



Township of Malahide

cultivating malahide

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

"Planting the Seeds Together for Our Future"

July 2013

mbpc

Monteith•Brown
planning consultants



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Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

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Prepared by:


Monteith♦Brown
planning consultants

Acknowledgements

Cultivating Malahide is a document that will enable the Township of Malahide to strengthen its future outlook by making decisions today. In order to do this, *Cultivating Malahide* has benefitted from a community-driven process that has articulated various perspectives of those living in the Township.

We would like to thank the numerous individuals and organizations who provided input through the consultation process. You have informed us on the diverse range of viewpoints and interests that exist in Malahide today. Our gratitude is also extended to Township of Malahide Council, the Cultivating Malahide Steering Committee and municipal staff. It is our sincere hope that *Cultivating Malahide* plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life for the Township's residents for years to come.

Township of Malahide Council

Mayor Dave Mennill
Deputy Mayor Jim Jenkins
Councillor Mark Widner, Ward 1
Councillor Max Moore, Ward 2
Councillor Mike Wolfe, Ward 3
Councillor Mark Wales, Ward 4
Councillor Chester Glinski, Ward 5

Cultivating Malahide Steering Committee

Dave Mennill, Mayor
Michelle Casavecchia-Somers, CAO/Clerk
Eugenio DiMeo, Director of Community & Corporate Services
Paul Groeneveld, Director of Fire & Emergency Services
Rob Johnson, Director of Physical Services
Susan Wilson, Director of Finance
Chandra Dougal, AMCTO Municipal Management Intern

Project Consultants

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Message from the Mayor



Whether we measure our history here in Malahide in years or in generations, we all care about our community and its future. It doesn't matter whether we are in school, working, or retired, or whether we are part of a village, hamlet, rural, or lakefront community. We all want to improve our community and our quality of life in it. There are aspects we want to preserve, and aspects we want to change.

Sustainability is probably the single most important challenge of our time. The *Cultivating Malahide* Plan consolidates concerns and ideas gathered from our community members. It addresses a wide range of strategies and actions spanning the promotion of agricultural, business, tourism, cultural, and residential growth and development, the protection and wise use of our natural resources for both economic and recreational purposes, and the provision of a healthy-living environment for year-round and seasonal residents and visitors.

This is not the endpoint; it is only the beginning. The *Cultivating Malahide* Plan and the principles contained within it will help to guide this Council and Councils of the future in our decision making process. In addition, prioritizing, developing, and pursuing the actions listed in the *Cultivating Malahide* Plan will require the enthusiastic participation of volunteers from all sectors of our community. So, we invite you to identify the aspects of the Plan that mean the most to you, and become involved in shaping the environmental, economic, and community well-being of Malahide – *Planting the Seeds Together for Our Future!*

~ David Mennill, Mayor

Message from the CAO



On behalf of our Senior Management Team and dedicated Staff of the Township, we confirm our commitment to the continual stewardship and implementation of the *Cultivating Malahide* plan. We all care about our community and its future.

Through our work with our partners, we have discovered that we are A *Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future*. We are committed to actions that find a sustainable balance among the environmental, economic, and community priorities. The goals presented in this plan reflect our vision for Malahide and its people.

The *Cultivating Malahide* plan is a living document, meant to act as a guide for the Township's work now and in the future. Already, the Staff has started working closely with the Council, incorporating sustainability into our daily work. We cannot do this alone, and so we are driven to focus on the continual engagement of our community – *Planting the Seeds Together for Our Future!*

~ Michelle Casavecchia-Somers, CAO

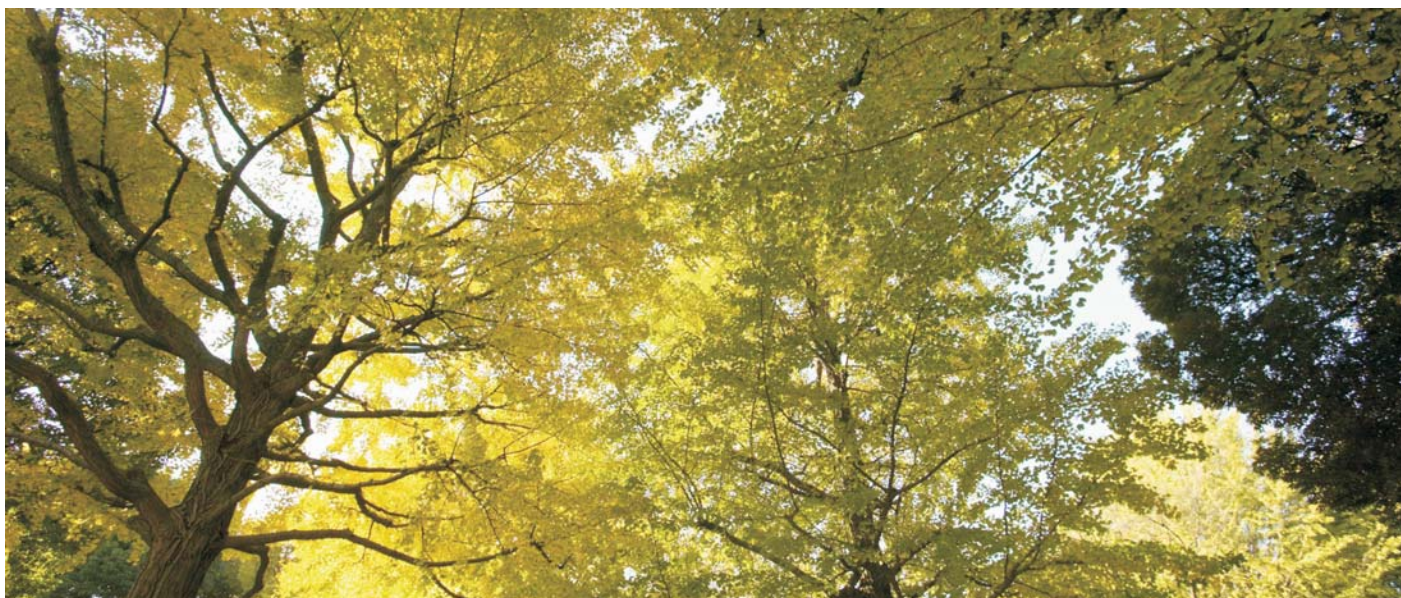
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A Framework for Sustainability in Malahide



Cultivating Malahide is Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) for the Township of Malahide. ICSPs are based upon four pillars of sustainability: environment, economy, society, and culture. For Cultivating Malahide, these pillars are organized as Our Land, Our Economy, Our Community, and Our Local Government.

1.1

About Cultivating Malahide

Cultivating Malahide is the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)¹ for the Township of Malahide. The purpose of *Cultivating Malahide* is to enhance and build upon existing planning instruments and practices such as the Official Plan, Capital Investment Plan, and various other documents, policies and procedures that support municipal operations. *Cultivating Malahide* considers these planning elements in conjunction with one another in order to create a holistic, overarching plan that is intended to enhance the sustainability of the Township over the long-term.

Becoming a sustainable community can mean different things to different municipalities as the very definition of sustainability varies among individual residents themselves. The most commonly accepted definition comes from a report entitled *Our Common Future* that was prepared in 1987 (also known as the Bruntland Report) that states sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Interestingly enough, a resident survey developed for *Cultivating Malahide* showed that the majority of local respondents also agreed with this definition.

ICSPs are often based upon four “pillars” of sustainability: environment, economy, society, and culture. For *Cultivating Malahide*, these pillars have been organized as follows:

- **Our Land** – reflects the environmental pillar and may include topics such as preservation of the natural environment, the provision of clean water, protection of agricultural areas.
- **Our Economy** – reflects the economic pillar and touches on areas such as attraction and retention of business, developing tourism opportunities, and embracing creative industries to diversify the local employment base.
- **Our Community** – integrates the society and culture pillars and includes topics such as promoting healthy communities, providing recreation opportunities for all ages, promotion of festivals, and supporting local artisans and craftsmen.
- **Our Local Government** – addresses “Institutional Sustainability” based upon ensuring the longevity of municipal operations, governance, management of municipal resources, and strengthening organizational partnerships to achieve long-term objectives.

Sustainable Development

“*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*”

- Bruntland Report, 1987

¹ An ICSP is a document that allows a municipality to access the federal Gas Tax Fund, with revenue transfers governed through the Municipal Funding Agreement administered through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

1.2

Reasons for Undertaking an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

Malahide is a progressive community where residents and municipal decision-makers take a proactive role in planning for the future. Through initiatives such as *Cultivating Malahide*, the Official Plan, Asset Management Plans, and other topic-specific studies, the Township has a plan for implementation of key strategies guiding municipal operations and governance. Similarly, community organizations, volunteers and residents all contribute to the quality of life locally. By building upon these strengths, undertaking an ICSP such as *Cultivating Malahide* can provide a number of benefits.

Influences All Aspects of Municipal Operations

Cultivating Malahide can be viewed as a strategic plan for the organization, whereby it provides overarching direction that can guide the decision-making process of Township Council and Staff. As a document that has engaged the community through its development, *Cultivating Malahide* has strengthened the Township's understanding of community needs which in turn provides its decision-makers with a framework that is generally reflective of local priorities.

Builds on Local Strengths

An ICSP identifies what a municipality and its community partners are doing well, so that efforts to build on these strengths continue into the future. For example, assisting local volunteers to build their internal organizational capacity to meet local needs results in a greater availability of services to Malahide residents. Similarly, building on existing partnerships (as the Township has done with area municipalities to provide recycling services, a secure water supply, etc.) and developing new relationships can help to share costs and risks, while enhancing service delivery.

Encourages Fiscal Efficiency

By planning for the future through decisions made today, the Township proactively positions itself to understand its strengths and challenges which in turn allows municipal funding to be directed where it is needed the most. An ICSP can target relatively minor savings that add up over time, such as integrating energy efficient street lighting to save electricity costs, to major investments aimed at averting water shortages or inefficient transportation systems. Furthermore, having a demonstrable plan in place is now often a requirement of senior government funding or grants. By having an ICSP in place, Malahide opens itself to new revenue opportunities that can be used to improve community services and infrastructure.

Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

“
A long-term plan, developed in consultation with community members, that provides direction from the community to realize sustainability objectives, including environmental, culture, social and economic objectives.
”

- AMO Municipal Funding Agreement, 2005

Commitment to the Environment

Cultivating Malahide promotes preservation and conservation of the local natural heritage system and agricultural lands. It contains strategies that aim to curb global issues at the local level, such as reducing our carbon footprint to offset climate change (e.g. the energy efficient street lighting not only saves costs but reduces the amount of greenhouse gas required to power the light), planning our communities to grow 'smartly' to minimize the loss of valuable agricultural land, and preserving more naturalized areas so that we have healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.

Ability to Respond

There are many rules, regulations and legislations that municipalities must abide by. These requirements often change to reflect best practices, and it is notable that there is a new generation of sustainability-related legislation and regulation (e.g. those addressing greenhouse gases or more stringent water quality requirements). An ICSP, by encouraging investment in sustainable projects, inherently positions a municipality to effectively respond to such regulatory change and potentially reduces the future costs that would otherwise be borne to meet new standards.

Enhances Community Vibrancy

As a holistic document spanning economic, environmental and social well-being, *Cultivating Malahide* contributes to strengthening the community and creating vibrancy that benefits established residents while attracting and retaining new people and jobs. *Cultivating Malahide* directs sustainable investments in the community that benefits the local quality of life, and provides a foundation to build partnerships and relationships with others who embrace sustainability as a part of their lives.

Think Global, Act Local

Cultivating Malahide is a plan to help protect our quality of life from externalities. Malahide's residents are affected by 'global' issues pertaining to sustainability. The local and regional economy is in transition, as a shift is occurring in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and knowledge-based industries due to national and global economic conditions. Climate change is another such example whereby fluctuating water levels in Lake Erie and more extreme weather patterns can affect our way of life. By doing our part to commit to sustainability at a local level, the hope is that our combined efforts with others around the world will have a positive effect.

The key to the success of Cultivating Malahide will be to achieve a commitment to sustainability from members of Township Council and Staff, key community stakeholders, and the general public. Achieving sustainability objectives is a collective effort, and one that requires strong leadership and a commitment to implementing priority projects.

While it is hoped that many of the actions proposed in this document are implemented, it is recognized that effective sustainability planning is an ongoing process that requires monitoring and future evaluation. For this reason, priorities and actions identified in this report may change depending on future circumstances – deviations from actions contained herein are acceptable provided that they are supported by appropriate rationale and continue to advance principles of sustainability.

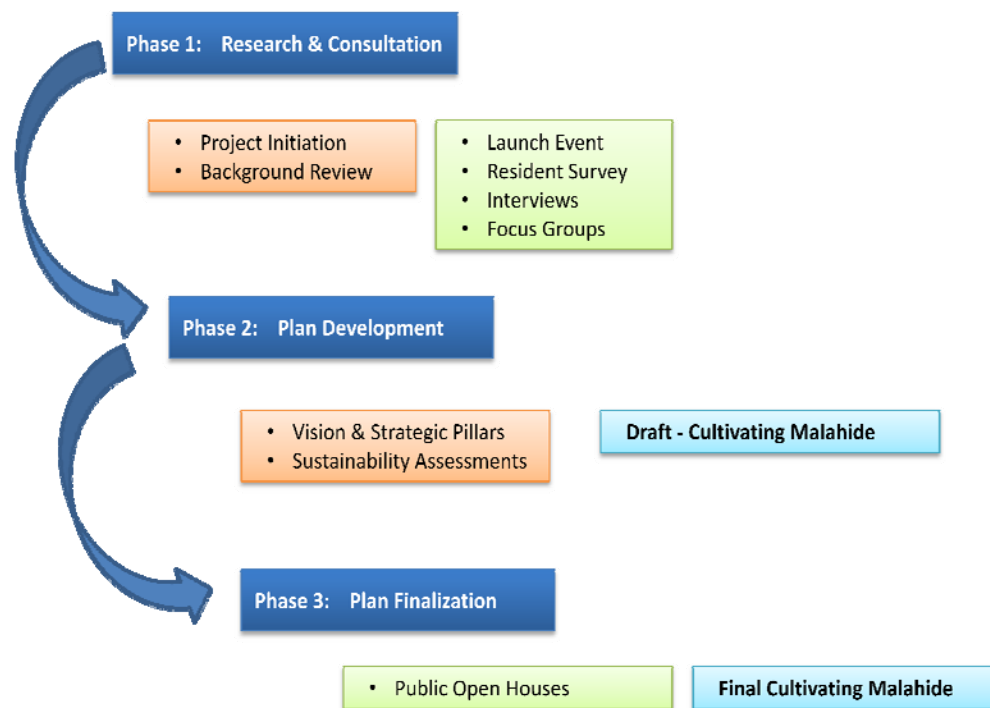


1.3

Planning Process

Cultivating Malahide was initiated in October 2012 by the Township of Malahide with the assistance of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants. The *Cultivating Malahide* process consists of three phases, with community input efforts timed to collect information prior to the development of the plan and then again before its finalization.

