

Bonfield Township Strategic Plan 2025 Background Report

Final Version

March 3, 2025



Introduction

The purpose of this background report is to summarize the stakeholder and community engagement activities that have taken place in recent years, throughout the process of developing the new Strategic Plan for the Township of Bonfield.

The following sections provide a timeline of activities in chronological order, including but not limited to:

- 1- **Preliminary research** regarding **best practice methods** when **producing a Strategic Plan**
- 2- **Councils' participation in a retreat**, and their **responses to Survey Questions**
- 3- An **evaluation of survey responses** received from members of the **General Public**
- 4- An **Internal review** of **background studies and reports** previously adopted by Council
- 5- The **preparation** of a **Draft Strategic Plan** for review by Council at a **second retreat**
- 6- The **consolidation of feedback** and completion of **final edits** by Staff; and
- 7- **Adoption of the Strategic Plan** at a **Regular Meeting of Council**.

In effect, this background report pulls together quantitative data, plus other qualitative information, received by Staff and Council over the past 18 months; and summarizes how the responses received have influenced the final version of the Strategic Plan as presented.



Timeline of Activities - September 2023 to March 2025



September 2023- Preparation

Staff completed preliminary background research into best practice approaches regarding stakeholder and community engagement methods involved in producing Strategic Plans.



Council Survey Questions and Results

October 2023 - Survey of Council Members

The first step in the process of developing the new Strategic Plan was the preparation of a survey, which was circulated to members of Council requesting their feedback on seven questions ahead of a scheduled retreat on November 19, 2023. The seven questions were:



Survey Questions

Question One: What is your personal mandate for Council? Do you feel you have a mandate, has your campaign for Council changed from the year you have been on council? How and/or why?

Question Two: What do you always hear being discussed but not resolved?

Question Three: What is not being discussed that needs to be discussed?

Question Four: What do you feel senior staff are not telling you that you feel you need to know? Do you feel you hear the challenges facing the Township?

Question Five: What is the Culture of Council? What is the Culture of Staff? How do you see and/or want the two to interact? Culture is defined as attitudes and behaviours of management and employees and sets the tone for how the goals and objectives of an organization are executed.

Question Six: What does Bonfield need? What problems or obstacles have you identified? List as many as you can think of. At the meeting we will discuss prioritizing and short to long term solutions.

Question Seven: What would your mission statement be for Bonfield? A mission statement is a precise statement that defines what a company does and what purpose it serves. It's generally a short 2-3 sentence statement that provides guidance to management for defining goals and tells stakeholders what you do and what is important to the Township. (Hints: what do we do, why, for who, what happens if you don't do it, and why does it matter?)

November 2023 - Council & Staff Retreat #1

Council held its first retreat to review and discuss each Council members' responses to the seven questions raised in the survey, with a view to identifying individual priorities, goals, and potential synergies; and also, to provide staff with further direction on the next steps required to engage the general public through the development of the Strategic Plan. The following synergies were identified:



Question One (Mandates)

Council agreed their shared mandate is:

‘To govern, to create policy, and to work towards improving Bonfield.’

Question Two (Matters to be Resolved)

Council agreed the following matters should be resolved over time:

- Facilitating change management
- Fostering positive Council / Staff relations
- Understanding the financial position of the Township
- Developing new policies and by-laws
- Enforcing Property Standards, including the unauthorized use of Trailers
- Addressing neighbourhood disputes including Short Term Rentals
- Supporting new Economic Development; and
- Attracting new Investment in Healthcare.





Question Three (Matters to be discussed)

Council agreed the following matters require further consideration over time:

- Making “*hard decisions*” to achieve progress
- Methods to improve positive Council & Staff relations
- Clearly tracking, and acting upon complaints received
- Procedures for managing Short Term Rentals
- Ways to celebrate municipal success stories
- Strategies that support Economic Development

Question Four (What Council needs to know)

Council stated they generally feel informed or are comfortable asking questions; however, that they would like to know more about the following:

- Budget planning and preparation
- Performance management standards
- An honest account of the Townships’ workload, and the timeframes involved; and
- The number and type of complaints, and how they are handled

Question Five (Culture of Council and Staff)

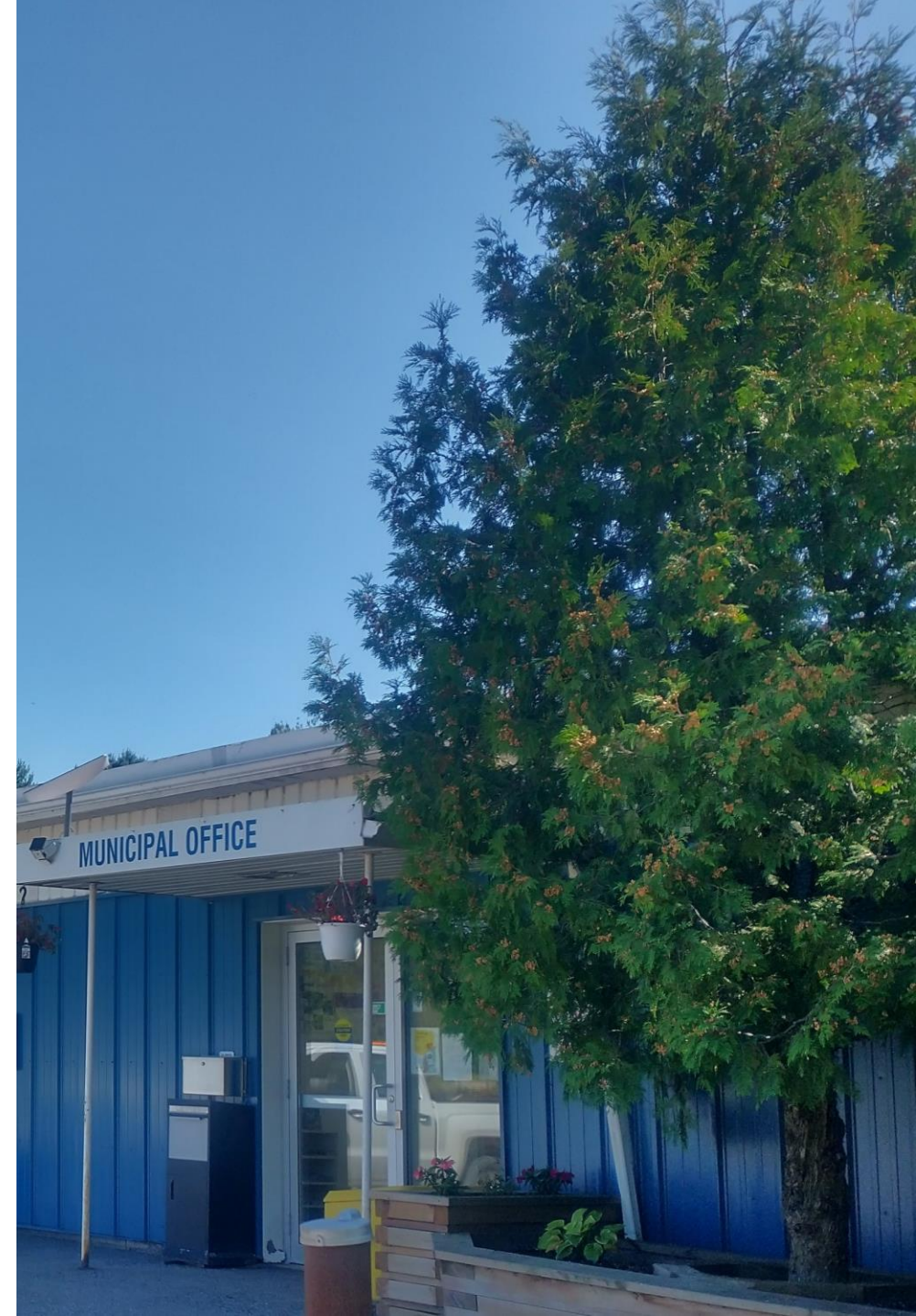
Council stated a belief that the current Council:

- Is living through a legacy of the past.
- That they aim to be collaborative and considerate, taking a partnership approach; and
- Are “*always comparing*” and potentially overlooking the inherent value and raw potential of the Township.

Council also stated their understanding that Staff have on occasions:

- Felt disenchanting, or unheard.
- Been defensive in their approach; and
- Have not always responded to public concerns

As such, Council agreed to “*build a culture of respect, take responsibility for their actions, own their mistakes, and support each other as a team, as the Township work towards one common goal*”. To achieve this, Council promised to create a “*safe environment for all to express their thoughts and ideas.*”





Question Six

(Identified Needs / Short to Long-term Solutions)

Council identified the following as priorities to be addressed:

- Restoring and enhancing the reputation of Council
- Ensuring an open, transparent, and trustworthy Township that functions as one team.
- Fostering increased community pride and participation
- Providing excellent healthcare services
- Working to build a clean and safe community
- Demonstrating a consistent approach to by-law enforcement
- Delivering road improvements
- Improving waste management services
- Protecting the natural environment
- Supporting new investment in commercial developments; and
- Promoting Bonfield as a tourism destination

Having evaluated the primary issues, challenges and priorities, Council identified potential short, medium, and long-term solutions as follows:



Question Six

(Identified Needs / Short to Long-term Solutions)

Short-term

- Produce a Strategic Plan
- Deliver improvements to the local road network.
- Explore options to create a new or improved Town Hall, with enhanced public service areas.
- Work with local community organizations and service clubs.
- Build trust by demonstrating a municipality that is well-run.

Medium-term

- Produce clearer budget reports, while demonstrating fiscal responsibility
- Identify alternate revenue streams
- Update the Township's Asset Management Plan
- Develop a Corporate Communications Strategy & Plan
- Evaluate staffing requirements
- Update policies and by-laws
- Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure performance



Question Six **(Identified Needs / Short to Long-term Solutions)**

Longer-term

Advance opportunities to:

- Provide a new Health Care Facility
- Introduce a new Grocery Store
- Support the continued development of property, including diverse housing options.
- Foster an increased sense of community pride; and

Make targeted investments (i.e. towards new signage, and/or public parks).

Question Seven

The final Vision, Core Purpose, Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles are all provided in this Strategic Plan for reference.



Community Survey Questions and Results

November 2023 - Community Survey

A Community Survey was also launched in late November 2023, which included **32 questions**. This ran through to January 2024 and resulted in a total of **114** responses.

Responses to specific questions are further analyzed as follows:



Question One: Respondent Age Groups

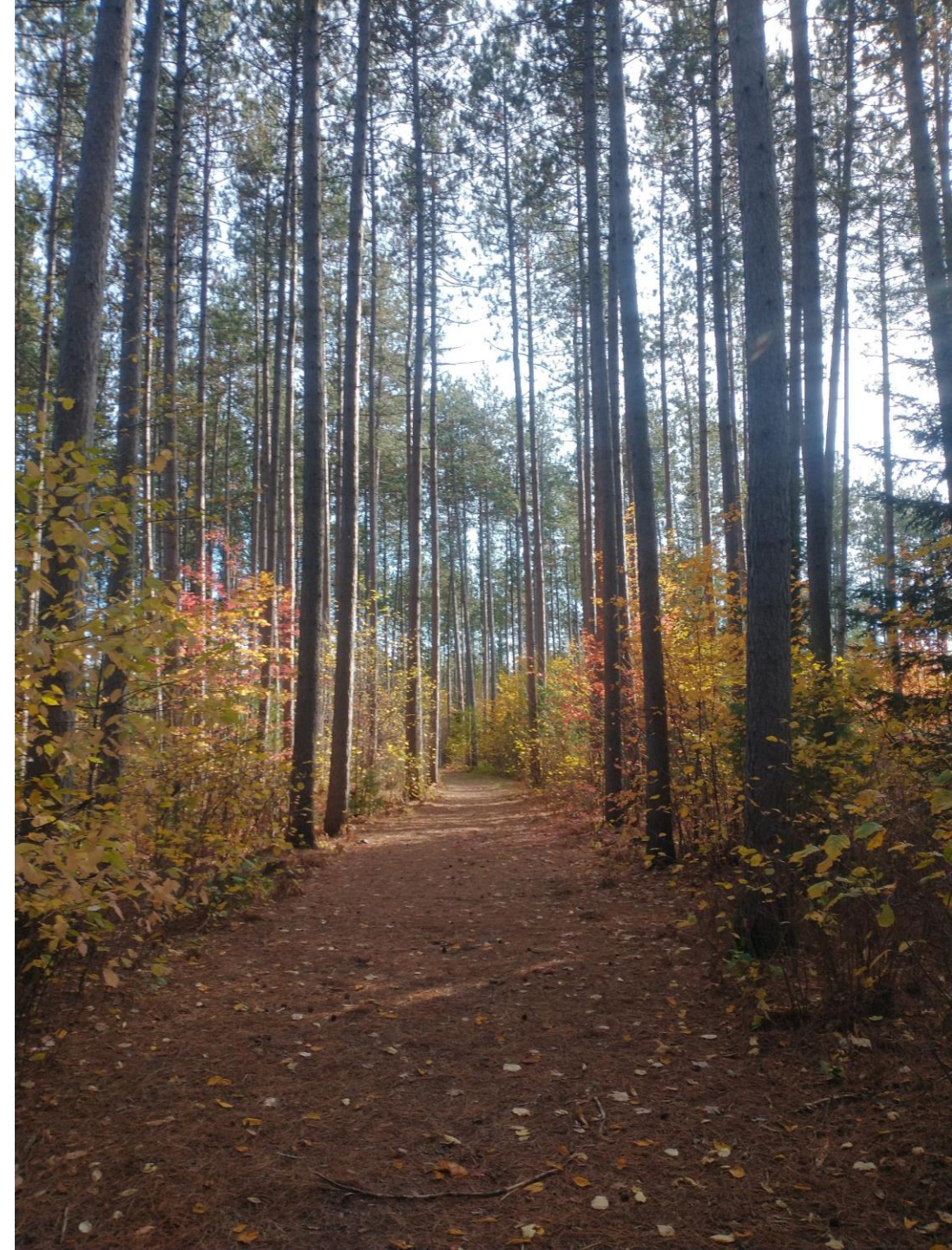
1. 18-34 (14%)
2. 35-49 (30%)
3. 50-64 (30%)
4. 65+ (26%)

Question Two: Gender

- Male (44%)
- Female (52%)
- Prefer not to answer (4%)

Question Three: Property Status (all that apply)

- Home-Owner (90%)
- Tenant (5%)
- Seasonal Resident (3.5%)
- Business Owner (3%)
- Permanent Resident (20%)





Question Four: Top Three Issues

- 1. Infrastructure, including Roads, Sidewalks, and Landfill (68%)**
- 2. Taxes (58%)**
- 3. Healthcare (47%)**
4. Property Standards (31%)
5. Economic Development (18%)
6. Fiscal Responsibility (17%)
7. Recreation Programming (15%)
8. Tourism Attraction (12%)
9. Land Use Planning (11%)
10. Parks & Facilities (10%)
11. Housing (8%)
12. Crime and Safety (8%)
13. Climate Change & The Environment (6%)
14. Increased Awareness / Support for Agriculture (4%)
15. Transportation (3%)

Question Five: Have you contacted the Municipality in the last 12 months?

