

Introduction and Purpose

The Township of Bonfield's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan provides a common direction for Council and staff, guiding decisions, municipal investments, and service delivery. Its four strategic pillars—Responsible Government, Economic and Social Development, Fiscal Prudence, and Environmental Stewardship—establish priorities that support a sustainable and prosperous community.

The Plan is guided by the Township's vision:

"The Township of Bonfield is a reliable, effective, and trusted provider of services to the community."

And the mission is:

"A modern municipal government which fosters safety, and a sense of community through fiscal responsibility and sustainable growth."

These statements describe both what Bonfield strives to be and the approach it takes to serving residents. Together with the Plan's values of service excellence, financial accountability, sustainable growth, environmental consciousness, collaboration, and transparency, they provide the foundation for assessing progress.

This Council Term Report reviews how actions taken during the 2022–2026 Council term have advanced the Strategic Plan's four pillars and nine goals. It identifies initiatives completed, improvements made, partnerships developed, and investments undertaken, with an emphasis on the results and benefits for the community. Where relevant, the report also recognizes work undertaken earlier in the term that established a foundation for the Strategic Plan, which was finalized in March 2025.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council and residents with a clear account of progress, demonstrate how municipal activities align with strategic priorities, and identify work requiring continued attention. It recognizes the contributions of Council, staff, volunteers, community organizations, and partner agencies in advancing these objectives.

As the Strategic Plan extends to 2030, this report represents a review of progress rather than the conclusion of the Plan. It distinguishes completed initiatives from ongoing responsibilities and longer-term objectives, providing a foundation for the next Council's planning, budgeting, and decision-making.

Pillar 1 – Responsible Government

Goal #1: Create and maintain a Communication and Brand Strategy

Goal #2: Create an environment that facilitates community participation

Goal #3: Comply with legislation and regulations

Throughout this Council term, the Township improved how it shares information and listens to residents. The aim was to make municipal information easier to find, explain Council's decisions, and help residents connect with community activities

1. Actions and Achievements

1.1 Improved the Township website

- Simplified headings and added drop-down menus to make information easier to find.
- Added more content about municipal services and activities.
- Created an events calendar for municipal events, Council meetings, and committee meetings.
- Enabled local organizations to submit their own events, helping promote activities throughout the community.

1.2 Expanded ways to keep residents informed

- Created a municipal Facebook page to share news, events, and Township project updates. This includes a formal Social Media Policy.
- Introduced the “*About Last Night*” blog to highlight discussions and decisions from the previous day’s Council meeting. It is shared on the website, on Facebook, and by email to subscribers.
- Added website subscriptions so residents can receive news and notice alerts directly by email.
- Continued seasonal flyers and newsletters delivered to residents’ mailboxes, reaching people who prefer printed information or do not regularly use online services.

1.3 Made Council information and meetings more accessible

- Added Question Period to Council agendas so residents can attend meetings and ask Council questions directly without arranging a formal delegation.
- Began posting the full Council agenda package online, including staff reports and correspondence, so residents can see the information supporting Council’s decisions.

1.4 Created opportunities to listen to residents

- Held three Town Halls to share information, hear residents’ views, and discuss the Township’s growth and future.
- Held an Official Plan open house early in the term to gather feedback on future land use and development.
- Conducted the Community Satisfaction Survey and the Grow Bonfield Economic Development Survey. Residents’ responses informed:
 - The Strategic Plan;
 - Annual budgets;
 - New municipal policies; and
 - The Economic Development Strategy.

1.5 Continued established community events and introduced new events

- Hosted Family Day, Canada Day, Christmas in Bonfield, and the spring business trade show and promoted Community Days.
- Added an Easter Egg Hunt, a Labour Day Weekend Celebration, and Halloween activities, including a parade.

- Moved Canada Day programming to the evening to encourage more people to attend and stay for the fireworks.
- Continued the well-attended Halloween parade, with increasingly impressive floats and costumes each year.
- Celebrate local arts and heritage with Celebrate the Arts in Bonfield adding a mural to the change room wall and a night of song and storytelling with Rendez Vous celebrated Bonfield's francophone heritage

1.6 Supported community organizations and volunteer activities

- Developed a formal donation policy to establish a consistent application process to ensure all organizations are treated fair and equitably.
- Fire Department assisting with the Lions ATV Run and the Agricultural Fair and they expanded their community events as well including pancake breakfast, shinny hockey and a scavenger hunt.
- Allowed the used of the outdoor rink area for the Farmers' Market, Library events, and community days and for private rentals such as the Cornhole Tournament, Nipissing Roller Derby and birthday parties.