- **Phase 1: Research & Consultation** – During this Phase, background research on the Township was collected and reviewed to provide an understanding of the context for *Cultivating Malahide*. In addition, public consultations were undertaken, including the Public Launch of *Cultivating Malahide*, a resident survey, interviews with Township Council and Staff, as well as a series of Focus Groups with local stakeholders.
- **Phase 2: Plan Development** – The objective of Phase Two was to fine-tune the vision statement, strategic pillars, and goals that direct the focus of *Cultivating Malahide*. Building on this, an assessment of the existing conditions and gaps was completed to determine how the Township is doing with regard to addressing sustainability. A set of action items and an implementation strategy for achieving specific sustainability goals and objectives have been proposed.
- **Phase 3: Plan Finalization** – A draft version of *Cultivating Malahide* will be presented to Township Council and the general public for review. Comments received from these engagements will be incorporated into the Draft Plan before it is finalized and submitted to the Township for adoption.



1.4

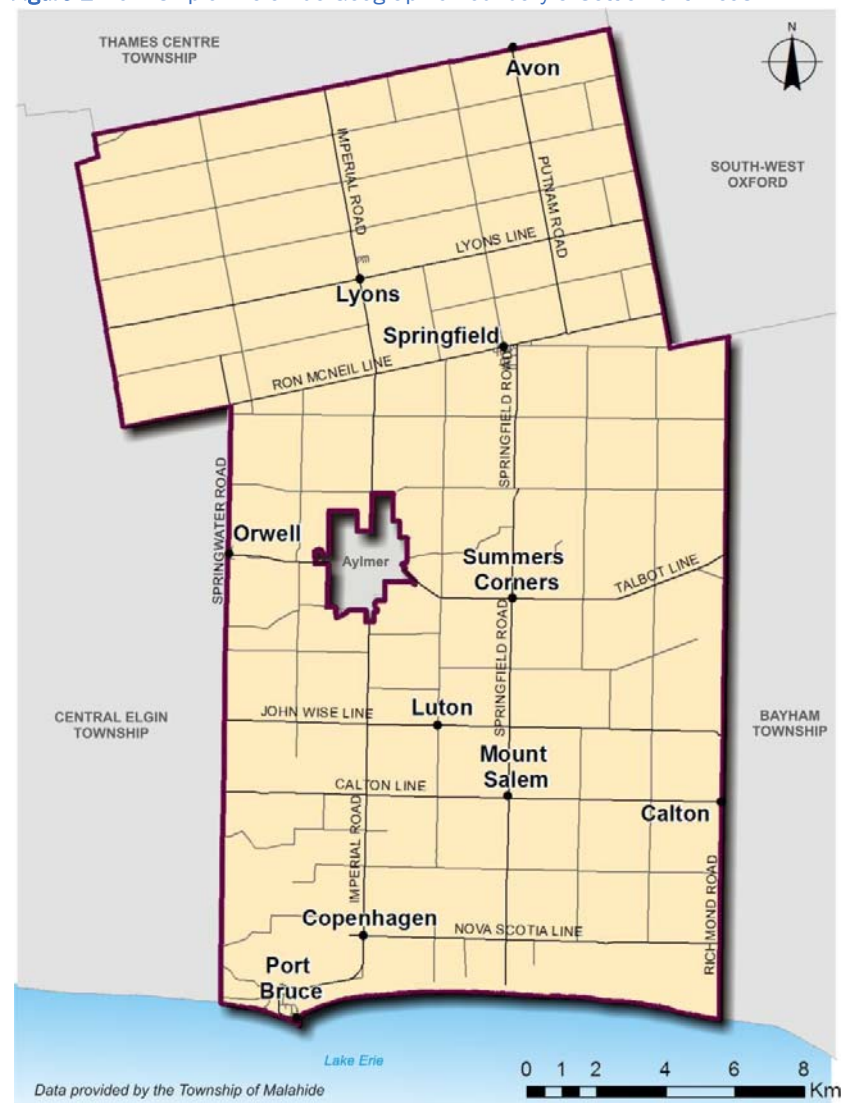
Community Context

The Township of Malahide is a small rural community with a strong agricultural base located on the shores of Lake Erie in the County of Elgin. In 1998, the former Township of Malahide, the former Township of South Dorchester, and the former village of Springfield amalgamated to form the existing boundaries of the Township. Malahide is comprised of villages and hamlets, including Springfield, Port Bruce, Lyons, Avon, Copenhagen, and Calton. *Cultivating Malahide* encompasses the entire Township, comprises both built and natural environments, and includes Malahide's urban, rural and shoreline communities (Figure 1).

The 2011 Census recorded Malahide's population at 9,146, representing growth of 4% over the last ten years. Malahide's population is expected to see continued growth, with over 1,000 new residents forecasted by the year 2029 when the Township is projected to reach about 10,500 residents in total (13% growth over the next sixteen years).²

Elgin County is expected to grow by a similar rate during the same period. The 2011 population of Elgin/St. Thomas is 90,560 and is anticipated to increase to 104,190 by 2031.³ Between 2006 and 2011, the population growth rate in Malahide grew more than that of Elgin County as a whole.

Figure 1: Township of Malahide Geographic Boundary & Settlement Areas



² Township of Malahide, Development Charge Background Study (December 23, 2009).

³ County of Elgin, *Directions Paper* (June 2011): p. 9.

1.5

Highlights from Community Engagements

Between November 2012 and March 2013, extensive work was conducted to review the existing municipal planning framework and research provincial and national best practices that pertain to municipal sustainability. To supplement these broader trends, a series of community consultations were conducted to understand the perspectives of Malahide's residents:

- A Launch Event held in November 2012 that was attended by over 50 residents.
- A Resident Survey that was available for completion during the month of November and resulted in 91 completed submissions.
- Focus Groups with key stakeholders in December 2012 representing local businesses, agricultural and environmentally-focused groups, and various other community interests.
- A Focus Group with representatives of the Low German-speaking community in March 2013.
- Interviews with Township of Malahide Council and Staff were held between November 2012 and January 2013.
- A Public Open House was held to present the Draft *Cultivating Malahide* Plan to the community in June 2013.

Emerging from the research and consultation phase were some key points that were considered. Certain themes that emerged from consultations were complementary while others were weighed more carefully given differing objectives. While not an exhaustive list, some of the major themes included:

- Recognition among many members of Township Council, Staff and the general public that **greater emphasis must be placed on planning for the future by making the right decisions today**. This bodes well for the success of implementing *Cultivating Malahide* as it is by its very nature a document that “plans for

tomorrow...today” and in turn, is cognisant of how present actions will influence future generations.

- Stronger **community engagement and involvement in the municipal decision-making process** is both a welcome and effective tool to ensure a broad range of voices are heard.
- Malahide should endeavour to provide an environment to **attract and retain residents and businesses** by offering a strong complement of services and competitive taxes within the region, all of which contribute to a desirable quality of life.
- **Long-term financial viability** of the Township is a priority for most of those residing in Malahide, touching on a broad range of topics such as maintaining competitive tax rates in relation to services offered and continuing to promote sound fiscal practices that do not defer costs of today to generations of tomorrow.
- **Operational efficiencies** should continue to be explored and enhanced through creative strategies such as building upon the many partnerships already in effect, upgrading the efficiency of the municipal fleet, making use of technology to work more effectively, and having strategic plans in place so that Malahide is competitively positioned to benefit from grants and other funding from other levels of government.
- There are a number of residents who believe that an **increasing focus must be placed on economic development**. There are also a number of residents who wish to **maintain Malahide's agricultural viability and quality of life**. These can be viewed as competing interests given they reflect two different identities for the Township – whether Malahide continues to maintain its rural character or whether it becomes more urbanized. One outcome that can potentially be gleaned from these competing philosophies, however, would be to intensify already built-up areas to accommodate growth rather than promoting land developments that sprawl into the countryside.
- There is a sentiment that desires Malahide to continue, and in fact build upon, the strong service provision that is delivered to residents. Strong service provision along with promoting economic development, as mentioned above, both are difficult

to successfully accomplish without having the necessary funding in place. With a stated desire of some to **limit taxation**, the ability of the Township to deliver high quality services to the public becomes increasingly constrained.

- While there might be ways to “do more with less”, **Malahide will have to be prepared to prioritize which services are required versus which ones are not**, if in fact budgets do not grow at a rate required to support service delivery. For example, effective economic development requires substantial investment for it to be effective; in the absence of revenue, the Township will have to evaluate its level of priority in relation to other services. It bears reiterating that **low levels of taxation does not always correlate directly with fiscal responsibility**, particularly if present costs are being deferred to future generations.



Sustainability Framework for Cultivating Malahide

The importance of *Cultivating Malahide's* Sustainability Framework (shown on the following page) is paramount to the Township's success in becoming a sustainable community. The Sustainability Framework provides the direction that defines our path forward through which *Cultivating Malahide's* sustainable actions are derived. Most importantly, the Sustainability Framework has been developed with input provided by local residents who contributed through the community consultations, as well as with the consideration of best practices occurring throughout the country.

Cultivating Malahide's Sustainability Framework is comprised of a Vision, four Strategic Pillars, Goals supporting each Pillar and a number of Actions that address how to achieve the Goals.

- **Vision:** An over-arching statement that articulates a desired end state and encapsulates the issues, ideas, and challenges identified during the public engagement process. It is intended to inspire the direction and scope of the Goals and Actions.
- **Strategic Pillars:** Each Pillar represents the breadth of the work to be undertaken to address Malahide's sustainability objectives. These Pillars do not function independent of each other, but may share common outcomes in certain instances. No single pillar is viewed as having priority over another.
- **Goals:** Derived from the background research and public engagement process, the goals are intended to illustrate the scope of the action items to be addressed, including specific areas of improvement that Malahide is striving to achieve. Goals are categorized under each of the Pillars though they are intended to be fluid and thus may apply to multiple Pillars.
- **Actions:** Specific recommendations that will fulfill the relevant Goals. Please note that Actions are not listed in any particular order of priority, rather their implementation will depend upon

the identified timing and the capacity (e.g. financial, staffing, etc.) of the Township to initiate them.

- **Implementation:** For *Cultivating Malahide* to be successful, Actions will need to be implemented. While not all actions may come to fruition due to timing, unavailability of funding or other resources, or higher priorities, implementation is an ongoing process. Actions should be reviewed and reconfirmed and/or adjusted depending on availability of resources, successful development of partnerships and future market conditions. Beyond implementation, progress and outcomes of Actions should be measured according to key indicators of success to determine whether performance leads to 'staying the course' or examining alternative approaches.





Our Land



Reflects the environmental pillar includes topics such as preservation of the natural environment, the provision of clean water, protection of agricultural areas.

2.1 Overview

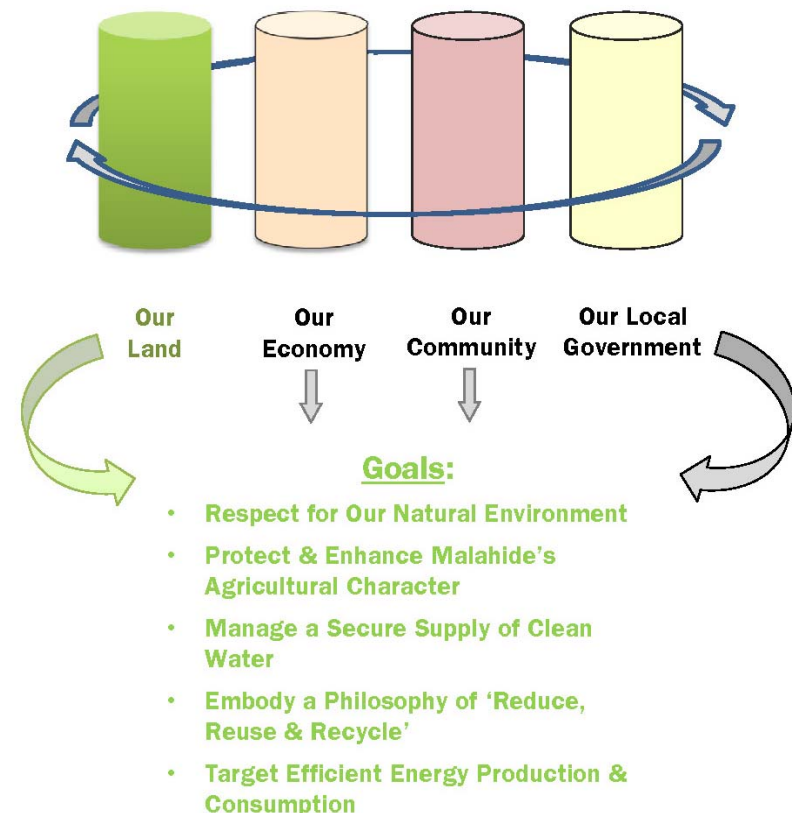
Located in the Southwestern Ontario, Malahide is situated amongst Canada's most productive agricultural land. The diverse natural heritage system is an added benefit, comprising forests, wetlands and the Lake Erie shoreline which results in a diverse ecosystem and strong biodiversity. Our land is one of Malahide's key strengths and we must respect the land as its stewards.

The rural lifestyle and quality of the natural environment in Malahide are highly valued by those who provided input through the *Cultivating Malahide* consultations. Strong emphasis was placed on sustaining agricultural lands, forests, wetlands, and the connection to water. Maintaining the integrity of the land was thus seen as a priority, particularly when planning the growth of Malahide's communities.

Curbing urban sprawl and other infringements on agricultural and natural lands was a key point of discussion. The County of Elgin and Township of Malahide Official Plans both articulate the direction for the community's built form. The Official Plans provide policies to guide land use planning and encourage responsible development, conserving natural heritage lands and maintaining agricultural production.

Input provided by local residents generally aligns with preferences, trends and best practices observed elsewhere in Ontario. Respect for the environment and strengthening food security are topics of discussion across the province. The Elgin St. Thomas Healthy Communities Partnership has produced a number of reports that encourage healthy lifestyles through initiatives centred around active transportation, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and promotion of local food as examples.

A Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future



2.2

Respect for Our Natural Environment

A healthy environment is necessary for our survival as humans. We are a part of a larger ecosystem and our ability to directly influence its integrity has implications on the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food that we eat. Respect for our natural environment is thus critical in attaining our sustainability-related goals.

