



Town of Kearney

# Strategic Plan

2026-2030





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## Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Kearney, Ontario, is located on the traditional and treaty lands of the Anishinaabe people, specifically within the Robinson-Huron and Williams Treaties, and acknowledges the legacy of stewardship over these lands by Indigenous peoples.

## Message from the Mayor

Welcome to our new Strategic Plan. The Council and staff have been working for some time to bring to the forefront a Strategic Plan for our community. With input from our residents, businesses, community groups, staff, and Council, we are pleased to present to you the visions, goals, and priorities that will serve as a roadmap for Council and staff for many years to come.

The input provided at the community sessions has shaped the plan and reflects our shared values and priorities. This plan is actionable, and staff will oversee its implementation. There will be regular reviews and benchmarks to measure progress and ensure transparency.



Current Council (left to right), Heather Pateman, Jill Sharer, Mayor Cheryl Philip, Michael Rickward, and Keven Beaucage.

In closing, we encourage you to stay engaged with the Council, help us to continue to recognize our many volunteers, and join us in working together to improve our community as we step forward into the future.

Mayor Cheryl Philip





## Our Community

Kearney is a vibrant, sustainable community with a rich heritage and unique character. It promotes economic prosperity, strengthens community bonds, and safeguards its natural environment. This Strategic Plan is designed to support the town's continued growth in ways that reflect its values, meet the needs of its residents, and respect its resources and traditions.

This Plan provides a clear, actionable roadmap for Kearney's development over the next few years. The plan is built on the pillars of economic growth, community engagement, and environmental preservation, focusing on sustainable development that benefits all who call Kearney home. Through collaborative leadership, innovation, and a commitment to inclusive decision-making, this plan aims to ensure Kearney thrives while preserving the essence of what makes it unique.

The vision of this plan is to build a vibrant and sustainable community that promotes economic prosperity, strengthens community ties, and safeguards the natural environment. The mission is to enhance the quality of life for everyone by fostering economic growth, promoting community engagement, and preserving the distinctive character of Kearney. These guiding principles will serve as the foundation for the strategies and initiatives that will be implemented in the coming years.

Kearney's Strategic Plan is the result of extensive community input, research, and collaboration. It reflects the collective aspirations of residents, business owners, local leaders, and other stakeholders, and it is designed to address both the immediate needs and long-term opportunities for the town. The plan will be a living document, adaptable to changing circumstances, yet steadfast in its commitment to building a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable Kearney for future generations.

Together, as a community, we can turn this vision into a reality. This plan is more than a blueprint; it is a call to action, inviting all members of the community to contribute to the continued success and vitality of Kearney.



# Our Strategy at a Glance

## Our Vision

To build a vibrant, sustainable community that promotes economic prosperity, strengthens community bonds, and safeguards our natural environment.

## Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life for all by fostering economic growth, promoting community engagement, and preserving the unique character of Kearney through sustainable development and collaborative leadership.

## Our Values

### Community Spirit

Belonging and connection.

### Integrity

Honesty, accountability, and transparency.

### Sustainability

Harmonizing economic, social, and environmental needs.

### Equality

Fairness and equal access to opportunities for all.

### Respect

Kindness and valuing diversity.

## Our Priorities



### Economic Growth

Support existing businesses.

Attract new business.

Leverage sustainable tourism for economic growth.



### Community Vitality

Expand cellular and internet.

Support affordable housing developments.

Invest in facilities.



### Tourism, Culture, and Heritage

Promote outdoor recreation.

Share cultural experiences.



### Green Space Development

Develop & enhance parks.

