



**NORTH ALGONA
WILBERFORCE**

Strategic Plan

TOOL KIT

LIVE SMALL.
THINK BIG.

**TRANSFORMING SURVIVE INTO THRIVE:
THE PATHWAY FORWARD FOR
NORTH ALGONA WILBERFORCE**

Prepared by:
**TGT Solutions
& With Chéla Inc.**

Two Over-Arching Concepts: **THINK BIG**

Every strategic recommendation we've made reflects these two foundational concepts.

Small Communities Run on Volunteer Contribution

Why does this matter to you?

- A large group of retirees make up the majority of your volunteer "workforce".
- Younger people and others face many barriers to community participation that prevent them from contributing their gifts and talents.
- The demands of modern society and rural conditions present most of these barriers. Secure access to food, transportation, income vs cost of living, access to local social programs, isolation, access to income-geared housing, closed networks and lack of essential resources like reliable internet are all examples of such barriers.
- If you can help to empower younger people and others to take part by removing the barriers they face, they will choose to volunteer more.
- When more community members can take part, more can be done and more can be sustained in the long run!
- And, removing barriers to participation directly influences the overall wellness of your residents. Only well communities can thrive. "Rising Tides Lift All Ships"

We recommend that you:

Remove the barriers current and potential volunteers have to contributing to the community.

So that you can:

Increase the number of residents actively taking part in building community.

Community Engagement can Leverage Volunteer Contribution

Why does this matter to you?

- As you grow your available volunteers by focussing on removing barriers to participation, the pool of talent you can access expands.
- You will need excellent processes, communication systems and leadership to capture and coordinate the talent you now have access to.
- If you can help to empower volunteers to lead and take action, the community will build itself.
- If you can learn to ensure clear, effective and meaningful volunteer pathways are present, onboarding becomes simple and natural for interested parties.
- When volunteer residents are engaged, valued and supported they become an extension of the Township Staff, helping you to move forward in one common vision.

We recommend that you:

Learn how to effectively engage with the community by employing training, tools and processes for communication.

So that you can:

Leverage the talent and enthusiasm of the volunteer residents that are helping you to achieve your strategic goals.

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Knowing this, we recommend you make commitments to identify where you are headed (Vision), why you are headed there (Purpose) and the actions you will take to get there (Mission). The following statements reflect our findings,

MISSION

Your Organizational Aspirations and Commitments

Municipal governments carry out a number of activities that are designed to support quality of life for the taxpayers and visitors. Excellent leaders understand that their primary responsibility is to **leverage human contribution** and **optimize resources**. Thriving small communities must evolve from 'servicing' the community to 'strengthening' the community. When municipal governments can adopt this same practice of enabling the ideal community conditions, people will rise in their gifts naturally.

“

MISSION STATEMENT

The Township of North Algona Wilberforce engages listening, learning, communication and advocacy as means to commit to excellence in continuous improvement in evidence-based decision-making that strengthens the community and leads to common wellness and inclusion of all people who live and visit here.

“

CORE OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to provide the leadership required to stimulate the transformation from survive to thrive as a collective community, where no one is left behind.

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LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

We recognize that our role is to provide the necessary foundation for residents to fully engage and contribute their immense gifts to our community as they determine.

VISION

Your Shared Ideal Destination

We learned that nearly everyone we consulted with shared the same vision for the future of the community despite a blind sampling. The following vision statement was developed to capture this common objective and view of your collective future.

VISION STATEMENT:



We are the small place that is leading the way as an example for rural communities on how to engage in human-centric community and economic development because we have proven that enabling inclusion, belonging and wellness is the best path to achieving sustainable development.

And they shared a repeating and pronounced alignment with the reasons to head there.

PURPOSE

Your Collective Reason Why

One clear consensus emerged throughout the consultation process – caring for others, feeling like you belong and knowing you are valued is the reason to do this work. The following purpose statement was developed to capture this common *raison d'être* that reinforces and emphasizes why we are in this together.

PURPOSE STATEMENT:



We will do this because all people deserve a high-quality life of their choosing, in a place that fully accepts, embraces and leverages the immense gifts those people possess.

