



COUNCIL PRIORITIES and INITIATIVES
2015-2018

FINAL

September 28, 2015

**OUR INITIATIVES FOR THE 2015-2018 TERM
and
OUR PRIORITIES FOR DECISION-MAKING**

**The Opportunity you have given us
as your Township Council
for the 2015-2018 term**

To be elected to Township Council for a four-year period is a precious opportunity to add value to community life and government in Centre Wellington. By our actions now, we can help to make Centre Wellington even better for the future. We are determined to make the best of that opportunity.

Naturally, you expect us to maintain the basic services of government we all expect...ploughing the snow, treating the sewage, maintaining the parks, inspecting new buildings, and yes, collecting the taxes. We realize too that most of your tax bill goes to the County of Wellington to pay for the OPP, waste collection and recycling, social services, County roads, and public health, among other things.

Nonetheless, despite the Township's limited means and the need to maintain basic services, you expect us to do more, to make a difference, to get results. You expect us to identify and confront the challenges we face or soon will face. You expect us to identify and seize opportunities. In short, you expect this Council to add value to what has been handed down to us from previous councils and previous generations.

Any municipal Council has to choose carefully where they will put municipal money, time and effort on your behalf. We need to channel that money, time, and effort into getting the results that are most important to you, the citizens and businesses of Centre Wellington, for the next four years. We can't do everything you would like us to do, but we can do your most important things.

Developing Council's 2015-2018 Initiatives and Priorities: **What is most important to you!**

In order to help Council to determine its 2015-2018 priorities, two research activities were carried out:

- 1) Qualitative input and analysis through consultation with community groups,
- 2) Quantitative data collection and analysis via a community survey.

On behalf of the Township, Winegard Municipal Consulting held over 20 meetings with community groups and individuals, such as the BIAs, prominent entrepreneurs, Minor Hockey, fire stations (Elora & Fergus), CWDHS Student Council, Economic Development Task Force, Victoria Park Seniors Committee, etc.. These groups provided valuable input, which was summarized for Council's further consideration, about where we are now in Centre Wellington and what issues need action.

Next, the consultants developed a 29-question survey to assess the public's aggregate sense of importance and satisfaction regarding key areas of potential community priority. The survey also asked what level of spending increase, if any, they would be willing to consider on each item. The 29 questions asked about:

- Support for arts & culture
- Support for festivals, tourism events
- Municipal industrial park
- Promoting CW as tourism destination
- Support for farms and agribusiness
- Retaining a "Small Town" Feel
- Expediting the Landmark commercial development
- Expanding the creative/high-tech economy
- Improving traffic flow
- Expanding trails (walking/hiking/biking)
- Preserving heritage buildings/homes
- Revitalizing downtowns
- Replacing/repairing bridges
- Repairing local roads
- Sources of water supply
- Increasing sports facilities
- Investigating a Highway 6 bypass
- Enforcing bylaws
- Support for the new Hospital
- Support for community organization fundraising
- E-communications & social media

- Municipal customer service
- Two-way communication on community priorities/actions
- Reviewing responsibilities and funding between Township and County
- Ensuring 'Growth pays for growth'
- Fire safety
- Attracting commercial property developers
- Well-planned, walkable, affordable residential growth
- Efficiency of municipal operations

The random survey was offered online and in paper format to 1000 households which were randomly selected from the Township's GIS system. In order to ensure representativeness, the GIS program picked 1000 residential occupied properties completely randomly, this completely randomized methodology was not weighted to any particular part of Centre Wellington, but was drawn from an undifferentiated overall Centre Wellington list. Further, the validity of this random sample survey methodology was enhanced by obtaining results from 2.0% of all households (10,729 households, 1000 surveys sent, 21.5% response rate). At a confidence level of 95% (Percentage 1/6) and 10, 729 households, the confidence Interval/Margin of Error was $\pm 4.93\%$.

In order to continue the community outreach, an online and paper survey was also offered to the community at large, for anyone who wished to answer. This 'Opt In' survey is not representative from a survey science perspective, but it allows further insight into the priorities of the population.

A complete set of results for both random and opt-in survey was presented to Council and can be found on the municipal website. The results were analyzed by highlighting where

- citizens indicated that the importance they attach to the matter was much greater than their satisfaction with the current situation,
 - citizens indicated that importance was very high for the item,
 - citizens indicated that importance and spending were both high for the item.
- A weighted and calibrated delta analysis revealed the items for which citizens were most willing to see tax dollars allocated and thought were important.