These stated improvements and changes expanded the ways residents and organizations can use Township facilities for recreation, gatherings, and celebrations.

1.7 Established clear and consistent processes

- Adopted a By-law Enforcement Complaint and Service Request Management System to provide a consistent process for receiving and addressing complaints.
- Introduced an Administrative Penalty System to modernize enforcement and reduce the time and costs involved for residents and the Township.
- Adopted a Public Conduct Policy to support respectful interactions and clearly define conduct expectations for everyone dealing with the municipality.
- Created a Video Surveillance Policy to establish standards for the use of cameras installed at municipal properties to address safety concerns.

1.8 Met accessibility requirements

- Updated the mandatory Accessibility Plan for 2025–2029.
- Successfully passed an accessibility compliance audit.

1.9 Strengthened emergency preparedness

- Maintained annual compliance with emergency management requirements.
- Expanded secondary response plans to better prepare for identified community hazards.
- Completed the Community Risk Assessment, identifying vulnerable areas and risks to guide prevention, training, and response planning.

1.10 Modernized Fire Department leadership and service planning

- Hired a Fire Chief for three days per week, providing additional capacity for leadership, planning, training, and policy updates.
- Began replacing outdated policies and procedures, some dating back to 1995.

- Updated the Fire Department's establishing by-law to define service levels and the fleet, equipment, and personnel needed to deliver those services.

1.11 Improved firefighter safety and equipment planning

- Replaced firefighter bunker gear that was reported to be ten years beyond its expiry date.
- Established a funding plan to set aside \$50,000 annually for three years to replace aging self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), which was four standards behind. Scheduled full SCBA replacement for 2027.

1.12 Updated fire procedures, training, and public rules

- Modernized the Open Air Burning By-law, including more flexible campfire start times so residents can enjoy additional outdoor family time.
- Updated fire standard operating procedures to reflect current best practices.
- Developed a new training manual and appointed a dedicated Training Officer.
- Successfully met the new NFPA standards required for July 2026.

Results for the Community and Continuing Priorities:

Significant progress was achieved in strengthening municipal services, improving communications, and supporting community participation. Residents benefited from:

- More accessible information and opportunities for input through printed and online communications, Question Period, Town Halls, open houses, and surveys.
- Greater transparency and accountability through publication of Council materials and clearer connections between community feedback and municipal decisions.
- Clearer rules and consistent processes through updated policies, accessibility planning, and modernized by-law enforcement that reduced time and costs.
- Stronger emergency preparedness and firefighter safety through additional Fire Department leadership, updated procedures, structured training, and replacement of expired protective gear.
- More opportunities to gather and participate through established and new events, expanded use of municipal spaces, and programming that celebrates Bonfield's arts, identity, and heritage.

Council, staff, volunteers, the Recreation Committee, local organizations, and community partners all contributed to these improvements.

Maintaining this progress requires ongoing attention to current information, public feedback, successful community programming, policy updates, training, accessibility, and emergency preparedness. Supporting volunteers and partners remains important.

Pillar 2 Economic and Social Development

Goal #4: Foster and Support an Environment that Promotes Positive Social, Health and Economic Development Outcomes

Goal #5: Ensure Municipal Infrastructure Is Being Maintained Based Upon a Robust Analysis of Its Condition

Throughout this Council term, the Township took steps to support housing, strengthen local businesses, improve access to health care, and prepare for future growth. Council established a clear direction: diversify the tax base to support more sustainable municipal tax rates. With a population of approximately 2,148 and 1,150 households, and residential properties representing approximately 83% of the tax base, Bonfield relies heavily on residential taxpayers. Encouraging a broader mix of development is an important part of building long-term financial sustainability.