You also must understand the values your community wants to live by with every action taken to build community.



Environmental Stewardship



Inclusive Human Connection



Joy & Celebration



Family, History & Culture



Excellence in Leadership

You can reflect on each of these core values when you make decisions, form plans, coordinate people and take action.

Your Community

These fifty statements represent your community; Residents, Youth, Seniors, Businesses, Employers and Volunteers.

These items can be your checklist to ensure your goals, plans and decisions reflect the wants, needs and values of your community.

These fifty statements are each leveraged (strengths and opportunities) or addressed (weaknesses and threats) in the projects we propose that you undertake.

The Truth Road Map:

- RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES
- YOUTH LENS
- EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS
- RESIDENT ATTRACTION AND TOURISM
- VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- FUTURE STATE FOCUS
- THE TOWNSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS
- COMMUNICATION
- SENIORS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

1. The residents are divided between those who cling to the past and those hopeful for the future.

2. When youth have access to an adult mentor, they express a deep interest in returning to live here as an adult.

3. Local employers succeed in retaining employees once they are found.

4. There is a strong desire for eco-tourism options and promotion.

5. The township has experienced low recent immigration and new resident attraction.

6. Food service businesses continue to struggle to find seasonal food service workers.

7. Volunteers "run" the community's critical functions, especially the supports for the most vulnerable.

8. Youth will not return if there is no flexibility in the old ways.

9. Most people who visit here as seasonal residents have a family or childhood connection to the area.

10. Broadband and cellular services are patchy and unreliable in some areas of the Township.

11. Seasonal workers are still difficult to attract and retain.

12. The outdoor amenities of the township are viewed as the primary asset.

13. Residents feel that municipal assets are often underutilized.

14. The township is filled with environmental stewards.

15. Communication is the primary challenge as reported by every stakeholder group.

16. Timeliness and accuracy of information is a concern for many residents.

17. Community partners feel they could be doing more together with the Township but face red tape and barriers to entry.

18. Residents favour the pace of life here and would prefer to carefully select who is targeted as tourists and seasonal residents.