There are numerous natural areas dispersed across Malahide, situated on public and private lands. All residents, organizations and agencies have a role in nurturing our environmental lands as individual green spaces collectively make up the larger ecosystems and watersheds. The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority is a key partner with the Township in the preservation and stewardship of the local natural heritage system. Over two-thirds of the Conservation Area's lands are located within Malahide comprising conservation areas including the Springwater Forest, Archie Coulter Conservation Area, the Calton Swamp Wetland Complex, and a number of smaller properties. Additionally, the Port Bruce Provincial Park and the Aylmer Wildlife Management Area are two notable environmental features in Malahide, along with a number of Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Enhance local awareness of the importance of Malahide's natural heritage system
- Effective planning, management and protection of natural lands
- Mitigate adverse impacts of land development upon the natural heritage system



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 1.	In concert with provincial and regional agencies, regularly maintain and update the local inventory of natural heritage lands through the five year Official Plan Review process. Alternatively, the Township may undertake other initiatives to track trends and quantify the amount of natural or environmentally sensitive land available over time.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 2.	Encourage the preparation of a Natural Heritage Strategy in partnership with regional stakeholders, preferably prior to the next five year review of the Official Plan, in order to ensure that land use planning decisions consider priorities established to maximize ecological integrity in Malahide.		●			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 3.	Expand opportunities for the educational and/or recreational use of appropriate natural areas in provincial and municipal parks, conservation areas, waterfront areas, etc. to promote better understanding of these assets. This may also involve encouraging private sector nature-tourism enterprises to locate in the community.		●			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 4.	Promote growth in a responsible manner by ensuring that development lands are readily available in appropriate areas, such as established municipally-serviced areas, in order to minimize encroachment onto natural and agricultural lands.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 5.	Establish land use planning policies contained in the Official Plan, Zoning By-law or through site plan control requirements that contribute to improved air quality and encouraging a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 6.	In the design and construction of municipal infrastructure (e.g. parks, stormwater management areas, boulevards, etc.), integrate indigenous plant species into landscape designs, where appropriate, to increase the amount of naturalized area in Malahide. This may involve updating the Township of Malahide Design Standards Manual (2002) and/or the Servicing Standards (2005) to contain provisions related to native plant species as well as sustainable infrastructure designs, construction practices and materials.	●	← ongoing →			Physical Services

Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 7.	Expand the “Green Malahide” section that currently exists on the municipal website into a more robust community outreach and education program, preferably in partnership with the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and/or other local environmental organizations. The intent of the outreach and education program is to empower residents to be stewards of the environment, thereby increasing the profile and importance of the natural heritage system in Malahide.	•				Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and Provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Local Conservation Authorities (Catfish Creek, Kettle Creek, and Long Point Conservation Authorities) Area municipalities located in the regional watersheds Educational Institutions (e.g. local Boards of Education, private schools) Community organizations with an interest in the natural environment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of, or increase in the number of hectares associated with the natural heritage system Maintenance of, or increase in hectares of tree cover Number of hectares of rehabilitated natural land Greater biodiversity and ecological integrity within Malahide Air quality testing yields higher results 				

2.3

Protect & Enhance Malahide's Agricultural Character

Malahide boasts nearly 68,000 acres of productive farmland utilized for crop production. Although declines in the number of farms and amount of farmland are occurring province-wide, Malahide appears to be an exception to this trend partially driven by the fact that Malahide has not expanded its settlement boundaries since 2003. The protection of local agricultural lands is supported through the Provincial Policy Statement. A notable trend in Malahide's agricultural sector is that smaller farms are increasingly being consolidated into larger farming operations with a growing presence of land intensive agri-businesses.

Maintaining Malahide's agricultural character is important to many residents who value the quality of life afforded here. While economic development is also a priority, it does not have to come at the expense of agricultural land nor does it mean that Malahide has to take on a "big city" feel. People are drawn to the agricultural character here and enjoy the lifestyle that it offers.

Food security is also an important component of sustainability where residents can access healthy and nutritious food that is grown close to home; community food security is a "situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice."⁴ In Malahide's dispersed settlement areas, some populations have limited access to grocery stores (the nearest major chains are located in Aylmer, Belmont, St. Thomas and Port Stanley); these "food deserts" limit healthy food choices and consumption since it is more convenient to travel to nearby convenience stores where food choices are typically healthier.

⁴ Hamm MW and Bellows AC. Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour 2003;35:37-43.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Enhance local awareness of the importance of Malahide's agricultural lands
- Effective planning, management and protection of agricultural lands
- Minimize impacts of land development upon agricultural areas
- Promote local production, distribution and consumption of food



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 8.	Preservation of the existing agricultural land base should continue to be targeted through the land use planning process.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 9.	Continue to participate in initiatives, such as the Elgin County “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaign, which sell locally grown produce, meats and/or other foods from Malahide’s various farms and agricultural producers directly to consumers.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 10.	Facilitate expansion of agriculture and agriculture-related industries in Malahide through attraction of food processing and distribution services, encouraging investments in sustainable farming, promotion of agri-tourism opportunities, and retention of skilled professionals who service the agriculture-based economy.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 11.	Encourage urban agriculture in settlement areas to showcase Malahide’s rural and agricultural heritage. The establishment of a community allotment garden in Springfield is encouraged on a trial basis, and if successful could be expanded to other urban settlements.			●		Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and Provincial agencies such as Ministry of Agriculture and Food Ontario Federation of Agriculture Local agricultural industry representatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in farm productivity or value of farm receipts Maintenance or increase in the number of hectares farmed Greater diversification in farming industries Attraction of new agricultural businesses related to organic farming, crop processing, agri-tourism, etc. Higher numbers of agriculture-related jobs and farm operators Greater availability of fresh, healthy food choices 				

2.4

Manage a Secure Supply of Clean Water

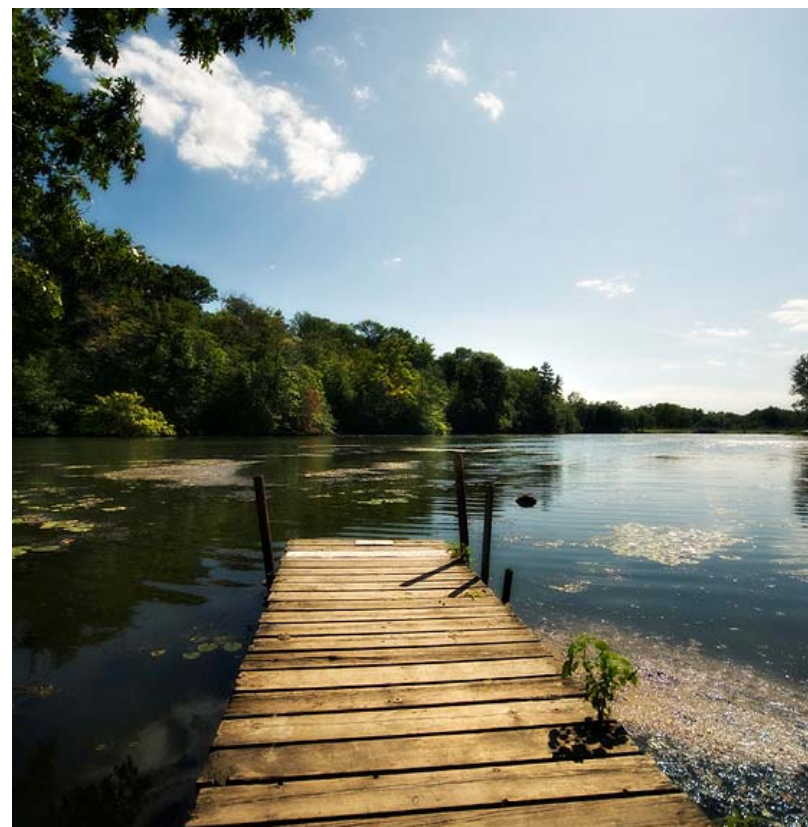
The Township is responsible for providing water services and receives its municipal drinking water from the Elgin Area Water Treatment Plant, located east of Port Stanley. In addition, the Township is also responsible for the administration of two independent transmission lines located along the south end of the municipality (Port Burwell Area Secondary Water Supply System) and along Highway 3 from St. Thomas to Aylmer (Aylmer Area Secondary Water Supply System).

Water services are presently available in the villages of Orwell, Port Bruce, Copenhagen, northeast of Aylmer near the Ontario Police College, as well as properties that are adjacent to the transmission lines. In total, the Township is responsible for approximately 75 km of municipal water lines that supply three municipalities, and is also responsible for monitoring the local water system (done with a complement of two staff). The Township contracts the operations and maintenance of the municipal water systems to the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) and the Regional Water Supply (headed by the City of London), which keeps down the costs of water provision; OCWA is also contracted to operate the wastewater system which at present services the village of Springfield.

Recent efforts to improve conservation have resulted in reduced water usage which is a positive direction in terms of environmental sustainability. This user efficiency, however, is creating challenges in financing the maintenance of hard infrastructure, particularly with the limited and slow growing base of water users in Malahide. To help make the municipal water system more financially sustainable, extension of services to new users would be beneficial while also providing opportunities for economic growth. For example, in 2010, an Environmental Assessment was conducted to explore extension of water servicing to a proposed agri-industrial park in Springfield and potentially provide additional capacity to the Ontario Police College.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Improve water quality
- Ensure a sustainable, long-term supply of water for residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural use.



Actions	Proposed Timing:	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 12. Continue to work with area municipalities to ensure that the local supply of drinking water is safe and secure.		●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
LAND 13. Work with the local agricultural industry to implement sustainable practices aimed at minimizing the amount of pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural runoff that impacts regional water quality.		●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
LAND 14. Initiate discussions with the Ontario Police College and/or the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to upgrading the local water distribution infrastructure, which could in turn make the extension of water servicing to Springfield more feasible.		●				Physical Services / CAO
LAND 15. Explore enhancements to existing and new stormwater management facilities through increasing naturalization of stormwater management ponds, greater onsite stormwater retention and onsite treatment of water to improve quality prior to discharge.		●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and Provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries & Oceans and Infrastructure Ontario Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA), Regional Water Supply Local Conservation Authorities Ontario Federation of Agriculture and local agricultural industry representatives 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality testing yielding better results Lower water consumption per capita Fewer beach closures Increased biodiversity and overall health of Lake Erie and local waterways Strategic expansion and management of the water supply and distribution network 				

2.5

Embody a Philosophy of 'Reduce, Reuse & Recycle'

The Township of Malahide, in partnership with a number of municipalities in the region, offers a comprehensive waste management system that includes full service recycling. These partnerships have benefitted Malahide tremendously through cost savings and shared expertise. For example, the Waste Management Master Plan was developed in partnership with the Municipalities of Bayham and Central Elgin, and subsequently a joint tender was issued for garbage and blue box collection. Furthermore, recycling services benefit from the City of London's Regional Materials Recovery Facilities which shares its profits with partnering municipalities; Malahide is thus able to cost-effectively benefit from recycling materials (including batteries and electronics) to a degree often only seen in larger urban municipalities.

The Waste Management Master Plan indicates for the years 2009 and 2010, each Malahide resident generated an average of 280 kilograms of residential waste per year. Malahide achieved a waste diversion rate of 15%, which was the lowest of the three partner municipalities (the average is 24%, due in large part to the blue box program). The Master Plan advances a diversion goal of 40% by the year 2016, a target that was established in consultation with the community.

Effective waste management programs divert waste from taking up valuable space in landfills, reduce the number of resources needed to produce new consumer goods, and contribute to higher air and water quality in Malahide through the proper disposal of materials. Furthermore, the nature of the Township's recycling agreement is such that the more local residents send to the recycling facility, the more revenue the Township receives in return to offset the cost of the service (and less is spent on 'tipping fees') meaning there is a degree of financial efficiency that can be achieved by higher waste diversion rates.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Greater waste diversion from landfills
- Greater degree of recycling among residents and businesses
- A more cost-efficient waste management system



Actions	Proposed Timing:	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 16. Continue to implement recommendations from the Waste Management Master Plan, including its 40% waste diversion goal to reduce the amount of waste being disposed of in landfills.		●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
LAND 17. Increase the emphasis on the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) through outreach and education efforts and the extension of recycling services (e.g. acceptance yard materials, construction waste, scrap tires, etc.) to increase the amount of recyclable material being processed and thereby receiving potentially higher revenues.		●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
LAND 18. Encourage a reduction in waste generated by households and businesses that receive garbage collection services. Options could include moving towards a more equitable full cost recovery model (i.e. a user pay approach) and/or decreasing the number of garbage bag tags issued over the course of the year.		●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal partners in waste management services such as the City of London and area municipalities Local/regional waste management contractor(s) Local landfills Local schools, business and industry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater waste diversion rates Less waste generated per capita Increase in the number of recyclables collected (solid waste diversion rate) Increased revenue received from recycling operations, lower tipping fees at landfills 				

2.6

Target Efficient Energy Production & Consumption

Maximizing energy efficiency, water conservation and waste management practices are the core focus of our goal to conserve finite resources associated with our land. Energy efficiency and water conservation are two of the most notable environmental enhancement efforts of the past decade due to escalating utility costs, a shift to more energy efficient lighting and low flow plumbing systems, and accredited standards such as Energy Star or LEED certifications in building designs.

Operating with energy efficiency in mind can result in a number of benefits. Electricity has traditionally been derived from sources such as coal, hydro-electric and nuclear power, all of which have different degrees of impacts on the environment. Burning fossil fuels (e.g. coal and natural gas), for example, release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and are believed to contribute to global warming and depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer. By utilizing less electricity, the environmental footprint of the end user (whether a municipality, business or household) is reduced while costs incurred for using energy are also lower.