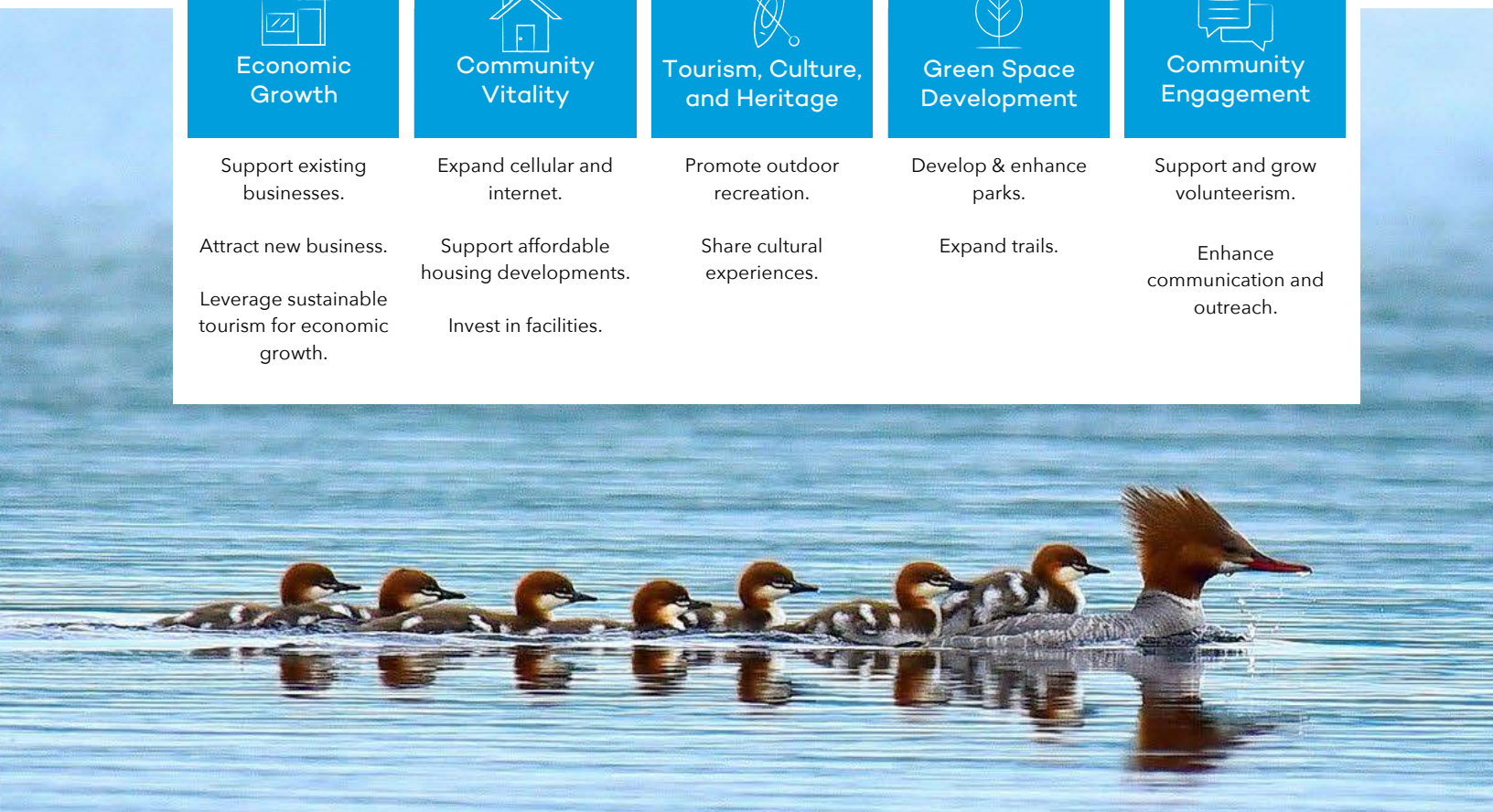
Expand trails.



### Community Engagement

Support and grow volunteerism.

Enhance communication and outreach.







## 1. Economic Growth

Enhance Kearney's economic development by supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment. Foster business retention and expansion by providing resources, addressing challenges, and creating opportunities for growth. Strategically attract new businesses in key sectors to diversify the local economy. Maximize the economic potential of tourism to drive sustainable growth and community prosperity.