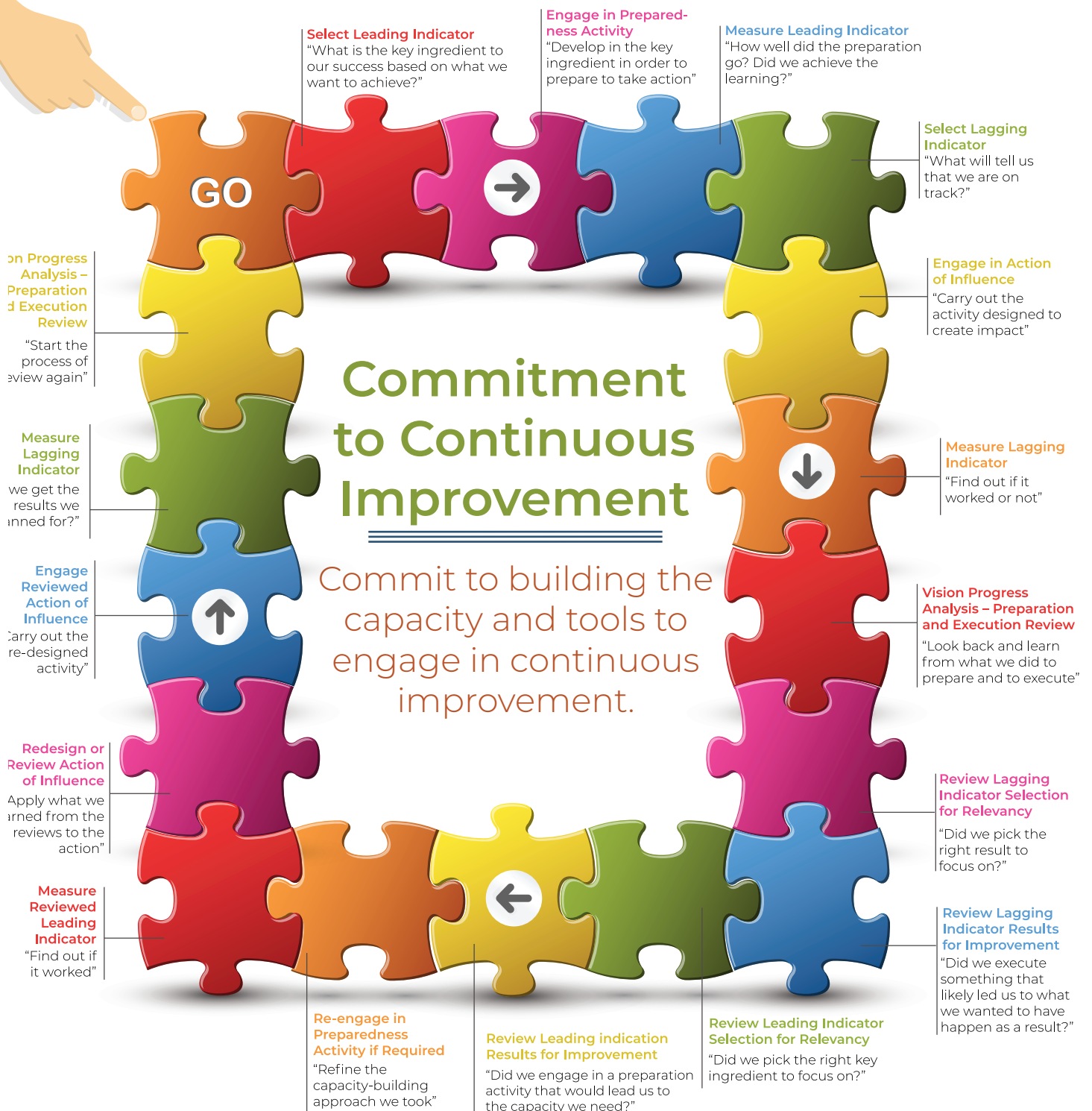
- 19. There is a strong desire to break down silos of work and collaborate more often overall.
- 20. Residents desire a reciprocal and inclusive communication tool to contribute to and learn from the Township in mutual understanding.
- 21. Misinformation is widespread and it fuels negativity, sustains conflict and creates gossip.
- 22. The word of mouth network has huge potential to evolve as a core asset.
- 23. Youth view the rural setting as an advantage.
- 24. Seniors have been deeply impacted by the pandemic and further social isolation is a critical health risk.
- 25. Food banks are leading social supports in the area, often informally and without security.
- 26. Demand for outreach food bank services is on the rise.
- 27. Stigma for food bank use held by the person in need and the community at large is the primary barrier to connecting those in need with access to food.
- 28. Businesses desire to purchase produce from a local supplier.
- 29. We lack a local food service worker training centre.
- 30. Youth desire meaningful participation in their community that they create and lead.
- 31. Food banks are interested in providing a social food sharing option for those in need that is integrated with others in the community.
- 32. Social enterprise is the way forward for all social good initiatives.
- 33. More people are looking to live outside of the city and work remotely.
- 34. North Algona Wilberforce does not have a brand presence.
- 35. Employment or volunteer entry pathways for the Township roles are unclear.
- 36. The neighbouring municipalities each have unique strengths to be leveraged and supported for further collective impact.
- 37. The Algonquins of Pikwakanagan are eager partners in collective development.
- 38. A rich history of rural cultural diversity exists here.
- 39. There is a lack of inclusive housing options.
- 40. Community actors engaging in social good activities struggle to engage with the Township consistently.
- 41. Most people here define success as being able to be with family.
- 42. When engaging with the Township, the residents focus on accessing services and providing feedback.
- 43. Those who do not engage with the Township are divided between those not perceiving a need to and those who are discouraged by unclear entry points and results.
- 44. The people who live here are nearly all volunteers in some way and care deeply about their neighbours.
- 45. Those who expressed they do not engage in the community felt it was related to lack of options or the promotions of those options were missed.
- 46. Residents want to contribute and have immense gifts to give.
- 47. The township's residents experience low socio-economic and health conditions.
- 48. Many residents and visitors prefer to shop local and wish they could do so more often.
- 49. Residents desire responsible and sustainable development of the land to increase the tax base and spread the tax burden more widely.
- 50. Youth are isolated and unengaged when they live in the country without access to transportation.

