

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY

2022-2026 Strategic Plan

*Planning for
the Future*



New BMPL
Logo Here

THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

The Strategic Plan was prepared by The Blue Mountains Public Library Strategic Planning Working Group, over a fourteen-month study period. The draft Plan was then presented to the community and tested through a final online survey. The Board approved the Plan at a Board meeting on April 21, 2022.

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Laurey Gillies, Chair
Maurice Pepper, Vice Chair
Dorothy Cammaert
Jesse T. Glass, Q.C.
Andrea Matrosovs
Joanne Vivona
Gary Zalot

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKING GROUP

Laurey Gillies, Board Chair
Dr. Sabrina Saunders, CEO
Mary Dodge, Manager of Community Engagement



Welcome to Our New Strategic Plan

We are very pleased to present this new strategic plan to our community. It was a challenging process within the constraints of the pandemic, but that is also a reason why it was so important to do it. Much has changed for all of us over the last two years and we at BMPL had to rise to the challenge, too. Our GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archives and Museum) had to pivot to offer extensive online programming which has become very popular. Our collections, and especially our virtual collections, are in high demand. The Blue Mountains is now the second fastest growing municipality in Canada, which places increased demands on our services and facilities. All these changes required a new look at our strategic directions.

This plan is based on comprehensive consultation with the community. We had a “listening phase” which involved many one-to-one and small group discussions and focus groups. We did micro-surveys and our popular post-it-note session. Once we had a sense of direction from the community, we crafted pillars and goals which we then tested through a larger community survey. In all, we had input from 2,153 of you over our five phase, fourteen month process.

Thank you for your involvement and commitment to BMPL and for helping us to shape the new pillars and goals which will guide us over the next four years.

Laurey Gillies, Chair

Dr. Sabrina Saunders, CEO



Laurey Gillies
Board Chair



Dr. Sabrina Saunders
CEO

Who Are We?

HISTORY OF BMPL

The Blue Mountains Public Library (BMPL) was established with the opening of the L.E. Shore in December of 1995. This union library between Clarksburg (in the former Township of Collingwood) and the Town of Thornbury became the BMPL in 1998 when The Town of the Blue Mountains was amalgamated. At that time the L.E. Shore property was designated for library purposes for as long as a library shall reside in the space.

The L.E. Shore opened its doors with a very special feature, a Gallery. For the design of this building, and the foresight to include other areas of culture services such as a Gallery, the building won provincial awards.

In 2016 the Blue Mountains Public Library Board acquired the Craigleith Heritage Depot community museum as our second facility. A book deposit station was added as a pilot study and the CHD hours of operation were increased from seasonal one day a week, to six days a week year-round.

2023 is the 15th anniversary of CHD as a community museum and 2025 is the 30th anniversary of BMPL.



GLAM

The Blue Mountains Public Library, the Craigleith Heritage Depot, and The Gallery, with our collective archival holdings, make our system a GLAM – Gallery, Library, Archives and Museum. GLAMs have become more popular across municipalities as Libraries, their CEOs and Boards become collectively responsible for the culture portfolio in their communities. The BMPL was an early adopter of the GLAM model opening in 1995 with a gallery and local archival collections. The addition of the museum in 2016 makes us a stronger public asset.