The following issues were found from the *random survey sample* to be the 10 most important (listed in the order in which they appeared on the survey form):

- 1) Supporting farms and agriculture-related businesses
- 2) Maintaining small town feel
- 3) Expediting the proposed Landmark hotel/condo/commercial development
- 4) Repairing/replacing bridges

- 5) Repairing local roads
- 6) Support the development of New Groves Memorial Hospital
- 7) 2-way communication on community priorities and actions
- 8) Growth plans that ensure that growth pays for growth
- 9) Well-planned, walkable, affordable residential growth
- 10) Reviewing the efficiency of municipal operations

Following from an Importance x Satisfaction Delta Analysis, a Priority Matrix was created. Items in orange below are those to which the public appears to attach more importance than satisfaction, and may most deserve Township priority.

		IMPORTANCE		
		High	Medium	Low
SATISFACTION	High	New Hospital Small town feel	Fire safety Promote CW tourism Festival/ tourist events	
	Medium	Roads Well-planned growth Municipal operations Bridges Growth pays growth	Farms/ agribusiness Water supply Traffic movement Sidewalks/ trails Downtown Revitaliz'n Twp/county review Customer service	Sports facilities Arts/culture activities Heritage buildings Community orgs
	Low		2 -way communicat'ns Expedite Landmark Enforcing bylaws Ind/com developers	Hwy 6 bypass Munic Industrial park High tech economy Electronic commun'ns

The survey also asked to what extent respondents were willing to see more of their tax dollars spent to deal with each of the 29 issues. In essence, this is the challenge Council always faces: what issues merit more spending?

Both the random sample survey and opt-in survey revealed three high-priority items where the public in aggregate is willing to see more tax dollars spent beyond simply keeping up with inflation:

- 1) Repairing Roads
- 2) Repairing/replacing Bridges
- 3) Supporting the new Hospital

Centre Wellington in 2015

A Fortunate Community...

In 2015, Centre Wellington can boast numerous advantages based on nature and geography, and on the work of previous generations and previous Councils. A short list would certainly include the following:

- The natural beauty of our river, gorge, recreation areas, and fertile farmland
- Our proximity to universities, cities, research institutes, and jobs beyond our borders
- Our parks, trails, and modern recreational facilities
- The strength of our economy in the trades, commercial , and home-based business sectors, and the quality of the Centre Wellington labour force
- A housing stock which is still affordable compared to larger communities, and a cadre of local developers able to undertake the projects to meet future needs
- Our diversity , comprising as we do two towns and our rural area, which gives Centre Wellington a broad range of assets and attractions, an economic cushion, and a rural/small-town feel
- Our strong family farm. agribusiness and agricultural research sector
- Our strong tradition of community organizations, community initiative, and volunteerism
- Our nationally-known tourism and cultural assets, our charming downtowns, and significant architectural heritage

And there is more good news in the offing:

- The Elora Mill/Landmark/Pearle Hospitality proposal is poised to deliver substantial economic benefit and amenities
- The new Groves Memorial hospital project will deliver even better health care and health research, and its location will continue to bring Elora and Fergus closer together
- High-speed internet in urban areas will be completed by 2019, and private firms are actively bringing service to our rural areas
- Higher wage earners and retirees are moving in, bring their purchasing power with them

- Provincial policy dictates that our population will continue to grow. Whatever its challenges, growth will yield new commercial opportunities and a wider variety of amenities

The Township government also excels in many respects:

- The 1999 amalgamation which created Centre Wellington has matured; the Township has developed significant in-house expertise and is a recognized leader in Wellington County and beyond
- Centre Wellington's property tax rates are lower than those of comparable municipalities
- The Township has a low and very manageable debt load, primarily for new water/wastewater facilities paid for by the users
- The Township has progressively adopted more efficient methods and modern business practices;
- The staff reorganization undertaken by the past Council seems to have yielded good coordination between departments and customer service improvements
- Studies, plans, and community engagement processes have been completed in numerous sectors, including culture, trails, recreation, community improvement plans, the Official Plan, and our comprehensive asset management plan. These set the stage for future growth and development; they set out the wishes of those who benefit from Township services and participate in Township programs; they help us to determine future roles for the Township
- The Township has impeccable, professional, and transparent financial practices and accounting
- We have impressive past practice in financial partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and community fund-raising. Among many examples are the recently-developed splash-pad parks and our recently-initiated downtown property improvement grants/loans program

Facing Challenges.