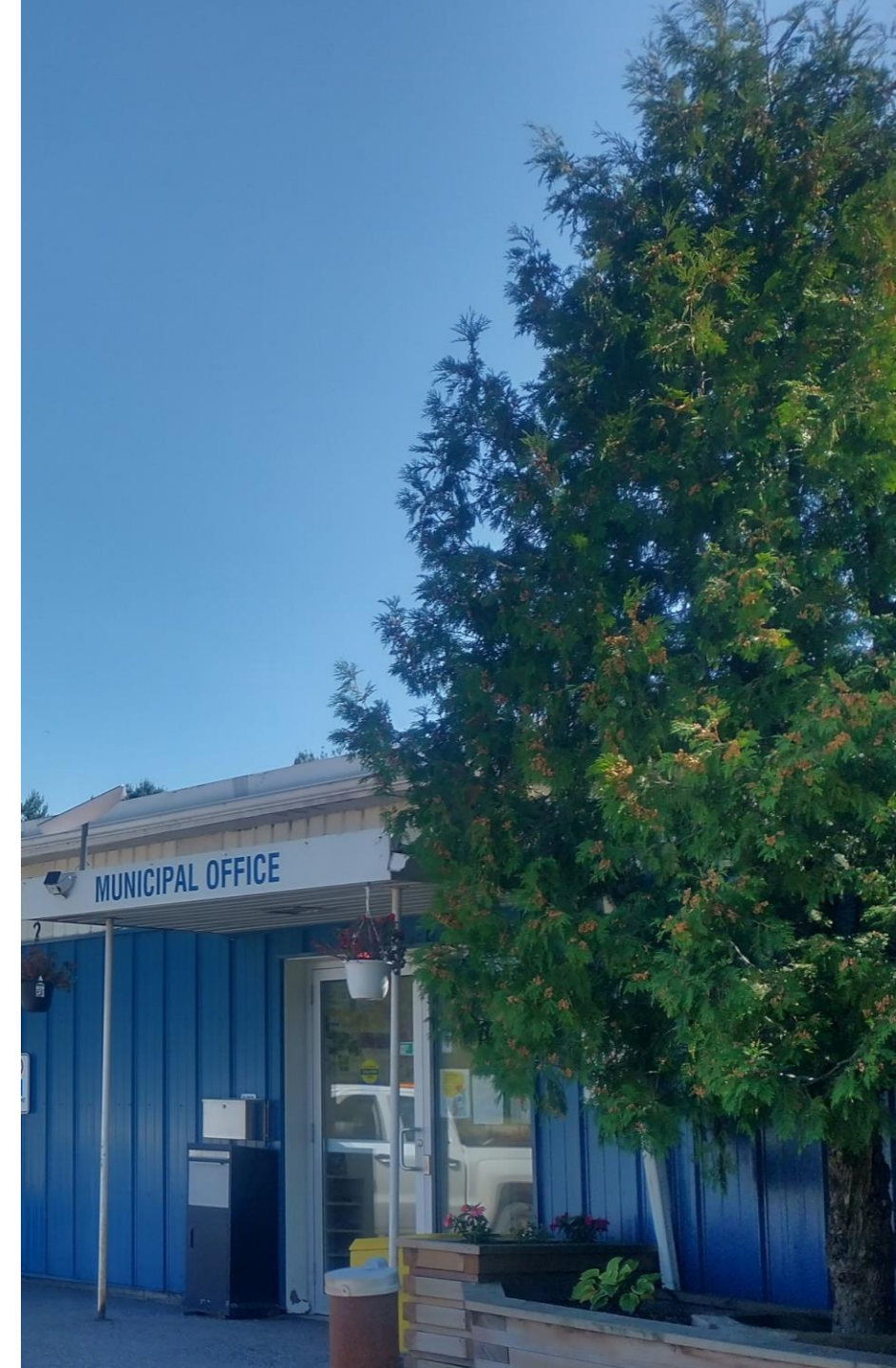
- Yes (55%)
- No (45%)

Question Six: Top 5 Most and Least frequency Used Services: Often

1. Landfill (35%)
2. Recycling Depot (28%)
3. Community Events (8%)
4. Municipal Facebook Page (8%)
5. Library (7%)

Never

1. Splash Pad (66%)
2. **Bonfield Medical Centre (64%) ***
3. Outdoor Rink (44%)
4. Playgrounds (41%)
5. Walking Paths (39%)

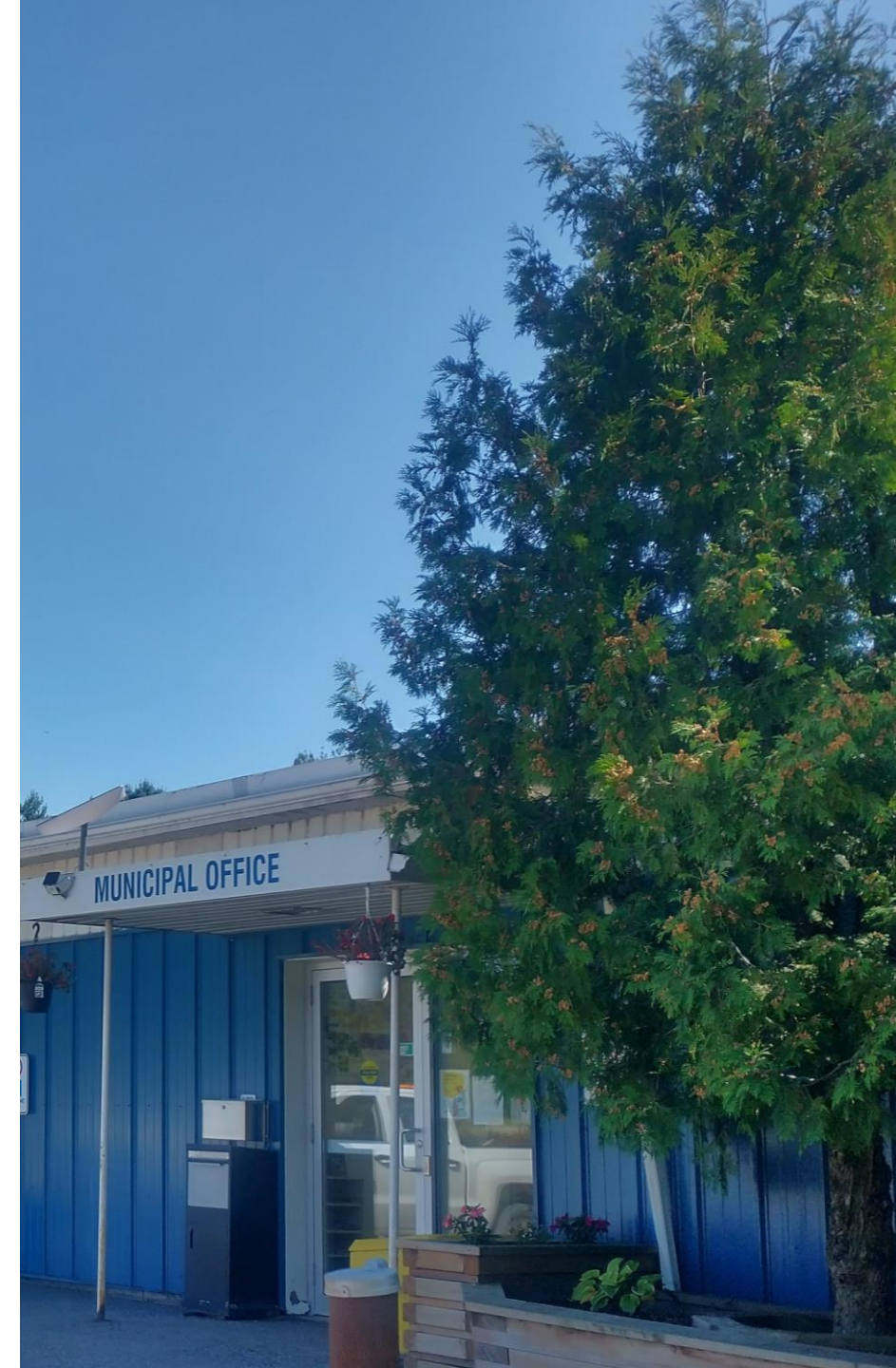


Analysis of Question Six

*The stated lack of use of Bonfield's Medical Centre could reflect known provincial limits on the availability of trained medical personnel; and how this is impacting the number of 'spaces' available, including at the local Medical Centre.

In this regard, we note Question 25 asks: **What factors would contribute to a better quality of life rating?** In response, individuals stated the following would '*definitely*' contribute:

- Access to / affordability of Medical Services **(55%)**
- Access to / affordability of Mental Health Services **(31%)**
- Access to / affordability of Addiction Services **(15%)**





Question Seven: Top 5 Most and Least Satisfied with Township Services

Very Satisfied

- 1. Municipal Office Customer Service (66%)**
2. Fire Department (16%)
3. Library (16%)
4. Landfill Services (15%)
5. Recycling Services (15%)

The recognition that staff at the Municipal Office are providing ‘satisfactory’ customer service is welcomed. At the same time, the Township of Bonfield acknowledges the responses made to Question Fifteen which indicates communication on Council priorities and activities could be improved.

Very Dissatisfied

- 1. Summer Road Maintenance (33%)**
2. Ditching and Brushing (28%)
3. Municipal By-law Enforcement (21%)
4. Winter Road Maintenance (18%)
5. Building Permit Process (12.5%)



Analysis of Question Seven

Although 33% of respondents state they are very dissatisfied with the summer road maintenance, Individual respondents did state elsewhere in the survey that they appreciate recent improvements made to local roads, including Development Road and Pine Lake Road.

On its part, the Township acknowledges there have been several terms of Council where local road maintenance was not prioritized, meaning it will take some time, money, and resources for the Township to ‘catch up’ and deliver the improvements residents are looking for.

Question Eight: Top Three priorities

1. **Improve Roads (75%)**
2. Maintain or Increase Health Care Services (36%)
3. Increased transparency on Tax Spending (29%)

Question Nine: How likely to recommend Bonfield as a place to live?

Average = **66%** out of 100%



Question Ten: How long have you lived in the Township?

Average = **15.6 Years**

This figure is further broken down into groups, and is displayed as a percentage as follows:

- **0-5 Years** = 27.4%
- **6-9 Years** = 15%
- **10-14 Years** = 9.7%
- **15-19 Years** = 6.2%
- **20-39 Years** = 22%
- **40+ Years** = 9.7%
- **Unclear responses** = 10%



Analysis of Question Ten

Analysis of these responses confirms other property-specific information available to the Township, which indicates there has been a heavy influx of newcomers to the Township in recent years. The increased demand for property in Bonfield reflects broader trends seen in the post-Covid economy, with individuals and households, often seeking more space away from the heavily populated urban areas.

Another large group of people are those that have lived in Bonfield for 20 years or more. They have undoubtedly witnessed some of the many changes the community has seen over time.

In the middle, is an equivalent percentage share of individuals who have been residents for between 6 and 20 years. This group quite possibly includes '*working families*' with mixed priorities depending on the structure of their household.

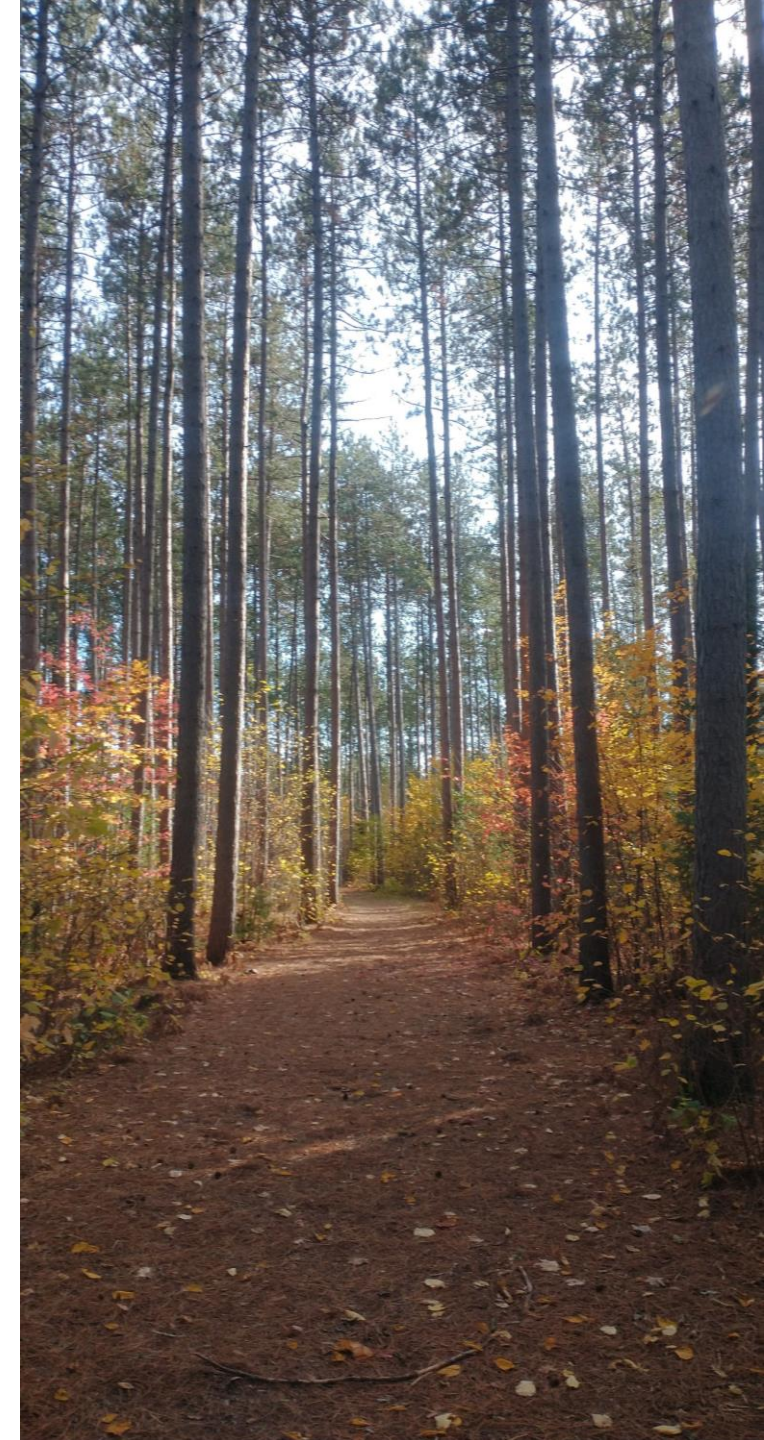


Question Eleven: Why did you decide to live in Bonfield?

- **Small Town Feel** = 37%
- **Housing Affordability** = 30%
- **Close to family / friends** = 29%
- **Recreation (Fishing / Hunting)** = 29%
- **Born and Raised** = 18.6%
- **Close Commute for Work** = 5.3%
- **Job / Employment Opportunity** = 4.4%
- **Other (please specify)** = 23%

‘Other’ responses are further summarized as follows:

- As an investment
- To manage the Family Farm / Homestead
- To enjoy the natural beauty of the area
- To have peace and quiet
- To use the seasonal cottage
- To be on the Lake(s)
- Part of retirement plan
- Access to outdoor recreation
- A house-specific decision
- To have horses
- Geographic location





Question Twelve: What keeps you living in Bonfield?

- **Small Town Feel** = 40%
- **Close to family / friends** = 38%
- **Recreation (Fishing / Hunting)** = 32%
- **A nice place to live** = 30%
- **Other (please specify)** = 25%
- **Affordability** = 23%
- **Employment** = 6.25%
- **Close to Amenities and Services** = 6.25%

‘Other’ responses are further summarized as follows:

- As an investment
- To enjoy the natural beauty of the area
- To manage the Family Farm / Homestead
- Privacy, peace and quiet
- To use the seasonal cottage
- To be on the Lake(s)
- Access to Services, including the Library
- Access to outdoor recreation
- Too “lazy” to move
- Looking to leave
- “Affordability”
- “Cannot afford to buy anything else”



Analysis of Questions Eleven and Twelve

A quick analysis of responses made to Question Eleven (Why did you decide to live in Bonfield?) and Question Twelve (What keeps you living in Bonfield?) revealed the following:

Most respondents still appear to appreciate the “*small town feel*” and the ability to be “*close to family and friends*” while enjoying the nature, beauty, and recreational opportunities available within the Township.

At the same time, it is noted that ‘*affordability*’ has declined as being a factor why residents continue to live in Bonfield.

Question Thirteen: How Safe do you Feel?

0% = Not Safe at All / 100% = Very Safe

Average = **77.5%**

This figure is further broken down into groups, and is displayed as a percentage as follows:

- Individuals that have spent ~10-20 Years In Bonfield = **70%**
- Individuals that have spent between ~20+ Years In Bonfield = **78%**





Question Fourteen: Which of the following statements are closest to your own opinion?