### Strategic Actions

- 1.1 Reduce barriers for new business development by simplifying regulations, streamlining approval processes, and providing clear, user-friendly guidelines.
- 1.2 Review and update zoning by-laws to designate new commercial zones.
- 1.3 Simplify rezoning and permitting procedures to attract businesses and encourage investment.
- 1.4 Educate and support short-term rental owners to ensure compliance with regulations, enhance guest experiences, and maximize community benefits.
- 1.5 Investigate a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for business upgrades, expansion, or innovation.
- 1.6 Strategize with economic development groups to attract investment in professional services, retail, tourism, sustainable industries, light construction, or mining.



## 2. Community Vitality



Enhance quality of life and essential services to attract and retain residents. Expand cellular and internet connectivity to improve accessibility. Support the development of affordable housing to meet community needs. Invest in recreation and community facilities to foster a vibrant and inclusive environment.

### Strategic Actions

- 2.1 Collaborate with telecommunications providers, businesses, and upper levels of government to expand and enhance broadband infrastructure, secure funding for underserved areas, and develop targeted solutions to improve connectivity across Kearney.
- 2.2 Expedite permitting and zoning approvals for affordable housing developments to minimize project delays and reduce costs.
- 2.3 Review and amend zoning regulations to ensure by-laws permit alternative housing options such as tiny homes, granny suites, and secondary units.
- 2.4 Collaborate with partner organizations and neighbouring communities to identify opportunities for shared services.
- 2.5 Develop a facilities master plan to evaluate current municipal infrastructure and plan for future needs.
- 2.6 Develop incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing, fostering investment in diverse, mixed-income communities.
- 2.7 Work with developers, community organizations, and stakeholders to identify barriers and create solutions that promote inclusive housing.





## 3. Tourism, Culture, and Heritage

Position Kearney as a premier destination for year-round outdoor recreation, cultural experiences, and community-driven initiatives that highlight its natural beauty and rich heritage.

### Strategic Actions

- 3.1 Recruit a dedicated resource to lead visitor engagement, community programs, economic development, and event planning initiatives.
- 3.2 Promote Kearney's history and culture by collaborating with residents and historians to create a community storytelling program and interactive experiences.
- 3.3 Develop a targeted marketing campaign that showcases Kearney's attractions, local businesses, and proximity to Algonquin Park, encouraging visitors to explore the town, support local businesses, and enjoy its natural surroundings.





## 4. Green Space Development

Enhance Kearney's natural landscapes by expanding parks, green spaces, and recreational trails to increase outdoor access for residents and visitors. Develop and improve accessible, multi-use trails for hiking, cycling, and other outdoor activities while ensuring they integrate with the town's natural surroundings.

### Strategic Actions

- 4.1 Develop a Parks and Trails Master Plan to guide the development, enhancement, and sustainability of Kearney's outdoor recreation infrastructure.
  - Identify and transform underutilized municipal land into parks, picnic areas, and community green spaces encouraging outdoor recreation.
  - Expand trail networks and outdoor amenities, ensuring they are accessible.
  - Connect Kearney trails to Algonquin Park trails.
- 4.2 Prioritize conservation efforts to protect local ecosystems, wildlife, and waterways as green spaces grow.
- 4.3 Improve amenities at Lions Park and Mirror Bay.
- 4.4 Work with relevant agencies to support lake health and identify areas of concern and address impacts of development.



## 5. Community Engagement



Foster a connected, engaged community through volunteerism, open communication, and partnerships with local groups. Regular meetings will bring together key stakeholders to align goals and share resources, while providing opportunities for public input on local matters.


### Strategic Actions



- 5.1 Develop a targeted volunteer recruitment campaign to increase volunteer participation.
- 5.2 Recognize community contributions through an annual Volunteer Appreciation Event.
- 5.3 Enhance communication and outreach by ensuring regular updates via multiple channels, including digital platforms and print materials.
- 5.4 Review resident engagement platforms to gather feedback and ideas, and to engage residents in town planning and decision-making.
- 5.5 Host collaboration meetings to align goals and share resources with community groups and local organizations.






