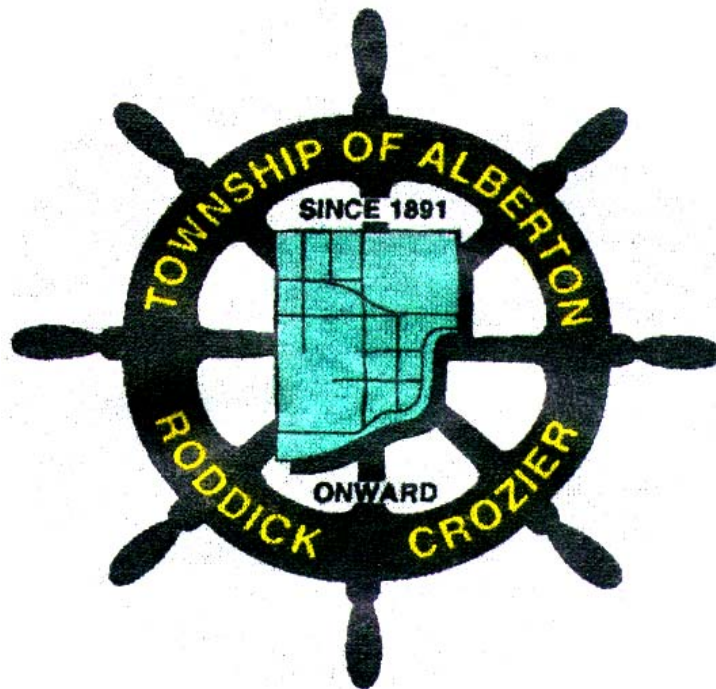


A Community Strategic Plan  
for the  
**Township of Alberton**

for the term 2005 - 2015



Date: June, 2005

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# COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 to 2015

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## **Section 1: The Strategic Plan**

### **1.1 The Importance of Strategic Planning**

It is no secret that the demands upon municipal governments in Ontario are great and are steadily increasing, nor that the resources available to municipalities to meet those demands are limited and diminishing. If a municipality does not define its long-term priorities, its ability to make effective decisions is severely hampered by short-sightedness and an ability to live only in the moment.

Competing demands for resources may appear equally important in the context of annual budgets which do not take planning into consideration. A mechanism is needed which will help Council determine the priority of the demands made upon it. Strategic planning is that tool.

When demands on a municipal government are considered in conjunction with a vision of what the community desires to become, the importance and relevance of those demands becomes evident.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to enable the people who serve on Alberton Council over the next ten years to identify municipal priorities so that Council may effectively allocate the municipality's scarce resources to enable it to achieve the vision of what the Township should be in ten years time.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document which is considered in conjunction with all municipal decisions, undertakings, activities and expenditures.

### **1.2 Structure and Direction of Strategic Plan Document**

This Strategic Plan is comprehensive and not specific in nature. The vision and goals set out in these pages are general and the means by which they may be achieved are myriad. This document is intended to function as a guide for current and future Councils to use to assess how projects, undertakings and expenditures can serve to meet the Plan's objectives.

Section 6.1 of this document sets out the general means by which the stated vision and goals may be accomplished. The Strategic Plan does not seek to provide specific direction by citing recommended initiatives or activities which should be undertaken since these are to be determined by each Council during its annual budget cycle. Each Council has sole discretion over what steps it will choose to take to move the Township closer to realizing the vision set out in Section 3.

The autonomy of each Council and the need to approve or reaffirm strategic planning initiatives during annual budget cycles shall not be construed to mean that any Council is prevented from conducting multi-year planning or implementing multi-year projects which may extend beyond its term of office. However, each Council must be aware that it cannot dictate the activities and expenditures of succeeding Councils, and that succeeding Councils are free to continue, amend or terminate any projects or plans as they deem appropriate, including this Strategic Plan.

## **Section 2: The Strategic Planning Process**

### **2.1.1 Methodology Employed**

The following process was employed by Council for the Township of Alberton in developing this Strategic Plan.

