
The Township of The Archipelago

A Strategy For Our Future



June 1996

Table Of Contents

| | Page |
|--|-----------|
| Executive Summary | |
| I. Introduction: Setting the Context for the Strategy | 1 |
| Provincial Interest in Rethinking Municipal Structures | 1 |
| The Archipelago is a Municipal Leader | 2 |
| Strategy to Reflect The Archipelago | 2 |
| II. The Township of The Archipelago: An Overview | 4 |
| Ontario's Newest Municipality | 4 |
| Predominantly Seasonal Residents | 5 |
| Commitment to Managing the National Environment | 6 |
| Fiscally Strong and Healthy | 7 |
| Limited Services Required | 8 |
| Organized to Deliver Cores Services | 9 |
| III. The Township of The Archipelago: A Strategy For The Future | 12 |
| Municipal Restructuring Initiatives | 12 |
| Objectives of The Archipelago's Strategy | 13 |
| Strategy Builds on Municipal Strengths | 14 |
| Strategy Targets Weaknesses | 16 |
| Other Initiatives Affecting The Archipelago | 17 |
| Strategy Guided by Five Key Principles | 18 |
| The Archipelago's Strategy for a Strong Future | 18 |
| IV. The Next Steps: Implementing the Strategy | 19 |
| Communicating the Strategy | 19 |
| Forming Municipal Partnerships | 20 |
| Developing a Work Program | 20 |

The Township of The Archipelago

A Strategy For Our Future:

Executive Summary

The strategy for The Archipelago depends on the mutual agreement, cooperation and support of all municipalities in the West Parry Sound District with shoreline along Georgian Bay. The strategy is not about takeovers, land grabs or building up municipal assessment bases. Rather it focuses on ensuring the continued health and well being of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas. The Archipelago strongly believes that this protection is only possible through the continuation of a strong, financially secure, independent municipality.

The Township of The Archipelago: Current Operations

The Archipelago was established in 1980. It is a water based, seasonally oriented municipality consisting of several thousand islands in Georgian Bay and a number of inland freshwater lakes, primarily used for recreational purposes. With the exception of Pointe au Baril Station, Skerryvore and certain sections of the inland lakes and very limited parts of Georgian Bay, access to and movement within the municipality, is by water.

Since its inception, the municipality has operated with a clear mandate – the preservation of the Georgian Bay shoreline and related watershed areas. All of its initiatives, particularly in the areas of land use planning and the environment, operate within an overall guideline of controlling growth and limiting development.

The Township of The Archipelago is thinking and planning for its future. Recent Provincial funding cutbacks and announcements on the need to seriously rethink how municipalities provide services are the catalysts for thinking about new directions for the Township of The Archipelago.



April 1996

The Township of The Archipelago: Future Strategy

The Archipelago has developed the elements of a strategy to guide its future direction. The strategy requires support from a number of parties—first and most importantly from its taxpayers and various community interests; secondly from its municipal neighbours and partners; and finally from the Province.

The strategy's objectives (not listed in any priority order) are to:

- Maintain the current fabric of the municipality in terms of land uses, development, the focus on the environment and responsible planning
- Build upon and expand the township's philosophy which is centred around the continued preservation and protection of the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas
- Maintain the municipality's political independence and right to plan for the future based on its shared philosophy
- Continue to remain economically viable and capable of providing services to meet the needs of the municipality's taxpayers
- Develop solutions in partnership with neighbouring municipalities that are mindful of the collective interests of these municipalities and the philosophy of The Archipelago. These interests relate to the ongoing maintenance of strong municipal governments which serve the interests of their taxpayers.

In preparing its strategy for the future, The Township of The Archipelago reviewed Vision 2020, the strategy for the Georgian Bay Association. Both strategies embody the same general philosophy, which focuses on the preservation of Georgian Bay and its related areas.

The Township of The Archipelago wishes to work with its neighbouring municipalities to implement a strategy consisting of the following three elements:

1. The creation of an expanded municipality responsible for the Georgian Bay shoreline within the District of Parry Sound.
2. Some of the unorganized townships will be included as part of this expanded municipality, to serve as a buffer area between land uses along the shoreline and related watershed areas, and those of more inland areas.
3. Once established, the new municipality will negotiate with other interested organized municipalities as appropriate.

