



# Township of The Archipelago Strategic Plan 2021



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## Acknowledgements

Communication and collaboration with the Township of The Archipelago Council, Staff, Community Associations and TOA environmental partners have played an integral part in the Strategic Plan review process. The 2021 Strategic Plan has been developed with the assistance of Karen Jones Consulting Inc.

# Introduction and Background

Established in 1980, the Township of The Archipelago (TOA) is a water-based, seasonally oriented municipality consisting of several thousand islands in Georgian Bay and a number of inland freshwater lakes. The municipality originated from a strong desire to recognize and respect the interests of its taxpayers at the political level and to preserve its high-quality recreational character and 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 Township are generally undeveloped, with 87% comprised of Crown land, Conservation Reserves and Provincial Parks. The scenic beauty of the natural landscape generates a high level of appeal to both taxpayers and visitors to the area.

The Township acknowledges that the community resides on traditional Anishinabek territory, under the terms of the Robinson-Huron Treaty #61 of 1850 and the Williams Treaties of 1923. For thousands of years, the Ojibway, Chippewa, Odawa, and Pottawatomi peoples resided and utilized the coast for their livelihoods and cultural strengthening. Today, the Township is home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

The Township is unique in recognizing its environment as the primary imperative of its official plan. Since its inception, the municipality has operated with the mandate to preserve the Georgian Bay shoreline, its inland lakes and its watershed areas. The Archipelago strongly believes that this protection is only possible through the continuation of a strong, financially secure, independent municipality. All of its initiatives, particularly in the areas of land use planning and the environment, contribute to the overall goal of limiting development by controlling growth.

The Township prides itself on being a highly focused, well-run municipality. In order to set the foundation for the future, The Archipelago has conducted a review of its 1996 Strategy and developed a Strategic Plan to ensure the municipality continues to serve its community in a sustainable and responsible manner while adhering to its commitment to maintain the well-being of its environment.

The TOA also realizes the benefits of working with its neighbouring municipalities in the provision of shared services to provide a local government which meets the needs of its community.

Strategic objectives that were identified in the *1996 Township of The Archipelago's Strategy for our Future* were reconfirmed through the review process:

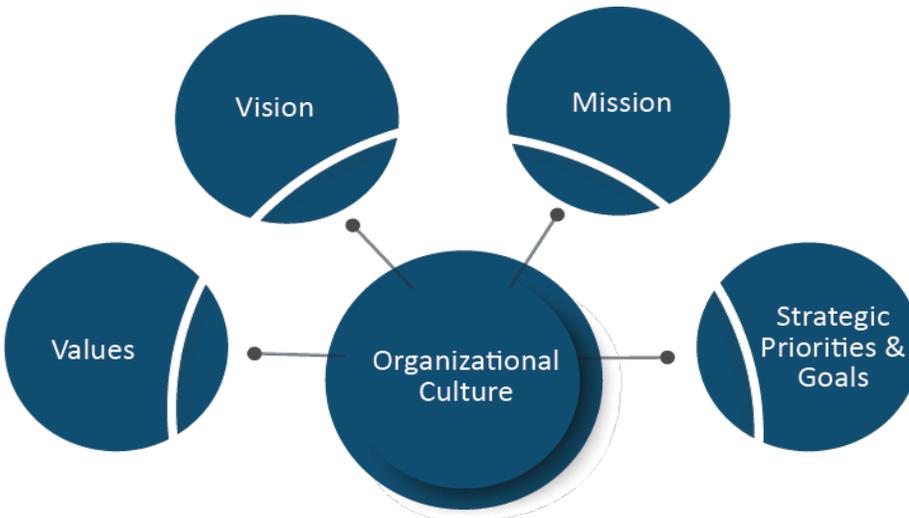
- Maintain the current fabric of the municipality in terms of land use, development, focus on the environment and responsible planning
- Build upon and expand the Township's philosophy, which is centred around the continued preservation and protection of the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas
- Maintain the municipality's political independence and right to plan for the future based on its philosophy
- Continue to remain economically viable and capable of providing services to meet the needs of its community
- Develop solutions in partnership with neighbouring municipalities that are mindful of collective interests and the Township's philosophy

This document outlines strategic priorities and goals for the TOA to ensure the continued health and wellbeing of its community, along with the eastern Georgian Bay shoreline and its inland lakes and watershed areas. Successful implementation of the TOA Strategic Plan depends on the mutual agreement, cooperation and support from its community, its stakeholders and the municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.



# Strategic Plan Implementation

The Township of The Archipelago’s organizational culture is guided by its vision, mission, values, strategic priorities and goals. The Strategic Plan guides the corporation, outlines priorities and objectives for the Township, and communicates the overall vision for the community. It is a tool to facilitate Council policy development and decision making and guide Senior Management and Staff in developing and executing plans and actions in order to successfully achieve Township goals.