Notwithstanding our advantages, Centre Wellington recognizes and confronts some present and predictable challenges. Key among these would be the following.

- Quite aside from growth, keeping our basic infrastructure (roads, bridges, buildings, water and wastewater pipes/pumps/plants) in good repair is a huge challenge. Taking only the tax-supported assets from our 2014 Asset

Management report (i.e., excluding water/ wastewater facilities), the Township owns **\$579 million** worth of roads, bridges and buildings. By the **conservative estimate**, the Township faces a \$61 million cost to repair/replace these assets over the next 10 years and a \$214 million cost over the next 20 years.

- Already, the Township has been forced to close four bridges for safety sake, and at least five more face potential closure in this Council term
- Traffic congestion is increasing, and certain roads - particularly those which bear the brunt of north/south commute traffic and gravel truck usage - have demonstrably deteriorated
- Local job creation struggles to keep up with population growth, and the proportion of the labour force which commutes elsewhere has increased. This challenge will remain prominent as population continues to grow
- 600 jobs have been lost over the last 6 years from large local employers (e.g., Target and GSW)
- Serviced industrial land is limited; to date, private sector developers have shown little interest
- Our downtown business environments exhibit not only undeniable strengths but also some seasonal businesses and business closings
- Growth has already placed stress on many aspects of life in Centre Wellington, not only the ratio of local jobs to local labour force, but also traffic congestion, wear and tear on roads, pressure on recreation facilities and emergency services.
- Some feel that the "small-town feel" we prize is being threatened. Centre Wellington's substantial 2041 growth target arising from the Province's "Greater Golden Horseshoe" plan will ensure that this challenge remains prominent
- A proposal from a Nestle affiliate for large-scale commercial water-taking is now before the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. This is causing community concern
- Many of us feel threats to our community life. New residents who commute to jobs elsewhere may have less time for local organizations, do more of their shopping elsewhere, and have a weaker identification with Centre Wellington.
- We are attracting retirees but our "home-grown" seniors may feel forced out of local market due to the rising cost of housing
- Some community groups are running short of new energetic volunteers, and some of our longstanding cultural and tourist events/organizations are in a precarious financial state

And Township government faces continuous challenges...

- The Township is losing much of its annual grant from the Province: \$ 1 million has been lost already, a further loss of \$600,000 is projected over next 4 years. This on an annual operating budget of about \$25 million
- Our infrastructure deficit is huge: the Asset Management Plan indicates that the Township should provide \$5 million more per year (i.e. \$5 million more than we have averaged over the past several years) to keep infrastructure in good repair (excluding water/wastewater facilities)
- New reality of municipal finance is: despite rising needs, we may have to rely less on help from other government sources. We will need to strive to be more self-sufficient and seek new revenue sources
- What is expected of Township government continues to increase. One example; the Township has not traditionally offered a high level of bylaw enforcement service, but Councils get constant requests to do more. Another example; while taxpayers can largely avoid the capital cost of building roads and parks in new residential areas, the ongoing annual costs of maintenance and operations go right to the tax bill.
- The Township still operates with some legacy infrastructure. For example, our Infrastructure Services department still operates out of five locations, some of which are inefficiently located, others of which are no longer suitable. Our fire department is facing similar constraints. Some of our water and sewer pipes - as we saw again during this past cold winter - are too close to the surface and subject to freezing. Furthermore, as staff retire, they may take key institutional knowledge with them.
- Some citizens perceive that the corporation is more official/distant/bureaucratic as it has formalized its processes and as pre-amalgamation staff have retired. Some feel that they are being left out of the loop as far as what the Township is doing and why. This feeling of distance is exacerbated by the fact that public understanding of municipal finance (which level of government does what, who pays for what) is generally diminishing.
- Businesses and landowners are very aware of the hurdles that dealing with government - including the Township - necessarily involves. As the Township continues to process development applications, we are reminded that we need to do so as efficiently as possible

Five goals we will pursue during our term

Given this current state of affairs in Centre Wellington, and the input we have obtained, we believe that, during the next four years, five broad goals are most important to you:

RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Township will manage and upgrade the community's infrastructure assets in an environmentally responsible way

HEALTHY GROWTH

The Township will plan now for its inevitable growth, so that we retain a vibrant and accessible community and our high quality of life in the future.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Township will help the business community to excel and expand and to create jobs, so that Centre Wellington's economic vitality keeps pace with its population.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Acting responsibly, the Township will continue to support community initiatives that foster pride in our community and enhance its amenities

GOOD GOVERNMENT

As a government, the Township will make well-informed decisions, operate efficiently, get results, communicate openly, and engage the public in all important decisions

Specific Initiatives we will take to pursue those goals

To pursue each of those goals, Council is committing itself to take a number of specific initiatives during our 2015-2018 term. Below we have outlined these initiatives and the timing we foresee. You will see results. These initiatives will be implemented through our annual capital and construction budgets and the work plans of our staff. We will also reach out to interested parties and community partners to help us.