GALLERY



LIBRARY



ARCHIVES



MUSEUM



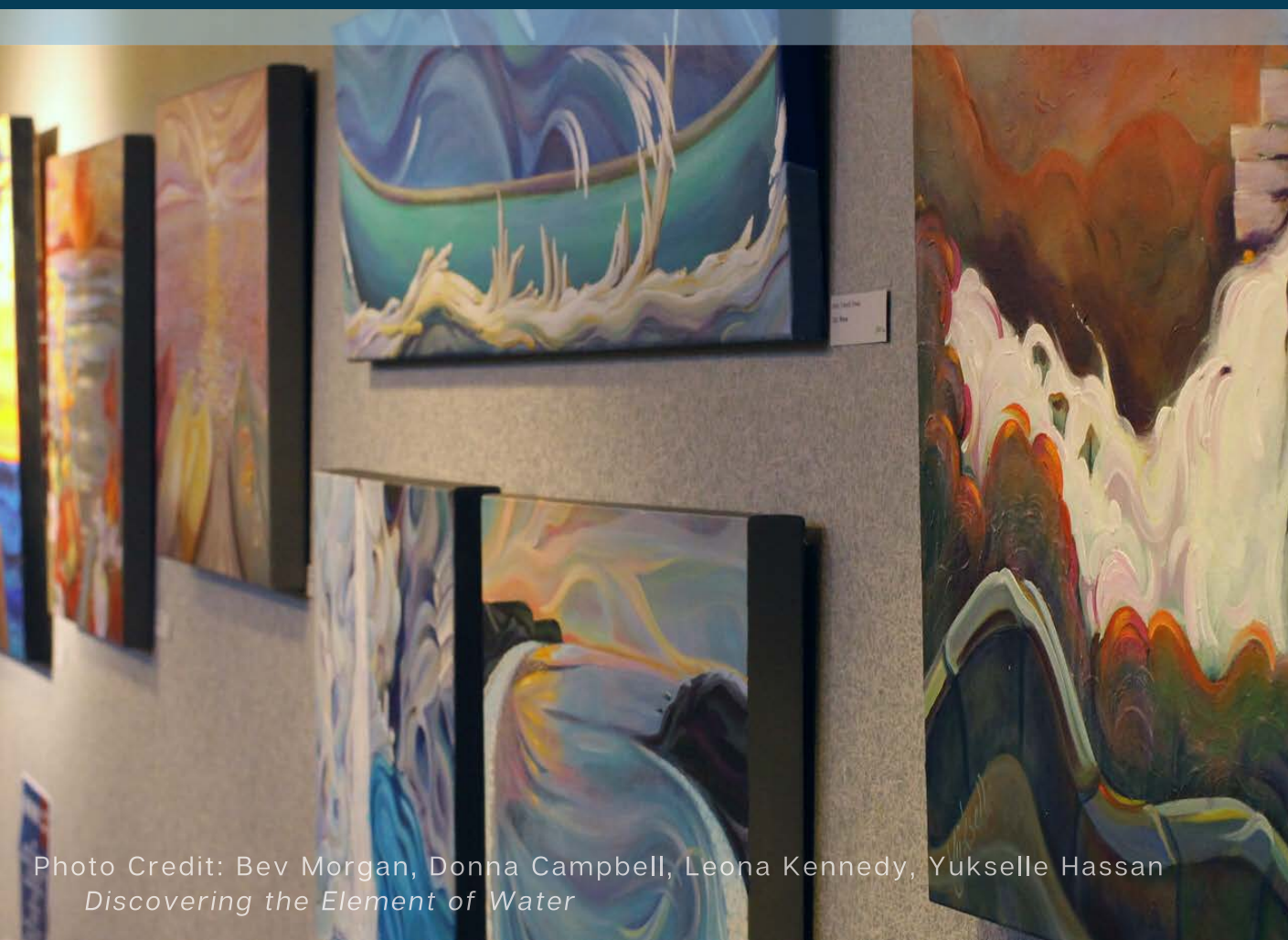
GALLERY

MANDATE

The Gallery at L.E. Shore acts as a centre for arts and culture in The Town of the Blue Mountains. The Gallery has a focus on artists and art forms of The Blue Mountains and our local area, as well as providing education to the community in the area of arts and culture.



Photo Credit: Willy Waterton
Salt of the Earth



Since the inception of the L.E. Shore branch, The Gallery at L.E. Shore has been an integral component of the facility. With over 300 exhibits to date and over 1,300 individual artists shown, our gallery is an important hub for arts and culture in The Blue Mountains.

The Arts and Culture Council (ACC) is responsible for producing The Gallery exhibitions as well as a speaker series program called The ACC Presents. In 2019 the ACC also began adjudicating the Municipal Arts Program (MAP) in the Town Hall.

Photo Credit: Bev Morgan, Donna Campbell, Leona Kennedy, Yukselle Hassan
Discovering the Element of Water



LIBRARY

MANDATE

The Blue Mountains Public Library supports 21st century literacies by ensuring equitable access to information in all its forms to grow an informed and connected citizenry. As a community hub we offer programs and spaces which enable people to gather, socialize, learn and play.

Our library services occur in both facilities, via a Virtual Branch on our website, and in pop up locations across the Town. BMPL continues to offer more programs per capital, have more card holders, and circulate more materials than other provincial libraries in our size category. Our collections continue to grow, through public requests and staff curation. Collections include physical materials, online / e-materials, and the Library of Things - a special collection of items. Our technology continues to be the more requested content in the Library of Things, but this content is based on community feedback and requests.