# Action Plan

Priority	Action Item	Priority Phase	Timeframe
 Economic Growth	1.1 Reduce barriers for new business development by simplifying regulations, streamlining approval processes, and providing clear, user-friendly guidelines.	Phase 1	2026
	1.2 Review and update zoning by-laws to designate new commercial zones.	Phase 1	2026
	1.3 Simplify rezoning and permitting procedures to attract businesses and encourage investment.	Phase 1	2026
	1.4 Educate and support short-term rental owners to ensure compliance with regulations, enhance guest experiences, and maximize community benefits.	Phase 2	Start: 2027 Ongoing
	1.5 Investigate a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for business upgrades, expansion, or innovation.	Phase 2	2027
	1.6 Strategize with economic development groups to attract investment in professional services, retail, tourism, sustainable industries, light construction, or mining.	Phase 3	2028-2030
 Community Vitality	2.1 Collaborate with telecommunications providers, businesses, and upper levels of government to expand and enhance broadband infrastructure, secure funding for underserved areas, and develop targeted solutions to improve connectivity across Kearney.	Phase 1	Start: 2026 Ongoing
	2.2 Expedite permitting and zoning approvals for affordable housing developments to minimize project delays and reduce costs.	Phase 1	2026
	2.3 Review and amend zoning regulations to ensure by-laws permit alternative housing options such as tiny homes, granny suites, and secondary units.	Phase 1	2026
	2.4 Collaborate with partner organizations and neighbouring communities to identify opportunities for shared services.	Phase 1	Start: 2026 Ongoing
	2.5 Develop a facilities master plan to evaluate current municipal infrastructure and plan for future needs.	Phase 1	2026-2027
	2.6 Develop incentives for projects that incorporate affordable housing, fostering investment in diverse, mixed-income communities.	Phase 2	2027
	2.7 Work with developers, community organizations, and stakeholders to identify barriers and create solutions that promote inclusive housing.	Phase 2	2027

# Action Plan



Priority	Action Item	Priority Phase	Timeframe
 Tourism, Culture, and Heritage	3.1 Recruit a dedicated resource to lead visitor engagement, community programs, economic development, and event planning initiatives.	Phase 1	2026
	3.2 Promote Kearney's history and culture by collaborating with residents and historians to create a community storytelling program and interactive experiences.	Phase 1	2026-2027
	3.3 Develop a targeted marketing campaign that showcases Kearney's attractions, local businesses, and proximity to Algonquin Park, encouraging visitors to explore the town, support local businesses, and enjoy its natural surroundings.	Phase 3	2028-2030
 Green Space Development	4.1 Prioritize conservation efforts to protect local ecosystems, wildlife, and waterways as green spaces grow.	Phase 1	Start: 2026 Ongoing
	4.2 Improve amenities at Lions Park and Mirror Bay.	Phase 1	Start: 2026 Ongoing
	4.3 Develop a Parks and Trails Master Plan to guide the development, enhancement, and sustainability of Kearney's outdoor recreation infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and transform underutilized municipal land into parks, picnic areas, and community green spaces encouraging outdoor recreation.</li> <li>Expand trail networks and outdoor amenities, ensuring they are accessible.</li> <li>Connect Kearney trails to Algonquin Park trails.</li> </ul>	Phase 2	2027-2028
	4.4 Work with relevant agencies to support lake health and identify areas of concern and address impacts of development.	Phase 2	Start: 2027 Ongoing
 Community Engagement	5.1 Develop a targeted volunteer recruitment campaign to increase volunteer participation.	Phase 1	2026-2027
	5.2 Recognize community contributions through an annual Volunteer Appreciation Event.	Phase 1	Start: 2026 Ongoing
	5.3 Enhance communication and outreach by ensuring regular updates via multiple channels, including digital platforms and print materials.	Phase 2	Start: 2027 Ongoing
	5.4 Review resident engagement platforms to gather feedback and ideas and to engage residents in town planning and decision-making.	Phase 3	2029
	5.5 Host collaboration meetings to align goals and share resources with community groups and local organizations.	Phase 3	Start 2029: Ongoing