As a financially strong municipality, The Archipelago is committed to playing a leadership role in this strategy development and its implementation.

The Next Steps: Implementing the Strategy

As a first step, the Township of The Archipelago will formally approve the strategy document and initiate a program of communications with taxpayers and community interests in The Archipelago, as well as with all municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.

Meetings will be held with potential municipal partners to discuss the strategy and agree on next steps. Municipalities to be included in these discussions are listed below:

- Carling Township
- Humphrey Township
- Town of Parry Sound
- McDougall Township
- Foley Township
- Shawanaga Township
- Harrison Township
- Wallbridge Township
- Henvey Township
- Mowat Township

All involved municipal partners need to develop a work program for proceeding. The work program will include agreement on who will be involved in the process, how the working sessions will be structured and the detailed Terms of Reference for implementing the strategy.

I. Introduction: Setting The Context For The Strategy

The Township of The Archipelago, like other municipalities in Ontario, is thinking and planning for its future. Recent Provincial funding cutbacks and announcements on the need to seriously rethink how municipalities provide services are the catalysts for thinking about new directions for the Township of The Archipelago.

The Archipelago is financially healthy and does not suffer the financial constraints now facing numerous other municipalities. The municipality also enjoys a clear and agreed upon rationale for its existence – the preservation of the Georgian Bay shoreline and related watershed areas. The future of the municipality depends on its ability to ensure that this goal is recognized and realized.

Provincial Interest in Rethinking Municipal Structures

Traditionally municipalities have existed as creatures of the Province of Ontario. Established by Provincial legislation, the majority of services themselves and the standards for planning, financing and operating these municipal services have been prescribed by the Province. Until very recently, the Province was responsible for funding major elements of these services, particularly capital infrastructure.

The situation has changed dramatically. Responding to municipal requests for more control and self management, and recognizing the need to reduce the Provincial debt, the Province passed legislation which allows municipalities more flexibility in how they operate. Along with this increased freedom comes reductions in Provincial funding to municipalities. The Province is suggesting that municipal restructuring is one way to deal with the opportunities/challenges of providing local municipal services within the new financial realities.

The Archipelago is A Municipal Leader

The Township of The Archipelago prides itself on being a highly focused, well run municipality. One of the newest municipalities in Ontario, The Archipelago was created in recognition of the need politically to recognize and respect the interests of taxpayers owning recreational properties along the Georgian Bay shoreline and within its watershed areas.

Unlike other municipalities where often there are conflicting views on growth and development, the Council and ratepayers of the Township of The Archipelago are uniform in their interest in protecting the natural environment, limiting growth and controlling development. Areas of particular attention have included land use planning and waste management. The Archipelago developed an Official Plan which was approved by the Province within three years of the municipality's creation. Authority to grant consents was delegated to the Township and became effective in January, 1987. The municipality also has secured and developed landfill sites to meet The Archipelago's needs for the next 25 years. Waste disposal sites have been set up and are being effectively maintained.

Strategy to Reflect The Archipelago's Interests

The Township of The Archipelago is taking seriously the Provincial directive to explore new and innovative ways of providing municipal services. The municipality thinks of itself as a leader within West Parry Sound in many areas, particularly those related to land use planning and the natural environment.

At the same time, The Archipelago recognizes its differences compared to other municipalities. Specifically, it is a water based, seasonally oriented municipality without the interests or concerns of neighbouring municipalities focused on providing a full range of municipal services to year round residents. It is committed to maintaining its current philosophy of very limited growth.

The continued well being of the municipality depends on the ongoing protection of its primary economic asset – the recreational properties within The Archipelago.

The Archipelago is interested in working with other municipalities within the West Parry Sound District to continue to provide a local government which meets the needs and interests of its taxpayers. The municipality realizes the benefits of working with its neighbouring municipalities in the provision of shared services.

From the perspective of the Township of The Archipelago, the future requires some realignment of existing municipal boundaries. It also requires the goodwill and cooperation of all of the municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.

As a first step, it is important to describe the existing municipality – why it exists and the key services it provides. Based on this background information, it is possible to establish a strategic direction to guide the municipality in the future.

