

TOWN OF KEARNEY

Strategic Development Plan

2019-2025



ADOPTED BY

Kearney Town Council

DEVELOPED BY

Jeremy Chan

Community Economic
Development Officer



ONTARIO'S BIGGEST LITTLE TOWN

"Kearney tries hard to engage the community with events such as the fireworks, Regatta, Dog Sled Races, festivals etc. The love for this little town is very evident!"

-Resident of Kearney



VISION

To being a forward-thinking community that strives for growth in economic development and community cohesion while protecting our natural landscape in a sustainable manner.

MISSION

The Corporation of the Town of Kearney is determined to provide accountability, transparency, respect, and leadership to residents, visitors, and businesses across the community.



"Kearney is a beautiful close knit community. I am very lucky to grow up here and raise my children here."
- Resident of Kearney

TABLE OF CONTENTS



MAYORS MESSAGE

Page 1

KEARNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Page 2

INTRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

Page 3-4

COMMUNITY PRIORITY #1: TOURISM

Page 5

COMMUNITY PRIORITY #2: SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Page 7

COMMUNITY PRIORITY #3: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & GROWTH

Page 9

COMMUNITY PRIORITY #4: TECHNOLOGY

Page 11

COMMUNITY PRIORITY #5: RECREATION & LEISURE

Page 13

IMPLEMENTATION

Page 15

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

On behalf of Council, I am very pleased to share with you, our new 2019 Strategic Development Plan.

This Strategic Plan has been developed from ideas and input from your elected officials, municipal staff, residents, local business owners, and tourists.

Council will use this Strategic Plan to help guide us in our decision making and priority setting over the next six years and provide future Councils with a basis to assess their own plans and priorities.

Our new Strategic Plan will help us identify what changes we can make to improve our Town, while retaining and building on what we all love and value in our wonderful, close-knit community.

Our new Strategic Plan will help us to focus on short, medium, and long term goals to ensure that Kearney continues to be a great place to live, work, play and invest.

We know from our past that we are at our best when we are all united and work together. Together, we can help build a bright future for our Town.

Sincerely,

Carol Ballantyne
Mayor
Corporation of the Town of Kearney



TOWN COUNCIL

Representing Kearney From 2018-2022



From left to right:

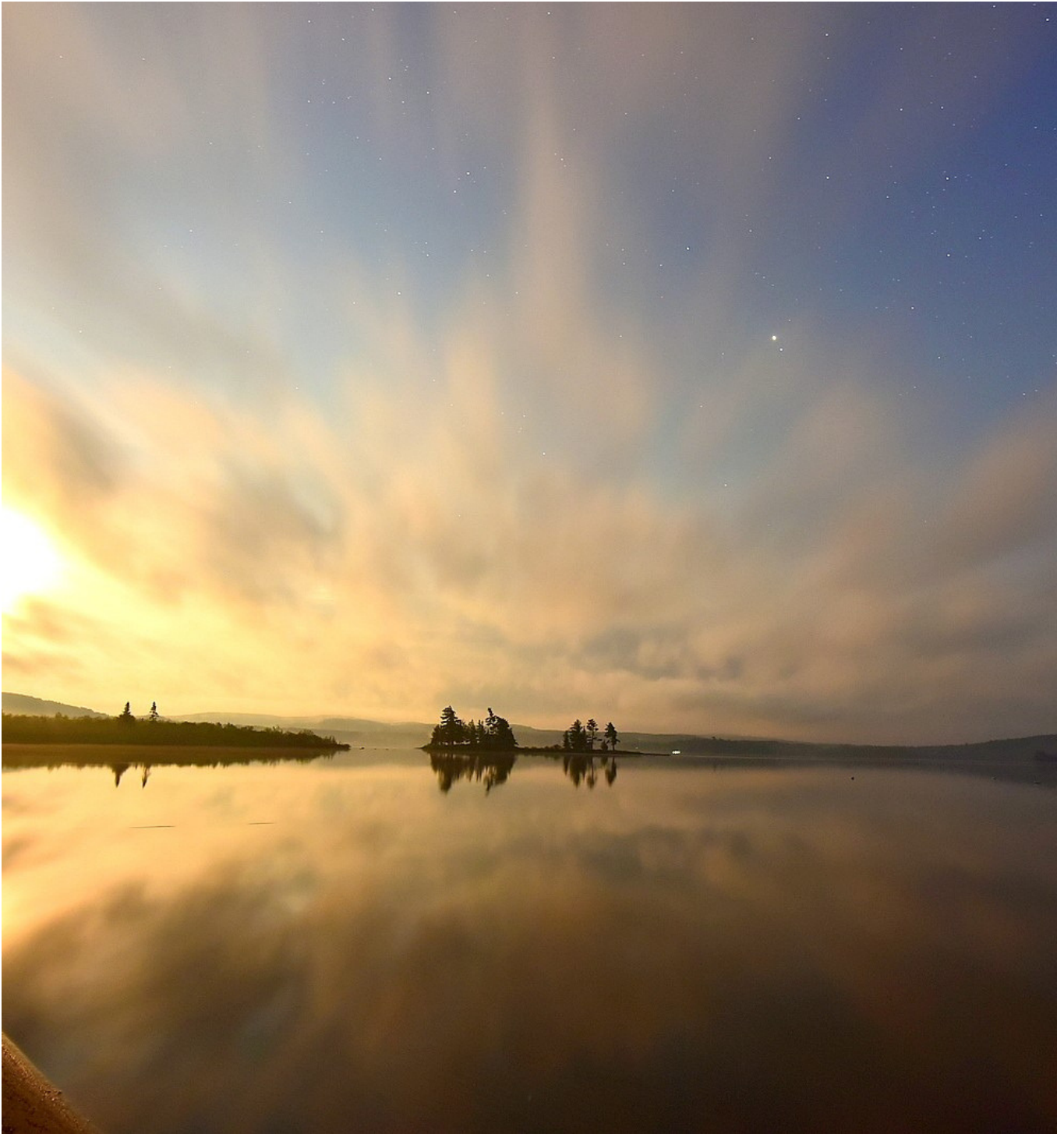
Councillor Michael Rickward: michaelrickward@gmail.com