The Township should:

1. Balance supports for existing business and the creation of new jobs - **60%**
2. Place greater emphasis on supporting the creation of new jobs and businesses - **27%**
3. Place greater emphasis on supporting existing businesses - **13%**

Analysis of Question Fourteen

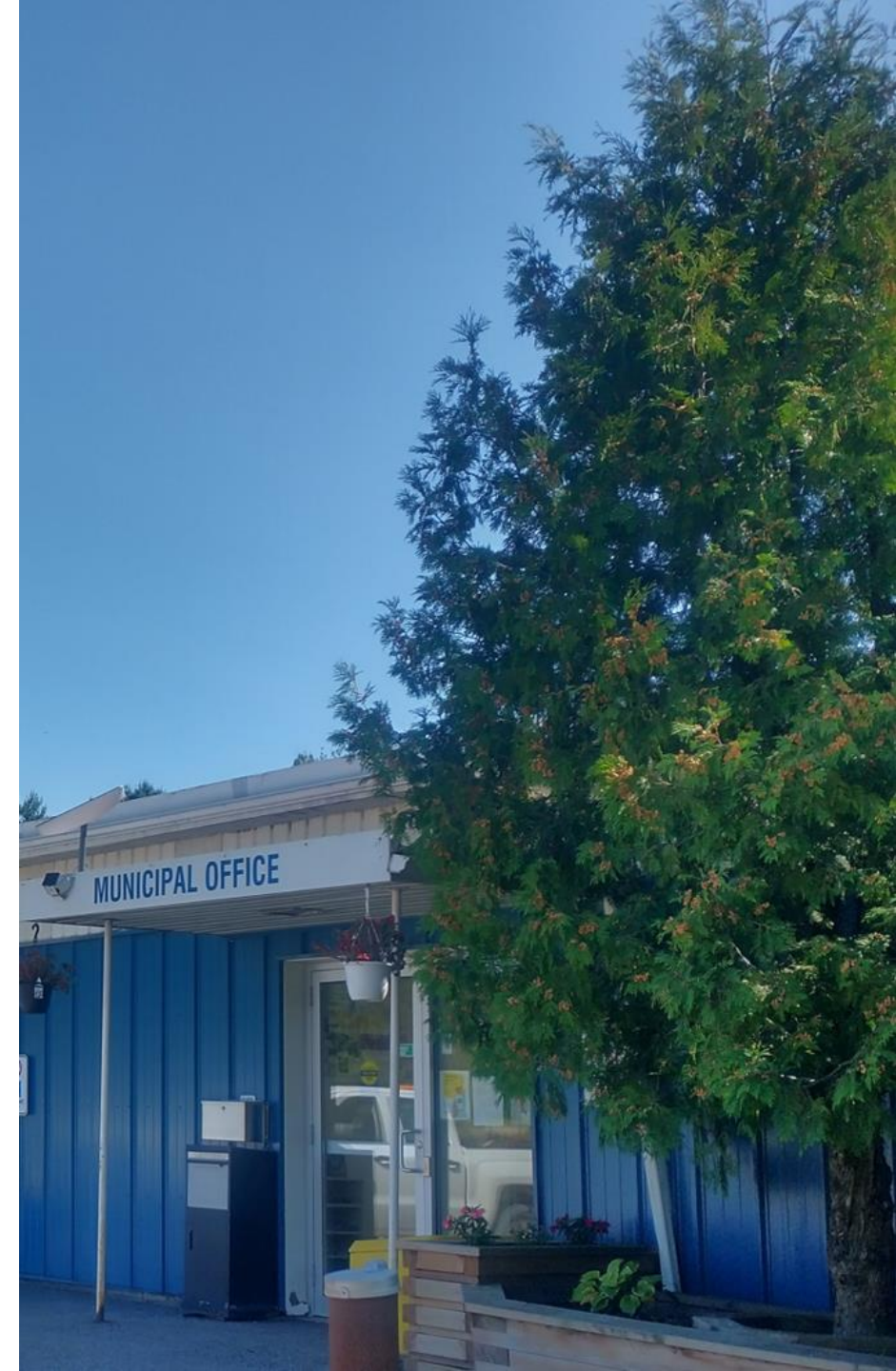
The vast majority of respondents states they would like to see more support for existing businesses, combined with ‘*new jobs*’ suggesting a new program of economic development focussed on attraction and retention initiatives, which builds upon the existing economic assets and strengths of Bonfield as a community is the preferred way to go.

Question Fifteen: How well does the Township communicate how Tax dollars are spent?

1. Fair - **46%**
2. Poor - **29%**
3. Good - **20%**
4. Very Good - **5%**

Question Sixteen: Which of the following would you most like the Township to pursue?

1. None of the following - **27%**
2. Cut Services: To maintain current Tax level - **20%**
3. I don't know - **17%**
4. Increase Taxes: To enhance or expand services - **14%**
5. Cut Services: To reduce Taxes - **12%**
6. Increase Taxes: To maintain services at current levels - **9%**
7. I don't care - **1%**

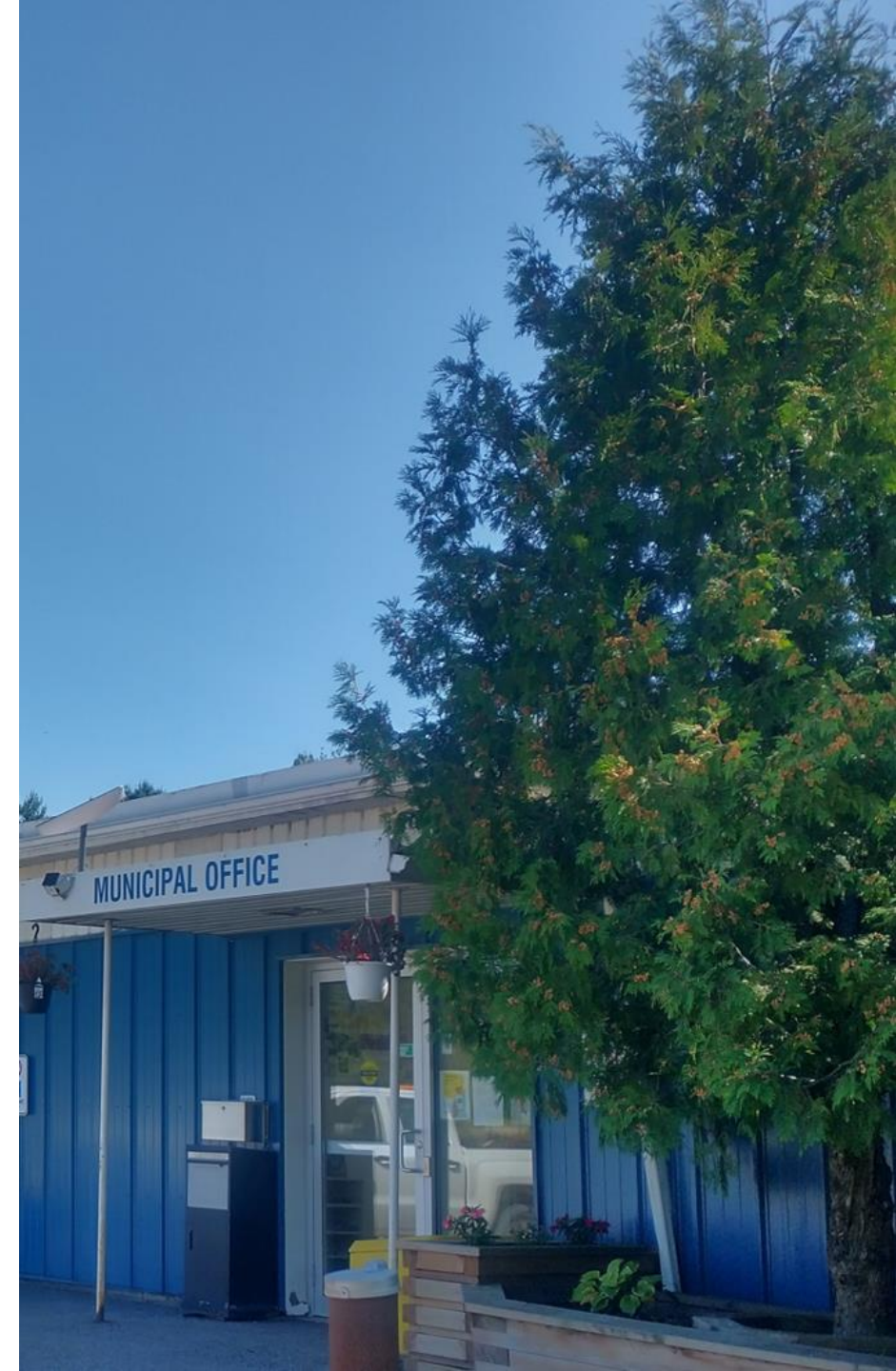


Analysis of Question Sixteen

The majority of people asked this question were either unwilling or unable to provide a response on how Council might continue to provide public services while addressing budget constraints (45%).

The second largest group indicated they would like to ‘*cut services*’ to either ‘*maintain the current tax level*’ or ‘*reduce taxes*’ (32%). The final group indicated they would like to ‘*increase taxes*’ either to ‘*enhance or expand services*’ or ‘*maintain services at current levels*’ (23%).

These responses indicate there is no consensus on this matter and, therefore, that Council and Staff could potentially do more to both educate and inform the public on how their tax dollars are being spent, with a view to fostering increased understanding.



Question Seventeen: Commute to Work

Responses are summarized as follows:

- N/A - **30%**
- North Bay & Area / ~30 Minutes - **29%**
- Less than 30 Minutes - **21%**
- Work from Home - **16%**
- Outside of Region - **6%**
- <45 Minutes - **3.5%**
- >15 Minutes - **3%**
- Mattawa & Area / 15-30 Minutes - **3%**
- Works in Bonfield - **2%**



Analysis of Question Seventeen

Responses to this question suggest the vast majority of people commute outside of Bonfield for work purposes, indicating there is more to be done to both attract and retain businesses in Bonfield so an increased range of employment opportunities may become available to local residents. Approximately 30% of respondents stated the question does not apply to them, indicating they may either be retired, otherwise not in the workforce.

In addition, it is noted 16% of respondents '*work from home*'. Moving forward, it would be helpful to understand how many of these individuals work for home-based businesses, and in which sectors they are employed; and how many individuals work remotely for an external organization not based in the Township of Bonfield. By re-engaging local business owners, the Township may be able to help local businesses as they '*scale-up*' their operations.





Question Eighteen: How motivated are you to participate in Township priority-setting and long-term planning?

- Somewhat motivated - **36%**
- Not at all motivated - **28%**
- Moderately motivated - **15%**
- I don't know - **11%**
- Very motivated - **7%**
- I don't care - **3%**

Question Nineteen: How much do you think feedback provided within the last 12 months influenced Council decision-making?

- A lot - **2%**
- Moderately - **8%**
- Very Little - **17%**
- Not at all - **29%**
- N/A, Or I don't know - **45%**



Analysis of Question Nineteen

Of the responses made, only **10%** felt their feedback had influenced decision-making either ‘*moderately*’ (8%) or ‘*a lot*’ (2%). Almost half (**46%**) stated their belief that the feedback provided had either ‘*very little*’ (17%) or no impact (29%) on Council decision-making.

A further **45%** either did not provide feedback (within the 12-month period); or didn’t know what the consequences of their feedback may have been in terms of Council-decision making. There could be many reasons for this, including but not limited to:

1. **A sense of frustration, or disbelief, in the role of Government.** This is a perception that often extends beyond the Township of Bonfield, to society at large.
2. **The feeling of being disconnected from Council and Staff.** i.e. An individual is unable, or unsure, how they can meaningfully participate in local decision-making.



Analysis of Question Nineteen (Continued)

3. A lack of understanding as to how local government works. i.e., the primary role of local government being to maintain or improve service standards, and ensure good governance through the creation of by-laws, policies & procedures, while balancing the rights of all stakeholders, in accordance with all '*applicable laws*'; and/or

4. A sense of anger or helplessness - that decisions are being made either against or without democratic consent (i.e. a sense there is a lack of inclusion in decision-making processes).

The Township of Bonfield is not able to fix all of these challenges in a short period of time. But it does have a responsibility to improve its communication methods in ways that foster increased understanding and supports engagement in decision-making processes.

At the same time, Council and Staff have a duty to respond where the actions of individuals are not considered beneficial to the interests of the Township as a whole; or may be considered '*frivolous*' or '*vexatious*' in nature.

Question Twenty:

How satisfied are you with the Township of Bonfield's notification processes?

- Somewhat satisfied - **48%**
- Somewhat dissatisfied - **18%**
- Very dissatisfied - **14%**
- I don't know - **12%**
- Very satisfied - **7%**



Analysis of Question Twenty

The responses were somewhat consistent when evaluated against the time an individual has lived within the Township of Bonfield, with life-long residents expressing a more favourable, but also, a more polarized view of how the Township chooses to notify its residents:

Of the responses made by life-long inhabitants:

- **67%** - Were '*somewhat satisfied*'; and
- **33%** - Were '*somewhat dissatisfied*'.



Analysis of Question Twenty (Continued)

There could be several reasons for this, including but not limited to, the **increased use of digital technologies** to communicate Township-based activities, requiring access to the Township's website and / or social media pages; and potentially, a more general sense of feeling **disconnected** from a Community that they have long known.

In this context, it is recognized some residents may not have access to reliable internet; or are potentially lacking computer literacy skills, meaning they are unaware of the regular community-based information being shared.

On its part, The Township ensures essential correspondence i.e. information related to Taxes, or Individual property matters, are communicated via mail so the Township can be assured that residents have received all necessary information. A Quarterly newsletter is also mailed to all households for general information purposes.



Question Twenty-One: How do you Connect with the Municipality?

- Phone - **58%**
- In person - **50%**
- E-mail - **40%**
- Website - **30%**
- Social Media - **23%**
- Town App - **14%**
- Letter - **11%**

The preferred means through which individuals **choose to connect** with the Township is further broken down into groups, based upon the duration of time spent in the Township of Bonfield, as follows:



Question Twenty-One: How do you Connect with the Municipality?

~10-20 Years In

Bonfield

- Phone - **100%**
- Website - **100%**
- In person - **67%**
- E-mail - **67%**

~20+ Years In Bonfield

- In person - **50%**
- Phone - **37.5%**
- E-mail - **37.5%**
- Town App - **25%**
- Letter - **12.5%**
- Social Media - **12.5%**
- Website - **12.5%**
- Letter - **11%**

Lifelong residents

- In person - **100%**
- Phone - **67%**
- Social Media - **33%**



Analysis of Question Twenty-One

A review of the preferences given for making connection with the Township, compared to the amount of time spent living in the Township of Bonfield, has revealed some potential **Generational Differences**.

With some exceptions, Individuals who have spent 10-20 years, 20+ years, and also. ‘*life long*’ residents generally expressed a preference for ‘*in person*’ and ‘*phone*’ based communication over and above other means.

These statistics contrast with individuals aged **18-34 years old** who generally stated a preference for connecting via ‘*social media*’ (**36%**) closely followed by ‘*phone*’ (**32%**) ‘*in-person*’ (**32%**) *e-mail* (**32%**) and *website*-based communication methods (**27%**).

These responses indicate the Township may need to provide service-level information through a range of different means for some time to come to satisfy different demographics.



Question Twenty-Two:

Where do you look for Municipal Information?