Several of these initiatives are somewhat intangible; they are a matter of exploring options and making plans, particularly related to Centre Wellington's inevitable future growth. Council must plan now so that growth provides benefits but does not ruin the community we love. Other initiatives are very tangible...bridges, paving, sidewalks, tree planting, development charges.

We will monitor and report to you regularly on our progress. We will need your help. We are prepared to be held accountable.

Priorities for our decisions and our administration in relation to those goals

Over and above specific measurable initiatives, Council also commits itself to other priorities which you will see reflected in our decisions and in our direction to staff.

Again some of our priorities are somewhat general. For example, we want Centre Wellington's citizens to stay involved in Township government and to understand it better; so, we will look for ways to engage you in our decision-making and our projects. By means of our statistically-significant public survey and many meetings with community organizations, we have tried to demonstrate that commitment in preparing these initiatives and priorities for the 2015-2018 term.

Other decision-making priorities, while not having a timetable, are more specific. For example, we will do whatever is in our power to keep the development application for the Elora Mill/Pearle Hospitality project moving along. We will marshal our facts and do whatever we can to get the Province to the table to find a solution for the traffic congestion on Highway 6 through Fergus and the multi-million-dollar damage to our roads and bridges.

Throughout the term we will welcome your feedback. Have Council and staff exhibited these priorities as we make our decisions and manage our services?

GOAL #1
RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Township will manage and upgrade the community's infrastructure assets in an environmentally responsible way.

2015-2018 Initiatives - Reliable Infrastructure

- 1.1** The Township will replace or reconstruct four bridges by 2019.

The selection of bridges for replacement/reconstruction during this term will be based on the objectively-derived priorities in the Township's asset management plan.

- 1.2** Before the 2016 construction budget, the Township will identify at least one candidate bridge for replacement/reconstruction by means of alternative methods of design and/or procurement and/or alternative materials.

With good engineering advice and a carefully-selected pilot project, it will likely be possible to reduce the cost of replacing some bridges, without sacrificing safety or durability, by means of such alternative methods.

- 1.3** Through its annual construction budgets, the Township will undertake a steadily enhanced program of repaving roads throughout this term of Council.

The selection of roads to be repaved through this accelerated program will be based on the objective criteria in the Township's asset management plan

- 1.4** Through its annual construction budgets, the Township will do more to connect existing neighbourhoods for pedestrians and cyclists, by means of sidewalks, trails, cycling routes and/or parks.

Public safety will be the criterion for identifying such projects.

- 1.5** The Township will conduct a feasibility study in 2016 to examine the business case for meeting the emergency power need at the Sportsplex by means of an energy co-generation solution.

The Sportsplex is the Township's designated community emergency shelter but lacks a source of emergency power. The feasibility study will estimate the costs, impacts, payback period, and potential partnerships for an environmentally- and financially-sound source of power co-generation.

1.6 Throughout the term, the Township will implement a Tree Management Program.

Beginning in 2015, this will entail the removal and replacement of park and roadside trees that have been attacked by the Emerald Ash Borer, but will also entail tree-planting for other aesthetic and conservation purposes, as well as tree-planting standards to be met by new development. The Township invites the participation of community organizations.

1.7 Throughout the term, the Township will continue to implement its Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan.

The Township has identified a number of mostly-small projects which not only save energy but also reduce costs and generate a cost-recovery payback on the investment. The ongoing conversion of Centre Wellington's streetlights to LED lighting is a larger-scale example of such a project.

1.8 The Township will identify the best option for where to locate and how to upgrade its public works and parks operations facilities,

Centre Wellington's public works and parks personnel continue to operate with facilities built by the five former municipalities which became Centre Wellington in 1999. Some of these facilities are over 50 years old, in poor condition and unsuitable for storing modern equipment. They may be poorly located for the most efficient deployment of Township personnel. A study is now underway and will be presented to Council in 2016. This issue has faced previous Councils, but the time has now come to chart a clear course.

1.9 The Township will lobby the Ontario Government that commercial water-taking should not be permitted unless there is clear and publicly available scientific evidence that there will be no significant impact on the quality and quantity of our local water supply.