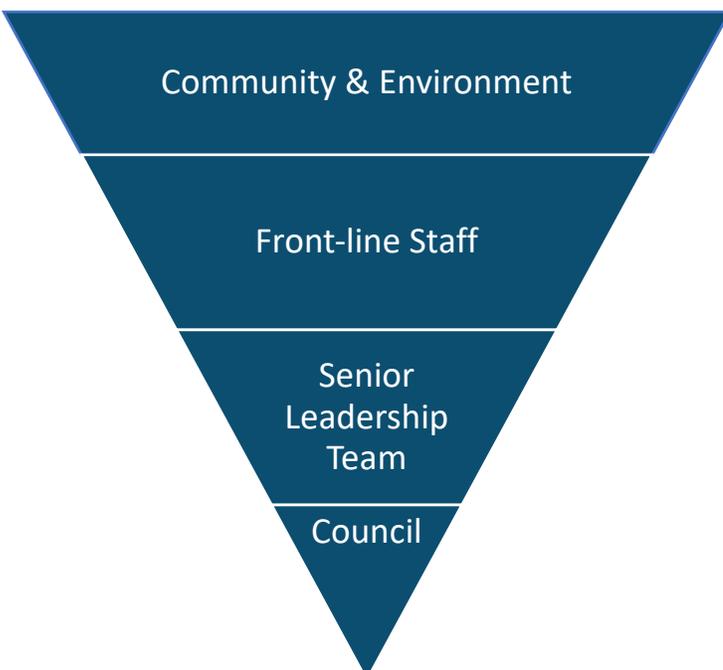


The Strategic Plan provides direction for the development of future plans, strategies and actions that enable the Township to meet its vision and goals. It is intended to be a living document that meets the evolving needs of the Township, its community and its commitment to the environment.

Council is committed to reviewing the strategic priorities once every term in order to ensure they remain relevant, realistic and achievable.

Through the various departments, staff are responsible for the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of annual workplans that align with the strategic priorities set forth within the Strategic Plan to successfully move the Township forward in meeting its goals. Ongoing assessment and review of the Strategic Plan will ensure priorities, goals and objectives remain valid and consistently reflect the Township’s vision, mission and values.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICES & ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW



**Front-Line Staff** – directly serves and assists the community; delivers municipal services to the community, implements directions; provides feedback on community needs.

**Senior Leadership Team** – creates, establishes, and interprets policy through consultation with Community, Front-line Staff, and Council; follows Council direction; provides expert recommendations to Council; leads, facilitates, and implements organizational decisions; provides effective and efficient delivery of services and programs.

**Council** – reflects community interests; consults with the community; leads strategic direction; duty to protect municipality on behalf of community (fiduciary, human resources, brand, legal, etc.).



# Vision, Mission and Values

The Township of The Archipelago's vision and mission outline the municipality's purpose and focus, and its values express the principles and standards that guide the Township's manner of operations and decision-making process.

## Our Vision

The Township of The Archipelago in partnership with its community will ensure the continued guardianship of the Georgian Bay Shoreline and its inland lakes and watershed areas.

## Our Mission

To preserve the unique and high-quality natural environment, leading to an experience that is both relaxing and aesthetically appealing to all, and as a community we share the responsibility of attaining this mission.

## Our Core Values

### **Environmental Guardianship:**

We protect and preserve the natural environment as our highest priority.

### **Advocacy:**

We take a leadership role in the education, promotion and advancement of environmental protection, sustainability and awareness.

### **Governance and Leadership:**

We lead by example by providing good governance, valuing transparency and being accountable in our actions.

### **Community and Heritage:**

We uphold and enhance the unique character, heritage, values, philosophy and independence of our community through open communication, engagement and community pride.

### **Equitability and Respect:**

We treat each other and others with respect, integrity, openness and fairness.



# Strategic Priorities and Goals

The Archipelago's strategic priorities and goals influence and shape decision making of the TOA Council and staff when fulfilling the municipality's mandate in regards to the continued health and wellbeing of its community and natural environment.



## Protect & Preserve

Adhere to the Township's mission and values centred on the continued preservation and protection of the Georgian Bay shoreline, inland lakes and watershed areas through environmental initiatives including prevention and removal of invasive species, responsible land use and controlled development.



## Sustainable & Cost-Effective Services

Deliver services and maintain infrastructure to meet the needs of the community in a manner that is responsible, sustainable, efficient and cost effective while maintaining the established mission, vision, values and beliefs of the Township of The Archipelago.



## Effective Relationships & Partnerships

Continue to strengthen and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders including neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, community associations, other levels of government and organizations.



## Leadership & Communications

Provide strong leadership through good governance, responsible decision making and open communication to encourage collaboration and develop solutions that are mindful of collective interests and aligned with the values and beliefs of the Township of The Archipelago.