- Council of 2000-2003 identified the need for strategic planning to be implemented to give the municipality direction. That Council authorized the conducting of a door-to-door municipal survey which was done in May, 2003 and which involved asking residents the three questions cited in Section 2.2 which were geared to laying a foundation for a Community Strategic Plan.
- Council of 2003-2006 reviewed what was involved in the strategic planning process and considered what steps were appropriate to take in Alberton. In April, 2004, informational material on the strategic planning process was provided to Council as a possible framework to use for its impending strategic planning exercise. In addition, precedents of Strategic Plans used by other municipalities were provided for review.
- A target completion date for the strategic planning exercise was loosely set for February, 2005.
- For a few months, Council held preliminary discussions at its regular Council meetings regarding potential goals and vision.
- Further public input was invited on the plan. In addition to discussing strategic planning at every regular Council meeting and opening the floor to comments by any visitors present, two formal Strategic Planning Public Meetings were held on October 25<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The Township continued to solicit comments from the public through to January, 2005.
- Council discussed and evaluated the various ideas which were presented, and rejected those which it did not deem possible or reasonable (ie. Alberton Central School could not be kept open because closure had already occurred).
- Council consolidated the suggestions and recommendations which it supported, and deemed viable and in the best interests of the community. Council worked on developing either a succinct vision statement or a slogan for the plan and Township.
- A rough draft of the Strategic Plan was prepared and put before Council in February, 2005 for initial review and revision. The Plan was revised and reviewed as necessary to bring it into draft final form.
- Notice of intention to adopt the draft Strategic Plan shall be provided to the public and comment on the final form shall be sought. Comments and concerns raised by residents and ratepayers shall be considered and duly addressed at an open meeting of Council, and the Plan shall be revised as deemed necessary.
- The Alberton Community Strategic Plan shall be formally adopted by by-law and posted on the Township's website.
- Once adopted, implementation of the inaugural cycle of the Strategic Planning process will commence.

## **Section 3: Public Participation**

### **3.1 Methods Employed to ensure Community Input**

While the development of a strategic plan for the community of Alberton had been discussed by previous Councils, the first concrete steps to initiate the process began in early 2003 when the 2000-2003 Council recognized the need for community direction through strategic planning and took action to lay the groundwork for the exercise.

Because the very nature of community strategic planning requires that the public be afforded the opportunity to participate in the process, and because it was recognized that the level of public participation in municipal matters in the Township was at a very low level, Council sought to gain public input by undertaking a door-to-door Municipal Survey. The survey was conducted in May, 2003 and the results were compiled; however, due to the impending fall municipal election and the possibility that the incoming Council might not support the recommendations, Council chose not to take action on the survey results and, instead, left them for review by the incoming Council.

Following an initial adjustment period during which the members of the 2003-2006 Council became familiar with the business of municipal governance and working together, attention returned to the need for strategic planning to provide direction for the Township. After discussing elements of the strategic planning process, reviewing information and discussing possible goals and events for a few months, a process was agreed upon and a tentative target completion date for completion of the strategic planning exercise was set for February, 2005.

It was determined that the purpose of the Strategic Plan set out on these pages is to provide to Council and the Township specific direction for goals to be accomplished during the course of the term of current Council, and general direction for the balance of the ensuing ten years.

In order to facilitate the planning process, the following efforts were made to encourage public input on the plan:

- Commencing in July, 2004, Strategic Planning was set out as a designated item on every regular Council agenda, and Council permitted any interested participants attending the meeting to provide input on the subject.
- Formal public meetings were held on October 25, 2004 and November 30, 2004 to encourage and receive input from residents.
- From October, 2004 to January, 2005, updates on progress in the strategic planning process and requests for participation in the strategic planning process were provided to residents through the Township's website as well as in the Township's Community Newsletter. Participation from the public in the form of in person attendance at meetings and written submissions (by mail, fax or e-mail) was invited and encouraged.

### 3.2 Results of 2003 Municipal Survey

The following are the questions asked of residents during the 2003 Municipal Survey, and all suggestions and comments received in response thereto:

<b>2003 MUNICIPAL SURVEY RESULTS</b>		
<b>1. What changes, if any, would you like to see occur in Alberton in the next five years?</b>	<b>2. What obstacles might prevent these things from happening?</b>	<b>3. What can we do to overcome these obstacles?</b>
Community hall again, school stay open, clarity in severances		
School to remain open; roads are in excellent shape	District school	
Building permit rules not fair to every one, house trailers consistency in rules		
Recycling program		
Merge with Town of Fort Frances; services for taxes paid, garbage pick-up, keep school open, snow removal, grading		
Clean up the highway, Property Standards		
Sewer & water	Alberton	
Lower taxes, Town water		
Surface or pave Oakwood Road, Town water		
Question: Is there any animal control officer re: problem dogs & cats		
Have a large garbage bin available for Township use. Some people don't feel it's worth paying \$50.00 for a small amount of garbage.		
Speed limits of 60 kph on all municipal roads; clean fill be used for filling in low spots or excavations (C.J. Contracting) area being filled with garbage to avoid tipping fees; some land owners forced to clean up property	Lack of will on part of our elected officials	Treat all landowners equally
Have school stay open i.e. use of northern fundings towards this		
Ensure that we keep good grader services		