Where individuals are **seeking to obtain Municipal Information**, and not necessarily '*connect*' with the Township; Individuals overwhelmingly stated a preference for electronic means of communication, as follows:

- Website - **51%**
- Social Media - **37%**
- Newsletter - **24%**
- In person / Call - **5.5%**
- Town App - **12%**

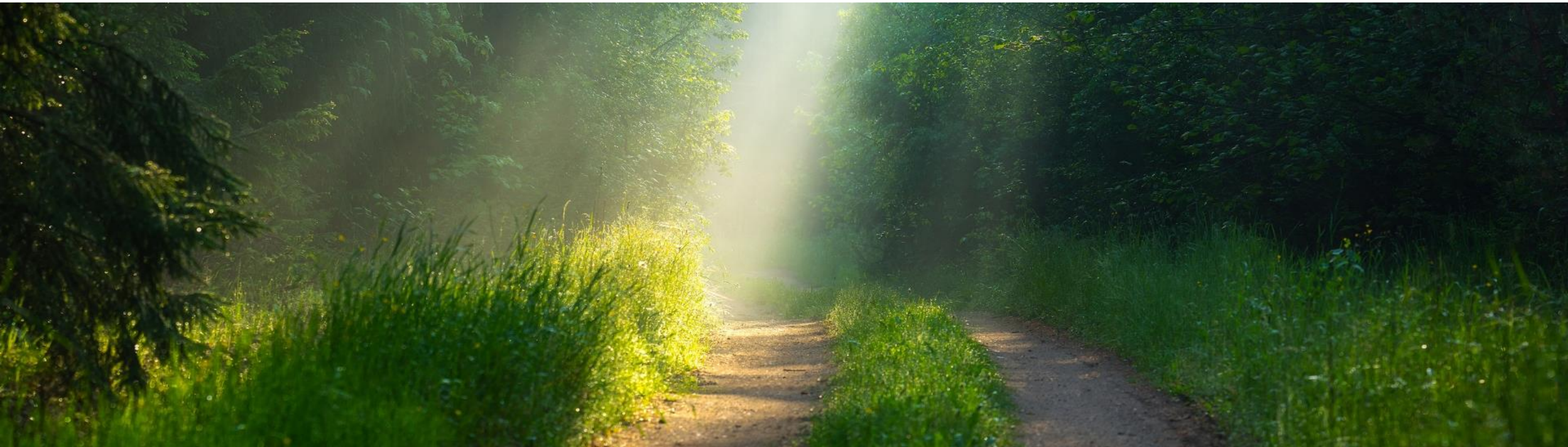
Analysis of Question Twenty-Two

This breakdown is consistent across the different groups listed for time spent living in Bonfield Township; however, the youngest generation, comprising individuals aged **18-34 years of age** did express a preferred interest to use **Social Media (66%)**, closely followed by the **Website (55%)**.



Question Twenty-Three: How do you want to be informed?

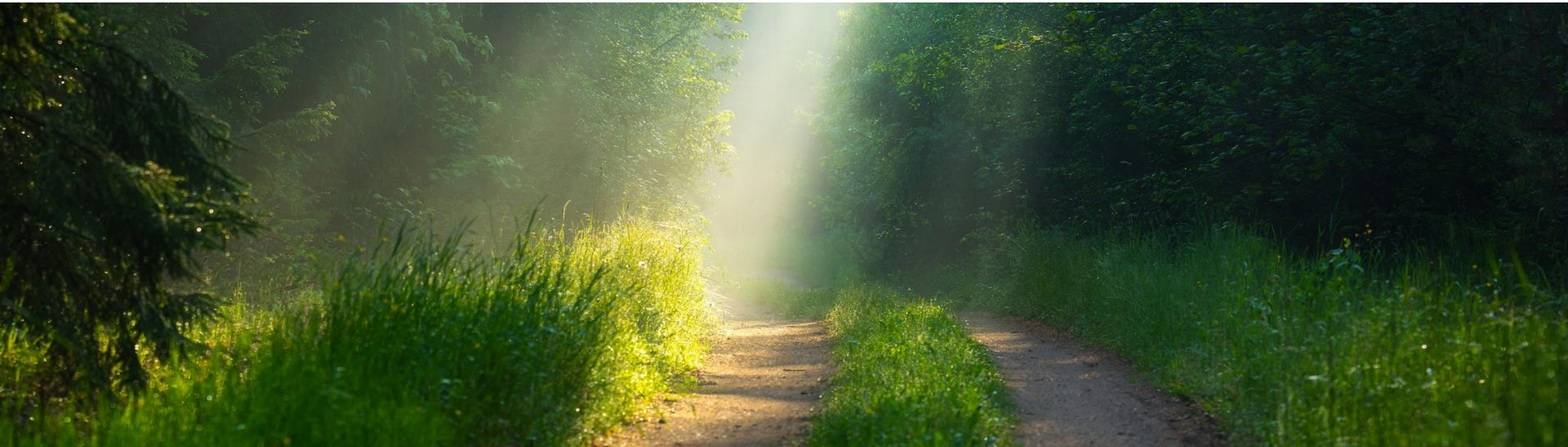
- Social Media - **40%**
- Email - **38%**
- Letter - **38%**
- Website - **38%**
- TownApp - **17%**
- Phone - **10%**
- In-person - **5%**



Analysis of Question Twenty-Three

There appears to be a discrepancy between how individuals **choose to connect** with the Township versus how they would **seek to obtain municipal information** and how they would like to **stay informed**.

The most basic interpretation suggests that individuals want to be able to call the Township and get the answers they need (a percentage which varies from **58%** to **100%** depending on the group responses made); however, that they don't necessarily want the Township to '*engage*' with them directly either by phone (**10%**) or in-person (**5%**).

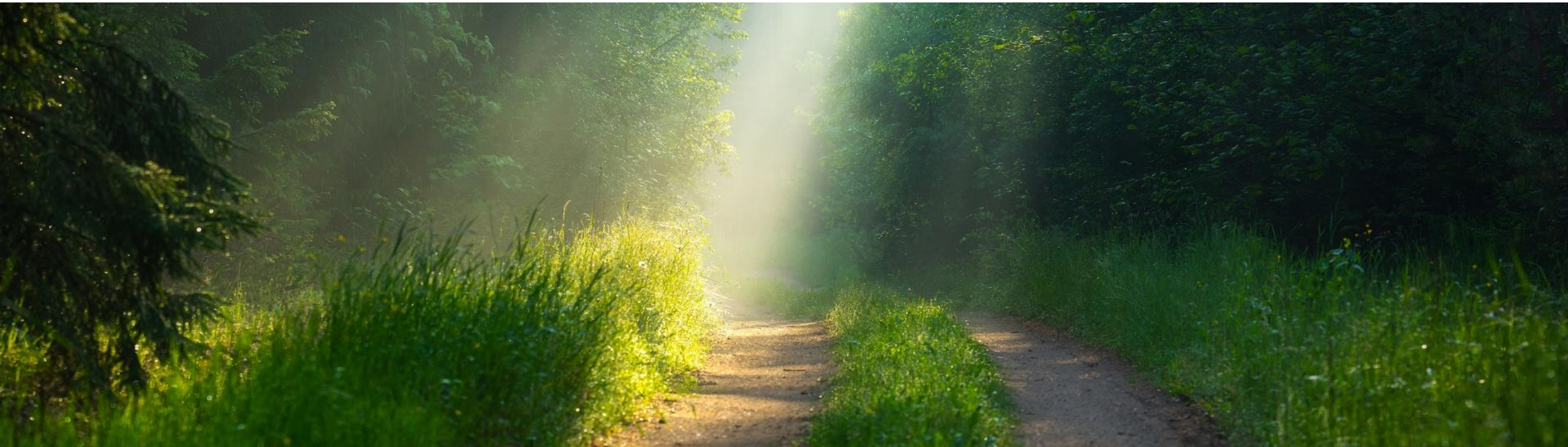


Analysis of Question Twenty-Three (Continued)

Further analysis may well conclude that the preferred means of communication either with or on behalf of the Township, is largely dependent on the matter being discussed.

For example, Individuals may want to speak directly with the Township in order to discuss their personal involvement in, or contribution to, a specific initiative (i.e. their voluntary participation in a public event); however, they may not want to hear from the Township on other matters that they do not wish to engage in (i.e. by-law enforcement).

A future survey, therefore, could further breakdown the question to assess the preferred means of communication per municipal function or department.



Question Twenty-Four: How would you rate your quality of life in Bonfield? (On a scale of 1-100)

Average = **74.6%**

This figure is further broken down into groups, and displayed as a percentage as follows:

- Individuals that have spent ~10-20 Years In Bonfield = **63%**
- Individuals that have spent between ~20+ Years In Bonfield = **75.5%**
- Lifelong residents = **76.6%**

Analysis of this data suggests an individuals' sense of '*quality of life*' in Bonfield Township improves over time.

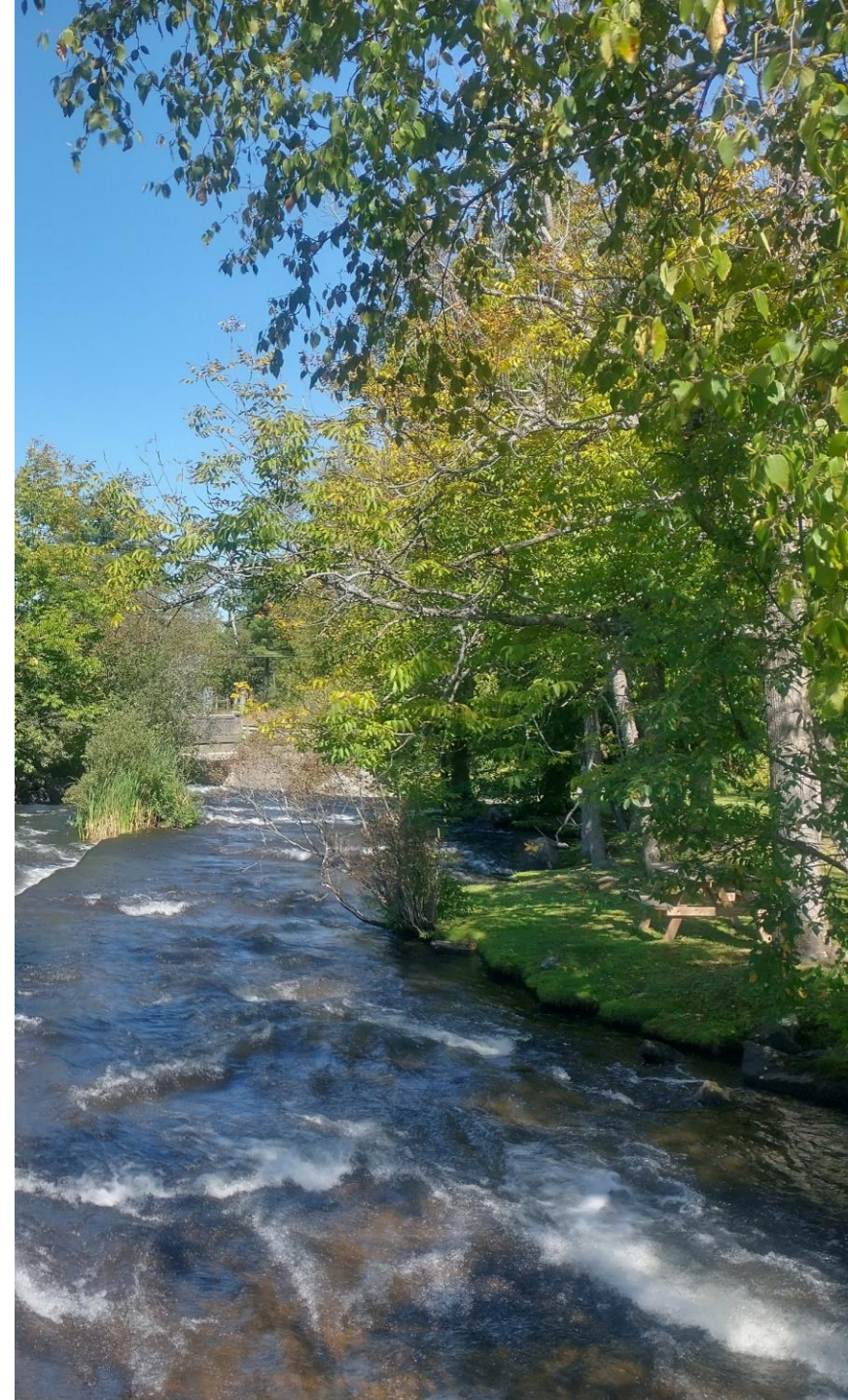


Question Twenty-Five: What factors would contribute to a better quality of life rating?

Question Twenty-Five (Part A)

The **top ten circumstances** where individuals identified a change would **‘definitely’** improve their quality of life, are summarized as follows:

1. Area is a good place to raise a family - **64.5%**
2. Reducing your personal waste to reduce your environmental footprint - **62%**
3. Family / Friends help when needed - **55.2%**
4. Parks and open spaces are well maintained and used - **55%**
5. Access to / affordability of medical services - **54.6%**
6. Enough money to meet your needs - **52.3%**
7. Getting to know your neighbours - **46.8%**
8. Everyone in Bonfield is treated with respect - **43.1%**
9. You feel part of the community - **41.3%**
10. People living with disabilities are included - **40.4%**

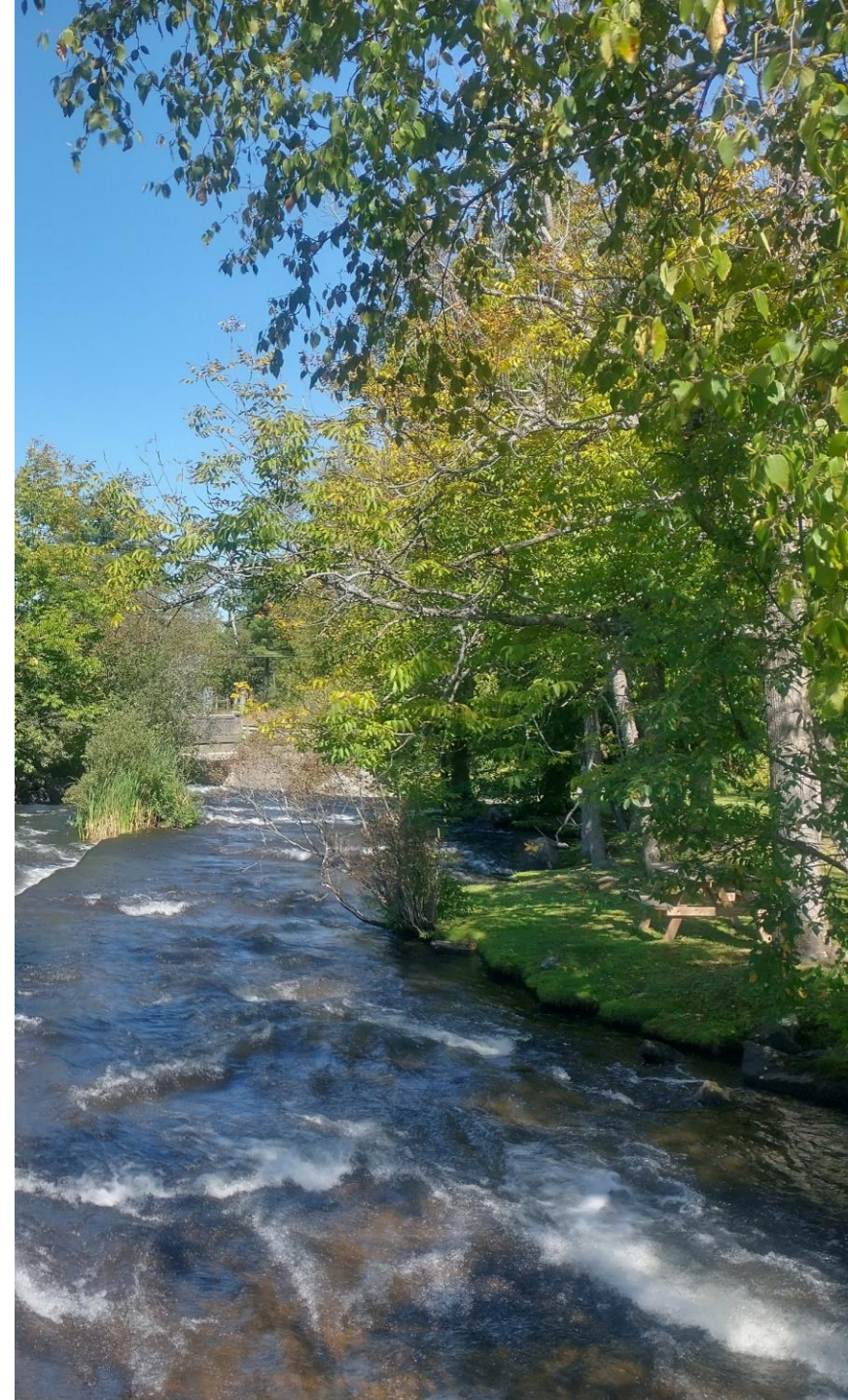


Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part A)

A review of responses made to Question Twenty-Five indicates a discrepancy with responses made to Question Four, where individuals were asked: **What are the top three issues facing the Township?**

In response to **Question Four**, only **6%** identified '*Climate Change & The Environment*' as being a top priority (ranked **13 out of 16**); however, **62%** of respondents to **Question Twenty-Five** identified '*reducing their personal waste to reduce their environmental footprint*' as the second highest factor that could contribute to a better quality of life in Bonfield (**ranked 2 out of 24**)

Analysis of these findings suggests there is a strong desire to see more environmental stewardship-led activities within the Township; however, that residents do not necessarily think the Township should be focussing its own resources on that.