ARCHIVES

MANDATE

The archives acquires and preserves local documentary objects at the Craigleith Heritage Depot in support of the community museum mandate. The wide range of archival material is a key resource that assists museum exhibition, education and programming as well as individual and community interests in the area of history, heritage and culture.



Our Archival collections include documents, photos, maps, as well as diaries and other personal papers. All held within the Craigleith Heritage Depot facility, our Curator and team regularly work with community members to collect and preserve our local historical documents. Our archival collections are often the foundation for our museum artifact collection plan and exhibition plans. A great example of this is the collection of attestation papers, letters and diary entries of local military members which became the foundation of the Our Military Heritage project.

MUSEUM

MANDATE

The Craigleith Heritage Depot community museum provides tangible links to the community, via artifacts, and intangible associations via memory, stories and folklore. Through conservation and collection management the museum is a steward of local culture and natural heritage. As a designated heritage building, the Depot is not only the community museum facility, but a significant part of the collection.

The Craigleith Heritage Depot is the eastern gateway to our Town. For generations people have used the iconic heritage building as a land mark. When inside the museum, local history collections such as shipwrecks, the ski industry, our geologic past and Indigenous peoples are represented. Our Virtual Museum further connects our archives and our artifacts for virtual visits and researchers.



MISSION

The Blue Mountains Public Library
is a dynamic centre of
community engagement
where everyone can
connect, explore and create.