The Township has no jurisdiction over commercial water-taking proposals. Rather, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change must be relied upon to require such proponents to provide rigorous scientific proof that no significant ecological changes or reduction in long-term groundwater capacity will result. Moreover, such studies should be undertaken and independently peer-reviewed at the proponent's cost, and made available by the Ministry for public scrutiny and comment.

1.10 Township staff will review new opportunities to promote and make municipal water more accessible at events and in public places.

2015-2018 Priorities for Decision-making

As we plan, repair, update, and add to Centre Wellington's infrastructure base throughout our term, we will:

- **Undertake asset management projects in the order of priority set out in the asset management plan, subject to new technical information**
- **Incorporate the impact of climate change in our infrastructure design standards, urban design guidelines, etc.**
- **Support the expansion of high-speed internet in both rural & urban areas**
- **Continue to ensure that developers and development-derived revenues provide a full suite of modern infrastructure, including parks facilities, in new neighbourhoods**
- **Continue to urge the Province to restore permanent funding to Centre Wellington for the maintenance and repair of Highway # 6 through Fergus, and to take responsibility for a solution to Highway 6 congestion**
- **Urge all senior levels of government to recognize municipalities' need for new sources of revenue, beyond property taxes, to overcome our huge backlog in repair and updating of our basic infrastructure**
- **Together with other municipalities, convince the Province to require the gravel industry to provide more cost-recovery funding to the Township for the damage the industry inflicts on our roads and bridges**

GOAL #2

HEALTHY GROWTH

The Township will plan now for its inevitable growth, so that we retain a vibrant and accessible community and our high quality of life in the future.

2015-2018 Initiatives

- 2.1 In 2016, the Township will complete a growth strategy for the development anticipated by 2041**

Being subject to the Province's Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan, Centre Wellington will be required to accept and plan for significant additional development between now and 2041. This strategy will identify which areas within Centre Wellington will be permitted to develop in what order over that period, so that services and roads can be extended sequentially as needed and development charges can be collected to pay for this sequential extension of services.

- 2.2 By 2018, the Township will have completed and adopted an update to its Official Plan, primarily in order to incorporate the 2041 growth projections and the recommended development sequence**

The Township is required to bring its Official Plan - our guiding document for land use and future development - into line with the 2041 growth projections for Centre Wellington as set out in the Provincial plan and the County of Wellington Official Plan.

- 2.3 The Township will undertake a Transportation Master Plan, in order to anticipate transportation infrastructure needs until 2041.**

This substantial study will be completed in 2016 and 2017. Along with projecting road system needs generally as we grow, it will take a fresh look at a Highway 6 bypass for Fergus as the basis for future discussions with the County and Province. It will also identify options for a future bus service in Centre Wellington and identify the point at which the size and density of urban development will generate a viable level of ridership and revenue.

- 2.4** In 2016, the Township will prepare a Fire Service Master Plan, in order to anticipate fire service facility and equipment needs until 2041.
This study will recognize the need to extend fire protection to new development areas and new building types over the next 25 years, the availability of new fire equipment, and the unique seasonal circumstances to which our firefighters respond.
- 2.5** In 2017, the Township will identify and prioritize the sports facilities which will be needed to accommodate a growing population until 2041, and update our Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan accordingly.
This study will recognize the need for new/expanded facilities to accommodate the recreation activities of new families over the next 25 years, and establish a sequence for which types of facilities should be supported in what order during that period.
- 2.6** Based on the future growth-generated needs identified in the studies noted above, the Township will update its Development Charges Study and bylaw
Provincial law requires that this be completed no later than early 2018. Development charges - the per-unit levies paid by the builders of new development - are the fundamental way that the Township ensures that existing property taxpayers are largely shielded from the cost of expanding infrastructure to service new development. The preceding analyses of 2041 infrastructure needs - roads, fire stations and sports facilities, for example - help to ensure that capital costs generated by growth are funded by growth.
- 2.7** In 2015, the Township will complete and adopt Urban Design Guidelines
This document will formally establish the infrastructure and landscaping standards that developers must meet within their new subdivisions and commercial areas.