II. The Township of The Archipelago: An Overview

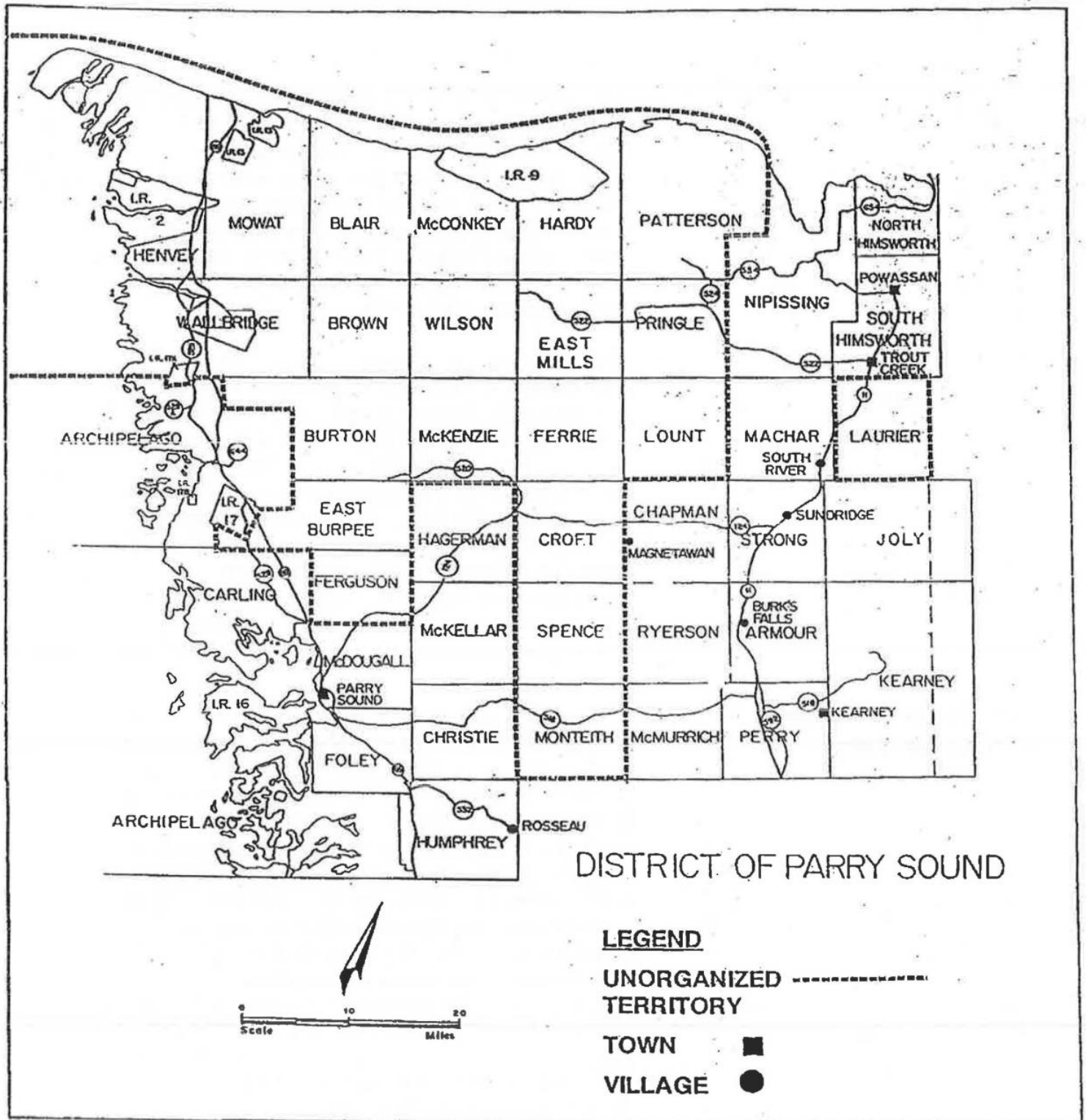
The Township of The Archipelago is a municipality with a difference. Located in an area of the Province noted for remote cottaging, the municipality works hard to preserve its unique character which is based on the preservation and conservation of the Georgian Bay watershed area. The municipality's economic strategy for the future is based on the ongoing preservation and conservation of the area.