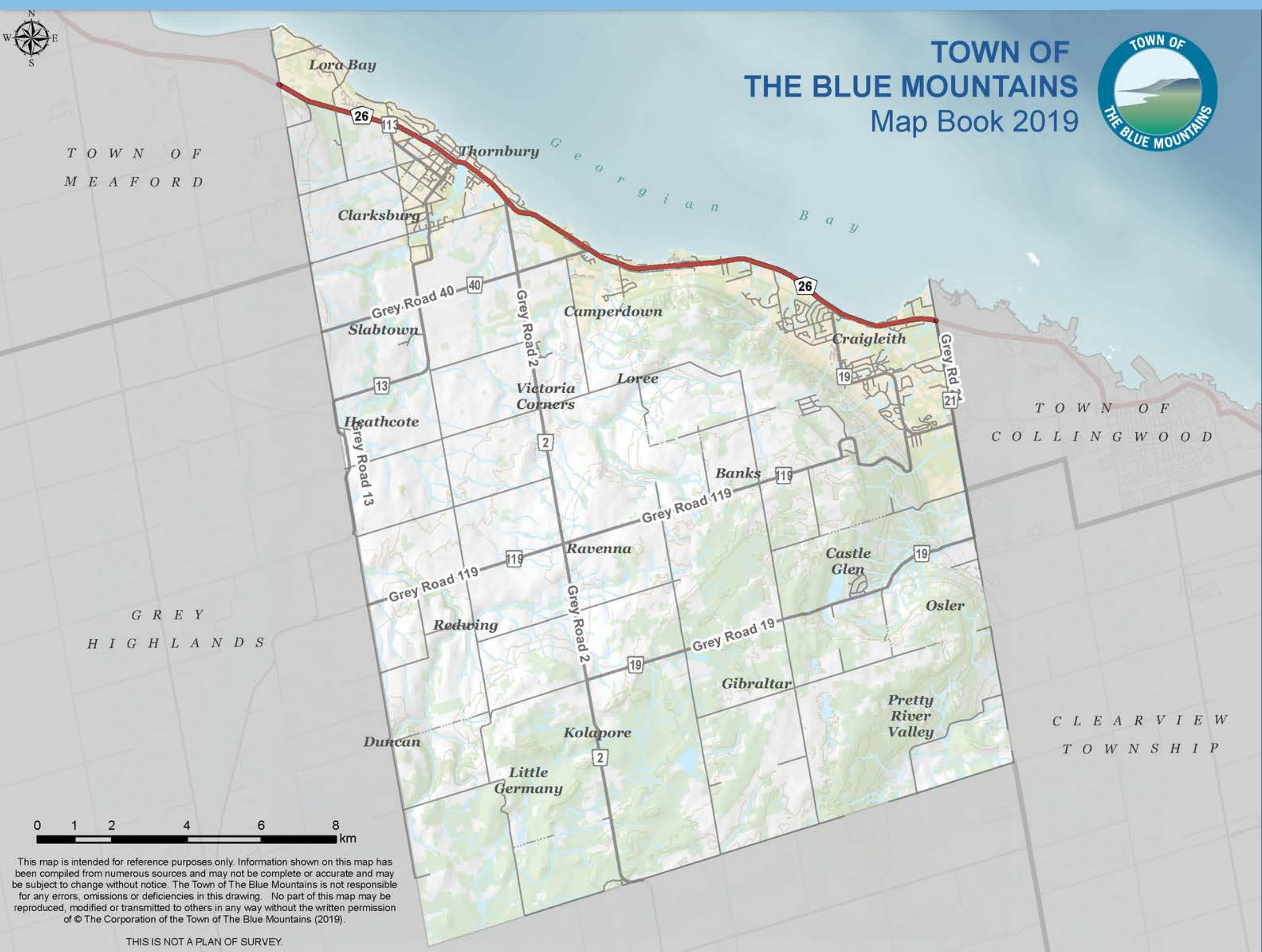
VISION

Our Community Hubs meet the evolving
interests and needs of our diverse and
growing population through thriving
Gallery, Library, Archives and Museum
(GLAM) services.

VALUES



COMMUNITY PROFILE



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

With over 15,000 residents, the community demographic is diverse in terms of age, income and interests. In 2020 and 2021 the community made a large shift, not represented in any official capacity, of seasonal weekenders residing full time. Additionally, year over year there is evidence that part-time weekenders are making the shift to permanent residency in The Town. As a community we also have a significant seasonal migrant agricultural worker population as well as supporting over 2.5 million visitors annually.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Over the past several years the lack of Attainable and Affordable Housing is a concern of our community. Businesses have had difficulties employing service workers due to the inability to live where you work. We acknowledge that regardless of where you live the community workforce is more likely to access GLAM services in the period during and following business hours.



Of those who make less than \$100,000 a year, 58% are considered below a living wage. (According to the 2016 Census). BMPL heard from the community that we have a role to play in providing equitable access to all members of our community including those who Live, Work, and Play here.