1. I would like to see a general clean up of personal property e.g. rubbish and derelict vehicles. 2. Some control of speed limits on rural roads.	By-law for clean up has to be enforced differently	Make Council more accountable
Bike trail		
Some street lights, walking trails/biking trails, more flowers, fitness center	Money	Fundraisers
A new hall built, biking trails, a walking trail(s), paved road	Funding	Do community fundraising
Paved Hall Road, 60 km speed zone on Hall Road, keep the snowmachines off Hall Road	None!	
All roads paved	unknown	
More community activities		
1. We would like to see recycling again. 2. A drainage ditch dug to empty flooding of beaver pond across from K. Kaun's.		
All roads paved like Hill Road and maintained so they last for years	People on Council?	Vote people in who want to show some pride in our community. People like Bill Morrison Jr.
1. To have a playground located at the skating rink along with landscaping of some sort. 2. Have more roads paved and to have them plowed at earlier times in the a.m.	1. Cost may be a factor & volunteers to assemble. 2. Money is always the big issue & time management of the individual doing it.	1. Incorporating a fundraising committee to come up with ideas for fundraising. Approach Trillium fund. 2. Put monies aside for roads that need it; that are traveled frequently.
1. Bring back some form of recycling services. 2. Review tax rate - why are our taxes the same as Fort Frances with less services offered?	1. Lack of public education on benefits of recycling versus landfilling. 2. Publish comparison of local communities' tax rates and services offered to justify/explain tax fees.	
Keep improving recreational area, ie. rink shack landscaping, play equipment, roller blade equipment, basketball nets, baseball field and baseball teams organized children and adults; continue with seasonal activities ie. community skating/sliding, etc. in winter and a summer event(s).	Lack of funding, lack of volunteers	community involvement, advertising, continue local newsletter re events

A. Garbage pick-up at no cost (even monthly) B. library fees covered by taxes (with no increase in taxes). I would (like) our municipality reps to lobby to the Town so we don't have to pay fees to use town services. We put a lot of money into F.F.	re A: \$ re B: The Town's stubbornness or resistance to this idea	
Less taxes, better road service, don't plow unless necessary		
Walking, biking trails; street lights	Money	Apply for more grants
Speed limit signs posted. Roads graded more often. Dog (pet) by-law enforced ie. Unleashed wandering dogs.	?funding	
A bike/walk/run path to Fort Frances to promote healthy lifestyles in Alberton Township, school - school - school, more community events for children to keep community spirit alive when our school closes	Money & volunteers	?
Frog Creek Road repair. Do the same repair as on Hill Road. Too many accidents on Frog Creek Road.		Better maintenance
We would like Frog Creek Road to have calcium put on, to keep dust down.		
Hard surfaced roads.		
The roads to be top coated, free of loose gravel.		
Improved road maintenance: ditches moved in June, "washboard" repaired/graded more frequently		
Recycling program reinstated	Lack of funds	
All road paved	Cost	
1. High speed internet. 2. Community Center	1. Bell telephone lines require upgrade. 2. Funding.	1. Upgrade phone lines. 2. Convince residents of need for center - if board moves school to town, access old school for center.
1. Reinstate a recycling depot. 2. (Purchase?) Utilize the future abandoned Alberton School for: public recreation area (ball park? Picnic area?), meeting hall, emergency centre (ie. for evacuations, etc.). 3. Provide a recreational trail system for biking, hiking, walking, horses, ATVs, etc. 4. Provide additional services such as garbage pickup OR decrease taxes (of course). 5. A nice "Welcome to Alberton" sign.	Lack of \$, lack of volunteer efforts of community members; lack of time, conflict in regulations, by-laws	Adequate funding would eliminate most of these obstacles. Keep up the good work on the monthly newsletter, for some of us it's the only means of keeping informed.