# Strategic Objectives

The following lists demonstrate examples of actions taken by the Township of The Archipelago to achieve its strategic objectives. The TOA Official Plan and Operational Workplans outline additional policies, practices, and projects related to the Township's mandate and meeting its strategic priorities.



## Protect & Preserve

- Utilize the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB) as its primary environmental consultant, service and educational provider.
- Provide financial support to and work with Georgian Bay Forever (GBF) and GBB to prevent and remove non-native species (i.e. phragmites) and protect the natural flora and fauna.
- Partner with Shawanga First Nations on the creation of an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) on Shawanga Island.
- Provide municipal taxpayers with responsible and sustainable waste removal, education to reduce waste and increase diversion and effective management of the recycling program.
- Provide property tax exemptions (currently over \$146,000 per year) in support of the Georgian Bay Land Trust's (GBLT) commitment to protecting and preserving the natural state of the land.
- The Archipelago Official Plan and Zoning By-Law will continue to limit the number of new lots, in addition to ensuring lot sizes have minimal impact on the natural surroundings.
- TOA/GBB/GBF Research and Action Plan to include water quality testing, blue-green algae research, a micro plastic action plan, etc.
- Provide Land Use Planning Board/Services and septic inspections for unincorporated townships to the north.
- Carry out ratepayer education programs on topics such as septic systems, invasive species, planning, etc.
- Work with community associations to organize Community Action Days to address pollution and waste (offshore and onshore).
- Provide By-Law Enforcement/Fire Safety prevention and education resources to the community.





## Sustainable & Cost-Effective Services

- Demonstrate fiscal discipline in the provision of cost-effective services.
- Employ a high standard of management to extend the lifespan of landfill site.
- Contract services where possible from external organizations like the Georgian Bay Biosphere and Georgian Bay Forever for scientific and environmental support.
- Participate in the region ICEACP (integrated community energy climate action plan) initiative.
- Provide accessible and staffed transfer stations with large item pick-up days and a single use battery diversion program.
- Collaborate with other municipalities within the Parry Sound District to provide a cost-effective base of services:
  - West Parry Sound Pool & Wellness Centre Project includes seven West Parry Sound (WPS) municipalities, and Shawanaga and Wasauksing First Nations.
  - Fire Protection & Service Agreements (various WPS municipalities).
  - Mutual Aid Agreements (various WPS municipalities).
  - Joint Emergency Plan EMO (various WPS municipalities).
  - West Parry Sound Geography Network (WPSGN) – Shared Geomatics Services /GIS Services managed by TOA (all seven municipalities and various organizations).
  - Economic Development Office and Shared Economic Development Officer (All seven WPS Municipalities).
  - Clerks Networking Group consisting of seven WPS Municipalities with focus on (Elections/Purchasing/Special Projects).
  - West Parry Sound Joint Election Compliance Audit Committee (six of seven WPS Municipalities).
  - Collaboration with the Town of Parry Sound and West Parry Sound Health Centre to locate health facilities in Pointe au Baril (e.g. EMS Services – Ambulance Station Pointe au Baril, Pointe au Baril Nursing Station).
  - 911 Primary PSAP (Public-Safety Answering Point) Services (All seven WPS Municipalities).



## Effective Relationships & Partnerships

- Acknowledge the need and are working toward establishing and strengthening development relationships with local Indigenous communities.
- Support arts and cultural activities at Community Centres, such as Arts on the Bay and Festival of the Sound.
- Recognize and financially support community associations and centres such as the Ojibway Club, Sans Souci Community Centre and Pointe au Baril Community Centre.
- Provide supply chain infrastructure for water-based communities such as community docks and marina facilities.
- Contribute to cultural and educational facilities such as community museums, libraries, wellness centres, etc. in West Parry Sound District.
- Maintain relationships and collaborate with other levels of government and surrounding municipalities.



## Leadership & Communications

- Communicate regularly with community associations, GBB, GBA and its neighbours in West Parry Sound District to reinforce The Archipelago's desire to consult with the community.
- Collaborate with municipalities in the West Parry Sound District to actively work together to deliver cost effective services.
- Provide information technology services such as the West Parry Sound Geographic Network (WPSGN) GIS Portal to municipalities in the West Parry Sound District.
- Explore the opportunity to collaborate on conservancy and protection of the environment with Indigenous communities.
- Provide support and maintain relationships with the unorganized geographic area to the north.
- Advocate on behalf of the TOA community with municipal, provincial and federal representatives and other senior levels of government.