Furthermore, renewable energy sources (e.g. solar, geothermal, wind, etc.) are becoming more mainstream and while their initial capital costs tend to be higher than traditional sources, the payback in operating savings and environmental benefit can be substantial. Locally produced energy, such as renewable sources, can also reduce reliance on the provincial/regional energy grid and results in increased energy independence. In recent years, there has been interest in developing solar and wind energy throughout the region and our community appears to be fairly accepting of these new sustainable technologies. Throughout the County, opportunities exist for municipalities to collaboratively facilitate joint-municipal or private sector investment in district energy production using renewable energy sources derived from wind, solar or other sources. Generating green energy at a local level is seen as a way to power a portion of Malahide's residences and businesses using "off the grid" sources and potentially even generating revenues through the provincial Feed-In-Tariff program.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Enhance local awareness of the importance of energy and water conservation
- Reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and the Township's carbon footprint



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
LAND 19. As part of the expanded “Green Malahide” outreach and education program, facilitate a culture of change within the Township, local business and residents through which energy efficiency and water conservation become core tenets of the community. Partnerships with the local school board should also be explored to educate local children and youth on such benefits.	●				Corporate & Community Services / Physical Services
LAND 20. Develop a strategy to retrofit the municipal lighting system in buildings, streetlights and traffic signals with energy efficient lighting over the course of the next ten years. Where appropriate, drawing energy from “off the grid” or renewable sources should also be considered to power municipal operations.	●				Physical Services / Corporate & Community Services
LAND 21. Focus on reducing environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions associated with municipal operations by incorporating principles of environmental sustainability into daily decision-making. Examples may include optimizing the municipal vehicle fleet to be more fuel efficient, replacing road salt with sustainable less harmful alternatives, or exploring more energy efficient public works infrastructure such as water pumps.		●			All Departments
LAND 22. For all Township buildings that are to be constructed or substantially expanded, explore designs that achieve energy efficient certifications (e.g. LEED or equivalent standards), recognizing that the long-term operating and environmental cost savings tend to rationalize the higher than average initial costs of construction. The Township should also investigate the provision of incentives to private-sector construction projects that achieve green building or energy efficient certifications.		●			Physical Services / Corporate & Community Services
LAND 23. Explore appropriate green investments aimed at improving the energy efficiency of municipal buildings through use of onsite renewal energy sources such as solar, wind or geothermal power to generate electricity needed to power these buildings.	●				Physical Services / Corporate & Community Services
LAND 24. Given strong regional partnerships with area municipalities, facilitate discussions centred on the creation of district energy including those based upon regional renewable energy sources.				●	Physical Services / Corporate & Community Services

Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and Provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Environment • Area municipalities • Local schools • Local business and industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of LEED certified or equivalent structures • Increase in the number of energy efficient streetlights and traffic signals in Malahide • Greater number of kilowatt-hours derived from renewable energy sources • Greater number of hybrid vehicles in the municipal fleet • Reduced tonnage of road salt per kilometre





Our Economy



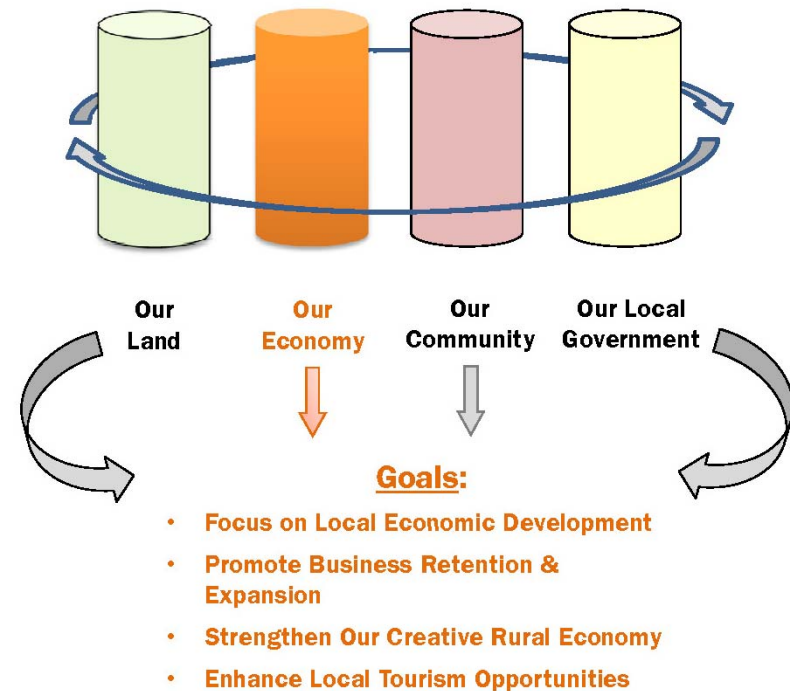
Reflects the economic pillar and touches on areas such as attraction and retention of business, developing tourism opportunities, and embracing creative industries to diversify the local employment base.

3.1 Overview

Malahide's economy is centred upon its agricultural sector, which is a valued asset and source of pride for many residents. At the same time, there is a desire to diversify the local tax base in order to provide new sources of revenue to balance the Township's budget. Sustaining the local economy is a top priority for many residents in Malahide and while the Township has little jurisdiction over economic activities, it can influence business perspectives by encouraging green investments and sustainable business practices, and creating an investment-ready climate through policy documents and economic development incentives.

Throughout consultations held for *Cultivating Malahide*, stakeholders placed a focus upon attracting and retaining local jobs through greater economic diversification and development. As the regional economy continues to shift from traditional sectors such as farming and manufacturing, there is a need to capture new economic opportunities by attracting skilled workers and creative industries who have been able to sustain themselves through recent economic challenges.

A Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future



3.2

Focus on Local Economic Development

Local economic development is important to Malahide's residents so that they have access to jobs, services and a diverse tax base. In order to create a supportive business environment, Malahide must facilitate opportunities that attract and retain investment while also being proactive in its local economic development efforts. Economic development and competitiveness can be facilitated by providing a range of employment, diversifying the local economic base, planning and protecting employment areas for current and future uses, and ensuring that necessary infrastructure is provided to support business needs.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Increased economic diversification
- Attract new workers and their families to Malahide



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
ECON 1. Economic development initiatives should continue to be a core tenet of municipal decision-making processes and should be carried out in a manner that builds on existing infrastructure, the capacity of local business and individual skill sets.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
ECON 2. The County of Elgin's Economic Development & Tourism Department should be regularly engaged in discussions aimed at aligning Malahide's economic development priorities with those of the County's. As a point of departure, discussions should be held with the County to determine how its Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan can be implemented in Malahide.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
ECON 3. Undertake a Community Improvement Plan for key settlement areas such as Springfield and/or Port Bruce to determine incentive programs aimed at bolstering private-sector investment to assist in the revitalization and enhancement of these communities.		●			Corporate & Community Services
ECON 4. Diversify the tax base by promoting commercial and industrial development, including attraction of 'green' industries.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
ECON 5. Ensure that a sufficient supply of commercial, industrial and mixed-use lands are designated through the Official Plan. These lands shall be directed to areas where they have the most economic benefit while minimizing impacts to natural and agricultural lands.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
ECON 6. Explore and implement strategies geared to attracting skilled workers (e.g. economic immigrants, skilled trades and other professionals, etc.) to Malahide.		●			CAO
ECON 7. Enhance the economic development information contained on the Township of Malahide website, possibly through the creation of a separate website dedicated to economic development in Malahide.	●				Corporate & Community Services

Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Association for Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) • County of Elgin • Area municipalities • Local business and industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a local BIA or Chamber of Commerce • New businesses attracted to Malahide • Increase in the number of people employed • Higher property tax assessments or value of building permits • Expansion of digital infrastructure and services (e.g. broadband) • Increased number of hits on the municipal economic development webpage



3.3

Promote Business Retention & Expansion

Business attraction and retention strategies are critical, particularly in rural economies where a robust and diverse base of industry is needed to ensure economic sustainability. The longevity of local businesses to provide needed services and jobs, as well as contributing to the tax base is an important part of *sustaining* the local quality of life. Building upon the existing base of business through attraction of new investment is an important part of *enhancing* the local quality of life.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Greater attraction and retention of business to contribute to the local tax base
- Job creation to attract greater employment and residential growth
- Greater availability of services and choices for local consumers



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
ECON 8. Encourage the collaborative undertaking of a regional Business Retention and Expansion (BR + E) study, led by the County and area municipalities, to develop community-responsive strategies aimed at supporting businesses, retaining and creating new jobs, and facilitating new opportunities to support Malahide's rural economy.		•			CAO
ECON 9. With a focus on incubating small business opportunities, explore programs and financial incentives permissible through Sections 107 and 108 of the Municipal Act to provide opportunities for small business creation.	•				CAO
ECON 10. Adapt municipal policies to provide flexibility in how business can innovate and respond to change (e.g. incorporating secondary agricultural use provisions in the Official Plan, Zoning By-law) according to local and global market conditions.		•			Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal and Provincial agencies such as Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment County of Elgin Elgin Business Resource Centre Area municipalities Local business and industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New businesses attracted to Malahide Increase in the number of people employed Greater property assessments or value of building permits 				

3.4

Strengthen Our Creative Rural Economy

In recent years, much has been documented on creative economies. As the provincial economy increasingly shifts from manufacturing and restructuring of the agricultural sector (e.g. fewer 'family' farms) towards service-based industries, the promotion of creative industries has been explored in many municipalities as an economic development generator. Some recent studies⁵ have argued that businesses are likely to locate where they have access to skilled and creative people, however, such skilled workers are attracted to places that provide a desirable range of lifestyle and amenity options. As a result, sense of place is an important component to economic development whereby attracting skilled workers is thought to subsequently attract new businesses.

With municipalities across the country vying to attract skilled workers, Malahide will need to differentiate itself from the rest by capitalizing on its strengths. Rural economies have traditionally been challenged in a creative economy for a number of reasons such as limitations with digital infrastructure (e.g. broadband), loss of younger residents to larger urban centres, difficulty in attracting skilled immigrants, and the deterioration of the 'Main Street'. Malahide, however, has unique potential to position itself in the creative economy given the quality of life that it affords through amenable features such as its waterfront, scenic rural settings and an already strong base of creative people such as local artisans and craftsmen. Such strengths should be enhanced, promoted and further developed in order to help diversify the local base of industry.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Greater economic diversification
- Greater attraction and retention of business and jobs

⁵ A notable example of such research is Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) that examines how communities can adapt to changing and challenging economic circumstances.



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
ECON 11. Promote Malahide's unique rural identity through economic development communication plans to attract creative, skilled workers.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
ECON 12. Inventory vacant and underutilized manufacturing lands along with available agricultural and/or heritage properties, and subsequently assess their ability to be converted into spaces for creative industries.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
ECON 13. Encourage government and/or private sector investment in local infrastructure that is aimed at stimulating creative industries in strategic areas of Malahide (e.g. encouraging provision of broadband, extension of electrical servicing, space for creative co-operatives, etc.).	●	← ongoing →			CAO / Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment, Ministry of Infrastructure County of Elgin Area municipalities Local business and industry Local arts and culture sector 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in the local labour force New creative businesses established Economic output of arts and cultural organizations Expansion of digital infrastructure and services (e.g. broadband) 			

3.5

Enhance Local Tourism Opportunities

Enhancement of local tourism opportunities is seen as a way to bolster economic diversification in Malahide. The most notable benefit of drawing tourists into a community is the resulting economic multipliers that are generated whereby money is brought into the Township and is then dispersed within itself; for example, an example of a ‘multiplier’ would apply where a tourist pays for a meal at a restaurant, the restaurant in turn pays the wage of its staff (or a local supplier), and the staff in turn spends that money for everyday goods at the local level.

Agriculture is a core strength of our community, thus it is logical to build upon and showcase local agriculture at a regional and/or provincial level. Enhancing the agricultural way of life in Malahide has been identified as a goal under the ‘Our Land’ pillar and seeking ways to develop a more comprehensive agri-tourism industry is seen as a vital component in both protecting the character of the Township while also supporting economic development and diversification of local industry. Traditional agri-tourism enterprises have generally centred around farm tours and farmers markets, both of which have been found to be effective in other parts of southern Ontario (e.g. winery tours are becoming increasingly prevalent along the shores of Lake Erie). In the Malahide context specialty or niche crops can be marketed as agri-tourism opportunities, with local apiaries (beekeeping and honey production) or the growing number of organic farms as examples of opportunities. The Township of Malahide Official Plan contains supportive policies surrounding agri-tourism by permitting small-scale activities as-of-right on local farms and allowing flexibility through Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments for larger-scale activities.

Tourism does not have to be limited to one specific sector, as there are other strengths within Malahide that could be built upon. Nature-based tourism is a potential opportunity given that the Lake Erie shoreline provides waterfront access coveted by many. A recent private sector venture elsewhere in Elgin County has combined agri-tourism, by developing a winery, with eco-tourism by way of an outdoor experience centre containing treetop zip-lines. Marketing local heritage and culture is also an opportunity for tourism-related growth by capitalizing on local festivals and special events (e.g. Celebrate Canada, Clovermead Honey Harvest Festival, Springwater Trout Derby, etc.). Ultimately, the

Township’s role would be to encourage like minded businesses and individuals to collectively work together and form a critical mass that can support local tourism opportunities, whether in the agricultural, environmental or heritage/cultural sectors.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Increased economic diversification
- Development of tourism infrastructure
- Economic multipliers from tourist visits



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
ECON 14. In conjunction with the County along with local and regional agricultural industries, collaboratively develop an Agri-Tourism Strategy to showcase local agriculture and complement economic development objectives of the Township.		●			CAO / Finance
ECON 15. Through amendment or the next five year review of the Official Plan, integrate greater policy support for cultural tourism in Malahide. This may include: development of tourism-related goals and objectives; integration of permissible tourism opportunities into appropriate land use designations (e.g. parks and recreational lands); and encouraging development, maintenance and expansion of tourism-related infrastructure.		●			Corporate & Community Services
ECON 16. Explore selected improvements to the Port Bruce waterfront, potentially in conjunction with the proposed Community Improvement Plan (ECON 3), and promote this settlement area as a regional waterfront destination.		●			Corporate & Community Services
ECON 17. Promote and support the work of local artisans and craftsmen to showcase their services to the regional market through municipal publications and collaboration with the County of Elgin's Economic Development & Tourism Department.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (Tourism Region 1) Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment County of Elgin Area municipalities Local Business and Industry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New businesses attracted to Malahide Increase in tourist visits Enhancement or investments in existing tourist-oriented assets such as waterfront communities Maintenance or increase in the number of opportunities to access public waterfront areas for recreational or cultural use 			



Our Community



Integrates the society and culture pillars and includes topics such as promoting healthy communities, providing recreation opportunities for all ages, promotion of festivals, and supporting local artisans and craftsmen.

4.1 Overview

Malahide is a collection of communities which have a diverse range of identities that are defined by their physical characteristics and the people who live within them. It is this diversity that is one of the Township's primary strengths where urban, rural, and waterfront communities provide the unique experiences found throughout Malahide.

It is important that community identities continue to be respected and enhanced. All residents of Malahide deserve access to essential services, functional community layouts that promote healthy lifestyles, and the benefits derived from a strong cultural fabric.



A Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future



4.2

Design Healthy & Liveable Communities

A healthy community can be described as “one which includes those elements that enable people to maintain a high quality of life and productivity.”⁶ Generally speaking, a healthy and liveable community is one which respects its surrounding environment, provides a stable economy, and is designed in a manner that maximizes safety and the ability to be physically and socially active. As a result, it can be said that a sustainable community is also a healthy and liveable community.

Community design is a critical part of achieving sustainability. Obesity is a growing trend among Canadians, especially among youth, thus it is important to encourage community designs that are not solely oriented to the automobile. Compact and mixed use community designs, along with the availability of active transportation infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks, trails and bicycle routes), can encourage greater physical activity in day-to-day tasks. Similarly, the availability of parks, recreation and cultural services contribute to the social and physical health of residents.

In Elgin County, the Local Food for Local People Coalition has created a ‘Food Charter’ to help guide policy-makers, businesses and residents to make decisions pertaining to safe, healthy food.⁷ Common in a number of municipalities, Food Charters have supporting principles that pertain to topics such as food access and security, health and economic benefits, the environment, etc. Aligning with Elgin’s Food Charter will provide the impetus to pursue sustainable policies centred around locally food production and consumption.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Smart, efficient and sustainable land development patterns and practices
- Healthier residents engaged in physical and social activities

⁶ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Healthy People 2010.