Industry - no work for the children or youth - not enough encouragement. No amalgamation with Fort Frances.	The people themselves not working together.	You have to work together as a whole. Some day people will realize that what they think is not necessarily what is best for all.
1. Places to ride horses other than public roads. Riders obstruct traffic & do not clean up after their horses making our roadways look like barnyards. Those riders that use the grass area alongside the roads should be req'd to pick up after their horse because cleaning a lawnmower after mowing through droppings should not have to be tolerated. 2. Decrease in property taxes.	1. Bylaws not in place to enforce the prevention of horse riding on public roadways in residential zoned areas. Fields are for horse riding, not roads.	1. Create bylaws.
Upkeep of property ie. grass and garbage	Stricter enforcement	Stricter enforcement
Tax increases little as possible. Use own resources eg. grader. Roadsides need attention.		
Emergency siren.	Money	
Resurface more roads, our own garbage dump, keep school open		
Complete paving on Ducharme Road, lower taxes, enforcement of by-laws regarding preventing semi trucks from parking on the road, garbage pick up part of town service, have individuals clean up yards to remove derelict vehicles and hazardous materials (ie. Ducharme's place across from Alberton School) or build a 4 foot fence. Use school to benefit community once it closes so it doesn't become another "eye sore" like the old high school.	Funding/budgeting problems	Eliminate unnecessary expenses. Comment: The municipality is misleading the public by informing them that Ducharme Road has been paved when in reality only a small portion is paved.
More roads surfaced, speed limits, own garbage dump		
Speed limit reduction - which I hope to pursue in the next few years as time permits. Unfortunately there has not been a lot of people "pounding down my door" to help - but I am sure this is not unusual. Township should be encouraged to erect "children playing" signs in the meantime.	Lack of support	?????

More paving would be nice, better dust control on gravel roads would be appreciated, find some way to keep Alberton School open, how much interest would there be in a private school? Clean up of some properties that are junk yard eye sores (Ducharmes).	Money, money, money!	Pursue government funding, attract some sort of industry, or business to increase tax revenue.
Stewart Road resurfaced, street light at Ducharme/Hwy 11/71 intersection, Bylaw restricting pulp trucks from parking on Stewart/Ducharme Roads	None foreseen.	
Road surfacing, municipal garbage pick-up as part of taxes, area becoming too built up for hunting	financial	gov't funding
Better road maintenance, preferably hard topped. P.S. Snow removal is excellent, swift response.		
More road surface	\$\$	
I would like to see our school remain open & have grades JK through to grade 8	School board, parents driving their children to schools in town	If all parents in Alberton & Miscampbell would bring their children back to our school, we would have enough children to meet the criteria need to bring our school up to standard & remain open.
WOULD LIKE DONE NOW: 1. Clarence Ducharme's junk off road right of way. It's gone on long enough. This has always been a disgrace and problem getting way out of hand. 2. Roads maintained more promptly like they were when Ryan Scott was in charge.	No response, no action	
Paved roads, our own landfill site, roads graded when they're not paved & gravel left on road - instead of thrown in the ditch, taxes are high for what we get in services		
I think it would be nice to have our own garbage dump so long as it is far enough from residential areas (built up areas) as it would be quite bothersome for residents with certain health problems. With so many young families I think speed limits would be nice.		

<p>Continue to fight to keep Alberton School open. (They are 1.3 million over projected budget and have yet to break soil) (J W Walker), Zone parts of 11/71 in the Township 1/2 residential, 1/2 business</p>	<p>Zoning around existing residential properties could be challenging but if handled correctly, we should be able to accommodate both (bring in taxable revenue and jobs to the community ie. NorFab)</p>	<p>Publicly adverse for small businesses as well as medium to large business. Introduce a form of incentives? Tax breaks? etc.</p>
<p>Changes or improvements I would like to see in the next five years: Would be to have the creek from Ducharme Road to the river cleaned out. Since the Municipality had the foresight to do the ditching throughout the community to alleviate any problems from flooding, I feel they need to now complete this project by cleaning out this portion of the drainage system. On the advice from drainage engineers a few years ago, the culvert capacity under Ducharme Road was increased in order to accept the increased volume of water being fed to this locaton; as well as the decrease in time it took to get there. If one was to observe these culverts today (5/22/03), they would find them 7/8 or better full. This being a very dry spring in this area, all drainage facilities should be empty at this time. If we, heaven forbid, receive anywhere near the rain we had last June, the water will have no choice but to wash out the newly surface treated Ducharme Road again. I feel that if the creek was cleaned properly from Ducharme Road to the river, the blockage by beaver dams would not be an annual problem for the municipality. The road would not be in as great a danger of flood damage. Enclosed please find pictures taken of the culverts before and after the storm in June of last year.</p>		

### **3.3 Ideas discussed at Public Meetings**

The following are the questions and comments and suggestions discussed at the Strategic Planning Public Meetings held on October 24<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004:

#### **3.3.1 Excerpt from Minutes of October 24, 2004 Public Meeting:**

"It was noted that Council had previously indicated its intention to continue to support the Bog Walk project; however, it had not received a recent update on it.

