

BSRA Input for  
Bluewater Strategic Planning

April 16, 2005

PREAMBLE

In January 2005, the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association submitted input to the Strategic Plan process. Since that time, Municipal Council has developed its draft Strategic Plan. This document is response to the draft Strategic Plan published in March 2005.

GENERAL RESPONSE

B.S.R.A. commends Bluewater Council on the process, structure, and content of the Draft Strategic Plan. The attempts to define the vision, to describe the mission statement, to outline the principles and values, to lay out the areas of effort, and to chart implementation plans are very worthwhile. They will hopefully guide the leadership and decision-making processes in Bluewater for several years. They should establish a tone which will enable Bluewater to move successfully into the future.

In the January 2005 input, B.S.R.A. outlined three "Strengths" (lake, diversity, land) and six "Concerns" (economic development, environment, tax equity, de-amalgamation, political leadership, and administration). The draft Strategic Plan substantially addresses two of the three "strengths" and five of the six concerns. It does not address the topic "lake" appropriately, and it does not lay out the "economic development" plans fully enough. Finally, a sentence on the issue of "property tax distribution" is not stated as clearly as it might be.

SPECIFICS

1. The draft Strategic Plan refers many times to "quality of life", and it broadly refers to "environmental beauty", "natural features and assets", and "use of the community's resources". But it does not specifically or clearly address one of the most fundamental problems facing our community – the pollution of our lake water. This phenomenon does immeasurable damage to our population and to the image of Bluewater both inside and outside of this community.

This omission could be addressed by placing more emphasis on Bluewater's responsibility to "uphold our stewardship of the physical environment" in the Vision statement on "Quality of life", or the Mission statement on "Enhance our quality of life". It should also be addressed by including references to lakeshore water quality issues in the Principles and Values section on "being accountable for the efficient and effective use of the community's resources" and in the Areas of

Effort section “quality of life values”.

2. The draft Strategic Plan does refer to the development of a multi-dimensional economic development strategy. But, this initiative should develop a clearer vision for the economic future of the community. Hopefully this vision would include the development of a “technologically-friendly community” and supports for manufacturing, retail trade, accommodation, food and beverage, and construction, as well as the sectors mentioned on page 5-1.

The draft Strategic Plan reflects a tension between “respecting our traditions” and encouraging future aspirations. This tension should reflect the needs of developing a successful economic community that will carry residents through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It should not rely on a type of thinking that says “We have always done it this way and therefore we’re going to continue doing it this way”.

On page 5-3, in the section on “Areas of Effort”, on the third line, the sentence referring to property tax distribution is very unclear. It says “...property tax distribution is becoming increasingly concentrated...” Does this mean that “The heaviest property tax burden is falling on a concentrated area of the municipality”? If so, then B.S.R.A. supports this comment