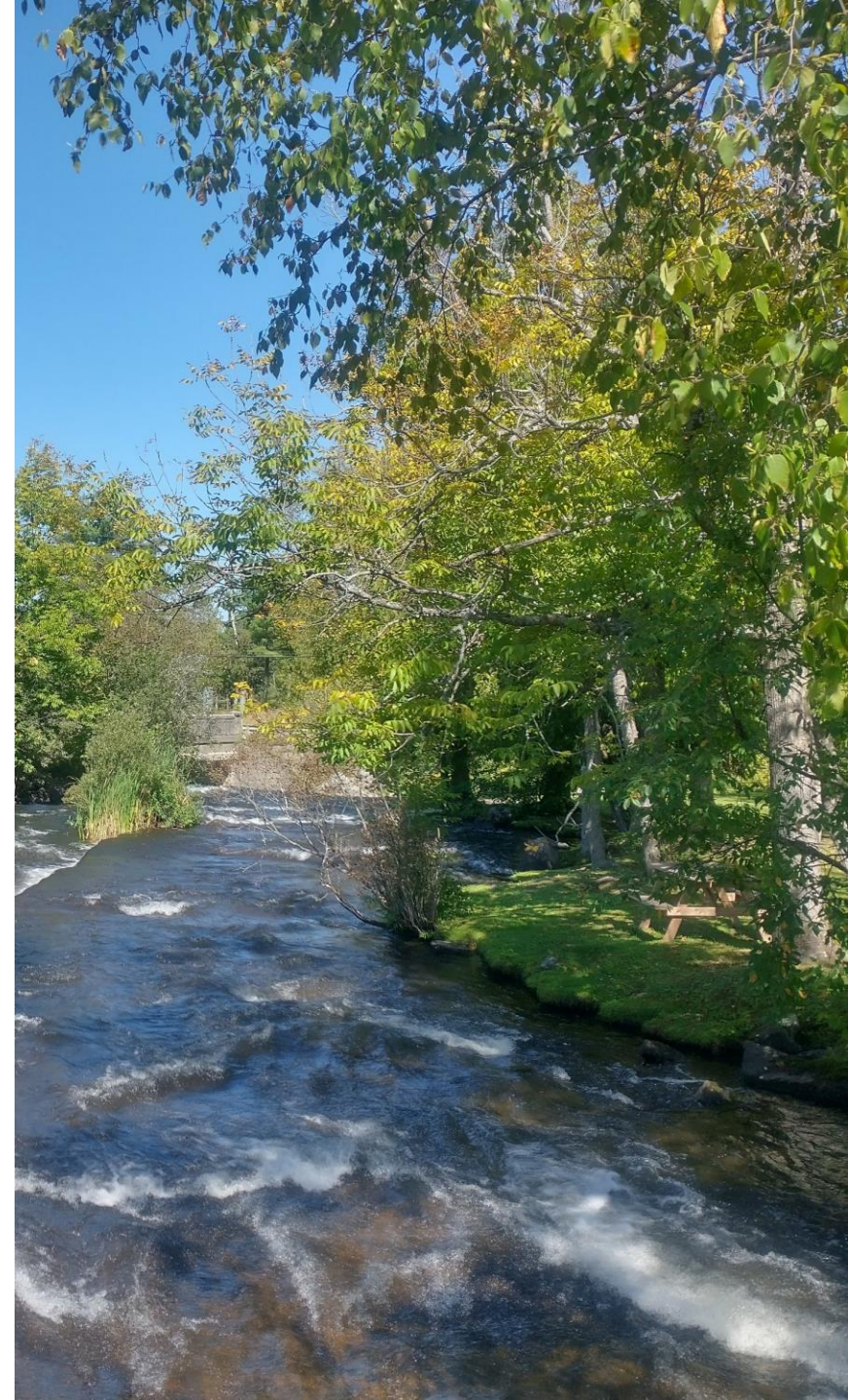
Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part A) Continued

Recognizing this, the Township remains willing and able to engage with regional and local partners in ways that deliver value-added capacity-building support; enabling the Township to continue with its environmental goals and priorities, while minimizing the cost to the Township as a whole.

Another discrepancy is noted between **Question Twenty-Five**, **Question Four**, and also, **Question Six** which asked: Which Municipal Facilities do you use the **most** and the **least**?

In response to Question Four (Top Three Issues) '*Parks & Facilities*' scored just **10%** (Ranked 10 out of 16). In addition, in response to Question Six, the following percentage(s) of residents stated they **never** use the Splash Pad (66%), The Outdoor Rink (44%), Playgrounds (41%) and Walking Paths (39%).

That said, **55%** of respondents to Question Twenty-Five stated that having access to **parks and open spaces** that are '*well maintained and used*' **can contribute to a better quality of life** (ranked 4 out of 24).



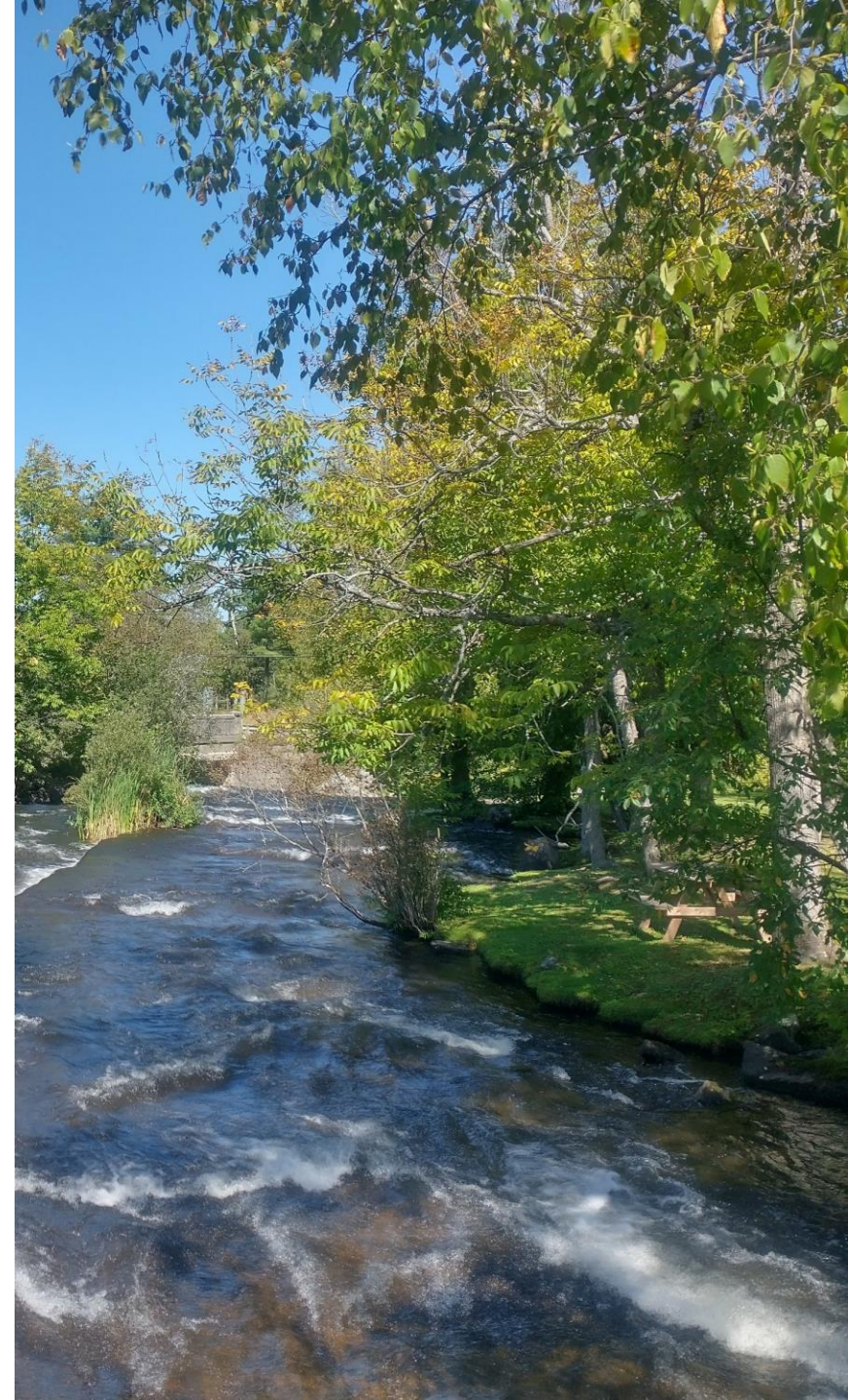
Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part A) Continued

Analysis of these findings suggests there is a strong desire for residents to both access and use municipally maintained parks and open spaces; however, that residents are not always inclined to take advantage of the existing facilities in place.

Increasing the use of existing municipal parks and open spaces is considered a priority so residents may benefit from an enhanced quality of life.

Increasing the level of participation in the use of public parks and open spaces was previously identified as a priority in the *'Active Living Waterfront Masterplan'*, with several projects having been implemented in recent years.

Now it seems, the focus should be on maximizing the value of these assets through enhanced recreational programming and increasing public knowledge and awareness of the opportunities available through destination marketing - so residents, and visitors, may take full advantage of the existing opportunities available.





Question Twenty-Five (Part B)

The **five lowest ranked circumstances** where individuals identified a change in service levels would have '***no impact***' in terms of their quality of life, are summarized as follows:

1. Access to / affordability of addiction services - **59%**
2. Access to Transportation - **57%**
3. Access to / affordability of mental health services - **44%**
4. Employment opportunities - **42.5%**
5. Housing affordability - **38%**



Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part B)

Analysis of responses made to this question suggests residents do not consider improved access to **specialized health services** which provide support to people living with addictions and / or mental health issues would be beneficial to them. The responses suggest respondents do not have a personal need to access such services; however, it is unclear whether respondents think such services would be beneficial to the Township as a whole.

Respondents also stated their general lack of interest in accessing alternative Transportation options; however, the **demand for such services was much higher among older and longer- established residents**, with the following stating their quality of life would most **‘definitely’** improve as result of improved Transportation:

- Individuals that have spent between ~20+ Years In Bonfield = **25%**
- Lifelong residents = **50%**



Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part B)

At the same time, differences arise between groups of individuals regarding whether the '*affordability of housing*' has an impact on their quality of life, with the following responses noted:

- Individuals that have spent ~10-20 Years In Bonfield
 - Definitely = 0%
 - Somewhat = 0%
 - No Impact = **100%**

- Individuals that have spent between ~20+ Years In Bonfield
 - Definitely = **25%**
 - Somewhat = **37.5%**
 - No Impact = **37.5%**

- Lifelong residents of Bonfield
 - Definitely = **33%**
 - Somewhat = 0%
 - No Impact = **66%**

Analysis of this data suggests **those that more recently moved to the Township** have **less concerns regarding the affordability of housing**; potentially, because they have moved to the Township from locations where the '*cost of living*' was less affordable. Some respondents may even have benefitted financially from having moved to Bonfield (i.e. through the sale of land and property in Southern Ontario).



Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part B) Continued

In addition, two-thirds of life long residents indicated they don't have concerns regarding housing affordability.

At the same time, **residents** that have lived **in the Township of Bonfield for ~20+ years** indicate they **do have concerns regarding the affordability of housing**, with **62.5%** of respondents indicating they '*definitely*' or would '*somewhat*' be impacted by the increased affordability of housing.

There could be many reasons for this. It is possible that such individuals' are feeling the effects of increased mortgage rates and the cost of living more generally, while wages have remained largely stagnant. Some may include inter-generational households, where homeowners are expressing housing affordability concerns related to their children, or other family members.

A wide range of additional comments were provided by respondents in regard to factors that either enhance or diminish their '*quality of life*'.



Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part B) Continued

Negative comments included reference to high taxation, poor quality roads, a lack of sidewalks in the Hamlets, confusion or dissatisfaction with the Township's waste management services, unclean beaches and washroom(s), and a general aspiration for educational services that “*reflect the community demographics of today*” (i.e. a stated preference for a Public French Immersion-oriented School, rather than a French Catholic one).

Positive comments included a sense that this is a ‘*great community*’ where people look out for one another and can access a range of recreational opportunities. Others noted an opportunity to increase the supply of housing, and with that - the Tax base.



Analysis of Question Twenty-Five (Part B) **Continued**

Negative comments included reference to high taxation, poor quality roads, a lack of sidewalks in the Hamlets, confusion or dissatisfaction with the Township's waste management services, unclean beaches and washroom(s).

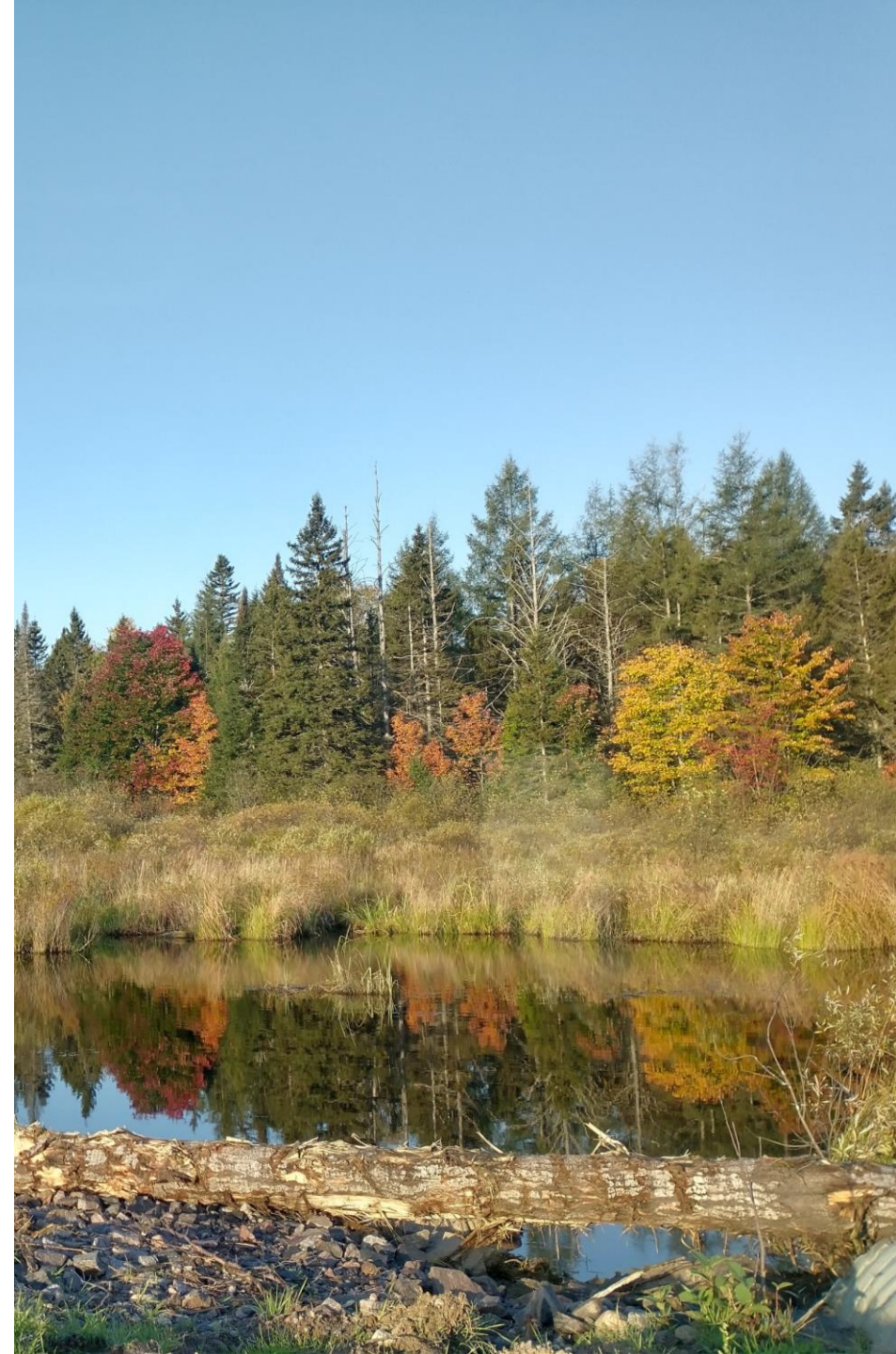
Positive comments included a sense that this is a '*great community*' where people look out for one another and can access a range of recreational opportunities. Others noted an opportunity to increase the supply of housing, and with that - the Tax base.