Construction of a service road in the Business Park running parallel to Highway 11-71 was discussed. The possibility of using Watson Road as a service road was eliminated since the area is swampy and the shallow gas line could be a concern. It was pointed out that there is a road allowance between Cunningham's and Leimenstoll's that could be opened up to access property in behind. Council was advised that Eighth Street in Fort Frances may be opened up as a by-pass for trucks and, if it is, there may be potential for a road from Eighth Street along the road allowance which eventually becomes Hall Road.

Council reviewed the properties which it owns in the Township with a view to whether any of it could be used for residential development but it was decided that none is particularly suitable for this purpose and there are plenty of lots for sale privately which can accommodate the market in any event. It was noted that the properties near Watson Road should be retained as, if the Eighth Street by-pass goes through and the road is extended, there is potential for development there. It was pointed out that some municipalities sell the wood off their properties and collect stumpage as revenue...

The question of whether Old School Road is actually owned by the Township or whether it actually belongs to MTO was raised. The Clerk is to check into this and report her findings back to Council.

Recycling was noted as a suggested improvement in the 2003 Municipal Survey and it was noted that the expense associated with the service was too high. The Clerk advised that a proposal may be forthcoming later in the year from Doug Brown of Fort Frances Public Works with regard to a recycling program in which all municipalit(ies) could participate which is estimated to cost \$40-\$45 per tonne, although she was not aware of whether this included all costs. Council will review the proposal if and when it is received.

The survey suggestion for a walking trail or bike trail was discussed. It was suggested that this could be incorporated into the recreation area, perhaps by clearing and paving around the rink site so people can walk there. The potential for people to walk inside the rink were pointed out. It was noted that there had been a suggestion for a trail along the highway to Fort Frances. Enhancement of the recreational area was recommended, including installation of equipment and possible future expansion perhaps including a playground or ball park. The swampy location and high mosquito population in that area were pointed out.

Designing of the gateway signs was discussed. Councillor Ford did quick sketches of the three options he has developed. General consensus was to proceed with the option that has the Township's logo incorporated as a cutout to add greater interest. It was agreed that the signs should be lit using solar energy and it was suggested that flowers beds be included which could be maintained through Ontario Works. The Clerk suggested bearing in mind that Hydro One sponsors a gateway competition each year and the Township could participate in that. Completion of the gateway sign was deemed a short term priority.

Surfacing of municipal roads was discussed. It was suggested that Hall Road, the last section of Ducharme and Forsythe Lane could be surfaced if funding becomes available, which would enable those areas to be "tied off" so it would not be necessary for them to be graded. Hammond Road was also suggested as a potential candidate for surfacing.

Discussion returned to the development of a service road on the south side of Highway 11-71 in the Business Park and it was pointed out that the Township should be requiring all new buildings to be built back far enough from the highway allowance to allow for a service road to be constructed. It was noted that Mr. Jodoin's shop is located where a service road would be located. It was explained that constructing a service road would give the Township control over entrances to open up access for business development. It was suggested installing a service road on the north side of the highway and routing NorFab traffic up to Watson Road would allow access to the Lampi property since the road would be shared. It was noted that the value to be realized from constructing service roads would have to be taken into consideration.

It was suggested that the Business Park be tied into Fort Frances' water system to encourage development and enhance fire protection, although concerns about such an undertaking were raised. It was noted that the water hookup had been turned down by previous Council since the Township would have been responsible for installation and maintenance of infrastructure, for metering and billing, and for costs of any water which is lost due to leaking.

It was agreed that garbage pickup would not be offered (since) pickup service is already available privately and it would be a user pay system in any event. The suggestion from the survey to create a municipal dump was dismissed as costs associated with developing, maintaining and closing a dump are prohibitive.