The Township's philosophy is based on maintaining the existing situation, not growth and development. The needs and interests of its taxpayers are different than those of its neighbours. There is a limited need or demand for typical municipal services as the majority of residents are seasonal. The Township of The Archipelago is committed to working with its neighbours in the West Parry Sound District to ensure the continuation of the preservation of the natural environment which is the hallmark of the municipality.

Ontario's Newest Municipality

The Township of The Archipelago was established in 1980. The impetus for creating the municipality originated from a strong desire by its inhabitants to preserve its high quality recreational character and the natural environment. The municipality, shown in Figure 1, can be described best as remote and sparsely populated. It consists of approximately 85,000 hectares of land and an equal area of water within its boundaries, making it the largest municipality within the District of Parry Sound (see Figure 2). It extends a distance of approximately 100 km from north to south. The north and south portions of the Township are separated by Carling Township and the Town of Parry Sound and small parts of McDougall Township and Foley Township.

Figure 2
The District of Parry Sound



The Township of The Archipelago emerged from four previously unorganized townships on the east coast of Georgian Bay, all sharing similar recreational land use character. It consists of several thousand islands in Georgian Bay and a number of inland freshwater lakes, primarily used for recreational purposes. A large part of the southern portion of the municipality is a wilderness park. With the exception of Pointe au Baril Station, Skerryvore and certain sections of the inland lakes and very limited parts of Georgian Bay, access to and movement within the municipality is by water.

Predominately Seasonal Residents

Published population figures for the Township of The Archipelago require clarification. As shown below, The Archipelago has the largest number of households in West Parry Sound. However, of the estimated 3,092 households in the municipality, over 90% (2,801) are seasonal.

| West Parry Sound District | Permanent Population | Total Households | % of Recreational Households |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Town of Parry Sound | 6,052 | 2,814 | 1% |
| Village of Rosseau | 276 | 157 | 37% |
| Township of Carling | 911 | 1,476 | 73% |
| Township of Christie | 519 | 895 | 73% |
| Township of Foley | 1,385 | 1,336 | 57% |
| Township of Hagerman | 445 | 834 | 75% |
| Township of Humphrey | 997 | 1,684 | 75% |
| Township of McDougall | 1,995 | 1,187 | 32% |
| Township of KcKellar | 794 | 1,229 | 70% |
| Township of The Archipelago | 598 | 3,092 | 91% |
| TOTAL | 13,972 | 14,704 | |

Source: Information Management Branch, Municipal Analysis and Retrieval System, Ministry of Municipal Affairs (based on 1994 data)

Note: This data was used as it is based on a consistent set of information. Individual municipalities may have numbers different from the Provincially collected information shown here. However, this information is used for the purposes of comparison only.

The community of Pointe au Baril is the principal concentration of year round residents. It serves as the area's tourist service centre for the northern portion of the municipality, and is maintaining a stable or slightly increasing population base of approximately 300 people. In addition to these published numbers, The Archipelago accommodates numerous unrecorded visitors who boat and camp within the municipality's boundaries.

Commitment to Managing the Natural Environment

The essence of the Township is derived from its natural environment. The majority of the lands and islands that make up The Archipelago are generally undeveloped. The scenic beauty of the natural landscape generates a high level of appeal to both taxpayers and visitors to the area.

The local economy of the municipality results primarily from the recreational base of the area. The economic strategy for the future of the municipality depends on the preservation of this recreational base. The Township's Official Plan strongly supports the preservation of this natural environment:

"The general goal of the Official Plan of The Archipelago is to preserve the unique and high quality of the natural environment which leads to a recreation experience which is both relaxing and aesthetically appealing to property owners and visitors who use the area, and is designed to make both property owners and visitors realize that they share equally in the responsibility of attaining this goal".