2. Actions and Achievements

2.1 Used community input to guide growth

- Conducted a Community/Resident Satisfaction Survey to identify Bonfield's strengths, challenges, and residents' priorities.
- Residents identified natural landscapes as the Township's greatest asset and emphasized the need to protect them.
- Agriculture and housing were also identified as community strengths, helping guide priorities for future development.

2.2 Built connections with developers, farmers, and businesses

- Held a Developer's Forum to showcase development opportunities and discuss how the Township could work with businesses and organizations to bring more housing to Bonfield.
- Held an Agri-Food Forum to celebrate local agriculture and explore opportunities to expand farming.
- Undertook a Business Retention and Expansion Study with support from regional economic development agencies, involving 24 local businesses.
- Used the findings to help inform the Economic Development Strategy, recently adopted by Council.
- Established 12 action steps for the first year of implementation.
- Secured Northern Ontario Heritage Funding to hire an intern to assist with implementation.

2.3 Created clearer rules for housing options and rural land uses

Council adopted by-laws addressing:

- Additional dwelling units;
- Hunt camps;
- Short-term rentals; and
- Trailer licensing.

These updates established a clearer framework to accommodate housing options and rural uses while protecting neighbouring properties and community interests.

2.4 Supported community connections and wellbeing

- Continued and expanded the events and recreation opportunities described under Goal #2.
- Supported activities that bring residents together and strengthen community life.

2.5 Strengthened access to local health care

- Worked with the Ministry to help bring two new doctors to the Medical Centre when the community's only doctor decided to retire.
- Established a memorandum of understanding between Council and the medical team.
- Created a new Medical Centre Board to support operations at greater arm's length from Council.
- Partnered with the Powassan and Area Family Health Team to provide access to additional services, including diabetes care, mental health support, and physiotherapy.

These actions mentioned above supported continuity of local medical care and strengthened regional partnerships for additional health services. They strengthen community culture and showcase opportunities for growth.

2.6 Prepared for the cost of long-term care infrastructure

- Continued monitoring the Cassellholme, Home for the Aged capital project, approved during the previous Council term.
- Planned for the Township's approximately \$3.8 million loan obligation, with repayments expected to begin in 2027.
- Continued annual tax increases of 1% to build the reserve and gradually prepare the municipal budget for the anticipated \$166,000 annual loan repayment.

2.7 Completed a Road Needs Study

- Reviewed each road under municipal jurisdiction; Recorded daily traffic counts and assessed road conditions.
- Established a detailed plan to bring roads requiring improvements up to standard.
- The study provides a foundation for setting roadwork priorities and planning future investments.

2.8 Finalized the Bridge and Culvert Management Plan

- Assessed the condition of bridge and large culvert components.
- Identified required repairs and estimated costs.
- Established condition ratings and recommended timelines for work.
- Completed the required two-year cycle of Ontario Structural Inspections for applicable bridges and culverts with spans greater than three metres.
- These assessments help the Township identify concerns and plan repairs before infrastructure deteriorates further.

2.9 Clarified the use of unmaintained roadways

- Adopted an Unmaintained Roadway Policy to clarify the use and maintenance of municipal road allowances.

2.10 Assessed municipal buildings and improved the workplace

- Used a Building Condition Assessment to identify long-term maintenance and repair needs at municipal facilities.
- Remediated mould in the Public Works Shop, providing a healthier working environment for the Public Works team.

2.11 Planned for the landfill's long-term operation

- Directed landfill consultant Pinchin to conduct annual capacity assessments over five years. Received the first assessment in 2025, which estimated 47 years of remaining landfill capacity.
- Used this information to guide operating practices and identify additional measures to extend the landfill's useful life.

2.12 Completed road improvements and storm repairs

- Resurfaced six kilometres of Development Road, including sections from Line 3 to South Shore Road and from McNutt Road to Mount Pleasant Road.
- Added gravel lifts to Pine Lake Road, Maple Road, Line 3, Farmer's Line, Grand Desert Road, and South Shore Road.
- Rebuilt Talon Lake Road and repaired storm-damaged portions of McNutt Road, Pine Lake Road, Shields Point Road, Grand Desert and Trunk Road.
- Repaved portions of Gagnon Street, Trunk Road Hill, and Pine Lake Road.
- Included brushing and ditching with planned capital roadwork to improve drainage and help extend the life of the road improvements.
- Replaced Trunk Road Bridge; from a one lane bridge to a two lane

2.13 Improved municipal buildings and recreation facilities

- Completed interior repairs and mould remediation at the Public Works Shop to provide a healthier workplace.
- Replaced the municipal office's septic system.
- Renovated the Medical Centre to accommodate two doctors and additional health care staff.
- Completed installation of the splash pad and outdoor exercise equipment, expanding recreation opportunities for residents.