Question Twenty-Six:

What kind of Community do you want to be?

Individuals ranked the following answers, as a combined percentage, in their **top five choices** (out of a total of 11):

1. Safe and Secure - **88%**
2. Well maintained and vibrant community and properties - **88%**
3. Affordable and Accessible - **84%**
4. Family oriented - **81%**
5. Focussed on Recreation and Active Living - **67.5%**

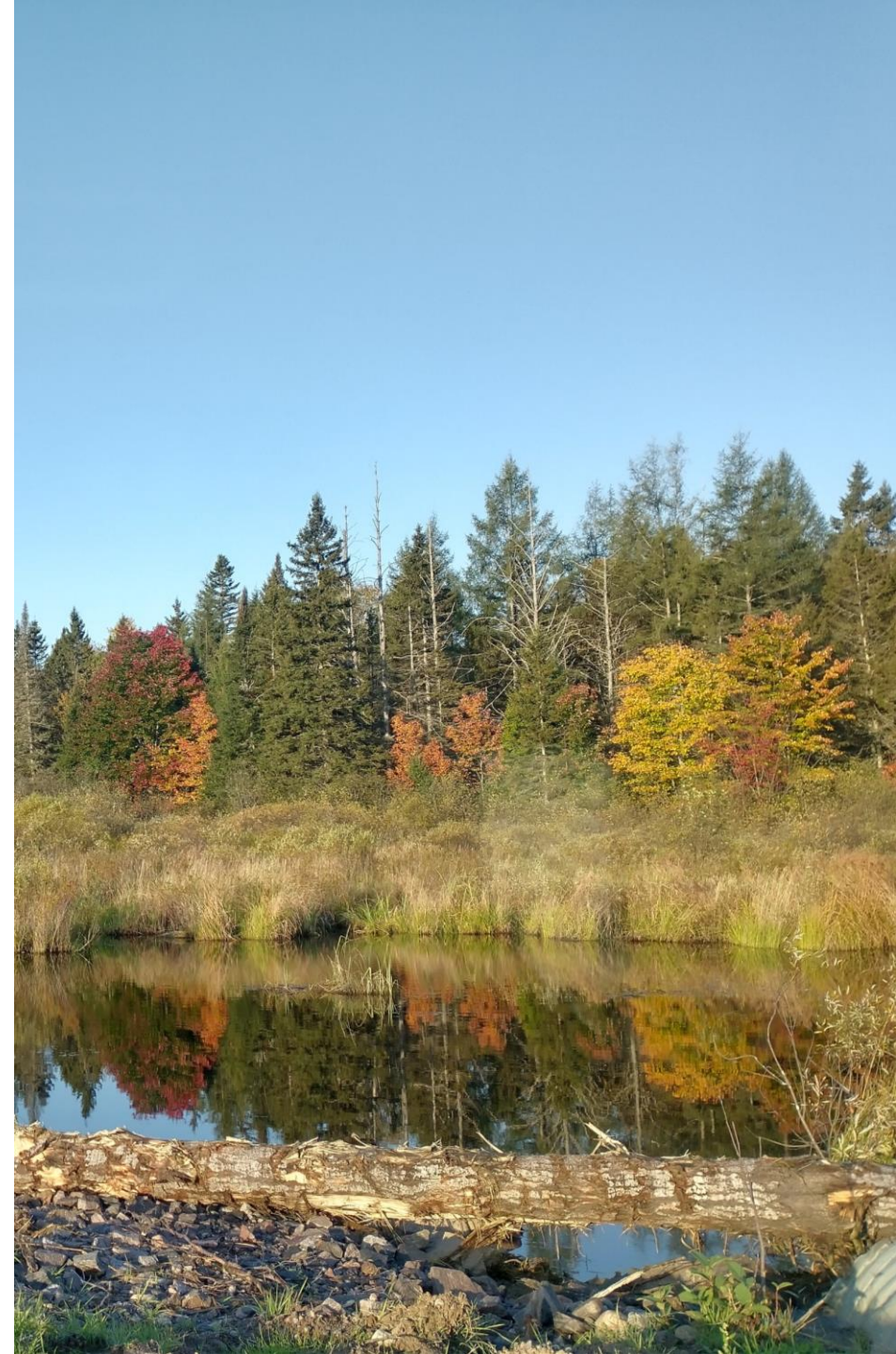


Analysis of Question Twenty-Six

Perhaps most surprisingly, **only 22%** of respondents included 'lower taxes with limited services' in their top five responses; though just **1.84%** stated they would like to see *'higher taxes with more services'*.

The responses made to these questions indicate **Taxpayers would neither like to see an increase or decrease in taxation**; however, that they **would like to ensure there is sufficient value for money**, and **continued access to services** within the Township.

The responses made to Question Twenty-Six can be further broken down by the duration of time residents have lived in the Township of Bonfield as follows:



Analysis of Question Twenty-Six (Continued)

Individuals that have spent ~10-20 Years In Bonfield

(Combined Top Five Responses)

1. Family-oriented - **67%**
2. Well maintained and vibrant community and properties - **67%**
3. Supportive of businesses and economic development - **67%**
4. Focussed on Recreation and Active Living - **67%**
5. Supportive of Arts and Culture, Outdoor Displays - **67%**

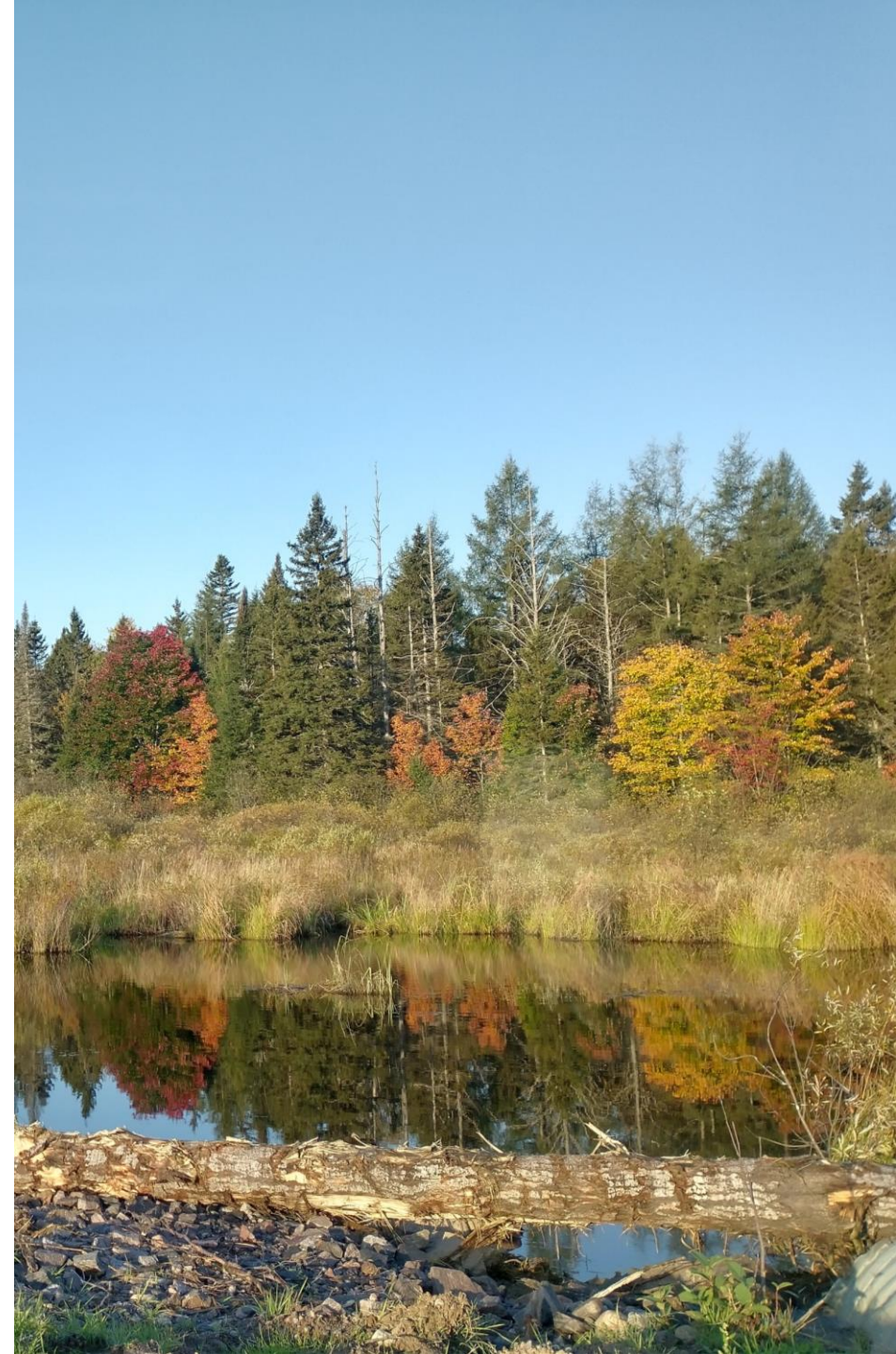
Individuals that have spent between ~20+ Years In Bonfield

(Combined Top Five Responses)

1. Safe and Secure - **100%**
2. Family-oriented - **100%**
3. Supportive of businesses and economic development - **62.5%**
4. Affordable and Accessible - **62.5%**
5. Well maintained and vibrant community and properties - **50%**

Lifelong residents (Combined Top Five Responses)

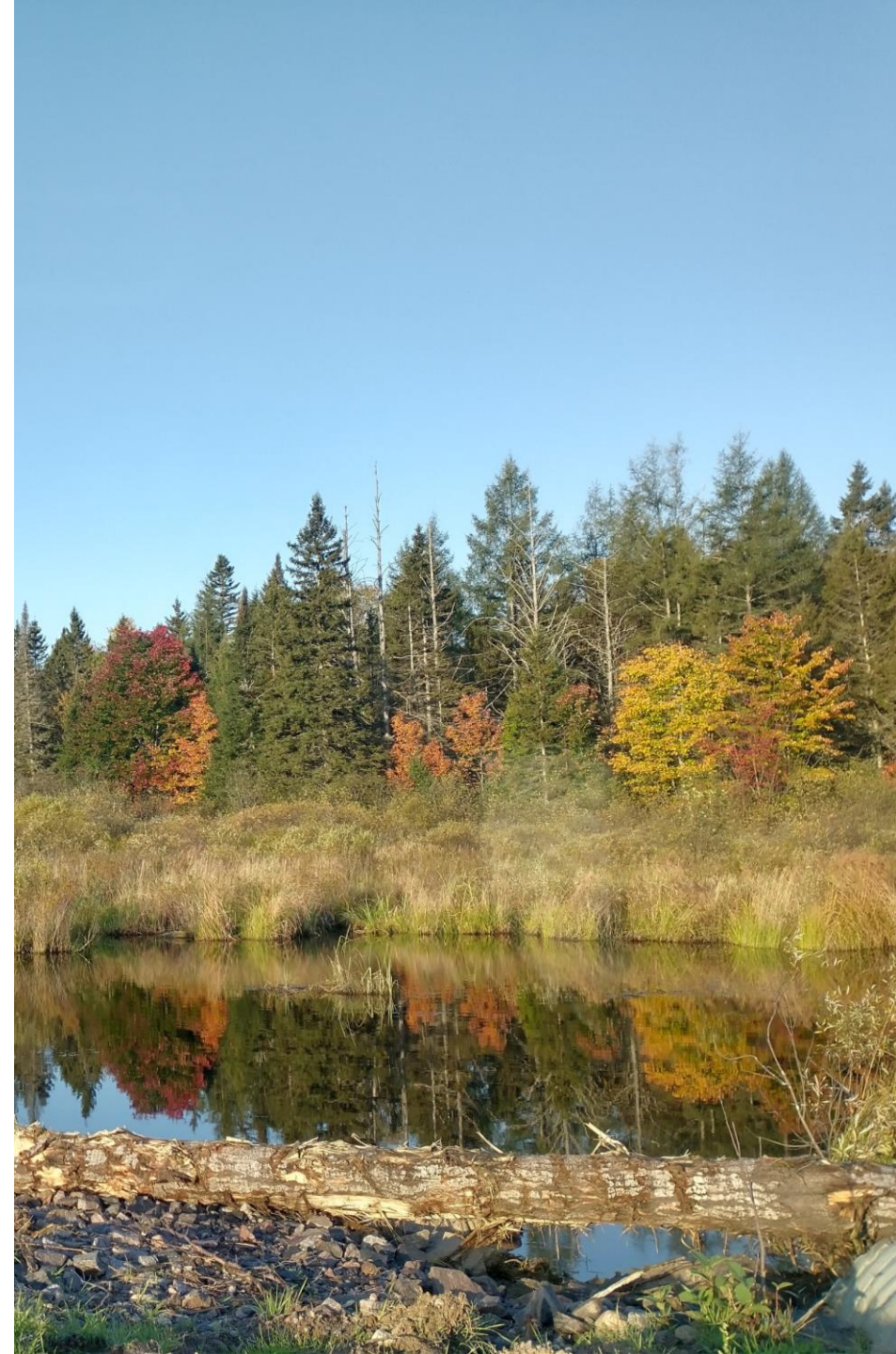
1. Safe and Secure - **100%**
2. Family oriented - **100%**
3. Affordable and Accessible - **100%**
4. Supportive of businesses and economic development - **100%**
5. Well maintained and vibrant community and properties - **67%**



Analysis of Question Twenty-Six (Continued)

Analysis of these responses indicates **a strong desire for the Township of Bonfield to be ‘safe and secure’ and ‘family oriented’**; however, it is unclear from the responses made whether residents currently feel unsafe living in the Township of Bonfield; Or whether they have chosen to live in the Township in order to feel more safe and secure (i.e. away from the larger urban centers in Ontario).

In addition, the common desire to be *‘family-oriented’* is likely reflected in the understanding **there needs to be something for everyone** for Bonfield to be truly considered *‘well maintained and vibrant’*, *‘supportive of businesses and economic development’*, *‘focussed on Recreation and Active Living’*, and *‘supportive of Arts and Culture, and Outdoor Displays’*. These factors appear to be most important to newer residents that have lived in the Township ~10-20 years.