We propose **six projects** to achieve the **community wants, needs and goals**.

What is Leveraged	Project Name & Description	What is Addressed
<p>4. 7. 9. 12. 14. 18. 22. 23. 33. 38. 41. 44. 46.</p>	<p>Walk the Talk</p> <p>Engage in the development of a brand and communication plan that targets our critical audiences.</p>	<p>1. 5. 8. 13. 15. 16. 17. 19. 20. 21. 34. 35. 40. 43. 45.</p>
<p>2. 3. 7. 23. 28. 30. 31. 32. 36. 37. 38. 41. 44. 46.</p>	<p>Cooking for Connection</p> <p>Develop a Community Food Centre in a licensed community kitchen that enables local training, critical food literacy, partnerships, cultural sharing and connections among people.</p>	<p>1. 6. 8. 11. 13. 19. 24. 25. 26. 27. 29. 47. 48. 50.</p>
<p>7. 19. 20. 23. 32. 33. 36. 37. 44. 46.</p>	<p>Enabling Digital Communication & Remote Work Culture</p> <p>Bring forward a private/public partnership to provide fast, reliable internet to your community.</p>	<p>1. 4. 5. 8. 10. 11. 13. 16. 47. 48. 49. 50.</p>
<p>4. 7. 12. 14. 20. 23. 25. 30. 36. 37. 38. 44. 46.</p>	<p>Key Partnerships for Synergy & Collective Advocacy</p> <p>Invest in the key relationships you need to influence collective outcomes via collaboration.</p>	<p>1. 5. 8. 13. 15. 17. 19. 40. 45. 47.</p>
<p>9. 12. 14. 18. 23. 33. 36. 37. 38. 41. 48. 49.</p>	<p>Dynamic & Inclusive Housing Development</p> <p>Engage in the development of dynamic and inclusive housing that will serve your planned growth and community needs.</p>	<p>1. 5. 8. 11. 13. 26. 39. 47. 50.</p>

A Road Map to Guide Your Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The sixth project we propose is to invest in your capacity to perform robust measurement and evaluation, while learning as you grow ongoing.



Use this guide in all that you **plan, implement, measure and achieve.**

GETTING STARTED:

Year One High-Level Project Plan

The First step is to make a commitment to move forward in the directions proposed. It is important that the leadership team express buy-in and full understanding of the opportunities presented.

Step 1

We recommend that you invite residents to join you in a series of virtual workshops, one for each of the initiatives. These workshops are intended to:

- Build understanding of the background information supporting the recommendations
- Create a united position in the community
- Make a commitment to owning the Strategic Plan and its findings
- Build interest for the projects within groups of community members

The workshops will provide the community with the opportunity to dig deeply into each initiative and develop passion and preferences working alongside Council and Staff. We also recommend that you capture the names and contacts of the interested parties to help inform Step 4 activities and invitations.

Step 2

The second step is for the Township leadership team to position each strategic initiative into a preferred level of control.

Each one of the strategic initiatives could range from being volunteer driven, self-funded, partnership based, business revenue funded, grant-funded or fully invested in from all parties, engaging all potential resources. The options on how to engage these proven ideas are vast and so narrowing down your preferred role in each is necessary.

We propose that the Township has five levels of engagement or control possible under each strategic initiative (listed from least to most commitment level):

- Influence – engage in advocacy to inspire others to act
- Coordinate – bring people together and support their organization and action
- Plan – provide the design and project management support to steer projects carried out by others
- Lead – take a primary role in leading and acting for self or with a partner
- Own – assume full internal control of the project development

In order to leverage the features of effective community engagement, it is important to recognize that residents may wish to participate at some level in the projects contained herein. Volunteers with mission, vision and values alignment should be encouraged to contribute and coordinated effectively to enable them.

Step 3

The third step is to engage in preparedness as a necessary function to the initial phase of change management and positive community engagement.