2.14 Invested in own equipment

- Finalized purchase of grader from previous council RFP
- Purchased back-hoe, excavator, 1-ton truck, pickup truck and compactor with solid return on investments

These projects turned infrastructure planning into practical improvements: better road conditions, restored storm-damaged routes, improved municipal facilities, and more opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Results for the Community and Continuing Priorities

The Township combined infrastructure planning and completed projects with initiatives supporting housing, local businesses, and community health. Studies identified maintenance needs, costs, and priorities, while community feedback, forums, and business outreach helped guide plans for Bonfield's growth.

Residents and staff benefited from:

- Improved roads and restored access through resurfacing, paving, gravel lifts, and repairs to storm-damaged routes, including Talon Lake Road.
- Better drainage through brushing and ditching alongside planned roadwork, helping extend the life of road improvements.
- A healthier workplace and improved municipal facilities through mould remediation at the Public Works Shop, a new municipal office septic system, and Medical Centre renovations.
- Stronger access to local health care through facilities accommodating two doctors and additional staff, supported by regional health care partnerships.
- More outdoor recreation opportunities through the completed splash pad and exercise equipment installations.
- A stronger foundation for housing and business development through updated by-laws, business outreach, and the adopted Economic Development Strategy.

Road, bridge, culvert, and building assessments helped Council plan repairs and future investments. Annual landfill capacity assessments also provided information to improve operations and help extend the site's useful life.

Significant groundwork and practical improvements have been completed, while longer-term results continue to develop. Diversifying the tax base remains an ongoing objective, supported by improved investment readiness and plans that recognize the importance of Bonfield's natural landscapes and rural character.

Continuing priorities include implementing the Economic Development Strategy's first-year actions, hiring the funded intern, supporting local businesses and appropriate housing development, maintaining health care partnerships, carrying out infrastructure repairs, and preparing for Cassellholme loan repayments.

Pillar Three: Fiscal Prudence

Goal #6: Ensure spending is based on Asset Management Priorities

Goal #7: Modernize and simplify administrative processes

Goal #8: Understand opportunities for shared resources

Throughout this Council term, the Township strengthened financial planning, updated purchasing and administrative policies, and reviewed operating costs. Council also supported shared services and partnerships to make better use of municipal resources. The focus was on informed spending, consistent financial practices, and finding practical efficiencies.

3. Actions and Achievements

3.1 Strengthened long-term infrastructure planning

- Created a long-term Asset Management Plan using infrastructure condition ratings to guide maintenance and replacement priorities.
- Prioritized assets in the poorest condition with the highest traffic or use.
- Used infrastructure studies and financial reporting to support informed investment decisions and future budget planning.
- Reviewed Reserve and Debt Policies and created long term capital financial plan.

3.2 Established clearer financial controls

- Adopted a new Procurement Policy and Procedure to strengthen purchasing controls and financial due diligence. Also adopted the Delegation Bylaw that set out who does what and increased accountability for both Council and Staff.
- Made procurement information available on the Township website to support transparency, including all tenders, staff reports on projects and year end reporting and annual budget reports.
- Adopted a Tax Policy to standardize tax administration.
- Adopted Credit Card Surcharge policy.
- Increased promotion on pre-authorized payment plans.
- Developed municipal travel expense policies for all departments, establishing consistent expectations for reimbursement.

3.3 Reviewed costs and found operating efficiencies

Council and staff reviewed operating costs annually and identified efficiencies to manage ongoing expenses and make better use of available resource in areas including, but not limited to:

- Council agenda production.
- IT services.
- Cellphone and tablet costs.
- Municipal financial software.
- 5-year reviews and tendering for major on-going contracts.