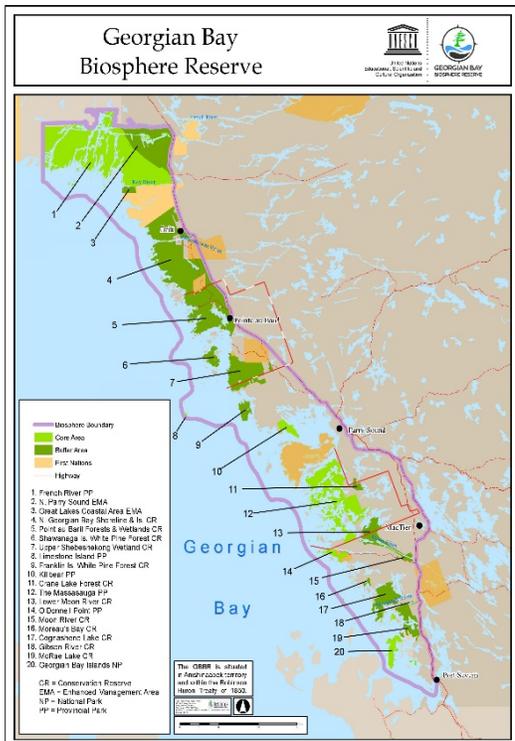


# Strategic Plan

## Background Information

# Township Overview

The Township consists of several thousand islands in Georgian Bay and a number of inland freshwater lakes, all of which are used for recreational purposes, especially where there are cottages and year-round residences located. The lands in The Archipelago may be described as remote and sparsely populated.



The TOA is part of Eastern Georgian Bay, the world’s largest freshwater archipelago, which is rich with coastal areas and dynamic wetlands that provide a variety of significant and critical habitat for fish, turtles, birds and other aquatic organisms.

It is also part of the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB), a globally important region designated by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2004. The GBB is one of eighteen biosphere reserves in Canada and 868 biosphere reserves globally.

TOA is also part of the Canadian Shield. Known for its exposed bedrock of pink granite and thin layer of soil, the area produces hardy and stubborn trees that cling to the rocks such as the iconic windswept white pine.

The Township consists of approximately 145,603 acres of land with an equal area of water within its boundaries, making it the largest municipality within the geographic District of Parry Sound. It extends 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 Seguin Township.

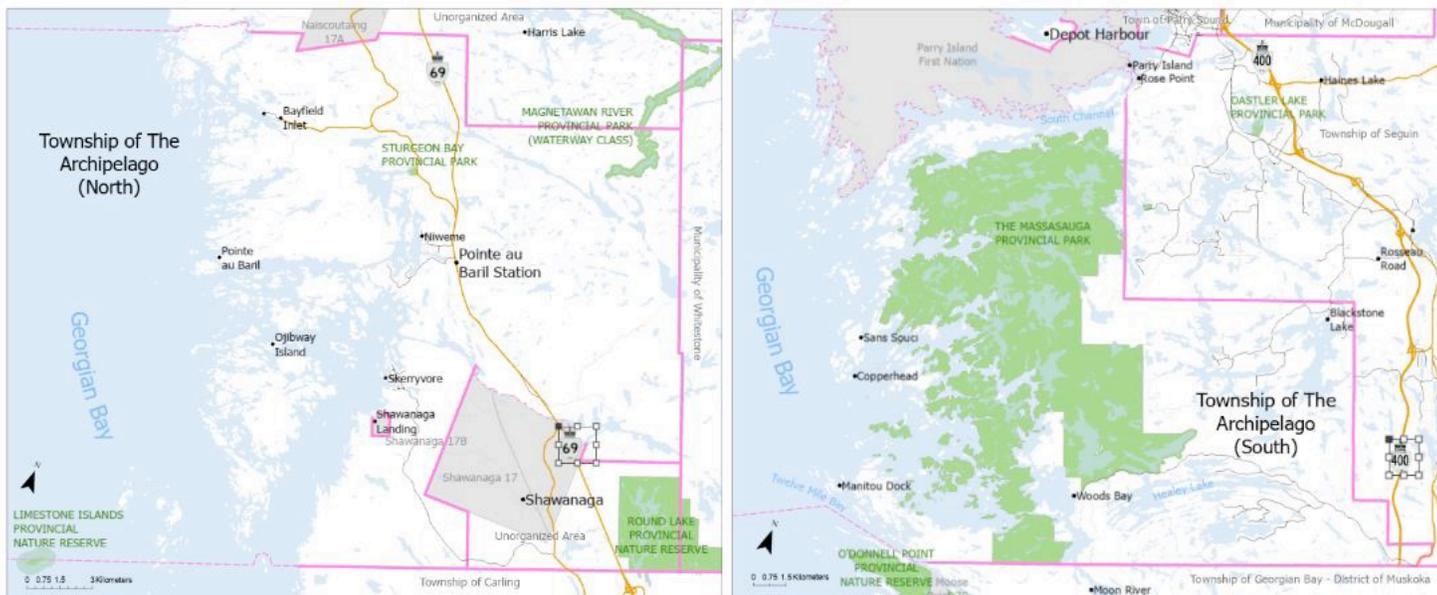
The TOA is a semi-wilderness region with a significant Crown Land base. A large part of the southern portion of the municipality is a wilderness park (Massasauga Provincial Park), and 87% of the Township is comprised of Crown land, of which 55% (70,043 acres) is Conservation Reserves and Provincial Parks.