Councillor Cheryl Philip: councillorcherylphilip@gmail.com

Mayor Carol Ballantyne: mayorballantyne@gmail.com

Councillor Elizabeth Stermsek: liz.stermsek@outlook.com

Councillor Paul Ziraldo: pziraldo@live.ca



INTRODUCTION

The Kearney Strategic Development Plan 2019-2025 is a community report with directions developed directly from residents, businesses, and tourists. Kearney, Ontario is a small and vibrant community on the cusp of exponential growth and development. The Kearney Strategic Development Plan embodies the priorities, hopes, and ideas of our community and defines the Town's vision over the next six years.

This document is not just limited to Town initiatives as everyone has a role in shaping the future of Kearney. Government, elected officials, municipal staff, businesses, partners, stakeholders, volunteers, and residents all need to work together and collaborate to ensure that the goals in this Strategic Plan will be achieved.

A NEW PLAN

"I love the lakes, wilderness, peaceful surroundings, and the intimate small town feel." -Resident of Kearney

Many things have changed since our last Town of Kearney Strategic Economic Development Plan adopted in 2008. With the changes and advances in our world over the past eleven years, it is time to develop a new 2019 Strategic Development Plan that is relevant to our current landscape of Kearney and the world. A new Strategic Development Plan will help guide Kearney through the next six years and will be integral to grant applications and funding. The new Strategic Development Plan will also give Government, residents, municipal staff and local stakeholders a guideline over the next six years and will help inform Town Council when making decisions on development for Kearney.



DEVELOPED BY THE COMMUNITY

The community engagement process began in August 2018 through various forms of consultation with the public and Economic Development Advisory Committee. Through different engagement methods such as: attending community events, Strategic Plan Vision Cards, online surveys, and e-newsletters, we were able to engage with over 3000+ members of the public. All directions and goals have been compiled by permanent residents, cottagers, municipal staff, elected officials, local businesses, stakeholders, and tourists. Overall, five Community Priorities were identified and established:

- *Tourism*
- *Sustainable Environment & Infrastructure*
- *Economic Growth & Prosperity*
- *Technology*
- *Recreation & Leisure*

As a result, the Strategic Development Plan 2019-2025 enunciates the priorities and goals that will have a positive impact on the quality of life for those who live, work, and play in Kearney over the next six years.

TOURISM

Kearney is a community that welcomes tourism and visitors with open arms to Our Town.

Located in the heart of the Almaguin Highlands and 20 minutes north of Muskoka, Our Town is a popular tourism destination as we are also along three access routes to Algonquin Park. We are committed to enhancing tourism in Kearney through our natural resources, events, festivals, and new activities that engages people of all-ages.

KEY DIRECTIONS

- **Promote Kearney's location around the three access routes towards Algonquin Park.**
- **Ensure a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for tourists visiting the area.**
- **Foster a tourism environment that encourages different tourism activities and events to the area.**
- **Develop new accommodations for visitors to the area.**
- **Establish new tourist activities for youths and teens.**
- **Continue maintaining and promoting the attractions and outdoor community assets in the area.**



ACTIONS & SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- **Successful application of funding for community improvement grants towards tourism driven areas.**
- **New and different tourism activities and businesses are developed.**
- **Accommodations such as hotels, motels, cottages, etc. are approved and developed to host visitors and tourists.**
- **Outdoor tourist attractions such as trails, lakes, and beaches are well-maintained throughout the year.**
- **Directional signage to help find designated facilities, services, and natural features is implemented.**
- **An inventory of community facilities is developed.**



SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Kearney is a town known for its pristine waters, lush forests, natural resources, and beautiful scenery.

