies</p>	<p>Develop an open and effective communication system</p> <p>Advocate for enhanced rural broadband internet</p>	<p>Protect valuable agricultural land for long term use</p> <p>Support innovation in the agri-food sector</p> <p>Connect the agri-food sector with tourism development</p>

# Plan for Growth and Development

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)
Be Business Ready for Growth	<b>1.1 Complete Official Plan Review and initiate update of the Township's Zoning By-laws</b> 1.1.1 Ensure OP and ZBL conform with Provincial Policy Statement updates and County Official Plan. 1.1.2 Include language in relation to: - Supporting economic development - Protection of significant natural heritage features - Protection of prime agricultural land		X		
	<b>1.2 Review industrial Development Charges options</b>		X		
	<b>1.3 Review delivery of municipally operated utilities</b>				X
	<b>1.4 Prepare marketing documents to detail industrial land supply</b>	X			
	<b>1.5 Review of constraints and opportunities for development. Compare to surrounding municipalities for opportunities to streamline and simplify the approval process</b> 1.5.1 Consult with the County and Ministry of Transportation early in the process			X	
<b>Develop a long term Growth and Development Plan</b>	<b>1.6 Complete Official Plan Update</b>	X			
Revitalize settlement areas	<b>1.7 Implement a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for settlement areas in the Township</b> 1.7.1 CIP for downtown revitalization for Brechin and Atherley in 2018			X	
	1.7.2 Develop a CIP for Rama Road Corridor			X	11

# Deliver Efficient Municipal Services

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)
Improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery	2.1 Implement recommendations from Organization Service Review.		X		
Open, accountable and responsible government	2.2 Review Strategic Plan annually and report on progress of actions / initiatives	X			
Build organizational resilience	2.3 Identify opportunities to share services and improve operational efficiencies with other municipalities and County		X		
	2.4 Review new revenue opportunities.		X		
	2.4.1 Explore metered parking for non-residents				
	2.5 Develop a Human Resources Management Plan	X			
	2.5.1 Focus on staff training and development as well as staff recruitment and retention.				
	2.5.2 Implement plan				
	2.6 Conduct parks, culture and recreation planning review				
	2.6.1 Identify assets and how to improve them			X	
	2.6.2 Recreational services and programs				
	2.6.3 Parks Master Plan				
	2.6.4 Review options for “community hubs”				
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# Support Economic and Tourism Development

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)
Grow the local community	<p><b>3.1 Relaunch the Township's Economic Development Committee.</b> The mandate of the committee would be to work with staff and Council to implement the economic development priorities identified in this strategy</p>	X	X		
Strengthen local businesses	<p><b>3.2 Provide economic development training to Township staff and Council.</b> 3.2.1 Review best practices on economic development 3.2.2 Create an economic development strategy 3.2.3 Improve access to high speed internet for businesses</p>		X		
	<p><b>3.3 Develop incentives and promotions for Rama Road Corridor and available industrial lands</b> (Review existing Secondary Plan for opportunities to decrease service costs)</p>			X	
Promote the natural assets of the Township	<p><b>3.4 Develop and implement a Destination (tourism) Development Strategy and identify Ramara's tourism assets and promote through marketing</b> 3.4.1 Ontario Parks in Township 3.4.2 Lakes 3.4.3 Agri-tourism /culinary 3.4.4 Leverage Simcoe Trail Strategy plan 3.4.5 Maintain active involvement in Ontario Lake's Country (ongoing)</p>				X
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# Protect Significant Natural Heritage Features

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)
Protect important natural heritage features	4.1 Identify and assess areas considered significant natural heritage features in Township		X		
	4.2 Ensure updated Official Plan and Zoning By-laws identify and protect significant natural heritage features		X		
Promote a clean and sustainable environment	4.3 Source Protection Implementation in the Official Plan		X		
	4.4 Include best management practices for feature protection in Official Plan		X		
Align local policies with provincial policies	4.5 In planning documents, identify BMPs for protection of significant natural heritage features and water resources		X		

# Foster Community Connection and Engagement

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)	
<b>Develop an open and effective communication system</b>	<b>5.1 Develop electronic newsletter as first element of a Township communication strategy</b>		X			
	5.1.1 Review opportunities to include newsletter in tax bills or make available at community facilities					
	<b>5.2 Develop a communication strategy for the Township</b>					
	5.2.1 Internal: to improve communication between departments, staff and council			X		
	5.2.2 External: to improve communication between the Township, ratepayers, and community partners					
	5.2.3 Explore a protocol for response times to inquiries					
	<b>5.3 Improve communication through Township website</b>					
	5.3.1 Update website to align with County platform		X			
	5.3.2 Develop website page with business and development information					
5.3.3 Maintain website on an on-going basis with community information						
<b>Advocate for enhanced rural broadband internet</b>	<b>5.4 Conduct study of internet coverage to integrate with the work of the SWIFT Initiative</b>		X			
	5.4.1 Review opportunities for government initiatives and funding for high speed internet					



# Support a Thriving Agricultural Sector

Goals	Summary of Recommended Actions	Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 Years)	Medium Term (3-5 Years)	Long Term (5+ years)
Protect important agricultural land for long term use	6.1 In Official Plan update, include specific language on the protection of prime agricultural land and reflect changes in the PPS for on-farm, diversified uses		X		
Support innovation in the agri-food sector	6.2 Develop and implement an Agricultural Community Improvement Plan (i.e. Norfolk County) to incentivize on-farm diversification and value-added operations. 6.2.1 Encourage farms to participate in programs that prevent run off into the watershed and lake through source water protection planning				X
Connect the agri-food sector with tourism development	6.3 Promote agricultural tourism connections through Lake Country			X	

# Implementation

Following the approval of the Corporate Strategic Plan, an Implementation Strategy should be developed with projected costs for resources required to implement this Plan. In some instances the Strategic Actions are specific project and tasks while Strategic Actions reflect a philosophy or business practice.

Implementation may change depending on budget allocation, opportunities for funding and available staff resources. Implementation should be reviewed annually with the preparation of the Municipal Budget.

# Monitoring Success

In order to measure success, Action Items that have been achieved and Goals that have been realized must be identified and celebrated. Monitoring may also involve the identification of additional Action Items that are necessary to achieve the Goals and Priorities of this Strategic Plan.

As Goals are achieved, Council will consider the establishment of new Goals and Action Items to ensure that the municipal progress is continued.