The community of Pointe au Baril hosts the Townships principal concentration of year-round residents. It serves as the area’s tourist service centre for the northern portion of the municipality. Apart from Pointe au Baril Station and Skerryvore, certain areas of the inland lakes and very limited parts of Georgian Bay, access to and movement within the municipality is by water.

The Township of The Archipelago encompasses a total land area of 145,603 acres:

- 87% of this area or 126,247 acres is Crown land
- 13% of this area or 19,356 acres is patented land
- There are 2,391 surveyed islands in the Township
- There are 4,084 patented parcels in the Township





## History

The Township acknowledges that the community resides on traditional Anishinabek territory, under the terms of the Robinson-Huron Treaty #61 of 1850 and the Williams Treaties of 1923. The Ojibway, Chippewa, Odawa, and Pottawatomi peoples were the original inhabitants of the region for thousands of years. As the thin soil made an agricultural way of life impossible, the Indigenous people were migratory people who hunted, fished and traded for survival. The waterways were their highways. Today, the Township is home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

The Township of The Archipelago was established pursuant to The District of Parry Sound Local Government Act as a result of the province's policy to extend, consolidate and strengthen local governments in the District of Parry Sound. It emerged from four previous unorganized geographic townships on the east coast of Georgian Bay, all sharing similar recreational land use character.

The impetus for creating the Township of The Archipelago originated from a strong desire by its inhabitants and the Province to preserve its high-quality recreational character and the natural environment. The Strategic Plan has been prepared within the context of the historical development of the area as well as its existing recreational development pattern.

In the 1800s and early 1900s, commercial fishing was a way of life in the region. As the industry boomed in the late 1800s, remote seasonal fishing villages bloomed across the bay, including those on the Bustard and Mink Islands. In the mid-1800s, the logging industry was in high gear due to increased demand in wood from the United States. From 1897 to 1899, the Parry Sound area experienced a copper mining boom. Remnants of the copper mining boom are still evident with a copper pit in Spider Bay.

The transition from commercial operations to recreation began in the late 1800s as cottagers discovered the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. Initially, the area was accessible only by water, until trains afforded access to Northern Ontario. The construction of the King's highway in the late 1930s and the Highway 400 expansion in the 1970s opened the remote landscape to the entire country.

Today, recreational activities are the economic engine of The Archipelago, bringing in over a million visitors to the eastern shore of Georgian Bay every year.



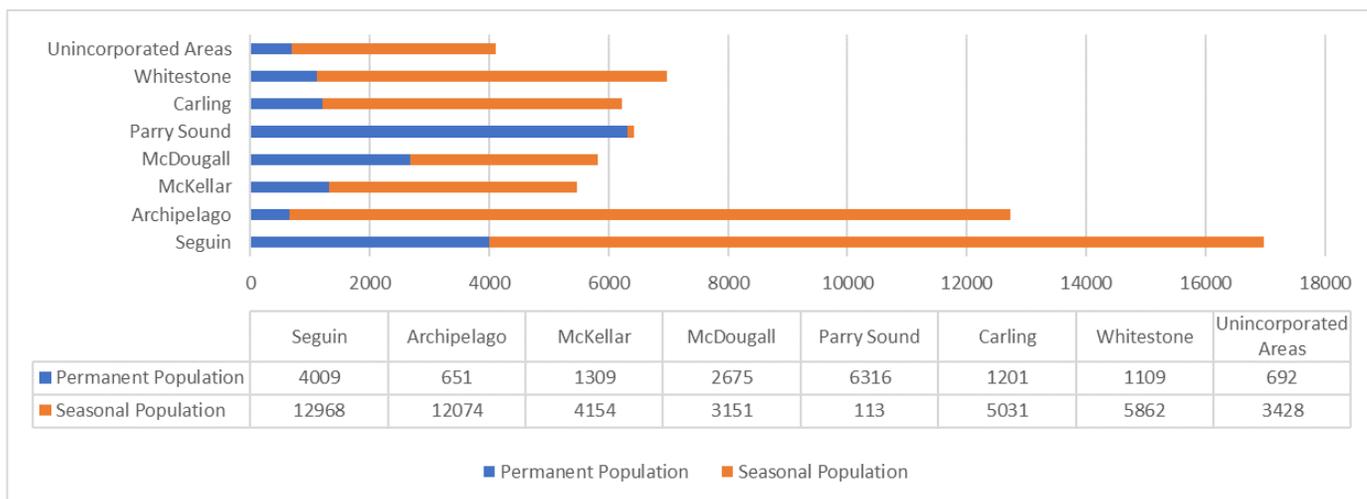
# Community Profile

|                       |        |                      |       |
|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|-------|
| Permanent population: | 651    | Permanent dwellings: | 283   |
| Seasonal population:  | 12,074 | Seasonal dwellings:  | 3,096 |
| Peak population:      | 12,725 | Total dwellings:     | 3,379 |