⁷ The Local Food for Local People Coalition consists of a number of partners including the County of Elgin, Elgin Federation of Agriculture, Elgin St. Thomas Public Health, and various other regional agencies and food producers.



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
COMM 1.	Explore interest with the local business community in designating a Business Improvement Area, under the authority of Sections 204 to 215 of the Municipal Act, within Springfield or another appropriate settlement area. Doing so can provide the opportunity to leverage resources aimed at improving the local business environment and support local economic development objectives.		●			CAO
COMM 2.	Promote Active Transportation infrastructure through the community design process, aligning wherever possible to the regional network and recommendations proposed through the 2012 Elgin-St. Thomas Active Transportation Initiative.	●	← ongoing →			Physical Services
COMM 3.	Prepare a Parks & Recreation Master Plan that articulates the community’s need for parks and recreation services along with appropriate management of the Township’s parks and recreation infrastructure.	●				Corporate & Community Services
COMM 4.	Align with Elgin’s Food Charter that supports the local agricultural sector and encourages access to healthy food sources.	●				Corporate & Community Services
COMM 5.	Identify more opportunities and strategies for the retention of young adults and young families with children by facilitating greater access to the amenities and services sought after by this market (e.g. employment, parks and recreation, cultural services, etc.).	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provincial & Federal agencies such as Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Agriculture & Food, etc.Elgin St. Thomas Healthy Communities PartnershipElgin St. Thomas Public Health UnitLocal business and industry representativesLocal service clubs and other community volunteers		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased levels of volunteerism and community-based provision of servicesExpansion of active transportation infrastructure such as trails, sidewalks and bicycle routesReduced greenhouse gas emissionsHigher levels of individual healthMaintaining the required number of parks and recreation facilities per capita				

4.3

Promote Community Development

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach that focuses on capacities of organizations, rather than their deficiencies, to address their needs; a relevant analogy is as simple as viewing the “glass being half full” rather than “half empty.” The intended result of ABCD is to empower the community to create positive outcomes for themselves.

For ABCD to be initiated, an understanding of local assets is required; assets, in this sense, refer to the collection of people, groups, institutions and their collective infrastructure (e.g. whether built structures such as schools, parks, or outcomes such as businesses, citizen’s associations, etc.). Assets are thus a broad range of physical, institutional and knowledge-based resources which need to be mapped to define the “building blocks” of the community. Combined with community engagement (e.g. outreach, awareness, etc.), the goal of ABCD is to strengthen communities and enable residents to take responsibility in enhancing their own quality of life, which then leads to a greater quality of life for all.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Building the internal capacity of community-based organizations and the private sector
- Facilitating longevity and sustainability of services provided by the community



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
COMM 6.	Promote principles of community development by providing citizens and community groups with the appropriate tools needed to ensure their long-term sustainability. Such principles may include, but are not limited to, providing necessary supports (financial or in-kind), engaging and empowering groups in decision-making, and exploring new and innovative partnership opportunities.	●	← ongoing →			All Departments
COMM 7.	Create a local database of volunteer and not-for-profit organizations to help facilitate networking between such groups with the hopes of bolstering the recruitment and retention of local volunteers.		●			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 8.	Compile an inventory of community-based assets and resources within the community, building off other processes such as the proposed Business Expansion and Retention Study (ECON 8), the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (COMM 3), the volunteer database (COMM 7), the cultural mapping exercise (COMM 18), etc.		●			Corporate & Community Services
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior levels of government (e.g. County, Provincial, Federal) • Educational Institutions (e.g. Boards of Education, private schools) • Conservation Authorities • Elgin St. Thomas Public Health • Local business and industry representatives • Local service clubs and other community volunteers • Faith-based institutions • Representatives from local sport, arts and culture, heritage groups 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in volunteer hours and percent of population who volunteers • Greater community-based provision of services • Expansion of active transportation infrastructure such as trails, sidewalks and bicycle routes • Higher levels of individual health • Maintaining the required number of parks and recreation facilities per capita 				

4.4

Keep Our Community Safe

The Fire & Emergency Services Department is responsible for overseeing community safety. The goal of the Malahide Fire Services is to provide fire protection services through a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants from adverse effects of fires, sudden medical emergencies, or exposure to dangerous conditions created by man or nature. The Malahide Fire Services provides such fire protection services; first to the Township; second to those municipalities requiring assistance through an authorized mutual fire aid plan and program; and third, to those municipalities which are provided fire protection by the Fire Department via authorized agreement.

In addition to responding to nearly three hundred incidents annually, Malahide Fire Services provides a wide range of fire and rescue, public education, and fire prevention programs. These programs include: fire suppression, motor vehicle collision extraction, tiered medical response for all life threatening injuries or illnesses, rope rescue, confined space rescue, and water and ice rescues. Fire safety inspections are typically conducted upon a request or complaint. The Department has a complement of approximately one hundred dedicated and highly trained volunteer firefighters operating from four stations located across the Township.

The Township also oversees elements of public safety through by-law enforcement and building inspections through the Corporate & Community Services Department. Facilities such as the Malahide Community Place are also designated 'Emergency Shelters' in the event of natural disasters and catastrophic circumstances, having been designed to accommodate displaced residents.

Through the County, the Ontario Provincial Police are contracted to provide policing services to Malahide. Efficiencies through cost sharing are incurred as Malahide partners with five other municipalities in Elgin County for the provision of policing services. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are primarily provided by the Elgin-St.Thomas EMS and supplemented by both Oxford County and Norfolk County EMS.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Maintaining a safe community
- Improve awareness regarding fire safety



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
COMM 9.	Undertake a long range strategy, in consultation with the appropriate emergency services authorities, to identify resources required to optimize the provision of emergency services in a manner that maintains appropriate response times to protect residents and businesses.	●				Fire & Emergency Services
COMM 10.	Integrate principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of municipal buildings and open spaces, collaborating with the Ontario Provincial Police where appropriate to do so.	●	← ongoing →			Physical Services / Corporate & Community Services
COMM 11.	Continue to prepare and refine Emergency Management plans, policies and procedures to ensure preparedness in emergency situations. Particular emphasis should be placed on flood mitigation measures given the susceptibility of the Township to such events.	●	← ongoing →			All Departments
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ontario Fire MarshallEmergency Management OntarioLocal Conservation AuthoritiesOntario Provincial PoliceElgin County Police Services BoardMalahide Community Policing CommitteeVolunteer firefighters		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Response times that minimize injuries and fatalitiesFewer dollars lost to damageLess frequent fire or distress calls, and reduction in the number of firesDecreasing crime rate				

4.5

Make Malahide an Inclusive Place to Live

Inclusive communities are those which are accessible to populations such as youth and seniors, newcomers to Canada, those with lower household incomes, and persons with disabilities. Having a diverse range of residents is a core strength of many communities by offering a number of unique perspectives and opportunities for all to experience. The local economy particularly benefits from having a diverse work force and market base.

To be inclusive, a community must provide a wide range of housing choices that are affordable to those with different income levels. The provision of affordable housing is a particularly important component of the housing mix, allowing those with lower incomes to have the opportunity to live in Malahide. Furthermore, the aging population trends in Malahide and the rest of the province will ultimately lead to the need for housing that is appropriate for seniors. In many rural communities, affordable and/or assisted living opportunities for seniors is limited compared to urban centres, as are limitations with respect to rural-based healthcare services.

Youth are another 'under-represented' population group as they typically do not have a voice in many decision-making processes that affect them. Retention of youth is an important part of having a diverse population and employment base, thus better engagement of Malahide's younger generations is required to understand their needs and desires if they are to remain in the community.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Inclusivity and equality in our everyday lives
- Embrace Malahide's cultural diversity



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
COMM 12.	Strive to ensure that all Township residents have an equal opportunity to participate and share their opinions on matters of local public interest. This may include the identification of innovative strategies and tools for widely engaging the public and soliciting their opinions on matters of local public interest.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
COMM 13.	Encourage the provision of affordable housing opportunities in Malahide, particularly with respect to the population of older adults and seniors.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 14.	Engage local youth throughout appropriate decision-making processes to understand their valuable perspectives. At a minimum, youth and young adults should have the opportunity to contribute to discussions centred around parks and recreation, arts and culture, and economic development to ensure that they continue to value Malahide as a place to “live, work and play.”	●	← ongoing →			CAO
COMM 15.	Actively pursue stronger relationships with the Low German-speaking and Amish populations through ongoing engagement of key representatives of the respective communities. The intent of such dialogue is to explore how municipal and community-based services can be designed or adapted to meet the needs and maximize the contributions of the Low German-speaking and Amish community.	●	← ongoing →			All Departments
COMM 16.	Undertake inspections of all municipal facilities and parks to determine actions and costs associated with making them accessible to persons with disabilities.	●	←	ongoing	→	All Departments
COMM 17.	Provide Township Staff with training and other professional development resources to ensure that they are familiar with how to effectively provide services to persons with disabilities, those from different cultural backgrounds, to be “youth-friendly”, etc.	●	← ongoing →			All Departments
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mennonite Community Services (Aylmer)• Elgin County Accessibility Committee• Elgin St. Thomas Public Health• Local land development and homebuilder’s community• Youth-focused organizations• Social service agencies• Cultural and faith-based representatives		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rise in median income• Favourable average cost of home ownership or rent paid in relation to affordability indices• Improved access to social services				

4.6

Showcase Local Culture & Heritage

The Township and the County have a strong reputation for supporting a diverse arts and cultural environment. The presence of numerous artists' studios, galleries, and small-scale creative businesses has helped foster the area's reputation for fine-dining, hand-crafted speciality goods, and local food. The presence of historically significant buildings, properties and landscapes is another contributor to Malahide's cultural fabric. Success in these areas has been leveraged to promote tourism and agri-tourism throughout the region.

Two examples of this success are the "Elginlicious" campaign hosted by Savour Elgin, and the Elgin Arts Trail. Savour Elgin is a program with a goal to promote and enhance culinary tourism in Elgin County and St. Thomas. Savour Elgin provides a route through Elgin County that visits some of the best restaurants, farms, wineries, and other culinary attractions that focus on food and drink that is local and unique to Elgin County and St. Thomas.

The Elgin Arts Trail provides a single resource for connecting residents and tourists to the variety of arts-related galleries and businesses throughout the County. Some examples of the cultural amenities available in the Township included in the Elgin Arts Trail are the Pinecroft Gallery, Gift Shop & Green Frog Team Room, Clovermead Bees & Honey, and Rush Creek Wines. As well, agri-tourism is a growing part of the Township's arts and culture environment, home to more than 10 eco-farms and markets.

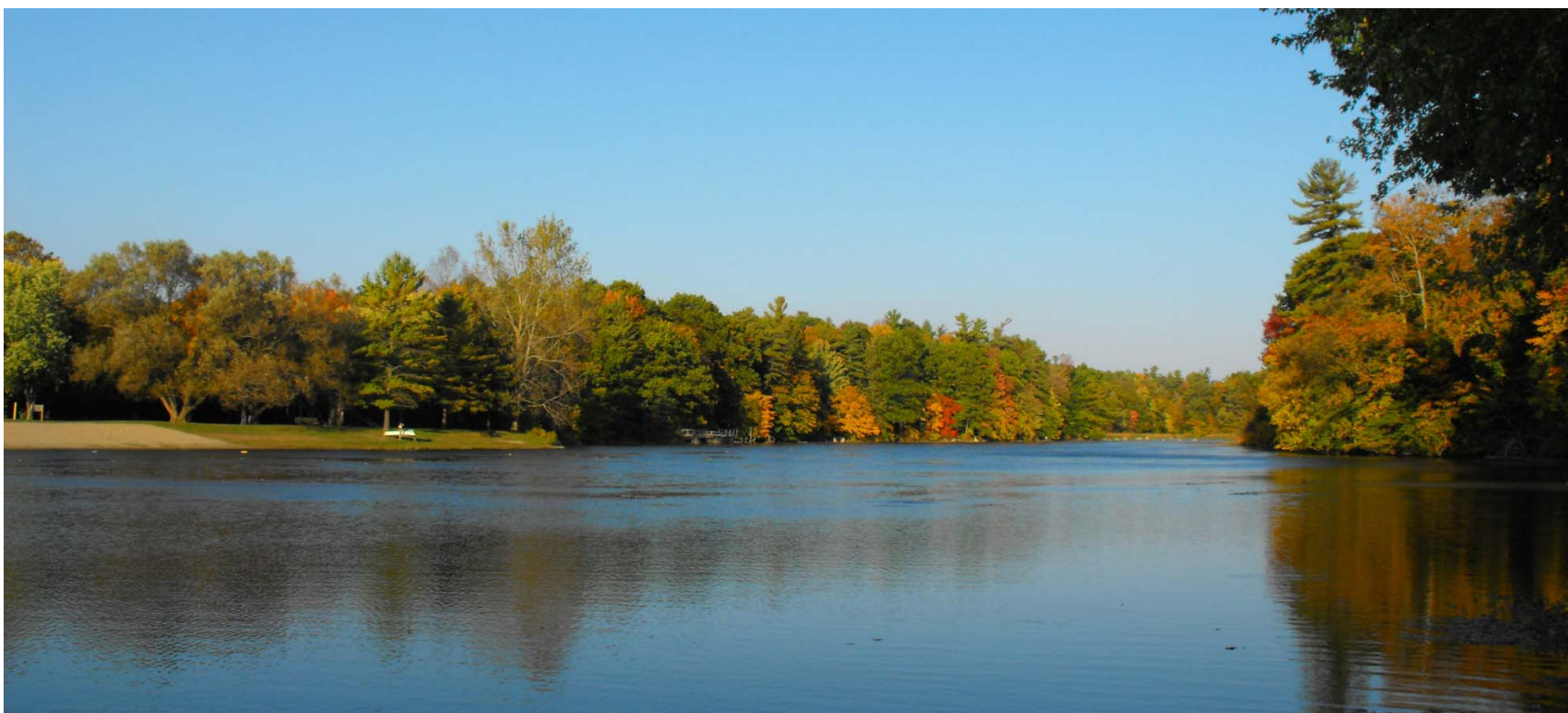
What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Increase the profile of the local arts, culture and heritage sector
- Strengthen and develop Malahide's cultural fabric for the benefit of all



Actions	Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
COMM 18. Ensure that the inventory of local cultural and heritage assets, as recently compiled through the County of Elgin's cultural mapping exercise, remains up-to-date for the purposes of supporting other goals of <i>Cultivating Malahide</i> including the pursuit of creative industries and tourism opportunities.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 19. Build opportunities that enhance and foster the diversity of cultural values and traditions in the Township, such as promotion of local festivals and special events.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 20. Encourage the preparation of a coordinated Marketing Plan with the County and area municipalities to raise awareness about local festivals and special events, as well as other arts, culture and heritage services available to the public in Malahide.		●			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 21. Maintain, renew and expand municipal arts, cultural and heritage infrastructure so that these assets can be managed in a way that highlights their historical value and promotes their longevity for the benefit of future generations. Integration of local arts, cultural and historic elements into new and existing municipal buildings and parks should also be pursued where feasible.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
COMM 22. Identify new ways to improve connections with the Amish and Low-German speaking populations and showcase the skills, talents and contributions of this community in ways that are sensitive and responsive to their beliefs/values.	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services

Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and Provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport • County of Elgin Economic Development & Tourism Department • Regional Heritage Advisory Committees (e.g. Aylmer, Central Elgin) • Regional arts and cultural organizations such as museums, art galleries, Elgin Arts Trail, etc. • Mennonite Community Services • Cultural and faith-based representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and economic output of arts and cultural organizations • Increased number of tourists • Growth in the number of creative industries • Increase in the number of festivals • Increase in the number of sites designated under the Heritage Act





Our Local Government



Addresses “Institutional Sustainability” based upon ensuring the longevity of municipal operations, governance, management of municipal resources, and strengthening organizational partnerships to achieve long-term objectives.