The suggestion that more community events be held to preserve or enhance a sense of community was discussed. While it was generally agreed such events would be good, it was acknowledged that they require volunteers to put in time to make them happen and the level of volunteerism in the Township is low. It was noted that the Rec Commission holds skating parties."

***Synopsis of ideas discussed which Council deemed to have merit:***

- *continued ideological support of Bog Walk Interpretive Trail project*
- *construction of a service road in the Business Park*
- *reintroduction of recycling*
- *development of a walking or bike trail*
- *installation of equipment and possible future expansion at the rink site, possibly including a playground or ball park*
- *gateway sign*
- *surfacing of municipal roads*
- *more community events*

### **3.3.2 Excerpt from Minutes of November 30, 2004 Public Meeting:**

"Lyle Hyatt advised Council that he would like to see lower speed limits on municipal roads. Reeve Hammond noted that enforcement would be a concern, and pointed out that the lower speed advisories on Frog Creek Road have not been much of a deterrent. Councillor Mitchell said that a petition would have to be brought to Council before it would take any action. Reeve Hammond said approvals from MTO would probably be needed and it is already known they don't favour it. Rachel Hill asked if the same thing applied to vehicle restrictions. It was noted that there are year-round half-load roads in LaVallee. The Clerk pointed out that Council does have authority to set speed limits on municipal roads. Reeve Hammond noted that Council can make all the rules it wants but questioned how they would be enforced. It was noted that, if there is general consensus from residents on one road, Council may consider lowering the speed limit. Councillor Ford noted that the surfacing of roads has resulted in shifts in traffic patterns in the municipality.

Reeve Hammond noted Beth Logue's memo which suggested a walking trail in the Township and commented that it would take dollars to do it. Rachel Hill indicated she was at the meeting to suggest trails as well. Ms. Logue said she was thinking a trail along the highway to Fort Frances. Mr. Hyatt said MTO had been approached about doing a bike path along the highway when it was last reconstructed but it refused to let one go in. Ms. Hill said trails could be developed for walking, hiking, horse-riding and skiing within the Township itself where there would be no conflict with traffic. It was agreed by all that any such trails should not be used by snowmachines. Ms. Hill suggested that road allowances could be used, picnic tables could be placed along the way, and noted it would take some planning but it could be worked out. She noted that maintaining the trails could be an excellent summer student project.

Reeve Hammond said someone would have to spearhead the project. Ms. Hill said the trails would be a recreational system that could be used year-round, and offered to put something together if Council supports the idea. Reeve Hammond stated that a decision to proceed would not be made immediately. He asked what an ideal length for a trail would be. It was agreed that starting out small would be best and that loops in the Hill Road area and in the Stewart-Bone Road area could be developed first since those are the most populous areas of the Township, and they could possibly be linked at some time in the future. Reeve Hammond noted that maintenance would have financial impact on the municipality. Ms. Hill asked whether Council would consider hiring students under an employment program to do maintenance. Councillor Ford noted there are different avenues that could be considered, such as an Ontario Works program. Councillor Mitchell suggested Trillium funding. The difficulty with getting volunteers was noted.

Councillor Ford said he thought a trail project was definitely do-able but it would be a matter of getting all the resources in order and getting all the ducks in a row, including getting landowner consent.

Mr. Hyatt pointed out that parking issues would have to be taken into consideration since the trails could become popular with cross-country skiers, and it was noted that there could be parking along the south end of Ducharme without much impact on traffic, the school parking lot could be used if permission was obtained, and the Millennium Rink Site parking lot could be used on Hill Road if a trail were developed in that area.

Reeve Hammond asked if anyone had more ideas to present. There were none. Councillor Ford said it was nice to see some input from the public.

Rachel Hill agreed to submit a plan to Council for its consideration. It was agreed that the entrances to the trails should be narrow, or have posts installed, to discourage snowmobiles. It was also suggested that benches could be placed near the entrance to make it easier for skiers (to) strap on their skis.

Ms. Logue and Ms. Hill departed. Cheryl McCallum was asked if she had anything to add. She indicated she agreed that the trails are a good idea and that they would be financially feasible.

Mr. Hyatt recommended that recycling be brought back in the Township. Reeve Hammond said the Clerk had been advised that a proposal might be forthcoming from Fort Frances on recycling but nothing had yet been received. Reintroducing recycling service in the Township would be seriously considered by Council if the proposal is financially feasible."