Source: MPAC data

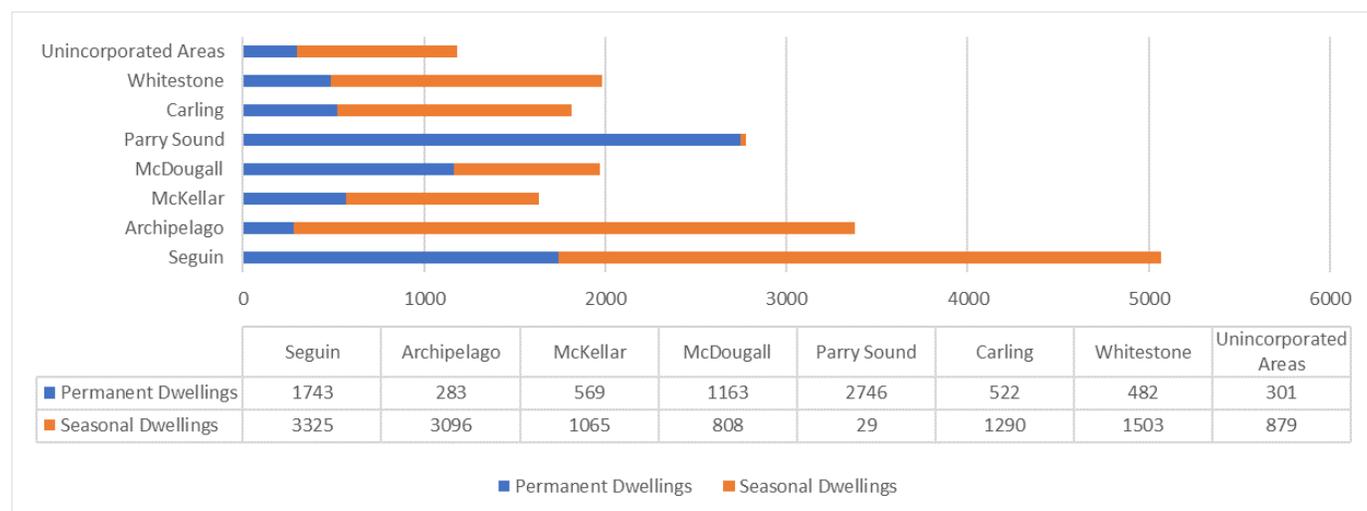
## Population

West Parry Sound is unique in that it has a higher population of seasonal residents than permanent residents. The TOA population swells from 651 permanent residents to 12,725 with visitors from all over the world.



Source: MPAC data

Although the Archipelago has one of the largest number of households in West Parry Sound over 90% are seasonal.



Source: MPAC data with a factor of 2.3 per dwelling for permanent population and 3.9 per dwelling for seasonal (West Parry Sound Area Recreation & Cultural Centre population estimate).



## Visitors

The Archipelago is a destination for eco-tourists from all over the world who enjoy visiting the provincial parks, including Sturgeon Bay Provincial Park and Massasauga Provincial Park, as well as the extensive conservation areas. Eco-tourists enjoy canoeing, kayaking, sailing, boating, fishing and camping. The Massasauga Provincial Park located inside The Archipelago also brings around 40,000 visitors a year to the area.

## Economics

The local economy of the Township of The Archipelago is primarily a result of the area's environment and the recreational base of the municipality. Its natural resources drive the Township's economy.

As the TOA has a substantial assessment base relative to other municipalities in the West Parry Sound area, it provides significant financial contributions for provincial and area services primarily provided by and used by permanent residents of the surrounding local municipalities.

The TOA is committed to working with its neighbours in the West Parry Sound District to ensure the continued preservation of the natural environment, which is the hallmark of the municipality.

## Services

Investment in education, social services and healthcare enhance the quality of life of Township of The Archipelago residents and visitors. However, service and infrastructure initiatives are limited compared to neighbouring municipalities due to the higher seasonal population, primarily water-based access and focus on environmental protection including limiting development and growth.

All development in the TOA is on private services – water supply and sewage disposal systems. Services are provided by the private sector to install and maintain these private systems. The municipality provides inspections services for new and expanded septic systems.

The Township is responsible for the maintenance and operation of 1 landfill site and 8 transfer sites within its boundaries.

As a water-based community, the Township of The Archipelago maintains over 82.7 kilometres of roads (some of which are seasonally maintained). Minimal roads help protect species such as reptiles and amphibians from death by vehicles, and it helps to control development pressures.

The Township of The Archipelago does not provide for the delivery of fire protection services. The Township does provide public education on fire prevention, ensuring that all citizens and visitors are aware and informed. In addition, the Township has an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for forest fire suppression on Crown land.