5.1

Our Local Government

Malahide is part of a two-tier municipal structure, where the Township is the lower-tier authority and the County of Elgin is the upper-tier authority. Municipal governance is administered through an elected Council represented by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and five Councillors who represent wards located throughout Malahide. Township Council is in the midst of a four-year term, after which municipal elections will be held in 2014.

Our elected leaders and Township Staff must buy-in to the concept of sustainability if *Cultivating Malahide* is to be successful. Sustainability must become a priority for Council and the Office of the CAO for it to translate throughout the organization and their respective Departmental operations. In turn, sustainability must be effectively communicated to the community and mechanisms will need to be in place so that the Township can benefit from regular input provided by a broad range of residents. Embodying sustainability in everyday decision-making can thus lead to fulfilling many of the goals and actions advanced throughout *Cultivating Malahide*.

A Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future



5.2

Improve Communication within Our Community

The “business” of municipal service delivery is rapidly evolving, which means that progressive municipalities and their Departments must be flexible in adopting methods to manage and control their day-to-day activities. Successful municipalities recognize that management and operating techniques must be revised over time in response to shifts in corporate culture or changes in market conditions.

In order to remain apprised of the needs of local residents and businesses, communication is critical between Council, Staff and the community. By increasing community involvement in decision-making, municipal representatives can understand and explore different ideas in how to enhance service delivery by listening to those living and working in Malahide. Similarly, the community can gain a better appreciation of the various factors that municipal representatives must balance in providing an equitable and efficient range of services. It is important to remember that communication is a “two-way” street in that both the Township *and* its residents/organizations must be committed to ongoing dialogue and participation in the planning process.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Increase community awareness regarding municipal plans and initiatives
- Empower the community to have a voice in municipal decision-making



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
GOVT 1.	Review the Township's internal communication practices with respect to how best to communicate necessary municipal information to those living and working in Malahide. Accordingly, a Communications Strategy should be formalized that articulates the principles, objectives, procedures, standards, and directives required for internal and external communications efforts.	●	←	ongoing	→	CAO
GOVT 2.	Regularly engage local residents and organizations to collect feedback pertaining to municipal operations through virtual or face-to-face efforts such as Town Hall meetings, Workshops, Surveys and other tools. In support of these efforts, enhanced communications and marketing should be in place to maximize the amount and effectiveness of the consultation initiatives.	●	←	ongoing	→	CAO
GOVT 3.	Regularly articulate the Township's key accomplishments and upcoming priorities to the general public so that residents and businesses are kept informed on the progress of implementing various municipal initiatives.	●	←	ongoing	→	CAO
GOVT 4.	Continue to emphasize high quality community consultation programmes during the preparation and implementation of municipal planning initiatives such as the Official Plan, Master Plans and other topic-specific studies.	●	←	ongoing	→	All Departments
GOVT 5.	Embrace an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) philosophy to improve inter-departmental communication and facilitate a collaborative approach to municipal initiatives. The ISD approach should also be extended to working with community-based service providers as part of municipal community development efforts (see also COMM 6).	●	←	ongoing	→	All Departments
Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals		Indicators of Success				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local business and industry representatives Community organizations and volunteer groups Neighbourhood associations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater and more diverse input provided at Council meetings Increased hits on municipal website or other community outreach and feedback webpages Higher public participation in planning initiatives such as Official Plan Reviews, Master Plans, etc. 				

5.3

Embody Financial Efficiency throughout Decision-Making

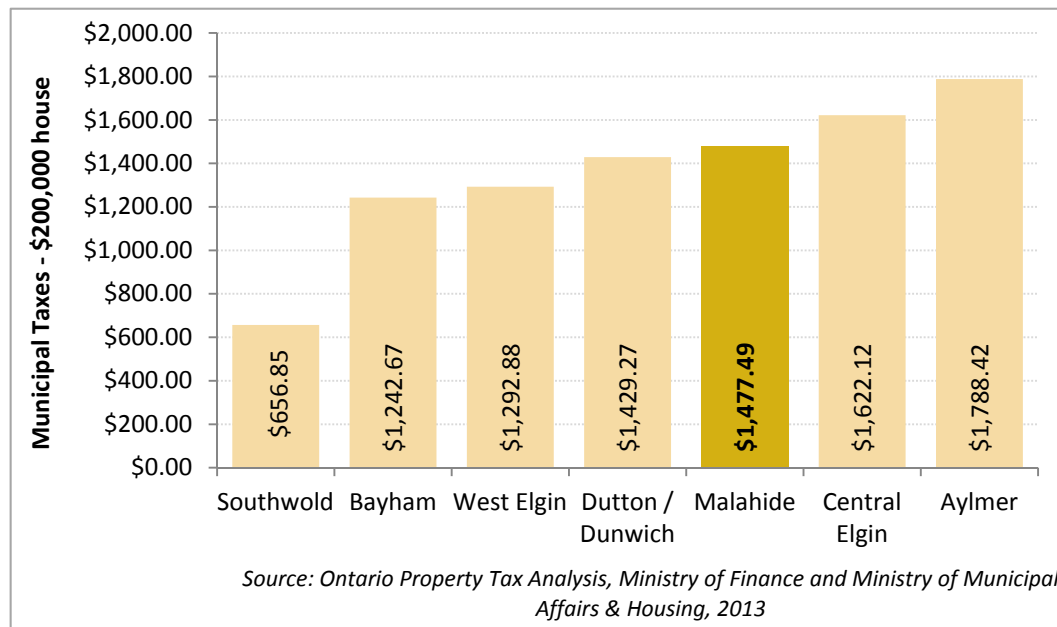
The Township of Malahide practices diligent financial planning and management throughout the delivery of its services to the community. Malahide has been able to achieve a comparatively low level of taxation while providing more assets and services. Furthermore, Malahide presently does not have outstanding debt to the degree often seen elsewhere, thereby providing the Township with flexibility to explore and fund major projects that are deemed necessary to enhance the quality of life locally.

In recent years, the Township has chosen a fiscal approach that targets a nominal increase in taxation rates. This approach has reduced municipal spending, however, it has also depleted a number of capital reserve funds which have been reduced to offset increases to the overall budget. The careful balance of minimizing tax increases and maximizing service delivery should continue to be practiced – it is important to recognize that low levels of taxation do not always correlate with fiscal responsibility.

A case in point is the use of capital reserves to reduce taxation levels. Capital reserve contributions are typically an element of strong fiscal management by ‘planning for the future, today’ in that funds are available to maintain assets (such as buildings, roads, etc.) regularly throughout lifecycles at a lower cost, compared to waiting to the end of the lifecycle and having to secure a large sum of money to undertake major renewal projects. Depletion of capital reserves is not generally considered to embody principles of financial sustainability since it essentially places a higher burden of infrastructure maintenance on future generations; this means that ratepayers will be paying a higher price in the future to maintain infrastructure that is also being used by ratepayers of today.

The first key to achieving strong fiscal health is to confirm the core services required to inclusively meet the needs of a broad range of residents, households and businesses. The Township’s core service delivery mandate is presently consistent with many rural communities across the province and is bolstered by the regional partnerships that it has achieved. Upon confirmation of the core services, alternative forms to access expertise or generate revenues will need to be looked at through moving towards full-cost recovery of certain services (e.g. the Township recovers about 70%-80% of costs of processing building permits through the fees), strengthening partnerships, becoming more proactive in seeking grants from other levels of government, etc. It is noted that rural communities with low population bases typically have higher than average cost-of-living tax increases due to the basic service levels they still must provide and maintain (i.e. it is easier for a large municipality to spread the cost of maintaining a kilometre of road over a large population base, compared to a small municipality which cannot achieve such economies of scale in maintaining the same amount of road).

Figure 2: 2012 Residential Lower Tier Tax Comparison in Elgin County



Wherever possible, the operations of individual Departments should be regularly examined to determine if any financial efficiencies can be found. A Staffing Review & Succession Planning Exercise would rationalize the costs of adding new staff versus re-assigning responsibilities (recognizing that expertise for certain tasks may require new positions), while planning for future staffing needs in anticipation of retirements. As another example of seeking efficiencies, Malahide presently operates two public works yards located in the north and south ends of the Township, however, there may be operational efficiencies if providing one centralized works yard instead. Similarly, Malahide does not have a road salt storage facility that is large enough to meet demand beyond a couple days without having to be refilled and thus provision of a larger salt storage facility could translate into operational efficiencies (e.g. spending fewer resources on loading and unloading salt). Any potential efficiencies will have to be measured against capital costs in terms of a 'payback' before deciding whether or not an action is deemed fiscally sustainable.

What We Are Striving to Achieve

- Extend the useful life of municipal infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewers, bridges)
- Thinking longer-term with respect to sustainability and cost of operations



Actions	Target Year to Initiate Action				Lead Dept.
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
GOVT 6. The Township should continue to strive for an equitable balance of taxation in relation to its provision of core services. Through this, continue to explore alternative ways to generate new forms of revenue and service provision; for example, strengthening partnerships to offset regional service delivery and placing greater emphasis on cost-recovery through user fees may generate supplemental resources that could offset increases in taxation.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
GOVT 7. Promote new development in a responsible manner that directs growth to appropriate areas, such as established municipally-serviced areas or where infrastructure is already concentrated to achieve economies of scale in infrastructure investment and maintenance (also see LAND 4).	●	← ongoing →			Corporate & Community Services
GOVT 8. Initiate a Pricing Strategy encompassing various municipal services to support the Township's desired levels of cost recovery, along with benchmarking rates and fees in comparable municipalities.	●				Finance
GOVT 9. Regularly review Departmental operations to determine where financial efficiencies can be found through centralizing appropriate operations, undertaking organizational reviews and work flow assessments, etc.	●	← ongoing →			All Departments
GOVT 10. Renew necessary capital reserve fund contributions in order to ensure that the cost of maintaining municipal infrastructure is equitably borne by current and future ratepayers in a financially-advantageous manner where costs are averaged over the lifecycle of assets.	●	← ongoing →			Finance
GOVT 11. Undertake a comprehensive Staffing Review & Succession Planning Exercise in order to ensure that the Township is in an optimal position to continue to deliver its core services effectively over the long-term.		●			CAO

Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior levels of government • Local business and industry • Community organizations and volunteer groups • Neighbourhood associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of long-term strategies for infrastructure renewal • Implementation of long-range Capital Asset Replacement Plan • Increased number of partnerships that increase benefits or lower costs for residents • Achievement of optimal staffing and servicing levels required to meet needs • Performance measures applied to various Departmental operations



Actions		Target Year to Initiate				Lead Dept.
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10+	
GOVT 12.	Increase communication efforts with other municipalities in the region to understand where existing partnerships can be strengthened and where potential partnerships may be developed. This may involve facilitating additional networking opportunities between similar Departments, dedicating more time to discussing partnership options, etc.	●	← ongoing →			CAO
GOVT 13.	Continue to explore appropriate partnerships with regional public and private sector entities to effectively fill any gaps that may exist in the delivery of services, and results in a net benefit to Malahide residents and businesses (also see GOVT 14)	●	← ongoing →			CAO
GOVT 14.	Continue to explore appropriate partnerships at the grassroots level with local stakeholders such as service clubs, schools, businesses, etc. to collaboratively address any service gaps (see also GOVT 13).	●	← ongoing →			All Departments

Potential Partners in Achieving Sustainability Goals	Indicators of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Federal and Provincial agenciesConservation Authority, School Boards, Health Unit and other institutional organizationsArea municipalitiesLocal business and industryCommunity organizations and volunteer groupsNeighbourhood associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing revenues from other municipalities for GIS and IT servicesOutside funding leveraged through partnerships



Implementation



The success of Cultivating Malahide ultimately depends upon the Township and its partners committing to a sustainable path forward. While the development of Cultivating Malahide has resulted in important and informative data through research and consultations, we are only completing our first steps. Sustainability requires a long-term approach, meaning that the journey is just beginning.

6.1 *Implementation*

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6.2 *Moving Forward*

Implementation of the Actions proposed throughout the document is critical in achieving the vision of being “A Community Mindful of Our Roots and Committed to Our Future.” It is this vision that must be embodied by Township Council if sustainability objectives are to be passed on through to municipal staff, local businesses, community organizations and residents. Consultations undertaken for *Cultivating Malahide* have indicated a strong desire to integrate sustainability into municipal governance, lending support to the Township of Malahide adopting the Sustainability Framework advanced through this plan. In order to integrate the Sustainability Framework into the day-to-day operations of the municipality, the following steps are recommended as a point of departure.