2015-2018 Guidelines for Decision-making

Throughout our term, as we prepare for Centre Wellington's continued population growth and development in accordance with the Province's and Wellington County's 2041 projections, we will

- Continue to identify and weigh the impact of growth proposals on our environment and on existing neighbourhoods

- **Ensure smart, balanced growth through its Growth Management Strategy. In combination with the Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines, this strategy will ensure that the pace and design of growth remain consistent with the objective of retaining Centre Wellington's "small-town" feel, while conforming to the principles of Provincial and County requirements. Through these plans we will work to define and measure what 'small town feel' means to our community.**

- **Ensure that services, including transportation, and servicing capacity will be planned and provided in advance of growth, so that the impact of growth on our quality of life is minimized**

- **Ensure that the pace of new residential growth does not outstrip the pace of new local job creation**

- **Ensure that developer-derived revenues, rather than existing taxpayers, pay for the expansion of services required by growth**

GOAL #3
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Township will help the business community to excel and expand, and to create jobs, so that Centre Wellington's economic vitality keeps pace with its population.

2015-2018 Initiatives

- 3.1 Beginning in 2016, a campaign will be launched to market the plentiful supply of property in Centre Wellington for new industrial and commercial businesses**

In addition to an up-to-date inventory of the readily-available land and buildings, including those owned by the Township, this campaign will market Centre Wellington's skilled workforce, increasing access to broadband internet, and many lifestyle attractions.

- 3.2 In 2015, the Economic Development Task Force will be requested to review the municipal fees and charges applicable to new industrial and commercial development, and make recommendations to Council.**

The Township tries to find the balance between ensuring that growth pays for growth and ensuring that businesses do not face unfair costs or undue barriers to expanding and creating jobs.

- 3.3 Over 2016 and 2017, the Economic Development Task Force will be requested to explore and recommend appropriate action in several areas:**
- programs for promoting entrepreneurship, and for coaching and training new local entrepreneurs, including young entrepreneurs
 - the potential for an incubation centre and/or support services for new local micro-businesses
 - potential partnerships to "incubate" new agriculture-related business and promote more local agricultural research

The Township has appointed a high-powered Economic Development Task Force, whose members bring a broad and deep experience in business and economic development, a thorough understanding of Centre Wellington's economic challenges and opportunities, and a commitment to feasible results. The Task Force will explore and recommend to Council opportunities

for Centre Wellington to build a reputation as an "incubator" community that welcomes and nurtures entrepreneurship.

- 3.4 In 2016, the Township will review the range of on-farm small business uses permitted in its zoning bylaw.**

The Province of Ontario's Provincial Planning Policy Statement sets out the parameters for what municipalities can permit in their land use policies and bylaws. A recent Provincial review proposes to expand the range of on-farm business types that municipalities can consider. The Township plans to take advantage of the opportunity that this Provincial review will offer.

- 3.5 During the term, the Township will work with Fergus/Elora Tourism to measure the results of tourism promotion activities, improve effectiveness, and increase community engagement in support of tourism**

Through its recently-established Regional Tourism Organizations, the Province offers funding and expertise to help local tourism promotion bodies to measure their outcomes and become more effective. Tourism has long been an essential piece of Centre Wellington's economy. The Township intends to take advantage of this Provincial program to ensure that Centre Wellington's tourism promotion yields maximum economic results and builds public awareness of tourism's importance.

2015-2018 Priorities for Decision-making

Throughout our term, to support Centre Wellington's business sector and the creation of jobs in Centre Wellington, we will:

- **Protect current employment lands through our official plan and zoning**
- **Recognize the importance of individual entrepreneurs and listen with a helpful ear**
- **Maintain close liaison with local business organizations**
- **Fast track development applications for the Pearle Hospitality Inc. project, and ensure that development approval processes within the control of the Township are completed without delay**
- **Fast track development applications for the new Groves Memorial Hospital project, and ensure that development approvals within the control of the Township are completed without delay**

- Monitor the performance of the programs initiated under the Community Improvement Plan and adjust as required

GOAL #4
PRIDE OF PLACE

Acting responsibly, the Township will support community initiatives that foster pride in our community and enhance its amenities

2015-2018 Initiatives

- 4.1 By 2016, the Township will develop a policy requiring community partnerships for all sports, parks, recreation, arts, culture, and heritage projects.**

The policy will enable the Township to respond expeditiously, consistently and responsibly to proposals from our varied and active community organizations, and will emphasize the Township's reliance on community initiative for projects of this sort. It will include requirements for

- *a substantial demonstrated level of community support for the proposed project, including substantial financial and/or in-kind contributions*
- *a review of the ongoing operating costs, if any, to the Township which may arise from the proposed project*
- *An assessment of the community's need for and benefit from the proposed project*
- *An assessment of how the proposed project aligns with the priorities set out in the Township's strategic plan and in the Township's various master plans such as the Parks, Recreation, and Culture master plan.*

The policy will also note that the level and timing of any financial support from the Township will be conditional on the financial capability of the Township, bearing in mind the other priorities of this Plan, particularly related to basic roads, bridges, and water and sewer infrastructure.