***Synopsis of ideas discussed which Council deemed to have merit:***

- *lower speed limits on municipal roads*
- *development of recreational walking-skiing-hiking- horseriding trails over life of plan*
- *reintroduction of recycling*

## **Section 4: Vision**

### **4.1 Vision**

The Township of Alberton is a safe, healthy and progressive community, rich with rural flavour and ideals. Space for personal privacy, creativity and recreation are respected, as are individual rights. A strong sense of community identity, spirit and neighbourliness is nurtured. The Township is a steward of its natural environment and promotes harmonies with it.

The reasonable needs of Alberton residents and property owners are of prime concern to the municipal government, and high value is placed on the social and economic commitment entrusted to Council by our citizens. The Township's municipal government is open, accessible and fully responsible to its taxpayers, and operates in the best interests of the Township at large. The municipality fosters strong relationships with municipalities throughout the Rainy River District and Northwestern Ontario through networking, active participation in municipal associations, organizations, and joint boards, as well as joint partnerships which enhance the capabilities of all participating municipalities while recognizing and respecting the individuality, autonomy and contributions of each.

Alberton is a community where entrepreneurial activities and business enterprises are encouraged and valued. The Township promotes the sustainability of approved business concerns, including agricultural enterprises and activities. Municipal operations are stream-lined to facilitate economic development and diversity in the Township's Business Park. Kings Highway and CN Rail connect the municipality to Northwestern Ontario, and the internet connects it to the world. Alberton is a municipality where business can do business.

### **4.2 Mission Statement**

The Township of Alberton is a safe, healthy and progressive rural community with a strong sense of community identity, entrepreneurial spirit and environmental stewardship, where a responsible local government delivers municipal services utilizing available resources in an efficient and effective manner.

### **4.3 Slogan**

"Country living and loving it!"

## **Section 5: Municipal Philosophy**

### **5.1 Beliefs**

The following statements are and shall continue to be upheld as fundamental truths in this community:

- (a) Citizens have a right to efficient, effective fiscally responsible and accountable governance and leadership.
- (b) Council is obligated to make decisions in the best interests of the residents of the community.
- (c) Residents and ratepayers have a right to be treated fairly and with respect in their encounters and interaction with municipal government. Where the nature of their involvement with the Township requires that a defined procedure be followed, residents and ratepayers have the right to due process.
- (d) All members of municipal Council and staff have a responsibility to represent the municipality in a respectful, professional manner at all times and, when required, to maintain confidentiality for the protection of municipal interests.
- (e) Diversification of the Township's economic base is desired for long term community stability.
- (f) Businesses in the municipality have a responsibility to be good corporate citizens.
- (g) Residents and ratepayers have an obligation and responsibility to respect the rights and property of others.

## **Section 6: Goals**

### **6.1 Goals**

Council determined that the following are the goals which are intended to be achieved through implementation of this Strategic Plan:

- (a) The community of Alberton shall maintain a rural nature. Residential and economic growth and development shall be compatible with the rural nature of the municipality.
- (b) Alberton will be a safe and healthy community in which to live, work and play.
- (c) A sense of community pride and spirit among residents, property owners and businesses will be enhanced and promoted.
- (d) The appearance of our community will be pleasing.
- (e) Entrepreneurial activity and diverse economic development which is compatible with municipal planning objectives and by-laws will be invited and encouraged.
- (f) A sense of common purpose and direction within the municipality will be established through the Strategic Plan, which will guide municipal expenditures and activities over the course of its applicable term.
- (g) The Strategic Plan will be a progressive and vital document.

## **Section 7: Means to Achieve Vision and Goals**

### **7.1 General Means to Achieve Vision**

There are several practical steps which can be taken to help realize the vision outlined above.

#### **7.1.1 Effective and Responsible Local Government:**

First and foremost, the municipality will be well-managed and financially responsible to all constituents. Accountability, transparency and accessibility of municipal operations is of high priority and will be achieved through mailing and/or on-line posting of relevant information on municipal activities and financial matters. Comments and feedback from residents will be encouraged. Customer service and positive public relations will be an essential element of municipal operations.

#### **7.1.2 Best Interests of Township Paramount:**

Council shall act prudently in identifying, considering and prioritizing annual needs of the municipality. Consideration shall be given to total dollar costs and overall best value for the Township in all municipal procurements and all procurements shall be conducted in accordance with the Township's Procurement Policy. Desired levels of municipal services shall be determined by Council with due consideration to necessity, economy, efficiency, safety, health and quality of life.