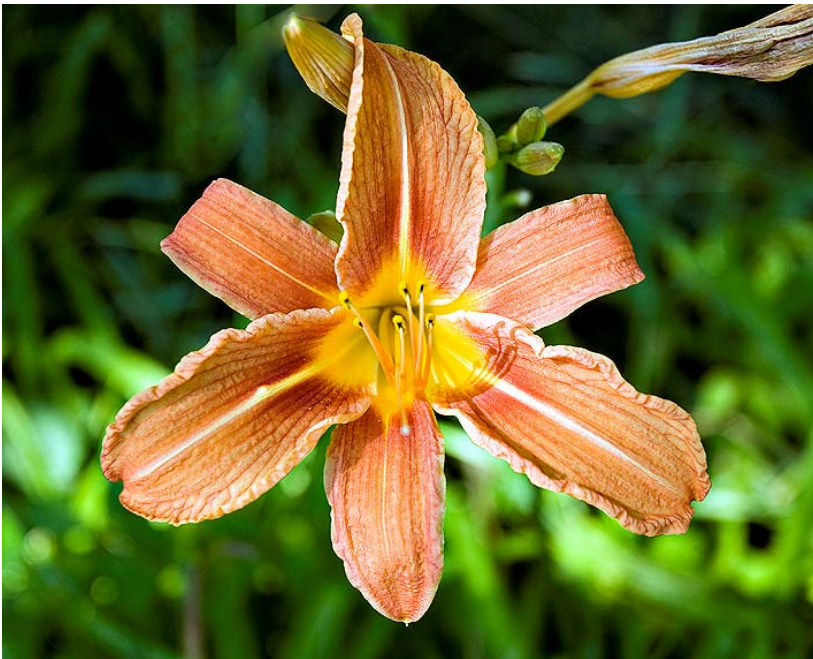
- Township Council should **adopt *Cultivating Malahide*** as a guiding document, with specific intentions to adopt the Sustainability Framework.
- All Staff Reports to Council shall **include relevance of recommendations to the *Cultivating Malahide* Sustainability Framework**.
- A staff-led ***Cultivating Malahide* Task Force** should be established (potentially consisting of the Cultivating Malahide Steering Committee), reporting directly to the CAO, whose mandate is to manage and track the implementation of the Actions contained herein.
- Each Department should create an **annual implementation plan** based on the Actions assigned to their lead. For each Action listed in the annual implementation plans, supporting information should also be contained such as potential partners (including other municipal departments), timeframes, financial implications (including how gas tax revenues are being allocated), and performance measurement (e.g. using the key indicators listed for each Goal).
- The CAO shall report to Council the interim progress being made on items contained in an annual implementation plan for the given year.. Further, the CAO shall report annually on progress being made on implementation of *Cultivating Malahide* as a

6.3

Sustaining Dialogue with the Community

whole by way of a **Sustainability Progress Report**, including key achievements pertaining to sustainability that may not be listed as Actions contained herein.

Cultivating Malahide should be viewed as a dynamic, living document. As a result, it is recommended that ***Cultivating Malahide* be reviewed and updated every four years**, preferably coinciding with new terms of Council. By timing the plan update accordingly, Council has the opportunity to provide input into the process, generate buy-in, and effectively use it as an adopted working document for the duration of their term. As a living document, the Actions contained in *Cultivating Malahide* may change in terms of direction, timing or priority depending on current circumstances. Furthermore, this is the Township's first formal foray into sustainability-focused planning and thus it is important not to be discouraged by challenges or mistakes but rather to continually "learn by doing."



Cultivating Malahide was developed with tremendous efforts provided by the community, who offered valuable input and insights into local sustainability. These community partners have a vested interest in the successful implementation of *Cultivating Malahide*, as do other residents and stakeholders who are interested in pursuing sustainability-oriented objectives and have come to learn of *Cultivating Malahide* after the plan has been written. To ensure that *Cultivating Malahide* remains fresh in the minds of residents and that principles of sustainability continue to be reinforced, the following ongoing communications and awareness should be considered:

- Regularly maintaining and updating the ***Cultivating Malahide* website** with relevant local information, progress reports, and links to other sustainability-oriented pages.
- Releasing the annual **Sustainability Progress Report** to the public.
- Preparing regular **Newsletters** for distribution to the community that update residents and stakeholders on progress made, highlighting success stories in Malahide and other communities, promote services offered by partnering groups, etc.
- Hosting an annual ***Cultivating Malahide* Community Forum** (similar to *Cultivating Malahide*'s Launch Event) to present the Sustainability Progress Report to the public, celebrate achievements, encourage networking opportunities among attendees, and receive in-person feedback from stakeholders and residents.

Many of these tasks may be considered as part of the Actions advanced through Goal 1 of Our Local Government (Improving Communication within Our Community).

Appendix A: Summary of Community Consultations

Community input is a central component of *Cultivating Malahide*. A comprehensive public awareness campaign and consultation process were developed to engage area residents and stakeholders. Developed by the Steering Committee, the *Cultivating Malahide* brand is designed to help market the initiative to the public by using a recognizable logo and colour scheme. This branding scheme has been used on documents throughout the public awareness campaign and consultations.

The public awareness campaign for *Cultivating Malahide* includes a dedicated page on the Township's website, a press release, and a poster advertising the initiative to the public. The dedicated web page is a central source for online information about *Cultivating Malahide*. On the page, visitors can read about the initiative, what it aims to achieve, opportunities for public involvement, and to access the resident survey. Likewise, the press release and poster provide a brief introduction to the initiative and explain how residents can be involved.

The public consultations process set out to gather input from area residents, business owners, volunteer organizations, as well as Township Council and Staff. The broader public consultations, such as the Launch Event and the resident survey were intended to help shape the strategic pillars, as well as a sustainability vision and goals for the Plan. Consultations with Township Council and Staff, and focus groups with local stakeholder groups were intended to gather more concentrated input on specific issues or servicing gaps, identifying implementation and partnership opportunities, and discussing outcomes they would like to see. The following sub-sections evaluate the results of each of the public consultation activities and events.

Launch Event

To kick-off *Cultivating Malahide*, a Launch Event was held on November 22, 2012 between 7:00 P.M and 9:00 P.M at the Malahide Community Place. The purpose of the Event was to introduce the project to the public and to gather input on what the future of a sustainable Malahide should look like. The Launch Event was advertised in a poster and press release distributed by the Township and on the *Cultivating Malahide* website. In total, **54** members of the public attended the Launch Event, as well as members of Township Council and Staff.

The Launch Event was divided into two parts. First, a presentation introduced *Cultivating Malahide* to the attendees, outlining what sustainability is, why the initiative has been undertaken, and how they could be involved. Second, attendees were divided into small groups of 8 to 10 and asked to discuss the important issues that are facing the Township.

The results of this exercise were analyzed and grouped into major themes. The following summarizes the major (and in some cases, unique or minor) issues that were prioritized in response to each of the issues discussed by the attendees. The priority issues (i.e., those issues specifically identified by participants) are grouped by themes.

Community Values

The adjacent figure illustrates the values of the community with the largest font identifying responses that were provided most often. Attendees valued the local **agricultural industry** and the rural lifestyle as a central part of living in the Township. They appreciate living in an area that has productive farmland and a diverse range of agricultural and agri-business products. In addition, attendees have a strong **sense of community** and security in the Township. They appreciate that Malahide is culturally diverse, with progressive and inclusive values that are shared by its residents. Attendees expressed that Malahide is a safe and “caring community,” where residents strive to help one another when in need.



Participants felt that they have **good infrastructure** services and proximity to major urban centres and transportation networks. Specifically, they pointed out that the Township has good hard infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer services, as well as excellent proximity to London and Highway 401. The Township also has good access to soft infrastructure such as schools, sports facilities, and libraries.

Attendees appreciate that the Township has a **healthy environment**, with clean air and water, a temperate climate, and access to wildlife. In particular, attendees are fond of the natural green spaces available for recreation purposes, such as Port Bruce and Springwater. They value the success of the entrepreneurs and **small businesses** in the areas, such as niche specialty shops, and appreciate the support Township Council and Staff have given to help them succeed.

Identified Issues

Many of the participants raised concerns about the **operating efficiency** of the local government and the perceived high cost of **property taxes**. In particular, issues of “high taxes,” “fiscal restraint,” and “top heavy” municipal management were identified by attendees as the most pressing issues. For example, the burden of the long-term operating costs for the new community centres were seen by some attendees as a concern.

Participants identified specific community challenges such as the loss of local community organizations and **cultural barriers** with the Amish and Low German-speaking Mennonite population as significant issues to be addressed (it is noted that some also believed that this was less of a barrier as many in the Amish and Mennonite communities have a desire to live autonomous of others). Access to essential medical and government services is also a concern.

The lack of **commercial and industrial development** in the Township is seen as a missed opportunity for additional tax revenue. In particular, attendees expressed a need to reduce obstacles to development as one tool to promote economic growth. The need for “quality jobs”, employment for youth, and supporting entrepreneurialism were all identified as issues that the Township should address.

Attendees identified the need to promote sustainable development that does not negatively impact agriculture in the Township. In particular, they want to see more **development in serviced areas** such as Springfield, and less strip development along highways and major roads.

Potential Improvements

Improvements in Township operations, service delivery, and engagement with the community were identified as the most important changes that should be addressed. Some of the key issues identified by attendees include: improving communication with the public, ensuring follow-through and execution of plans, and **improving efficiency** and **transparency** of municipal operations. Attendees want to maximize operational efficiencies by partnering with area municipalities to share programs and servicing (e.g., snow removal and fire rescue).

The promotion of **local agri-business** and **small businesses** are also important changes that the attendees would like to see. In particular, attendees want the Township to attract a variety of food production and processing businesses, as well as businesses that handle the processing of agricultural by-products. Building on this, the promotion of **“buy local”** campaigns to support local businesses, such as a local business directory (one already exists on the Township website), and the creation of partnerships within the business community were some ideas advanced by participants.

Other changes that were identified by attendees include the creation of more outdoor **recreation opportunities**; promotion of **competitive local energy** supplies to attract industry, including renewables; environmentally-responsible decision-making, **focused growth** in serviced areas; and the expansion of training programs at the Ontario Police College, beyond law enforcement.

Community Vision

As shown in the adjacent figure, at the heart of the attendee's vision of Malahide's future is a **prosperous local economy** that attracts new industrial and commercial opportunities, creating a variety of meaningful employment opportunities. Building on the Township's "strong work ethic," attendees want to see self-employment and entrepreneurialism as a viable means to earn a living in Malahide.

Equally important as sustained economic growth, participants want to continue to see agriculture as a cornerstone of the local identity. While attendees are supportive of larger, automated farms, they also want to

see smaller-scale **family farming**, a vibrant agri-business community, and the success of local food and organic agriculture. Ideas such as the creation of a GMO-free zone which would restrict or limit the production and/or sale of genetically-modified agricultural products in the Township; establishment of community gardens; and agricultural educational support within school were advanced by some members of the community as ideas for sustaining local agriculture.

Attendees would like to see the **cultural diversity** of the Township encouraged and promoted, particularly with regard to fostering closer ties to the Amish and Low-German speaking Mennonite populations. Building on this, the retention of young people and the provision of retirement / assisted living facilities for older adults were promoted by the attendees as specific priorities for the future of Malahide.

In the future, attendees pointed out that they would like to see the Township Office located within the boundaries of the Township, and that taxes should be kept to a manageable level by ensuring efficient use of staff and resources. In addition, attendees would like to see **recreation and tourism** opportunities created throughout the Township. The development of Port Bruce, with more areas for boating and residences was identified as a way to attract more tourists. Agri-tourism, which includes the promotion of agriculturally-based events and destinations such as wineries, fruit-picking, and country bed & breakfasts, was promoted as a tourism opportunity. Access to essential **medical services** was identified as a priority, with one group recommending the creation of a "mobile dialysis unit."



Resident Survey & Written Comments

A resident survey was developed to gauge the priority issues and concerns of residents and business owners in the Township. The survey included 9 multiple-choice questions, and an area for providing additional comments. The survey was published online between November 5, 2012 and December 3, 2012. Hard copies of the survey were also available at the Township Office and the Springfield Library, and distributed to attendees at the beginning of the *Cultivating Malahide* Launch Event.

During the survey period, **91** surveys were submitted. Of these, **51** surveys were submitted online and **40** surveys were submitted to the Township as hard copies. For those who did not wish to complete a survey, or felt the need to provide more thorough feedback, the public was invited to submit written comments to the Township via e-mail or at the Township Office. No written comments or feedback were provided to the Township apart from those submitted as part of the survey.

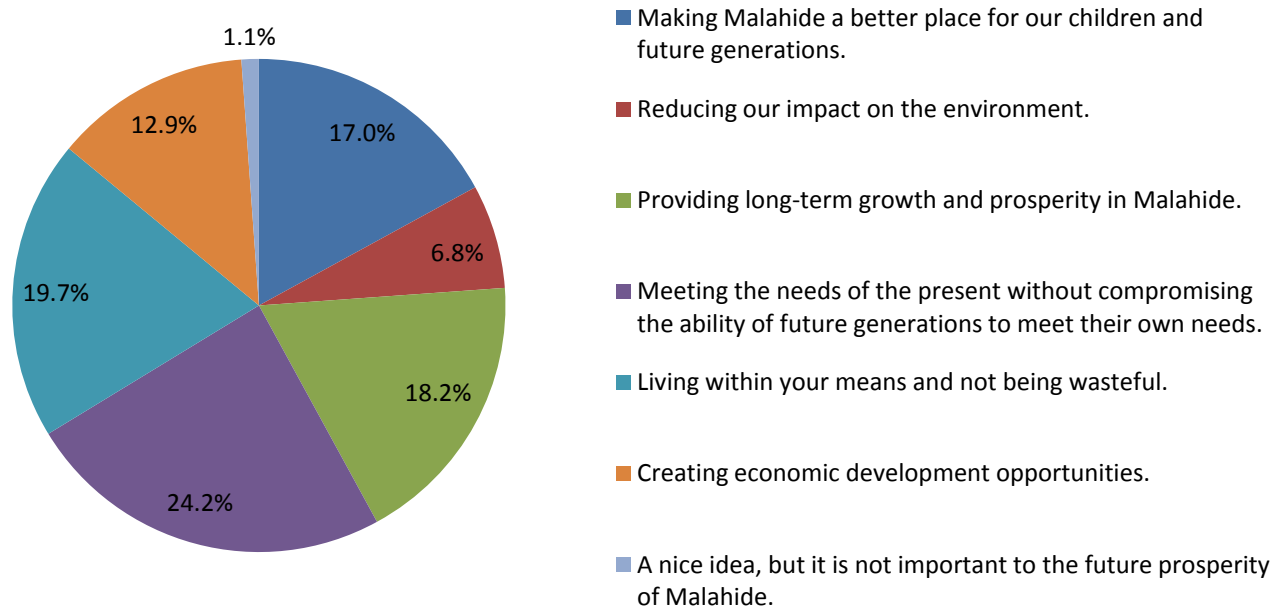
Illustrated in the adjacent Figure 1, nearly one-quarter of the survey respondents live in Malahide Central (23%). A significant portion of the sample also resided in Springfield (17%) and Malahide South (13%). Eighty-three per cent of survey respondents reported that Malahide is their primary residence, and 14% indicated that Malahide is their place of business.

Figure 1: Respondents by Location



Overall, the survey responses demonstrate that the principles of sustainability are important to many residents. There is a strong sense of practicality in the respondents' definition of a "sustainable Malahide," primarily concerned with ensuring that present economic decisions create long-term opportunities, not long-term consequences. As shown in Figure 2, survey respondents indicated that, "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future" (24%), "living within your means" (20%), and "providing long term growth and prosperity" (18%), are the top three definitions that best capture the meaning of a "sustainable Malahide".