We recommend that you engage with us (TGT Solutions and With Chela Inc.) in our signature municipal preparedness training suite designed specifically for leaders in small communities. The modules of this program contain the following fundamental preparedness activities essential to your growth regardless of your chosen level of commitment to any one project:

1. Inclusion at Work – Intercultural Competency training to enable effective communication and service results working in diverse communities
2. Change Management – Owning and adopting positive change within teams centred on mission and vision
3. Continuous Improvement – Intentional action and review of preparedness and results in pursuit of the optimization of human contribution and fully leveraging resources
4. Digital Tool Communication Best Practices – A training tool kit filled with key concepts, recommended tools and distribution process mechanism that enable robust, reliable and reciprocal digital communication channels
5. Principles of Community Engagement – A review of the best practices in mobilizing volunteers, gaining youth participation and serving the passion, enthusiasm and expertise of the local actors

Step 4

Engage with the community interest groups and volunteers identified in Step 1 to measure their level of interest or engagement. For example, if a group in the community wanted to own the community kitchen project, it is essential to embrace community leadership and for the Township to consider taking a contributing role as supporter and ally to enable the work.

This can be done by hosting working group meetings to begin the development of each project, as defined in the control levels expressed by all parties involved. The meetings can focus on identifying the skills, abilities and networks of each party and coordinating those assets and resources into a high-level project plan with clear roles and accountability.

We also recognize that the Walk the Talk project is an obvious break-out initiative for the Township. It will set the foundational tools and processes need to fully leverage each of the other initiatives. You may wish to consider using the Walk the Talk project as your pilot of the process you wish to adopt with the community for the remaining initiatives.

GETTING STARTED:

Year One High-Level Project Plan

Step 5

Consider some initial steps you can take to enable the start-up of the remaining projects:

Project Name	Prepare	Act
Walk the Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review grant application deadlines for opportunities in the near future that may require quick action • Review progressive branding strategies carried out by leading municipalities • Develop a strong understanding of the full potential of your new website by consulting your web developer and others so that ideas and opportunities can reflect technological feasibility • Review your internal internet connection capacity and evaluate against future needs to ensure adequate and expanding service level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the idea of the Town Listener and design a reciprocal reporting process/job description • Map community assets that will be critical for the adoption of the strategic directions • Engage a Township branding RFP • Fully develop and utilize the future investment in the Asset Management System so as to enhance your capital planning, inform your internal priorities and communicate them to the community
Cooking for Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review grant application deadlines for opportunities in the near future that may require quick action • Develop an understanding of what a commercial kitchen licence and maintenance of it requires • Continue your discussion with fresh food producers in the area who have already reflected an interest to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a meeting with Renfrew County District School Board and Opeongo High School for discussions on developing and co-funding a co-op placement program • Map community assets that will be critical for the adoption of the strategic directions • Strike a working group for community kitchen

Project Name	Prepare	Act
Enable Digital Communication & Remote Work Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review grant application deadlines for opportunities in the near future that may require quick action • Interview the owners of BCI to fully understand their local service provision model of high-speed internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map community assets that will be critical for the adoption of the strategic directions • Interview key players from the internet provider solution recommendations to better inform your options • Strike a working group for internet solution
Dynamic & Inclusive Housing Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue discussions with Bonnechere Valley on the partnership development opportunities • Engage in meetings with the County of Renfrew on planning for collective housing development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map community assets that will be critical for the adoption of the strategic directions • Investigate housing development options and builders that are innovative and will connect with the progressive development proposed
Key Partnerships for Synergy & Collective Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong understanding of the regional projects and their respective mandate and leadership teams • Engage the neighbouring municipalities not able to be reached during the consultation phase for a direction-clarifying interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) • Advocate for a collective of elected municipal leaders to form the LIP Municipal Engagement Working Group • Support local employers to respond to the Employer One Survey distributed by the Labour Market Group • Re-engage neighbouring municipal leaders and consider striking a regular and ongoing collaborative discussion opportunity
Commitment to Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and identify leading and lagging performance indicators for tactical moves that respect your level of influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin measuring an activity that you already engage in to test your understanding and skill in measurement with a proven and familiar existing service



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