Question Twenty-Seven: Hot Topics

The following provides a breakdown of the responses made to specific sub-questions, depending on whether respondents are inclined to **agree** or **disagree** with statements made:

Subject	Statement	Agree	Disagree
Short Term Rentals	Should they be permitted?	66%	34%
	Only to be permitted on Municipal Roads	39%	61%
	To be regulated with a license	57%	43%
	Place limits on the number of rental nights	39%	61%
Trailers on Vacant Land	Should they be permitted?	62%	38%
	They should be allowed, but license and regulate	48%	52%
	Allow on waterfront lots only	14%	86%
	Allow only in rural areas	40%	60%
Property Standards	Should they be enforced?	80%	20%
	Enforcement should improve	71%	29%
	Affordability is a concern. Leave them alone.	40%	60%
	The Township should clean up yards	45%	55%

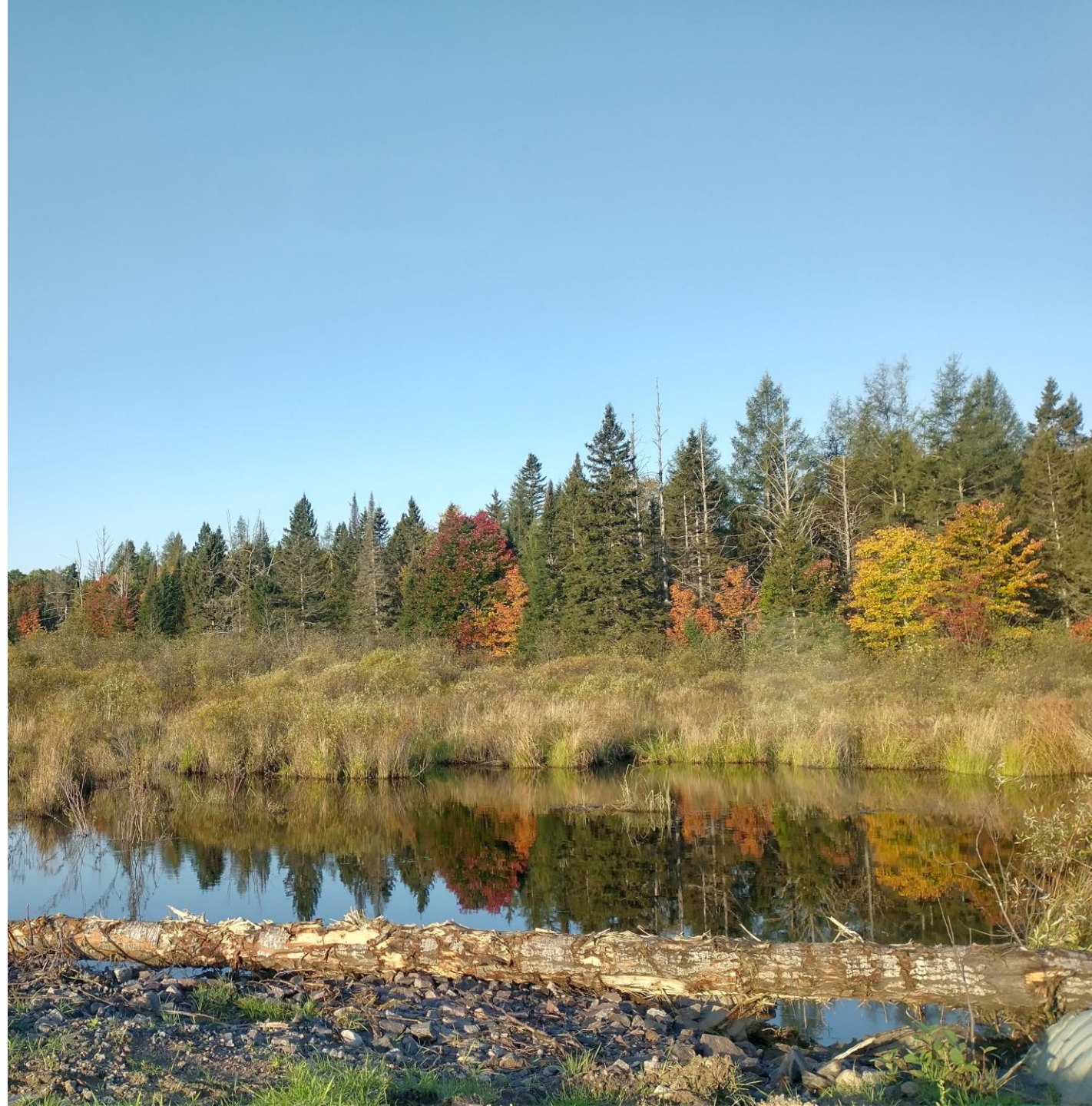


Question Twenty-Eight: Location of Respondents

- Bonfield Hamlet - **32%**
- Rutherglen Hamlet - **6%**
- Rural Property - **40%**
- Waterfront Property - **17%**
- Farm Property - **5%**

Question Twenty-Nine: Number of Individuals per Household

- One - **13%**
- Two - **47%**
- Three - **23%**
- Four or more - **17%**



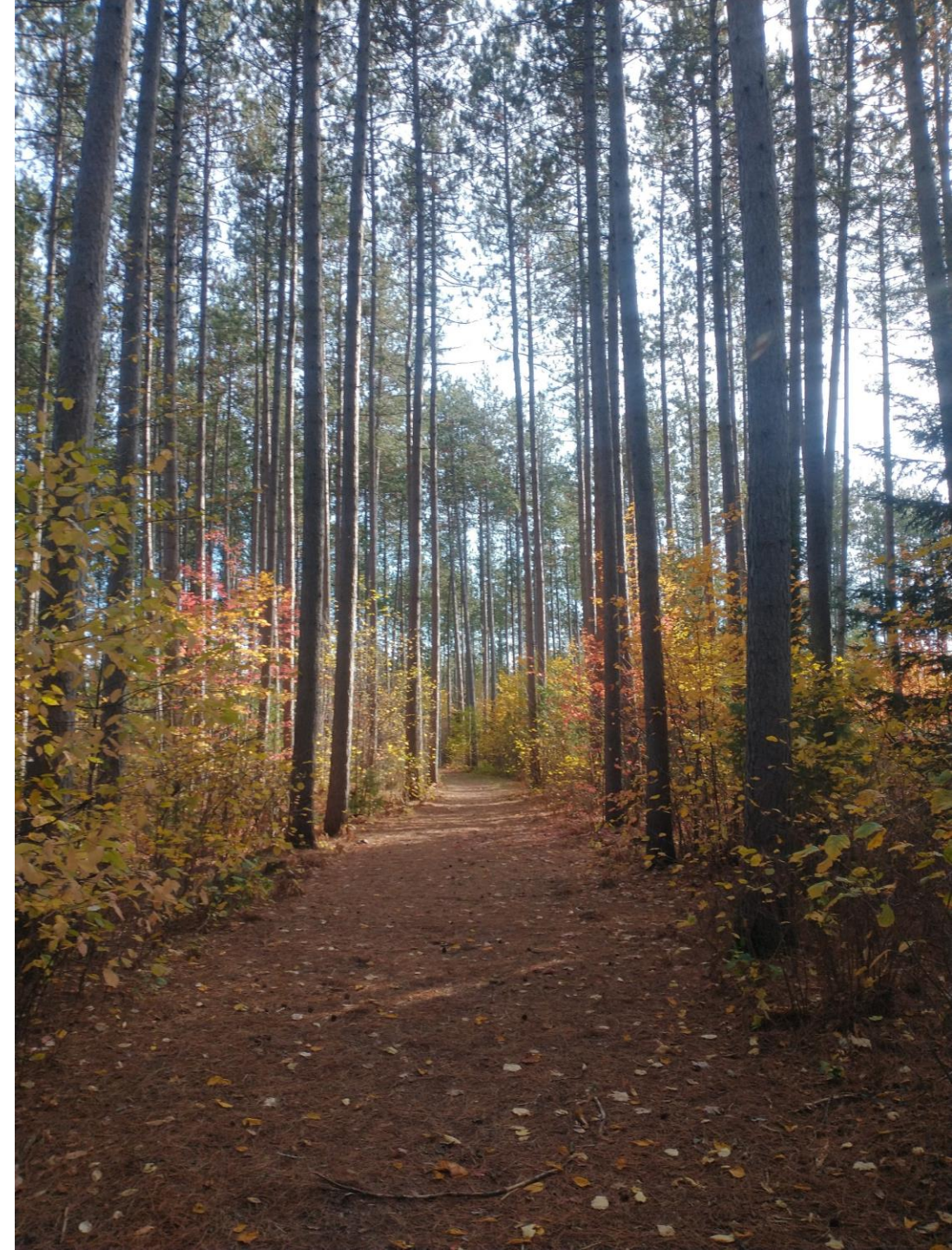


General Comments made in response to the Public

General Comments

A summary of general comments made in response to the survey are summarized in no particular order, as follows:

- 1. Introducing controls / licenses, and other limitations, on the use of private properties for Short Term Rentals (STRs).** Residents stated their concerns regarding STRs where owners are not present in the Community and rely on external Property Management Companies. Comments suggested a new STR licensing procedure, with fines for infractions. Others stated their support for STRs.
- 2. Reducing Taxes / Supporting and encouraging new development opportunities.** A common theme was reducing taxes and increasing efficiencies. Another comment suggested additional development could help increase the tax base and reduce the taxation on residents.
- 3. Improving Road Standards & Highway Maintenance / Prioritizing Infrastructure.** Residents noted there have been improvements in recent years; however, stated their interest in seeing more done to local roads, including sections of Development Road and Maple Road. A comment was made regarding the need for “*proper equipment*” to support activities at the landfill, plus ditching and brushing on roads throughout the Township. Another comment suggested the municipality should focus on roads, road maintenance, emergency services, and the landfill.



General Comments

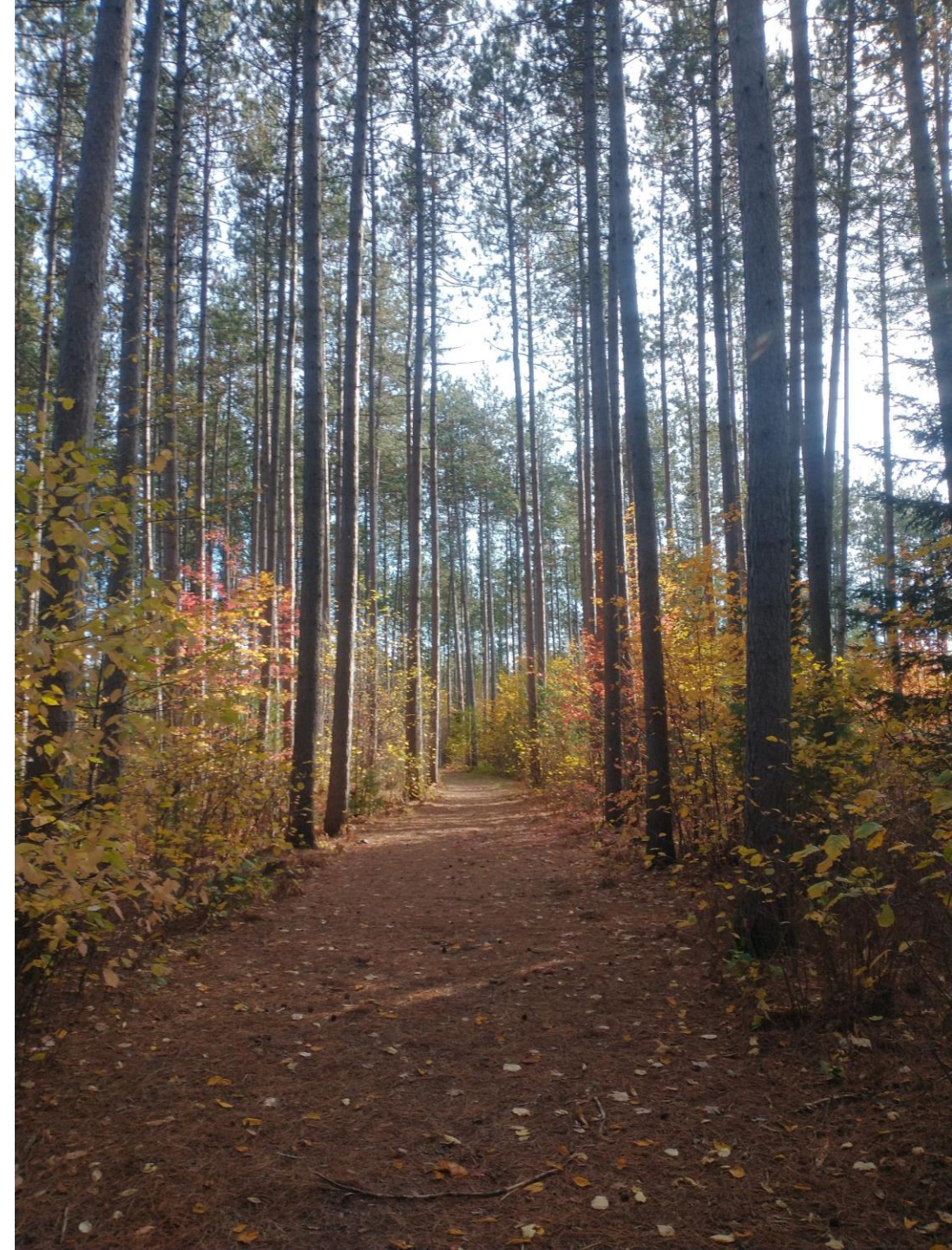
4. Enforcing Property Standards By-laws. Respondents stated the need for Council and Staff to create and “*fairly enforce*” property standards by-laws which address unauthorized living arrangements, the presence of “*junk*” (in various locations), while contributing to enhanced public safety within the Township.

5. Increasing Transparency and Openness. Members of the public expressed a desire for more frequent and open communication on matters including Property Taxes, the Township’s spending priorities, and the need to respond to “*legitimate*” complaints. Others stated their desire to reduce the powers of “*big government*”.

6. Supporting increased access to Health Care. Respondents noted the need for additional Doctors and/or Nurse Practitioners to reduce waiting times and provide increased choice & availability to local residents.

7. Implementation. Residents stated the need for a clear ‘*plan of action*’ for at least the next five years, and the need to communicate priorities with different audiences (i.e. French speakers).

8. Waste Management & Mail Delivery. Some residents stated their opposition to the use of clear garbage bags, with another suggesting this infringes upon their human rights. Von Doeler Road was specifically named as a location where garbage, recycling, and mail services are not provided.



General Comments

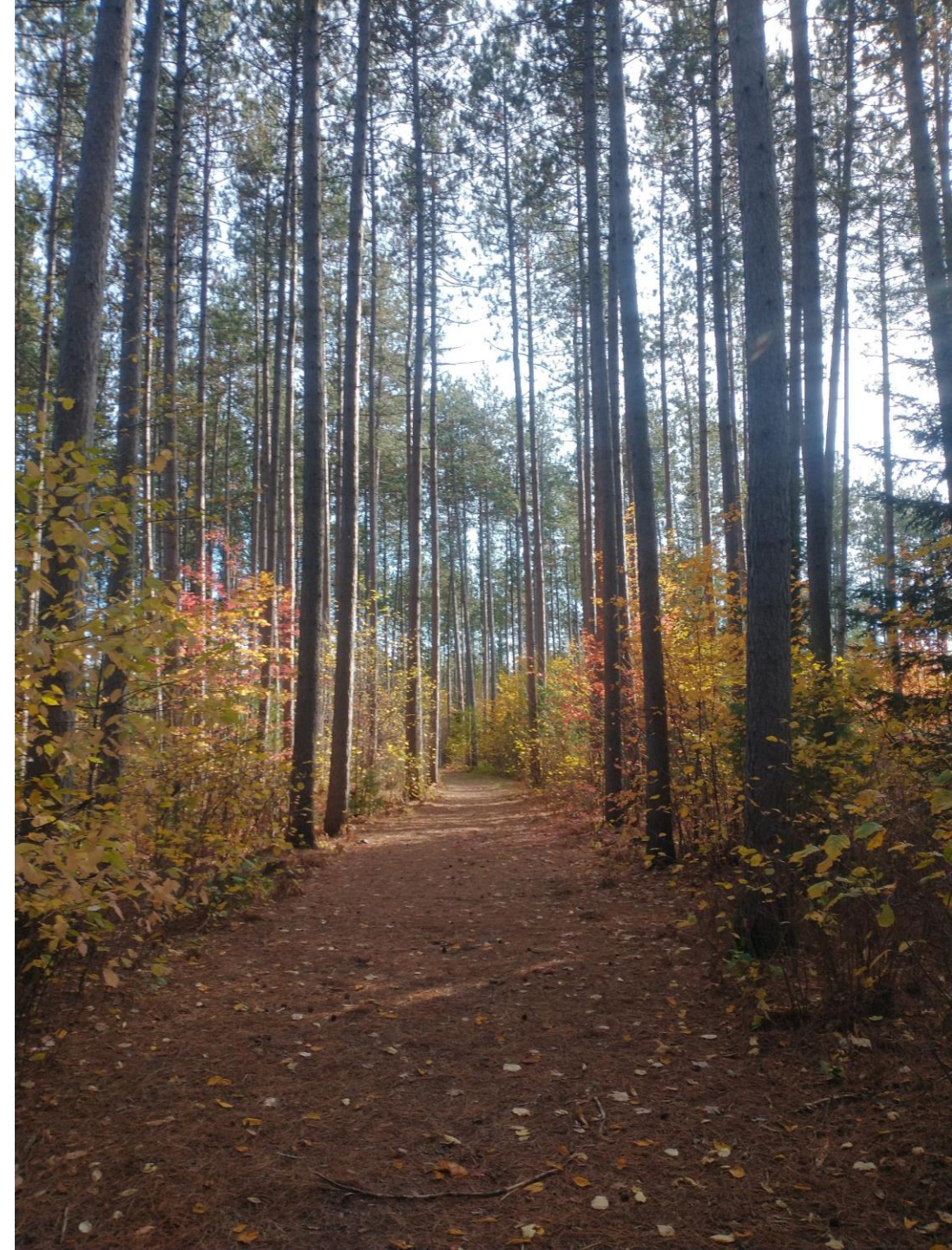
9. Access to local Support Services. A comment was made regarding the limited opening hours at the Food Bank / Used Clothing Store.