## Land Use Planning

One of the key municipal services provided by The Archipelago is land use planning. Prior to January 1, 1980, the majority of the lands making up The Archipelago had no land use controls governing development, while the Georgian Bay shoreline and islands were affected by a Minister's Order pursuant to The Public Lands Act.

The impetus for the creation of the Township of The Archipelago originated from a strong desire by its inhabitants and the province to preserve its high quality, recreational character and natural environment. The first Official Plan was developed in 1983 in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Township. The Official Plan provides the land use and development framework for the Township. The policy direction contained within the Official Plan is guided by the Strategic Plan.

Land use planning has remained one of the key municipal services provided by the Township, with the primary goal and objective continuing to be focused on respecting, maintaining and improving the natural environment.

## Infrastructure and Assets

The Township maintains modest mainland assets. Water access points and marinas are staging points to provide services to the coastal, offshore neighbourhoods that are home to many residents of the Township.

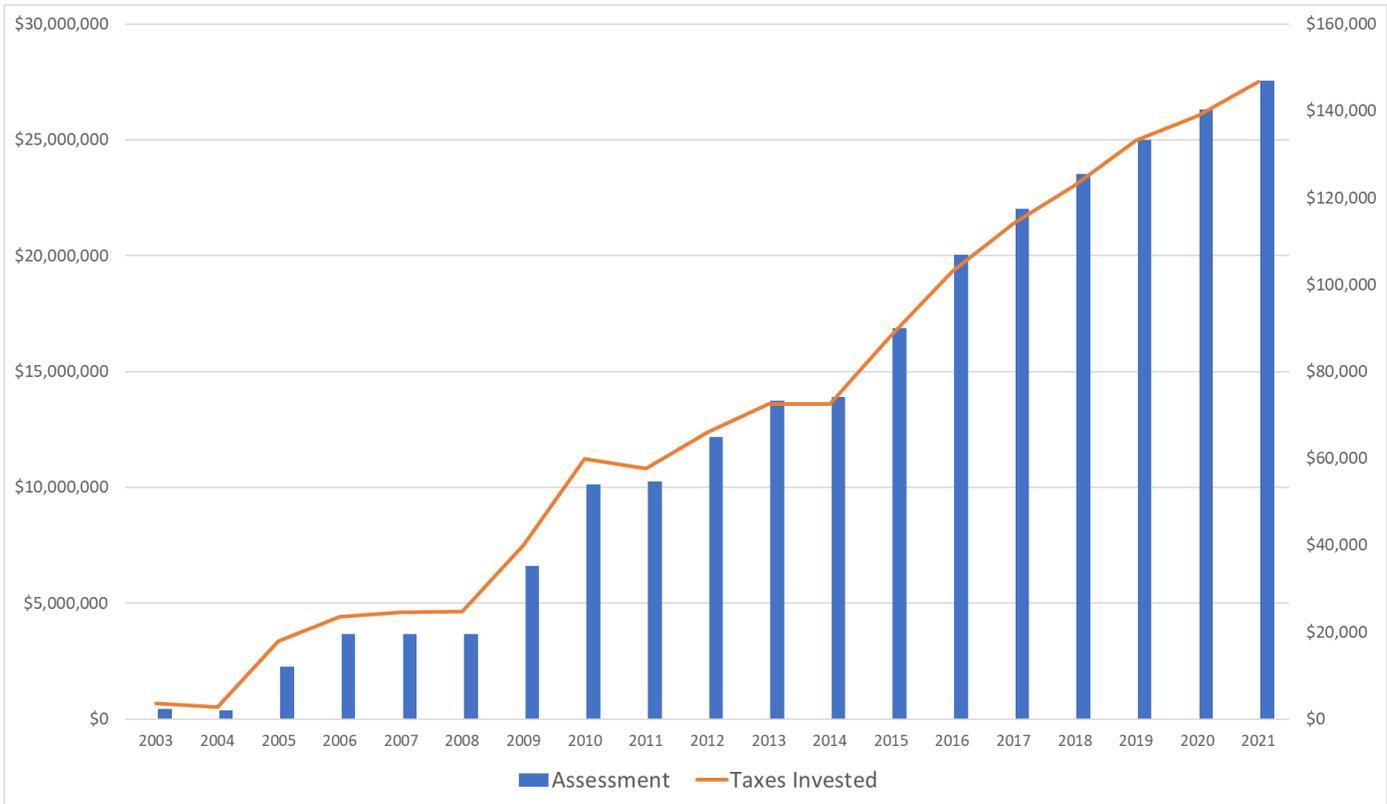
- Approximately 80.45 kilometres of private roads.
- Approximately 82.7 kilometres of Township roads.
- Three bridges/structural culverts.
- One community centre (Pointe au Baril Community Centre).
- One library (Pointe au Baril Public Library).
- One medical nursing station and ambulance/paramedic facility (Pointe au Baril Nursing Station).
- One cemetery (Georgian Cliffs Memorial Park – Pointe au Baril Station).
- One administration office.
- One public works office/garage.
- One marina (Holiday Cove Marina).
- One public wharf and harbour (Pointe au Baril Station) and approximately 8 access points.
- Eight waste transfer stations (Bayfield Transfer Station, Healey Lake Transfer Station, Sheep Head Transfer Station – island location, Pointe au Baril Transfer Site, Devils Elbow Transfer Station – island location, Woods Bay Transfer Station, Skerryvore Transfer Station, Crane Lake Transfer Station).
- One landfill site (Site 9).