Fiscally Strong and Healthy

The Township of The Archipelago has a substantial and increasing assessment base, relative to the other municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.

| West Parry Sound District | Total Taxable Equalized Assessment | Percentage of the West Parry Sound District |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Town of Parry Sound | 371,603,309 | 14.0% |
| Village of Rosseau | 22,372,909 | 0.8% |
| Township of Carling | 257,856,428 | 9.7% |
| Township of Christie | 110,174,181 | 4.1% |
| Township of Foley | 255,299,191 | 9.6% |
| Township of Hagerman | 109,540,719 | 4.1% |
| Township of Humphrey | 488,411,202 | 18.3% |
| Township of McDougall | 193,704,398 | 7.3% |
| Township of KcKellar | 186,588,733 | 7.0% |
| Township of The Archipelago | 667,208,099 | 25.1% |
| TOTAL | 2,662,759,169 | 100.0% |

Source: Information Management Branch, Municipal Analysis and Retrieval System, Ministry of Municipal Affairs (based on 1994 data)

As a result of its healthy assessment, The Township is a significant source of financial support for Provincial and District services delivered by the local municipalities. The Township takes seriously its stewardship role in the municipal activities occurring within the West Parry Sound District. In fact, based on its assessment, The Archipelago is the largest single financial contributor to these services (25%), exceeding Humphrey Township (18%) and The Town of Parry Sound (14%). Given the interests of its taxpayers, the Township makes minimal demands upon these services (e.g. education, social assistance, health services).

Limited Services Required

Because of the character of the municipality, a limited number of services are required to provide for the taxpayers needs. The type and location of development expected in the Township generally will not demand increased public services and associated costs, except in the Pointe au Baril Station Neighbourhood.

One of the key municipal services provided by The Archipelago is land use planning. The municipality has its own Planning Committee and Planning Administrator. It was the first municipality within the District of Parry Sound delegated the authority to grant its own consents.

All water supplies and sewage disposal systems are privately owned. Adequate facilities are provided by the private sector to install and maintain these private systems. The municipality provides inspection services for new and expanding systems.

The Township is responsible for the maintenance and operation of waste disposal sites within its boundaries.

The Township supports watercraft as the primary mode of transportation. However, the municipality maintains 71.2 km of roads, some of which are only seasonally maintained.

The fire protection services that are available are provided on a volunteer basis by the local ratepayers' associations. The Township has arrangements with the Ministry of Natural Resources to ensure fire protection services for the undeveloped areas.

There are a number of services provided by government agencies other than the Township. However, the Township pays for these services, through costs which are apportioned based on assessment.

Organized to Deliver Core Services

The Township of The Archipelago is governed by a Reeve elected at large and 10 Councillors elected on a ward basis. The municipality is divided into six wards – three in the north and three in the south, as outlined below.

North Wards

1. Pointe Au Baril Station
2. Bayfield-Nares
3. Pointe Au Baril-Shawanaga

South Wards

4. San Souci-South Channel
5. Crane-Blackstone
6. Healey-Kapikog

The Council governs the municipality through regular monthly Council meetings and Committee of the Whole meetings (focussing on such areas as finance and administration, planning and the environment).

In addition there are a number of other committees which direct The Township's activities as outlined below.

- Boundary Review Committee
- Committee of Adjustment
- Island Landfill Alternatives Committee*
- Massassauga Park Committee
- Native Issues Committee*
- Site Plan Control Committee*
- Skerryvore Road Access Committee*
- South Landfill Site Committee*
- Water Quality Committee*

* Includes citizen members.

Citizens are members of some of these committees. In addition, the Council maintains close relationships with the numerous cottagers associations in the area.

The Township provides mandated services which are required by legislation as well as additional services which The Archipelago considers fundamental to meet the needs of its taxpayers.

Areas of Service

- General government
 - Administration of local municipality
- Protection to persons and property
 - Building inspection and control
- Transportation services
 - Roadways
 - Winter control
- Environmental services
 - Private sewage system inspections
 - Waste disposal management
- Health services
 - Public health services
 - Public health inspection and control
- Social and family services
 - General assistance
 - Assistance to aged persons
- Recreation and cultural services
 - Recreation services
 - Libraries
 - Other cultural (e.g. special events, donations to groups)
- Planning and development
 - Planning and zoning
 - Shoreline protection program

The municipality employs a full-time permanent staff of 15 plus one contract employee to deliver its services. The costs for providing these services and operating the municipality are shown below.