#### **7.1.3 Economic Development:**

The municipality will strive to maintain and foster a healthy business environment. Municipal requirements with regard to approved business enterprises in appropriately zoned areas of the Township shall be basic and easy to understand in order to ensure that they are not unduly onerous for entrepreneurs seeking to establish or expand business endeavours. Council shall be responsible to the business community with regard to matters which may specifically impact commercial enterprises by inviting discussion and comment prior to rendering a decision on same.

#### **7.1.4 Effective Planning:**

Municipal planning shall continue to encourage both residential and economic growth while having regard to:

- maintenance of a reasonable balance between business and residential demands and assessments;
- growth objectives and prescribed requirements or concerns contained in municipal or Provincial planning documents;
- conservation of Alberton's agricultural heritage;
- accessibility issues, where public or retail development is involved; and
- rights of property owners.

Protection of wet lands and natural environment will be encouraged and taken into consideration in balancing the benefits and impact of development with potential environmental impact.

### **1.1.5 Reinforcement of Community Identity:**

A municipal identity and community pride will be reinforced by enhancing the visibility of the Township, and by encouraging and creating opportunities for social interaction through recreational activities and volunteerism. Venues for public exhibition of creativity and talent will be encouraged. With approval of Council, the municipality will publicly recognize contributions to the Township on at least an annual basis, whether such contributions arise through community volunteerism, service, property beautification or other endeavours which benefit the Township at large.

### **1.1.6 Employment of Strategic Governance:**

In order to ensure that this Strategic Plan is and continues to be a living document, Council shall practice strategic governance and management. To this end, Council shall be required to review the vision and goals cited in the plan annually during its budget process to ensure that its authorized expenditures will assist the Township in moving towards achievement of the objectives set out herein.

## **1.2 Identification of Specific Means to Achieve Vision**

During the budget process conducted in each year of its term, each Council shall identify specific actions it may take and/or expenditures it may authorize which would move the Township closer to achieving the vision set out in this Strategic Plan, and shall take steps to implement or approve those actions or expenditures which it deems fiscally responsible and expedient to undertake during the subject year.

## **Section 8: Strategic Plan Maintenance, Review and Revision**

### **8.1 Distribution of Plan to Council**

A copy of this Strategic Plan shall be provided to every incoming Council member at the beginning of his or her term of office so all members may fully familiarize themselves with the document and their obligations with regard thereto.

### **8.2 Strategic Plan Review**

#### **8.2.1 Annual Review**

Strategic planning is an ongoing process, not an exercise which terminates with adoption of the Strategic Plan.

To ensure that this plan remains a living document, each Council shall review the Strategic Plan at least annually during its budget process to ensure that expenditures are moving the Township toward the vision identified in Section 2.1.

#### **8.2.2 Comprehensive Review**

At least once during every term of Council, a comprehensive review of the Strategic Plan shall be conducted by Council. Due to potential lack of familiarity with, understanding of and participation in municipal proceedings which may be experienced by members of Council who are elected for their first term of office, the comprehensive review of this Plan shall not be conducted during the first year of the Council term.

The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the comprehensive review is placed on the agenda of a regular meeting held during the second year of the term of Council. The Reeve shall be responsible for leading Council through the comprehensive review. The review shall include a reassessment of the Strategic Plan document, a review of the endeavours undertaken during the past year which moved the municipality closer to achieving the cited vision, and any recommendations for amendment to the Strategic Plan.

#### **8.2.3 Additional Mandatory Review**

The Strategic Plan is required to be reviewed by Council, or its designate, when amendment or complete revision of the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-Law is undertaken.

### **8.3 Amendment of Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan may be amended by way of addendum only, authorized by by-law, so that the original plan will remain in tact and any changes made by succeeding Councils may be easily identified.

#### **8.4 Notice of Amendment of Strategic Plan**

Notice of intent to amend the Strategic Plan shall be provided to ratepayers by way of:

- (a) publication of notice in two consecutive Township Community Newsletters; and
- (b) posting notice of the proposed amendment on the Township's website, and
- (c) publication of one notice in a newspaper having general circulation in the Township no later than three weeks prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be adopted by by-law.

Where a proposed amendment is not adopted at the meeting cited in the notice but is tabled to a later meeting, and no further amendments are contemplated, notice of the postponement is required to be published only in the Township Community Newsletter. Where further amendments are contemplated, the notice procedure stated above must be followed so the public is aware of the nature of the additional amendment or amendments.