Our goal is to develop an attractive environment that benefits the community and increases Our Town aesthetically. When developing our infrastructure, sustainable development will always be considered to conserve our natural heritage and environment.

KEY DIRECTIONS

- **Develop the landscaping around our natural areas, trails, and parks.**
- **Protect, manage, and ensure the lakes and natural landscape of Kearney are clean.**
- **Maintain and improve the road system.**
- **Continue development of a vibrant downtown core in a sustainable manner.**
- **Ensure that development does not take away from the natural and environmental beauty of Kearney.**
- **Revitalize, reconstruct, and renovate older buildings to ensure that the buildings meet new safety standards.**



ACTIONS & SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- **The natural areas, trails, and parks meet the accessibility requirements of all users.**
- **The natural waters and landscape of Kearney are protected and well-maintained.**
- **Parking is expanded in busy areas of the downtown core.**
- **Sidewalks are fully installed from the Kearney Community Centre through Lions Park.**
- **Development in Kearney is achieved in a sustainable manner while continuing to keep the main characteristics of the Town.**
- **Logging of trees is completed in a sustainable manner and follows protocol of Ontario guidelines and regulations.**
- **Research the feasibility of developing and maintaining a heritage/nature trail.**



ECONOMIC GROWTH & PROSPERITY

Kearney is an ambitious town that is trending towards positive economic development.

Our goal is to develop an attractive Town that minimizes barriers to development while encouraging collaboration, business development, and investment from all industries. Our Town aims to attain a prosperous and diverse local economy that benefits all residents while providing a variety of quality and well-paying job opportunities.

KEY DIRECTIONS

- Continue growth and development while maintaining and considering the qualities that make Kearney unique.
- Foster a business environment that stimulates commerce and encourages small businesses.
- Strengthen the variety of service industries and businesses to provide residents with fundamental needs.
- Develop a diverse, strong and resilient economy with businesses that are open year-round.
- Support and promote local farming while protecting agricultural land.
- Attract businesses that specialize in youth engagement.



ACTIONS & SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- Growth and development in Kearney is managed in a sustainable manner.
- Strengthen the promotion of Kearney as a year-round destination and residency.
- New fundamental businesses and stores such as grocery and hardware stores are established to meet the needs of residents.
- A variety of events, services, and activities are provided year-round.
- Accommodations and real estate are developed to provide visitors, tourists, and potential residents with a place to stay.
- Young professionals and families are moving to Kearney.
- Potential small business owners are provided with access to information and advice to ensure successful business development in Kearney.