These costs include services which The Archipelago undertakes on its own behalf (e.g. planning and development, environmental services) and those which it pays for based on its assessment (Provincially mandated services such as social and family services).

| West Parry Sound District | General Govn't | Protection to Persons & Property | Transportation Services | Environmental Services | Health Services | Social & Family Services | Rec and Cultural Services | Planning & Dev | Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Town of Parry Sound | 764,054 | 1,323,994 | 1,150,044 | 3,042,845 | 120,481 | 329,808 | 5 87,187 | 268,202 | 7,586,615 |
| Village of Rosseau | 79,525 | -5,661 | 23,793 | 27,010 | 4,475 | 17,479 | 16,678 | 2,876 | 166,175 |
| Township of Carling | 435,786 | 111,226 | 343,377 | 72,254 | 27,688 | 198,813 | 25,184 | 41,851 | 1,256,179 |
| Township of Christie | 212,651 | 26,081 | 229,837 | 24,480 | 15,998 | 79,076 | 20,839 | 13,263 | 619,225 |
| Township of Foley | 383,369 | 182,016 | 293,865 | 137,434 | 18,951 | 168,500 | 40,379 | 52,525 | 1,277,039 |
| Township of Hagerman | 101,064 | 58,701 | 214,907 | 20,439 | 7,727 | 67,496 | 35,438 | 12,216 | 517,988 |
| Township of Humphrey | 278,424 | 148,500 | 515,186 | 189,673 | 22,104 | 329,220 | 196,773 | 58,492 | 1,738,372 |
| Township of McDougall | 244,265 | 141,687 | 565,911 | 287,209 | 15,784 | 132,777 | 56,543 | 27,009 | 1,343,418 |
| Township of KcKellar | 154,588 | 86,427 | 329,989 | 34,578 | 20,664 | 121,434 | 39,588 | 18,648 | 805,916 |
| Township of The Archipelago | 534,334 | 125,805 | 389,311 | 387,508 | 39,157 | 565,753 | 74,934 | 133,735 | 2,250,537 |

Source: Information Management Branch, Municipal Analysis and Retrieval System, Ministry of Municipal Affairs (based on 1994 data)

Note: These expenditures include monies from senior governments for specific projects (often one-time grants which do not appear in other years).

III. The Township of The Archipelago: A Strategy For The Future

The Archipelago has developed the elements of a strategy to guide its future direction. The success of the strategy requires preserving the strengths of the municipality while addressing the challenges it faces. The strategy requires support from a number of parties – first and most importantly from its taxpayers and various community interests; secondly from its municipal neighbours and partners; and finally from the Province.

Municipal Restructuring Initiatives

Municipalities in the West Parry Sound District already are exploring opportunities for partnering in the provision of shared municipal services. Initiatives in areas such as materials for road maintenance, cooperative purchasing for office supplies, and waste disposal are underway and should be continued.

In addition, there are more fundamental discussions concerning municipal restructuring. Three recent decisions will impact upon the Township of The Archipelago.

- Councils for the Township of Humphrey, the Township of Christie, the Township of Foley and the Village of Rosseau have each passed resolutions seeking a provincial commission to develop a restructuring proposal for the townships of Christie, Foley, Humphrey, the Village of Rosseau, the west half of the unorganized Township of Monteith, and including boundary adjustments to the Township of The Archipelago (southern area).
- McDougall Township Council has passed a resolution empowering the municipality to explore a rationalization of shared services and/or restructuring with neighbouring municipalities. It is understood that these

neighbouring municipalities are Carling and McKellar Townships.

- The Town of Parry Sound Council has passed a resolution stating that it is prepared to investigate and discuss various forms of municipal restructuring with West Parry Sound area municipalities, including shared services, partnerships, amalgamations, and/or other appropriate alternatives.

Like these other municipalities, the Township of The Archipelago has been thinking about how best to plan for its future.

Objectives of The Archipelago's Strategy

The Archipelago is committed to a strategy which will enable it to better serve its taxpayers and meet the original objectives behind the creation of the municipality. The strategy also builds upon the Township's commitment to protecting and preserving the Georgian Bay shoreline and adjacent watershed areas for the enjoyment of tourists to the area and for future generations.

The strategy's objectives (not listed in any priority order) are to:

- Maintain the current fabric of the municipality in terms of land uses, development, the focus on the environment and responsible planning
- Build upon and expand the township's philosophy which is centred around the continued preservation and protection of the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas.
- Maintain the municipality's political independence and right to plan for the future based on its shared philosophy
- Continue to remain economically viable and capable of providing services to meet the needs of the municipality's taxpayers

- Develop solutions in partnership with neighbouring municipalities that are mindful of the collective interests of these municipalities and the philosophy of The Archipelago.