## Land Trust

Individuals throughout the TOA have placed over \$27.5 million of assessed lands into conservation status to further protect the natural environment and balance development pressures. The Georgian Bay Land Trust, a not-for-profit environmental organization, maintains these lands in an effort to protect wilderness lands and species in the area.

### Georgian Bay Land Trust and Township of The Archipelago



## Community Stakeholders

The Township recognizes four main groups of key stakeholders who are vitally interested in the future of Eastern Georgian Bay:

- 1) Seasonal and permanent residents
- 2) Indigenous and First Nation communities
- 3) Businesses
- 4) Visitors



## Community Associations

Community associations have played a significant role in the conceptualization and formation of the Township of The Archipelago. Historically, associations have maintained proactive community voices, some dating back to the early nineteen-hundreds; they are strong, organized advocates for the protection of the environment.

The Archipelago is also unique in the level of communication it has with its constituents. Community associations throughout The Archipelago provide timely up and down communication. Many of The Archipelago Councillors started their community leadership by volunteering with community associations.

Active community associations include:

- Bayfield Nares Islanders' Association
- Blackstone Lake Cottager's Association
- Crane Lake Association
- Georgian Bay Association
- Healey Lake Property Owners Association
- Kapikog Lake Cottagers Association
- Manitou Association
- Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association
- Sans Souci and Copperhead Association
- Shawanaga Bay Islanders Association
- Skerryvore Ratepayers' Association
- South Channel Association
- Three Legged Lake Cottagers' Association
- Woods Bay Community Association

Members of the community associations are also actively involved in organizations that protect Georgian Bay.

## Environmental Organizations

The Township citizens are extremely proactive through a variety of organizations that help ensure the continued health and wellbeing of the Georgian Bay shoreline, inland lakes and its watershed areas.



GEORGIAN BAY  
BIOSPHERE  
MNIDOO GAMII

### Georgian Bay Biosphere – Mnidoo Gamii (GBB)

<https://www.gbbr.ca>

Established in 1998, the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB) is a non-profit registered Canadian charity governed by a Board of Directors. In 2004, our grassroots nomination document was accepted by UNESCO as it met strict criteria for designation as a world biosphere reserve. The GBB's mission is to create more resilient ecosystems and sustainable communities within eastern Georgian Bay. The goal at GBB is to help inform, educate, facilitate and provide leadership where it is needed. We take a balanced perspective to understand the "big picture" of activities that support conservation and sustainability in the region.





## Georgian Bay Association (GBA)

<https://www.gbta.org>

Founded in 1916, the Georgian Bay Association (GBA) is more than just a group of like-minded individuals. As a not-for-profit umbrella advocacy organization, the GBA represents the combined voice of 19 community associations. That is over 3,000 families along the eastern and northern shores of Georgian Bay with communications and publications reaching around 18,000 individuals.



## Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT)

<https://www.gblt.org>

Founded in 1991, the Georgian Bay Land Trust acts to protect wilderness lands and species along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and the North Channel and its near watershed through strategic conservation planning, land securement, stewardship, research and education. An eastern Georgian Bay and North

Channel whose islands, shores and inland watersheds are connected and strengthened by a network of protected natural lands and habitats, where native species thrive and people interact with the natural world.

**GEORGIAN BAY  
FOREVER**



## Georgian Bay Forever (GBF)

<https://georgianbayforever.org>

Founded in 1995, Georgian Bay Forever (GBF) is a charity dedicated to scientific research and public education on Georgian Bay's aquatic ecosystem. The GBF's mission is to protect, enhance and restore the aquatic ecosystem of Georgian Bay by funding accredited research on water levels, water quality and ecosystems. This is carried out by educating the public and governments on issues regarding the environmental protection, conservation, safety and preservation of the water and the natural features of the Georgian Bay area of Ontario and by enhancing the public's appreciation for their environment.



## Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation (GBGLF)

[https:// www.georgianbaygreatlakesfoundation.com](https://www.georgianbaygreatlakesfoundation.com)

Founded in 2016, Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation (GBGLF) has a mandate to protect and enhance the environment of Georgian Bay as part of the Great Lakes' ecology. The organization delivers sound scientific research and solutions supporting water levels, water quality, wetlands, the fishery and aquatic invasive species control.