Following adoption of this community project partnerships policy, the Township will revisit the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, and other master plans, to ensure they are consistent with the policy. Township staff will work with community groups to explain the policy and how to comply with it.

- 4.2** On the basis of this community project partnerships policy, during this term of Council, the Township will be particularly prepared to respond to:
- proposals that enhance the natural environment and the appreciation of our natural environment by residents and visitors
 - proposals that enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety
 - discussions now taking place among Centre Wellington's community cultural organizations toward a potential cooperative cultural resource centre
 - programs which support local entrepreneurship
- 4.3** On the basis of this community projects partnerships policy, the Township will actively meet with youth groups and relevant community organizations to explore their priorities and initiatives for Centre Wellington's youth
- 4.4** On the basis of this community projects partnerships policy, the Heritage Committee will be asked to identify and prioritize potential heritage conservation projects for the remainder of the term and beyond
- The Committee will also be asked to explore the potential for a Centre Wellington Heritage Foundation and other potential funding sources.*
- 4.5** In 2015, the Township will revise its community loans policy, asking applicants, to present a business case and evidence of having explored other possible lending sources before having approached the Township

2015-2018 Guidelines for Decision-making

As the Township supports community initiative, we will

- Continue actively to promote the advantages of Centre Wellington's geographic location, quality of life, unique environment, and diverse make-up
- Recognize that the commitment of volunteers and community organizations has been essential to create the amenities that make our community special and our quality of life so high. These amenities have not been, and will not in the future be, the sole responsibility of the Township

GOAL #5

GOOD GOVERNMENT

As a government, the Township will make well-informed decisions, operate efficiently, get results, communicate openly, and engage the public in all important decisions

2015-2018 Initiatives

- 5.1 The Township will prepare a plan for open and frequent communication with the public, and will initiate and sustain throughout the term a high level of service in communicating with the public**

Among other matters, the communications plan will encompass the appropriate of social media, informing new residents about the resources and activities available in Centre Wellington, communication in emergency situations, and construction notices.

- 5.2 The Township will prepare guidelines for engaging citizens in Township government**

These guidelines will indicate to staff and the public how, and on what matters, the Township will try to involve the public in Township projects and decision-making.

- 5.3 In 2016, the Township will explore and develop methods to engage citizens further in budget, spending, and program decisions**

Council recognizes the value of citizen input to our budgets and program decisions, both to ensure that efficiency and possible alternative approaches remain "top-of-mind" and to ensure that municipal decisions make "common sense" to as many citizens as possible

- 5.4 By 2016, Council will adopt a Council Code of Conduct**

Among other matters, this policy will set out guidelines for appropriate Council/staff relations, and deal with the appointment of an Integrity Commissioner.

5.5 By 2017, the Township will adopt a Policy on the use and support of volunteers in municipal activities

Volunteers are essential to several Township activities. At the same time, our volunteers deserve clear guidance about what we are asking them to do, support for their efforts, recognition for their dedication, protection from potential harm, and indemnification in case something goes wrong. The policy will provide both training for staff who work with volunteers as well as a resource manual for volunteers themselves.

5.6 In 2015, the Township will review and clarify the Township's role in termite control

5.7 The Township will review and clarify its intended role in the enforcement of Township bylaws

The Township has inherited from its predecessor municipalities numerous bylaws which may be inconsistent or outdated. Municipalities are required by law to provide enforcement in some fields, such as building permits and inspections, but differ in their enforcement methods. In other fields, the municipality is not required to have bylaws but may in the past have responded to requests that some form of public behaviour or some dereliction of property maintenance be regulated (think about parking, noise, abandoned vehicles, barking dogs, [dogs roaming at large](#), etc.). Some members of the public may expect the Township to enforce these bylaws actively while others expect only that the public be made aware of bylaws and encouraged to act appropriately. Whatever methods the Township may choose to encourage compliance with bylaws - whether it be tickets, fines, court proceedings, or merely public service announcements - the Township's costs can never be fully recovered and therefore compete with other uses of your tax dollar.

Like most municipalities, Centre Wellington needs to clarify - both for its staff and for the public - what behaviours it fully intends to regulate through its bylaws, how actively it intends to obtain public compliance, and what roles other parties such as the OPP or County can play.