10. Providing additional support to the Municipal Fire Department. It was also suggested that the Fire Department should be separate from the Municipality.

11. Demonstrating support for local tourism. A comment was made that more can be done with the covered rink. Washroom improvements were also suggested.

12. Broadening our Mindset / Realizing our potential. Comments were raised that there are “*no jobs here*”, and that the Township has a “*problem executing programs*”. Another comment stated the need to improve the Townships’ website to “*make it easier to navigate*” and to “*increase business opportunities*”.

13. Use of Trailers/Mobile Homes. Some respondents stated their desire for Council to clean up unsightly and unauthorized trailers throughout the Township. Others stated a desire for greater flexibility in the use of Trailers while the construction of a new dwelling is taking place.



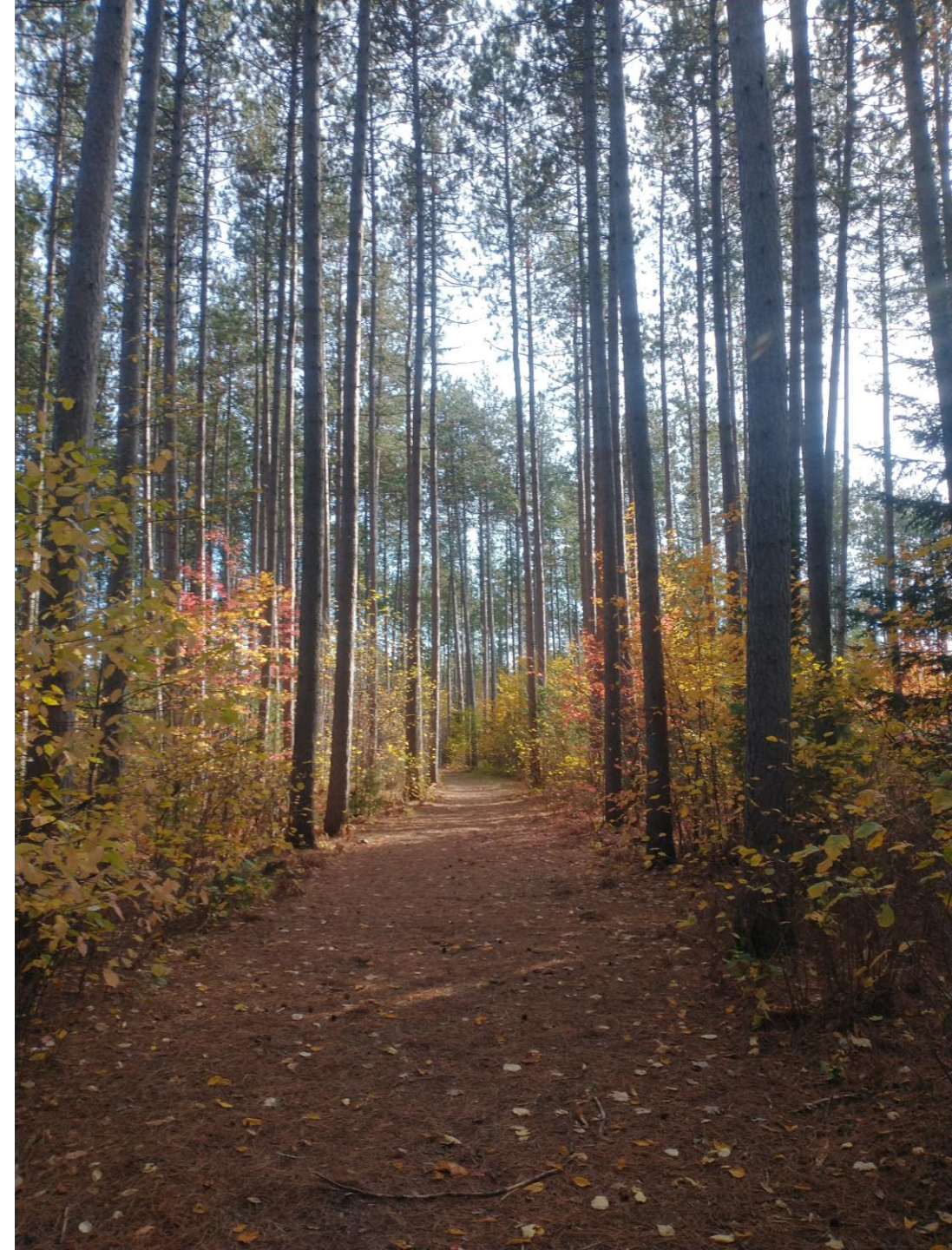
General Comments

14. Internet / Cell Service. Improving Internet speeds and providing stronger cell service was seen as an opportunity.

15. Centennial Park Beach. A comment suggested improvements to the Township's public beach might include additional clean sand, and a floating dock.

16. Backyard Chickens. A respondent stated the Township should allow residents to keep backyard chickens or water fowl.

17. Supporting Youth Development. It was noted that more families are moving in and that additional youth support services are required.



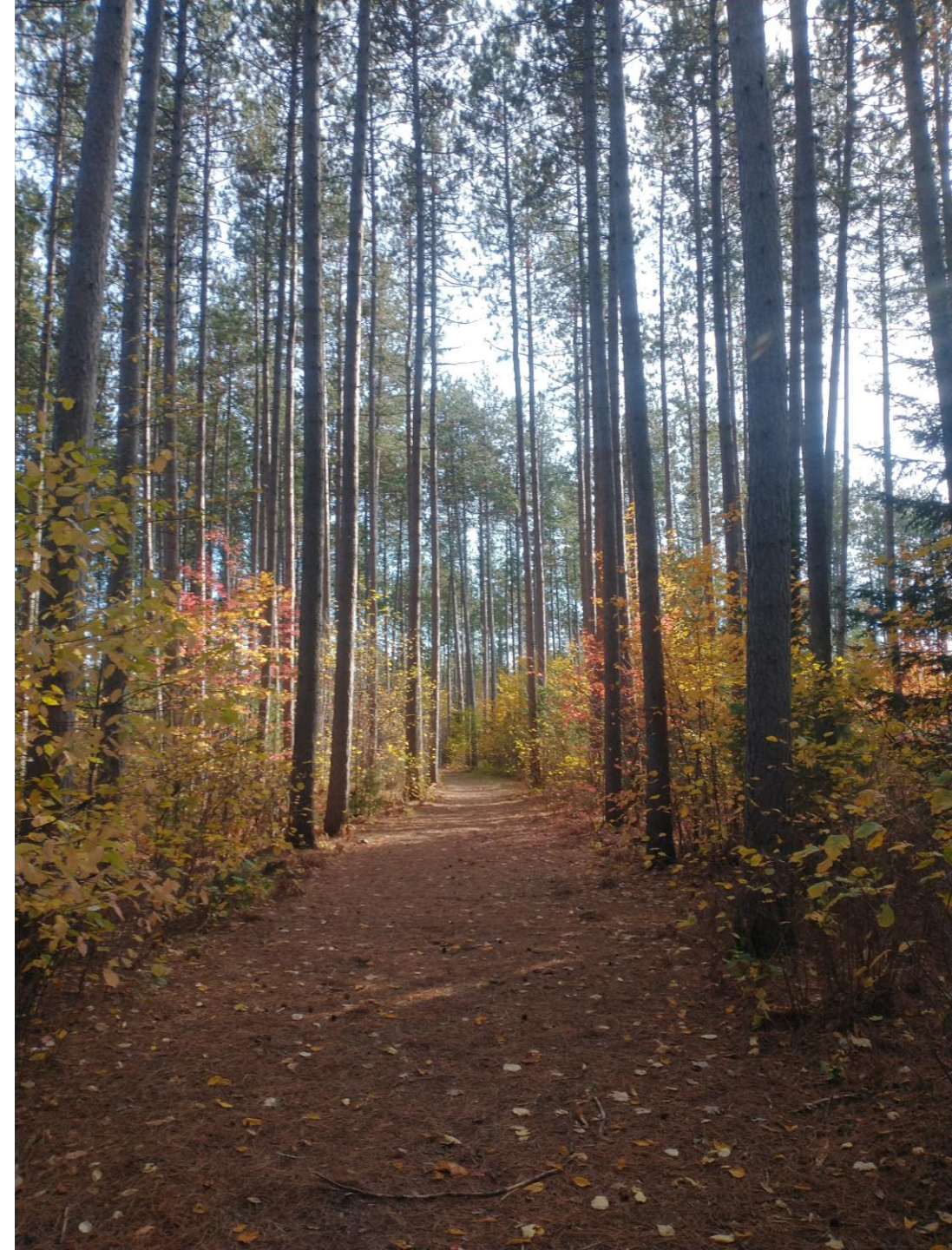
General Comments

Others provided **comments on the Community Survey itself**, suggesting it was “*too complicated*”, “*too ambiguous*” and does not apply to owners of ‘*vacant land*’.

It was also questioned why the survey could only be answered by one person per household.

A series of **positive comments** were also submitted, including:

- The municipality and landfill are “*well-run*”
- The “*current Council is the best in our 18 years here*”
- Staff are responsive and equipped to ensure the matter gets to “*the appropriate person / committee*”.
- The library offers “*a wide selection of reading material, movies, and activities*”
- Kaibuskong Park is well “*looked after and nice to visit,*” and
- Recognition of the recent improvements made to local roads, including Development Road and Pine Lake Road.





Review of Background Studies and Plans - September

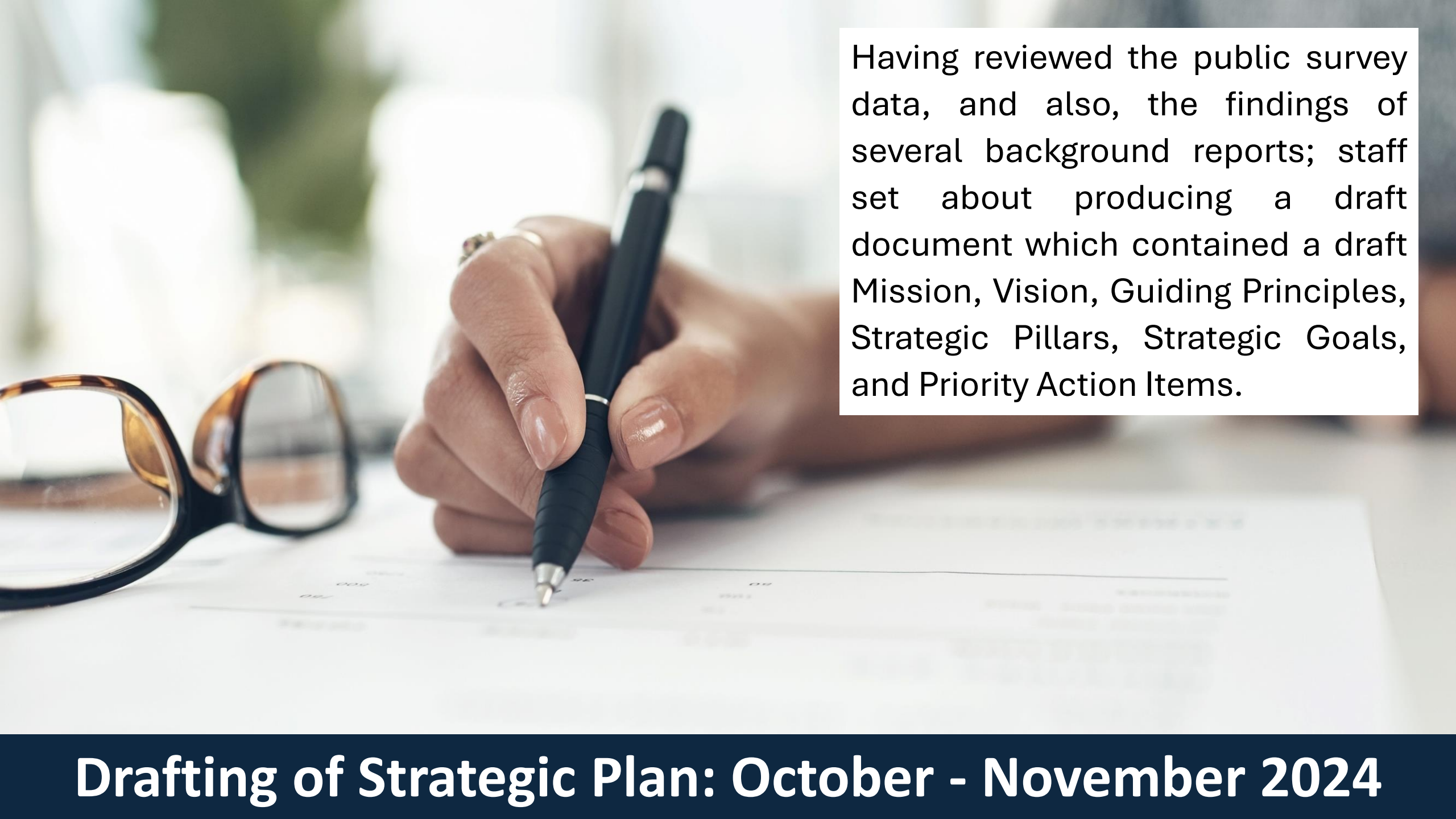
September 2024

Following a brief pause in proceedings over the Summer of 2024, the strategic planning process resumed in September 2024, with staff at the Township of Bonfield again evaluating the survey responses made by Council, and the General Public towards the end of 2023.

The next stage in the process involved a review of Council-commissioned studies and plans, to better understand project-specific opportunities; and how these relate to the proposed Strategic Plan. The background studies and plans reviewed include:

- **Township of Bonfield Official Plan, April 2013**
- **Township of Bonfield Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2012-49**
- **Official Plan and Zoning By-law Review and Update - Draft Background Report, J.L. Richards, February 2023**
- **Township of Bonfield Active Living Waterfront Management Plan, June 2018**
- **Township of Bonfield Economic Development Strategic Plan, July 2003**





Having reviewed the public survey data, and also, the findings of several background reports; staff set about producing a draft document which contained a draft Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, Strategic Pillars, Strategic Goals, and Priority Action Items.

Drafting of Strategic Plan: October - November 2024



Council & Staff Retreat #2 - November 2024

November 2024 - Council & Staff Retreat #2

A further retreat was held between Council and Staff to review and provide comment on the Draft Strategic Plan, and the strategic pillars, goals, and action items contained within. Council was provided with a matrix so they may rank their priorities in order of preference.

The general consensus at that meeting was the information contained could be further condensed and simplified for presentation within the Final Strategic Plan; however, that the information contained could also potentially be included as part of a future Implementation Plan if / once the new Strategic Plan has been adopted.

The rationale behind this approach is that specific action items should be tied to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) allowing progress to be measured throughout the duration of the plan.

In addition, by separating the '*action items*' from the broader strategic goals and priorities, the Township can demonstrate greater flexibility regarding how the Strategic Plan is implemented over time. This is particularly important given the potential impact of legislative changes within the Province of Ontario, and/or directives that may be issued by the Federal Government in the months and years to come. Such changes have the potential to impact the mandate and role of municipalities; hence, this Strategic Plan has been designed to be resilient enough to respond to future issues, challenges, and opportunities.



January 2025

Based upon the feedback received, staff set about producing the Final Draft Strategic Plan.

April 2025

The Strategic Plan is expected to be adopted by Council.



Contact us:

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Strategic Plan Background Report
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(8:30 am - 5:00pm) pm