3.4 Applied shared services and regional partnerships

- Sought opportunities for new or expanded shared services where they could benefit the community Shared by-law enforcement services with the Township of Chisholm.
- Shared building inspection services with neighbouring municipalities to the east.
- Temporarily shared the Public Works Manager with the Township of Calvin when it required assistance.
- Continued agreements with municipalities and agencies for emergency services, dispatch, recovery assistance, and household hazardous waste services.
- Supported the Medical Centre and economic development partnerships described earlier in this report.

Results for the Community

These actions helped the Township direct resources toward priority needs, strengthen financial accountability, and manage service delivery costs.

Residents benefited from:

- Better-informed infrastructure investments, supported by condition assessments and long-term planning.
- Clearer and more consistent financial practices for purchasing, tax administration, and travel expenses.
- Greater transparency through access to procurement information.
- Operating efficiencies identified through annual cost reviews.
- Access to shared expertise and services through partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and agencies.

Together, these measures strengthened the Township's ability to maintain services and plan for future needs while using public funds responsibly.

Pillar Four: Environmental Stewardship

Goal #9: Lead and support the move to a more sustainable future.

Throughout this Council term, the Township improved waste management, considered energy efficiency in municipal projects, and strengthened its approach to drainage and environmental protection. The focus was on protecting Bonfield's natural assets and preparing municipal infrastructure for changing weather conditions.

4. Actions and Achievements

4.1 Improved waste diversion and landfill operations

- Introduced a clear bag system to support waste diversion and encourage residents to separate recyclable materials from garbage.
- Expanded recycling through Circular Materials.
- Purchased a landfill compactor to improve waste management and help extend the landfill's useful life.

4.2 Used energy planning to guide projects

- Accepted the Municipal Energy Plan in 2023, following its preparation in 2021.
- Consulted the Plan when considering municipal projects to identify and incorporate opportunities for energy efficiency.
- Replaced lighting at Public Works Shop for energy efficiency and started review for Fire Stations.

4.3 Strengthened drainage management

- Adopted a Beaver and Beaver Dam Management Policy to provide a consistent framework for managing drainage concerns and risks to infrastructure.
- Established the practice of assessing culvert capacity when replacements are required and increasing culvert sizes where necessary to accommodate water flowing from upstream.
- Applied to University programs for hamlet drainage studies

These measures, outlined above, help the Township respond to changing weather conditions and reduce the risk of damage to roads and other infrastructure.

4.4 Supported protection of lakes, forests, and waterfront access

- Used community survey findings to reinforce the importance of protecting Bonfield's lakes, forests, and natural landscapes.
- Incorporated provincial policies into the Official Plan work to guide development and protect these valued features.
- Assisted Ontario Parks with replacement of the Blanchard's Landing dock, supporting access to the waterfront.

Results for the Community

These actions supported more responsible waste disposal, better use of landfill capacity, and consideration of energy efficiency in municipal investments.

Residents benefited from:

- More opportunities to divert waste through the clear bag system and expanded recycling.
- Improved landfill operations through the use of a compactor.
- Stronger drainage planning through culvert assessments and a consistent approach to beaver and beaver dam management.
- Planning that recognizes the value of lakes and forests, reflecting priorities identified by the community.
- Improved waterfront access through assistance with the Blanchard's Landing dock replacement.

Together, these measures helped protect the natural features residents value while supporting infrastructure and services that are better prepared for future needs.

Conclusion

Significant work has been completed over the past four years to improve municipal services, renew infrastructure, strengthen community connections, and prepare Bonfield for the future. These achievements reflect the efforts of Council, staff, volunteers, community organizations, and partner agencies. There is much to recognize, and much work still to be done.



**REPORT TO COUNCIL
STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE
OCTOBER 13, 2026**

The Strategic Plan, Long-Term Asset Management Plan, Official Plan, multi-year budgeting, and newly adopted Economic Development Strategy provide a strong foundation for continued progress. Together, they help guide decisions, establish priorities, plan investments, and support responsible growth while protecting the features that make Bonfield special.

These plans and studies have positioned the Township for success. Their value will be realized through continued implementation, regular review, and a shared commitment to moving Bonfield forward in a positive and productive manner.