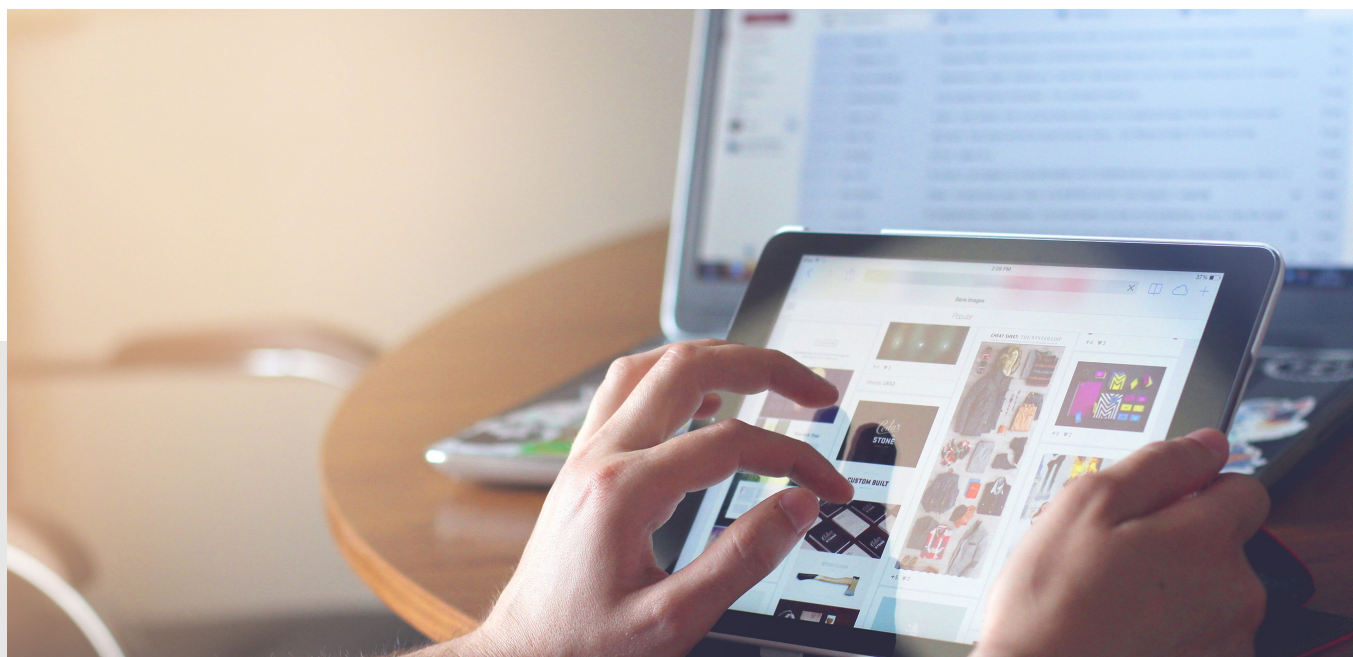
TECHNOLOGY

Kearney is a developing small town that is open and adaptive to new technology in order to stay with the current times.

Breaking down geographic barriers through technology is a way to connect Our Town with Canada and the rest of the world. The world is ever-progressing, and technology is a big part of everyday life. Ensuring that our technology is modern will continue to help bring new businesses, residents, and tourism to Our Town.

KEY DIRECTIONS

- **Expand Kearney digitally via website, social media, and other platforms.**
- **Strengthen cellular and data signal services in the area to ensure growth with businesses.**
- **Improve connectivity for the benefit of residents and visitors.**
- **Continue providing and expanding free Wi-Fi in public areas and/or areas that are busy.**
- **Provide efficient and effective channels for citizens to access town information and services.**



ACTIONS & SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- **The Town website and social media is consistently kept up-to-date to provide residents with updates regarding news, events, workshops, meetings, etc.**
- **Cellular and internet dead-zones in the area are eliminated to ensure connectivity across the entire Town.**
- **Wi-Fi is provided in many buildings across the Town.**
- **Connectivity, internet, cellular strength and speed are on-par with the provincial standards set by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).**
- **Transparent updates and access to information are consistently provided and updated via Town website and various digital media outlets.**



RECREATION & LEISURE

Kearney is a vibrant small community that takes pride in its heritage, annual events, festivals, and activities.

Our goal is to maintain a high quality of life for our residents through local access to recreational and leisure activities. It is our intention to continue bringing current and new events, festivals, health & fitness activities to participants and residents of all-ages while maximizing the usage of our current facilities and parks.

KEY DIRECTIONS

- Continue expanding opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation during both summer and winter seasons.
- Host year-round local events that celebrate Kearney's unique heritage and culture.
- Provide different activities for people of all-ages (seniors, adults, young adults, teens, youths, infants).
- Continue to maintain the current festivals and events while enhancing them to attract more tourism.
- Provide activities and hubs to help seniors maintain an active, engaging, and productive lifestyle.
- Maximize our recreational facilities.



ACTIONS & SIGNS OF SUCCESS

- A different variety of clubs and recreational programs for seniors, adults, teens, and youths are established and offered to ensure an all-inclusive community.
- Kearney's off-season months are identified and mitigated by new and unique events that celebrate the heritage and culture of Kearney.
- The Kearney Community Centre is fully-utilized with new recreational activities such as sport nights, dances, classes, youth clubs, etc.
- Current festivals and events are continued to ensure heritage and tourism is maintained.
- Amenities such as picnic tables, benches, accessibility ramps, garbage disposal units are improved and installed in areas where needed.



IMPLEMENTATION



Moving Forward and Keeping the Momentum Going in Kearney

The Town of Kearney will use this Strategic Development Plan to define the town's priorities and also prioritizing budget and resource allocations. The success of this Strategic Development Plan will be measured by the goals achieved from the 'Directions and Signs of Success' of each Key Priority. To analyze the progress of this Plan, an annual Progress Report/Review will be presented and updated on the Town of Kearney website and social media platforms by the Community Economic Development Officer. The simplest method for analyzing the success of this Plan will be seeing the positive change all around Kearney and the community. Collaboration among all residents, businesses, stakeholders, partners, and tourists will be critical to ensuring the success of the Strategic Development Plan.

Kearney will be a location that residents will continue to enjoy living, dining, relaxing, working, and playing. The possibilities over the next six years are infinite. Through the commitment of all, Kearney will continue the path to growth and it all starts with our Kearney Strategic Development Plan.





WWW.TOWNOFKEARNEY.CA

EMAIL: ADMIN@TOWNOFKEARNEY.CA

TELEPHONE: (705) 636-7752



Facebook.com/TownofKearney



@LifeInKearney



@LifeInKearney

**CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF KEARNEY
8 MAIN STREET
KEARNEY ON, POA 1M0**