Figure 2: Definition of a "Sustainable Malahide"



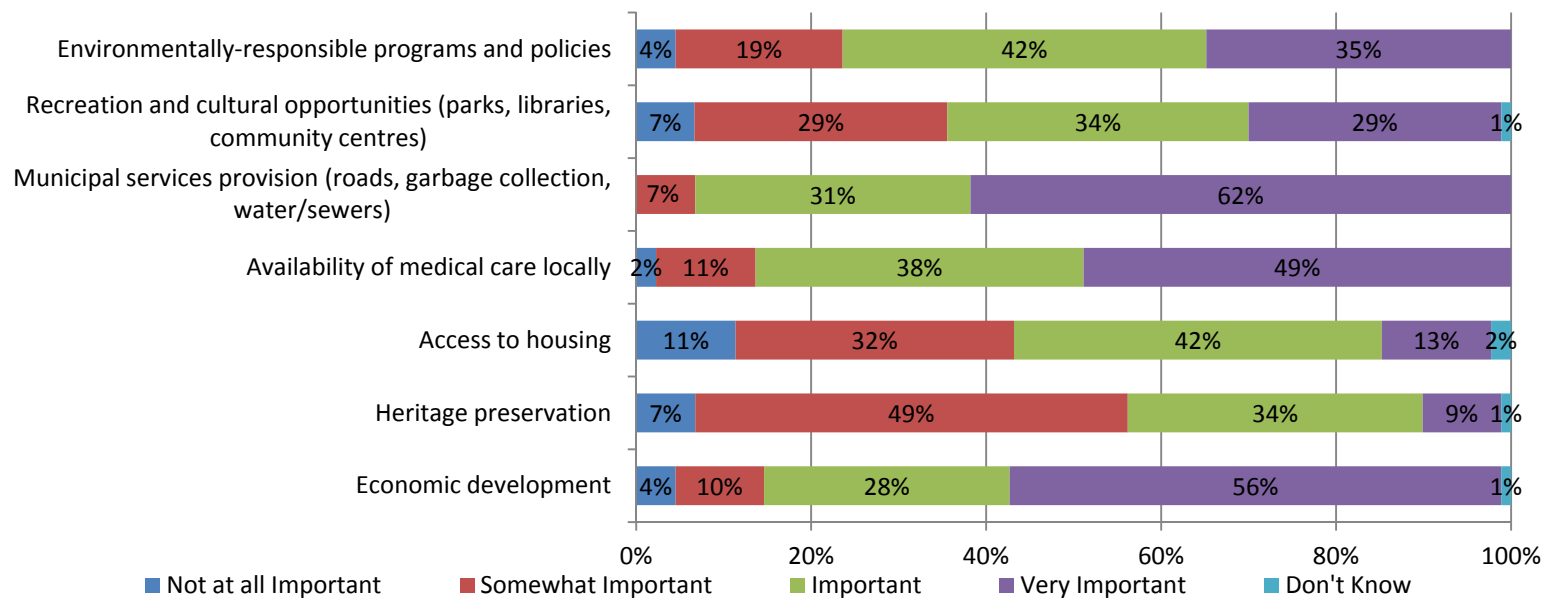
However, the survey respondents identified unemployment and a lack of new jobs (25%), the high cost of utility bills (21%), and the availability of medical care facilities in the local area (12%) as the greatest challenges to creating a "sustainable Malahide." Thirty respondents provided written comments identifying other challenges. Of these, the majority identified that high municipal taxes or Township spending as significant challenges. Other responses stated that the promotion of growth, through improved infrastructure, serviced industrial land, or attracting new businesses are a significant challenge. All together, area residents are concerned that without continued economic growth and efficient municipal operations, the Township will not be able to achieve its sustainability goals.

More opportunities for public engagement were important to survey respondents, as "community involvement and feedback" (30%) was identified as the best way to bring about positive change in the Township. "Working with neighbouring local governments to share resources" (22%) and "improving the

built environment” (15%) such as buildings, roads, and utilities were also identified. Sixteen of the respondents provided their own examples of how to bring about positive change, twelve of which specifically addressed the importance of developing a communal, long-term vision that is characterized by a strong, positive relationship between the Township and stakeholders, and the efficient management of municipal resources.

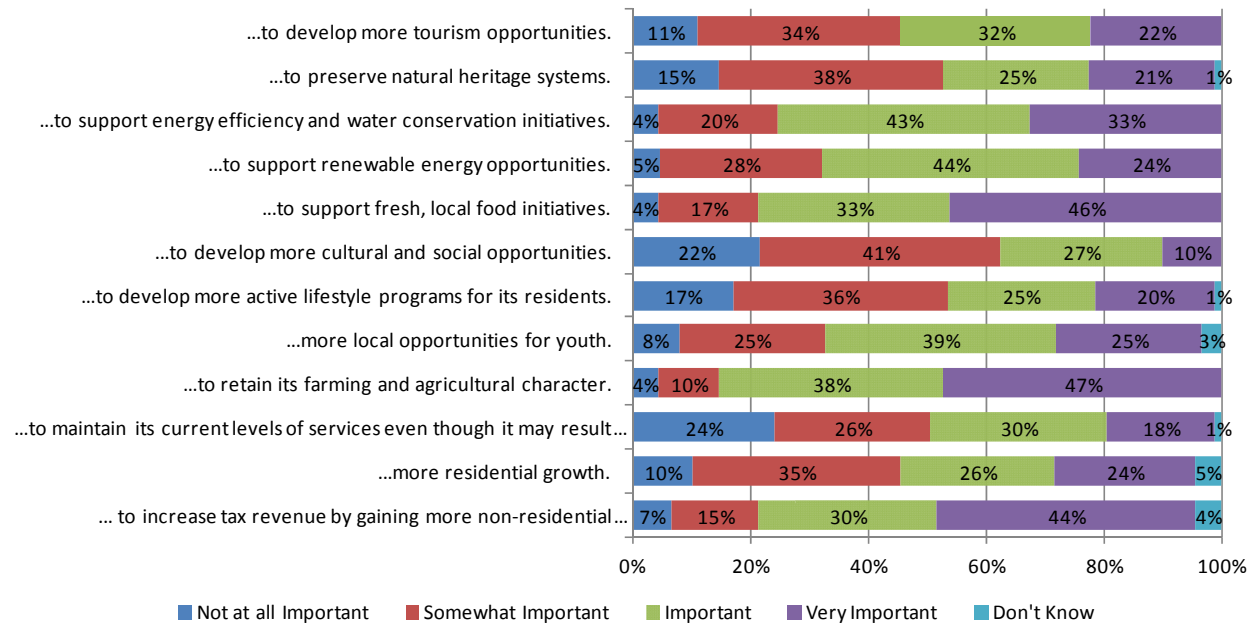
Figure 3 demonstrates that the vast majority of respondents (62%) felt that “municipal service provision” (i.e., roads, garbage collection, water/sewers) and “economic development” (56%) are very important policy areas to be addressed by the Township. This sentiment towards basic service provision is reiterated in the responses to what the ideal community provides for its’ residents. In a separate question, survey respondents identified three municipal services as almost equally important: “safe and healthy neighbourhoods” (18%), “improved roads” (17%), and “employment opportunities” (17%). Survey respondents felt that the Township should limit its responsibilities to basic service provision, while 92% of survey respondents expressed that “fiscally responsible service delivery,” is either “important” or “very important.”

Figure 3: Priority Policy Areas for the Township



Respondents want the Township to build on what is already done well in Malahide. As demonstrated in, the need to retain agriculture and to support fresh, local food initiatives, was indicated to be either important or very important by 85% and 79% of the respondents, respectively. At the same time, respondents recognize the importance of raising more tax revenues through avenues such as non-residential development.

Figure 4: Areas for Improvement in the Township (“Malahide needs...”)



Thirty-five respondents provided additional comments in the survey. As respondents noted in their comments, sustainability should be about “getting back to the basics” with regards to the responsible management of scarce resources. One of the strongest themes addressed in the additional comments provided by respondents is the issue of “doing more with less” in the Township by controlling municipal spending on services, and keeping tax rates low. Specifically, Two-thirds of the comments expressed concerns about the negative impacts of increased taxes on economic growth due to municipal spending. At the heart of these survey responses is the desire to encourage sustained economic growth and development by keeping municipal taxes and operating costs low, providing good quality hard infrastructure such as well-maintained roads and serviced land, and building upon key aspects of the Township’s agricultural base.

Council Interviews

On November 27, 2012, interviews were held with each member of Township Council that were intended to help understand the major issues and challenges in the Township. From these interviews, several key themes emerged, including:

1. The need to attract new growth through commercial and industrial development;
2. The need to balance constrained municipal revenues and operating costs; and
3. The need to improve communication with the public.

Overall, the interviewees identified the need to create opportunities for **economic development** to increase tax assessments and create more jobs. Diversifying agricultural products and processing, attracting and supporting new industries, and promoting small business were all seen as key opportunities for the Township. It was identified that one of the most significant barriers to industrial growth is due to the lack of availability of serviced industrial lands in the Township. As a result, new industrial businesses are likely to locate in Aylmer where there are existing serviced industrial lands.

In general, the interviewees addressed the challenge of **balancing municipal budgets**, as much of the Township's assessments are either residential or agricultural, with limited industrial or commercial land. Compounding this, residents are pushing the Township to minimize tax increases. To address this issue, some of the interviewees specifically identified the need to improve efficiencies in the Township's operations. A couple of the interviewees felt that the Township should be efficiently managed and "run like a business." At the same time, the majority of interviewees praised the hard work and dedication of staff, recognizing that many are also residents of the Township and therefore, have a vested interest in its future.

The interviewees identified that **local infrastructure** is relatively good. In particular, the new community centres in the Township (Malahide Community Place and South Dorchester Community Hall), as well as the East Elgin Community Complex provide area residents with places to socialize and participate in community and sports activities. The interviewees expressed the need maximize the utility of these facilities by being flexible and pro-active in booking the meeting spaces. At the same time, the interviewees identified the challenge of maintaining the large road network in the Township. In addition, there is a need to provide municipal services such as water and sewage in areas slated for new development, as most areas are only connected to either municipal water or sewers, not both.

Interviewees expressed broad support for a variety of local **environmental projects**. Renewable energy, such as solar, geothermal, and (some) wind energy projects are seen to be a valuable environmental and economic opportunity for the Township. Regular dredging in Port Bruce to maintain the shoreline is an expensive task that could be offset through the promotion of new development and tourism in the area. In addition, erosion along Dexter Line was identified as a significant and expensive problem that needs to be resolved. The protection of agricultural lands and woodlots, planting of more trees, and cleaning up of waterways and the Lake Erie shoreline were also identified as important environmental projects.

The interviewees made it clear that better community engagement and the effective execution of the Plan are outcomes they would like to see as the result of *Cultivating Malahide*. In particular, they want to see a Plan that contains achievable objectives, establishes common priorities for the Township and emphasizes cooperation with area municipalities and the County.

Focus Groups

On December 19, 2012, two focus groups were held with representatives from local businesses and community interests. There were **8** participants in the focus group on local business issues and **6** participants in the focus group on community issues. Participants in the focus groups were invited by the Township and represented a broad range of local issues, including small businesses, farmers, ratepayers, arts and culture, environmental issues, as well as community and accessibility issues. The purpose of the focus groups was to solicit insights on key issues facing the Township through topic-specific discussions.

Across both focus groups, the promotion of economic development opportunities and expansion of existing economic assets, such as agriculture and tourism, was seen to be a top priority. The participants felt that adaptability and resiliency were important aspects for effectively responding to future conditions. As well, both groups identified that they would like to see the community develop closer ties with the Amish and Low German-speaking Mennonite population.

A third focus group was held on March 25, 2013 with **8** representatives from the Amish and Low German-speaking community. The focus group was organized with the assistance of Mennonite Community Services with discussions centred upon what sustainability means to this particular community, services that they use or would consider using, and ways in which the Amish and Low German-speaking community could be better engaged in civic life.

Business Interests Group

For local businesses, “sustainability” means utilizing the Township’s existing assets and resources in a way that ensures longevity and growth for future generations. Above all, economic development was identified a top priority by participants. The vitality of the local economy is dependent on attracting new customers, increasing exposure to new markets, and retaining young and skilled workers. To remain a competitive destination for attracting and supporting businesses, participants felt that the Township needs to provide quality infrastructure and comparable taxes to the rest of the region.

At the same time, participants recognized the importance of the Township’s responsibility to balance the need for administering by-laws and regulations, with the need to make it easy and efficient for businesses to operate. To ensure efficiency, there needs to be greater cooperation and coordination between local businesses, the Township, and senior levels of government. The continued preservation and productivity of agriculture and the efficient use of tax revenues were identified as important ways to sustain valuable resources over the long term. Some focus group participants recognized that supporting local industries requires undertaking practices that have minimal negative impacts on the natural environment and protect the quality of air, water, and soil in the region.

Community Interests Group

At the centre of the group's notion of sustainability is the ability to adapt and respond to future change. This means developing the opportunities that ensure long-term vitality, such as:

- Creating employment opportunities for youth and young families so they do not have to move away;
- Ensuring that the quality of the natural environment is preserved and enhanced; and
- Building on the existing assets in the community, such as agriculture.

Economic development is key to the Township's success, and participants identified the importance of supporting local businesses and new tourism opportunities for ensuring long-term growth. As well, the diversification of the agriculture industry, particularly with regard to attracting food processing industries, was seen as an important tool for building on the Township's existing economic assets.

Low-German Speaking Group

A number of the participants owned businesses and as such were interested in economic sustainability initiatives such as the expansion of municipal servicing, rationalizing taxation, diversification of local industry, maximizing the skills of their workforce, and marketing the rural lifestyle offered locally. Participants mentioned that local parks are frequented by members of their community for picnics and family gatherings, though restrictions on bringing food into community centres discouraged their use of facilities. They mentioned that language barriers can often result in children and youth feeling uncomfortable in taking part of broader community programs.

The participants indicated that more traditional Mennonite or Amish communities view themselves as self-sustainable and autonomous, and have a reluctance to participate in governmental processes. The focus group suggested that better communication with the Township is needed (recognizing that their community must also play a key role in this regard), enhanced customer service from municipal representatives (e.g. timely response to requests), and environmental enhancements (e.g. establishing forestation targets and incentives) would be beneficial to achieving a sustainable and higher quality of life for their communities.

Summary of Themes from Consultations

Key issues and priorities identified through the public consultations process provide a clear direction for advancing into Phase Two of *Cultivating Malahide*. Throughout the public consultation process, several key issues were identified. These issues seek to build on aspects of the Township that stakeholders take pride in, such as the agricultural character of the area and a strong sense of community. As part of the public consultations, the following themes were frequently identified:

- Sustainability means growing the community and providing services in a manner that does not negatively impact current or future generations.
- A need exists to use municipal resources as efficiently as possible, while ensuring transparency in operations.
- Improving communications with the community.
- Encouraging closer ties with the Amish and Low German speaking Mennonite population.
- Pursuit of community economic development through diversification of industry, development and promotion of tourism-related infrastructure, retention of a young and skilled workforce, and support for small business.
- Protection and conservation of the natural environment, recognizing that broad ecological systems ultimately influence the longevity of the built environment and human health.
- Preservation and diversification of agriculture and agricultural-related industries.
- The need to improve and maintain hard infrastructure (e.g., roads and sewers).