The strategy will be successful if it results in a larger, contiguous municipality focused on the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas. The new municipality will continue to reflect today's concern for environmentally sound land use planning. The policies in its existing Official Plan will be applied to more of the Georgian Bay shoreline, watersheds and adjacent areas.

In preparing its strategy for the future, The Township of The Archipelago reviewed Vision 2020, the strategy for the Georgian Bay Association. Both strategies embody the same general philosophy, which focuses on the preservation of Georgian Bay and its related areas.

Strategy Builds on Municipal Strengths

The Archipelago is blessed with a number of strengths which combine to make it one of the key municipalities in the West Parry Sound District. Some of these strengths (not listed in any priority order) are listed below:

- **A common understanding and philosophy throughout the municipality** of why the municipality exists. Members of Council, community interests and taxpayers all are committed to preserving and protecting Georgian Bay and its watershed areas.
- **Strong land use planning.** The Archipelago was the first municipality in the District of Parry Sound to hire professional planning staff. It was also the first municipality in the District of Parry Sound to be granted the consents function from the Province of Ontario.

- **Healthy assessment base.** The Township of The Archipelago, because of its size and the seasonal cottaging that occurs, enjoys a healthy assessment base. It has the largest assessment, in the West Parry Sound District.
- **Well organized and efficient municipal operations.** The Archipelago prides itself on being well run and administered at both the elected and staff levels. The municipality also enjoys strong connections and communications with strong, well organized and long established ratepayers' associations who also communicate well with one another.
- **Focus on the environment.** The municipality has an excellent landfill facility with good capacity to meet its future needs. The municipality is also participating in a pilot project with the Ministry of the Environment and Energy where it is inspecting and approving existing, new, and expanded septic systems. The Archipelago also has introduced water quality testing throughout the municipality.
- **Uniform land uses.** The predominant land use in the area is by seasonal residents. Consequently, there are no industrial developments and commercial uses are directed at meeting the needs of seasonal residents in the municipality. The overall focus of the municipality's land use policies is on preserving the status quo as opposed to new development.

Strategy Targets Weaknesses

Several concerns have been identified by The Archipelago. These concerns must be addressed if the strategy is to be successful.

- **The municipality is physically divided.** The Township of the Archipelago is divided into two separate areas – the northern and the southern portion of the municipality. The Town of Parry Sound, Carling Township and small parts of McDougall Township and Foley Township separate these two portions. Despite a common philosophy and land use base, this physical separation makes the municipality vulnerable to proposals from other municipalities in the area (e.g. the proposal to make adjustments to the southern boundary of The Archipelago).
- **Small population.** The Archipelago is one of the largest municipalities in the District of Parry Sound in terms of size of the municipality. However, it has a small population for its size. The population reduces further in terms of permanent, year round residents. The Archipelago has concerns that its small population base makes it a prime target for proposals from other municipalities. Officials are also concerned that they may lack influence with senior levels of government because of their small, permanent population base.
- **Insufficient shoreline** to adequately achieve its objectives. There are some who would like to see the municipality expand to include all of the shoreline and related watershed areas from the Severn River to McGregor Bay. Given its current size and physical division, The Archipelago is unable to fully realize its prime mandate of preserving the Georgian Bay shoreline and adjacent areas.
- **Demand for increasing services.** The vast majority of the township's taxpayers are pleased with the current level of services provided by the municipality. However, some

residents both permanent and seasonal, are interested in more roads, improved garbage collection and other services provided by the more traditional urban municipalities.

- **Pressure for growth.** As technology improves and lifestyles and working conditions change, The Archipelago will experience pressures and conflicts relating to increased boating activity, building activity, and general interest in changing from the status quo as land costs rise and the value of the properties in the township increase.

Other Initiatives Affecting The Archipelago

There are other activities underway which will affect the future of the Township of The Archipelago.