5.8 In 2015 and 2016, the Township will review the internal processes it uses, and the fees it charges, to process development applications

While Provincial law and policy stipulate many aspects of how we deal with development applications, the Township must continuously recognize the impact of its internal processes on citizens and businesses, and ensure that

the resulting time delays, costs and submission requirements are justifiable. This review will also consider how the Township reviews the engineering submissions for proposed new developments.

- 5.9** The Township will continue to invite staff members to identify potential improvements to the Township's processes, procedures and services, and will clarify the channels for staff to do so

Township staff demonstrate daily their skill and dedication; they know the Township's procedures and operations better than anyone; they hear from the public; and they have ideas for getting things done.

- 5.10** Over the course of the term, the Township will engage Wellington County and its other constituent municipalities in a review of County and Township responsibilities and associated funding requirements

Most citizens have little understanding about what services the County provides or the fact that the County spends far more of their property tax bill than the Township does. Nonetheless, citizens expect their closest level of government - the Township - to meet their community's challenges and maintain their community's assets and infrastructure. We need to ensure that the balance is correct between what the County does and collects, and what the Township does and collects.

- 5.11** With its 2016 budget, the Township will approve a rolling 3-year capital budget forecast; with its 2017 budget, the Township will also approve a 3-year rolling operating budget forecast

Approving a forecast of capital projects 3 years in advance of each current year's budget will enable the Township in some cases to package projects into a larger tender, call for tenders well before the construction season, and thereby generally receive lower bids.

- 5.12** In 2015, the Township will adopt a policy dealing with its financial reserves.

The Township has set aside funds over the years to meet future financial needs. Some are as straightforward as a working capital reserve to meet cash flow; others are stipulated for very specific purposes by law (e.g., the Development Charges Reserve Fund). This policy will determine the desired number and purposes of reserves, and the desired balances in reserves.

5.13 Throughout the term, the Township will monitor and report annually to the public on its progress on the initiatives put forward in this 2015-2018 Council Initiatives plan

This statement of Council's Priorities and Initiatives for the 2015-2018 term is our commitment to you, the citizens and businesses of Centre Wellington. Council wants to be held accountable for making progress on these initiatives and demonstrating our adherence to these decision-making priorities. Our limited resources may not permit us to do as much as you would like us to do; unanticipated emergencies that may throw us off our "game plan" to some extent. Nonetheless, we will do what we say we will do. If not, you will know why not.

2015-2018 Priorities for Decision-making

During this term of Council, as we manage a municipal corporation that communicates and responds to its citizens, that gets things done, and that values efficiency, we will:

- **Continue to strive towards customer service that retains a personal touch**
- **Find ways to monitor public satisfaction with our services and our customer service**
- **Engage our citizens: provide opportunities for citizens to have input into important decisions, participate in getting important things done, and give us feedback**
- **Educate our citizens: clarify which levels of government have the power to do what**
- **Continue to value your tax dollar and spend it with care**
- **Invest in your priorities; Identify what you value most and channel your taxes into getting those things done**
- **Be transparent about what we are doing and why**
- **Continue to foster excellence in our administration; encouraging innovation and resilience, integrity and openness, respect and caring, teamwork and coordination**
- **Reassess our capacity on an ongoing basis to achieve the initiatives in this plan; consider adjustments as necessary to strategic action timetables, other priorities, and/or our staffing capacity**

How Township Council and staff will use this document

This document will be used by Council throughout the term:

- to communicate its collective intent to Centre Wellington's citizens and businesses
- to guide us in making the many decisions that will need to be made, and to help us make our decisions efficiently
- to guide us in our annual capital and operating budget processes
- to signal to community organizations what we are trying to achieve and ask for their help
- to signal to our dedicated municipal staff what we are trying to achieve and ask for their help
- to signal to other governments what we are trying to achieve and ask for their help
- to develop work plans and terms of reference for Council-appointed task forces and committees
- to measure our own success and that of our administrative leadership
- to hold ourselves accountable to you for getting the most important things done

by staff:

- to take initiative which implements this direction from Council
- to develop their annual departmental work plans and allocate their time and expertise in accordance with this direction from Council
- to draft annual capital and operating budgets for Council's consideration
- to measure the success of their departments and departmental leadership
- to reflect Council's initiatives and priorities in their reports to Council
- to help us to communicate Council's collective intent to our citizens and businesses
- to help us engage the public toward achieving our initiatives