- **Native land claims.** The native land claims in the area could provide an opportunity to adjust municipal boundaries.
- **Unorganized townships.** Some of the unorganized townships physically resemble The Archipelago and could become part of the municipality. Some residents in these areas may have concerns about potential tax increases and regulations that would result from becoming part of an organized municipality.
- **Provincial cutbacks.** The financial reductions in municipal grants provide an incentive for municipalities to think about new and more cost effective ways of providing municipal services. However, the financial health of The Archipelago could make it susceptible to other municipalities who do not share its philosophy but would enjoy its tax base.

Strategy Guided by Key Principles

The strategy for The Archipelago builds upon the fundamental objective of being responsible for more shoreline and thereby meeting the township's overall goal of preserving and protecting the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas. The strategy has been guided by the following principles:

- Any new lands to be assumed by The Archipelago must be compatible with and support the township's philosophy of preserving and protecting the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas.
- Any new lands to be assumed by the township must respect watersheds and drainage areas
- New lands may be assumed if they provide a buffer between the Georgian Bay shoreline and other uses
- New lands to be assumed should focus on water access wherever possible.

The Archipelago's Strategy for a Strong Future

The Township of The Archipelago wishes to work with its neighbouring municipalities to implement a strategy consisting of the following three elements:

1. The creation of an expanded municipality responsible for the Georgian Bay shoreline within the District of Parry Sound
2. Some of the unorganized inland townships will be included as part of this expanded municipality, to serve as a buffer area between land uses along the shoreline and related watershed areas, and those of more inland areas.
3. Once established, the new municipality will negotiate with other interested organized municipalities as appropriate.

As a financially strong municipality, The Archipelago is committed to playing a leadership role in this strategy development and implementation.

IV. The Next Steps: Implementing The Strategy

The Township of The Archipelago has taken a leadership position in developing the strategy and its key elements. However, its success in moving forward depends on partnerships with all neighbouring municipalities, regular and open communications, and a commitment to change.

Communicating the Strategy

As a first step, The Township of The Archipelago will formally approve the strategy document and initiate a program of communications. Special attention will be given to the taxpayers and community interests in The Archipelago. It will also be important to discuss the strategy with all municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.

Meetings will be held with the potential municipal partners to discuss the strategy and agree on the next steps. Municipalities to be included in these discussions are listed below:

- Carling Township
- Humphrey Township
- Town of Parry Sound
- McDougall Township
- Foley Township
- Shawanaga Township
- Harrison Township
- Wallbridge Township
- Henvey Township
- Mowat Township

Forming Municipal Partnerships

The strategy depends on the mutual agreement, cooperation and support of all municipalities in the West Parry Sound District with shoreline along Georgian Bay. The strategy is not about takeovers, land grabs or building up municipal assessment bases. Rather, it focuses on ensuring the continued health and well being of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas. The Archipelago strongly believes that this protection is only possible through the continuation of a strong, financially secure, independent municipality.

Developing a Work Program

All involved municipal partners need to develop a work program for proceeding. As part of this process, the following questions need to be answered:

- **Who will be involved in developing the work program for this strategy?** As a first step, the involved municipalities will appoint elected officials and staff to develop the work program. The individuals assigned to the project must be able to speak on behalf of their respective municipalities. Ideally, a committee of 10-15 people will be created. It may be desirable to have appointed officials on the committee with senior staff in attendance as observers/advisors.
- **How will the working sessions be structured?** Once the committee has been established, it will be important to develop some simple operating guidelines. Matters such as meetings (when and where), taking minutes and following up on agreed upon activities will need to be discussed and a plan developed. Meetings may need to be held every two weeks at the beginning of the process and then monthly once the details have been worked out and implementation is proceeding.

- **What are the Terms of Reference for implementing the strategy?** A critical part of getting started involves thinking and talking about how the strategy development will proceed.

Typical questions to be addressed include the following

- What do we hope to achieve through this strategy?
- What are the key components to be included in the strategy?
- Who will be responsible for each of these components?
- How long will the strategy take to implement?
- How will costs be apportioned?
- What is the political and administrative composition of the new municipality?
- Are there current municipal services now being provided that are unnecessary?
- Are there new or different services to be provided?

As part of this process, it will be useful to speak with other municipalities who have undertaken similar partnerships and restructured their municipalities as a result. In addition, the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers has produced a how to manual entitled, "Making It Work" which is targeted specifically to municipalities interested in amalgamations and restructuring. It provides a step-by-step guide which can be used to develop the work program.