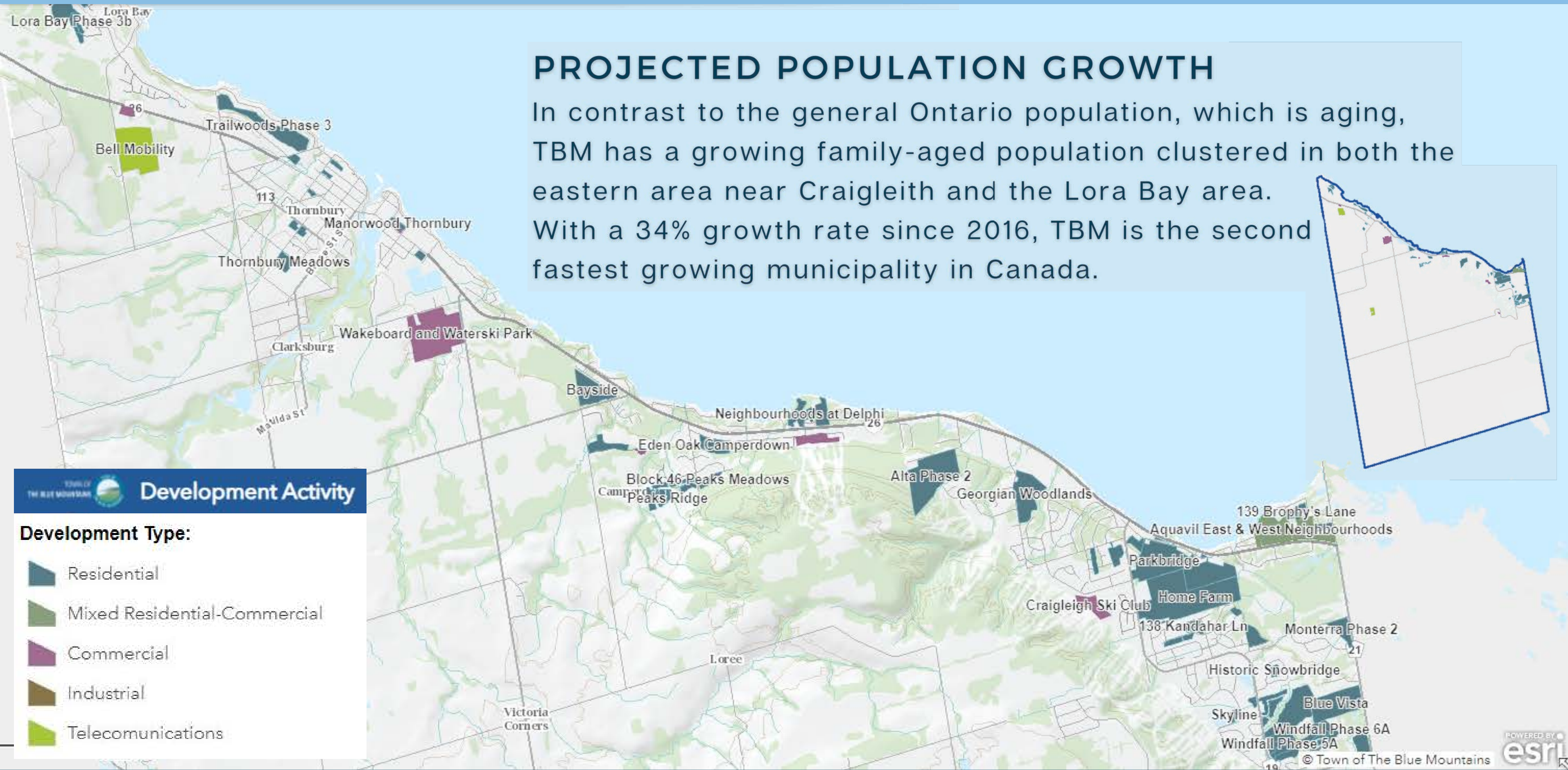
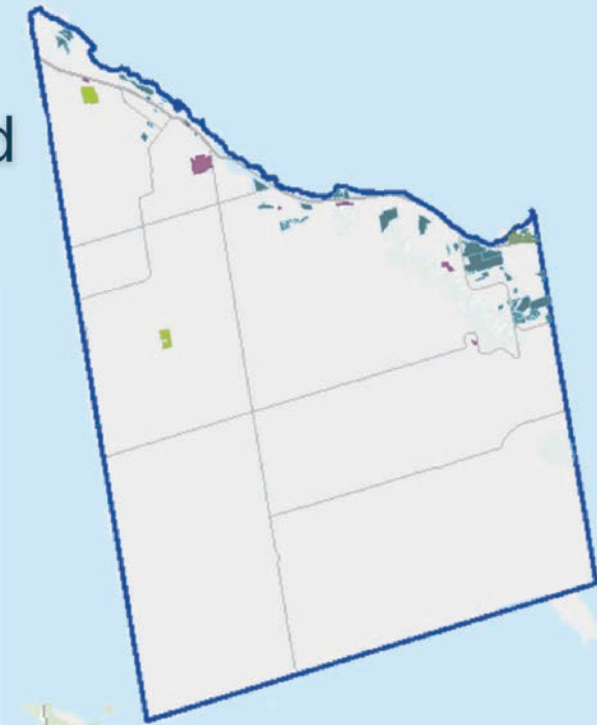
Residents of the Town can attest to the high cost of living in our area due to high assessments. Many of our seniors and multi-generational residents are "house rich" which means their home has grown in value over the decades, but they do not have the income typically affiliated with a property of that value.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH

In contrast to the general Ontario population, which is aging, TBM has a growing family-aged population clustered in both the eastern area near Craigleith and the Lora Bay area. With a 34% growth rate since 2016, TBM is the second fastest growing municipality in Canada.



Development Activity

Development Type:

- Residential
- Mixed Residential-Commercial
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Telecommunications

2021 SERVICES AT A GLANCE



49,296

people visit our branch in-person

***55,084**

virtual branch visits



64%

of TBM residents are card holders



43,979

items circulated



31,676

Digital checkouts

ACCESS

Statistics include

30 weeks of curbside service, **3** weeks of hybrid access, and **19** weeks of full facility access.

VOLUNTEERS

In Fall 2021 the volunteer program re-opened after a 17 month pause.

49 volunteers

1,577 hours given



33,957

participants attended in

617 programs



Strategic Planning Study

1,121 people consulted

105 events



9 exhibits of local artists

2,193 online visits



***192,817**

local history objects and archives

EQUITY OF LIBRARY SERVICE



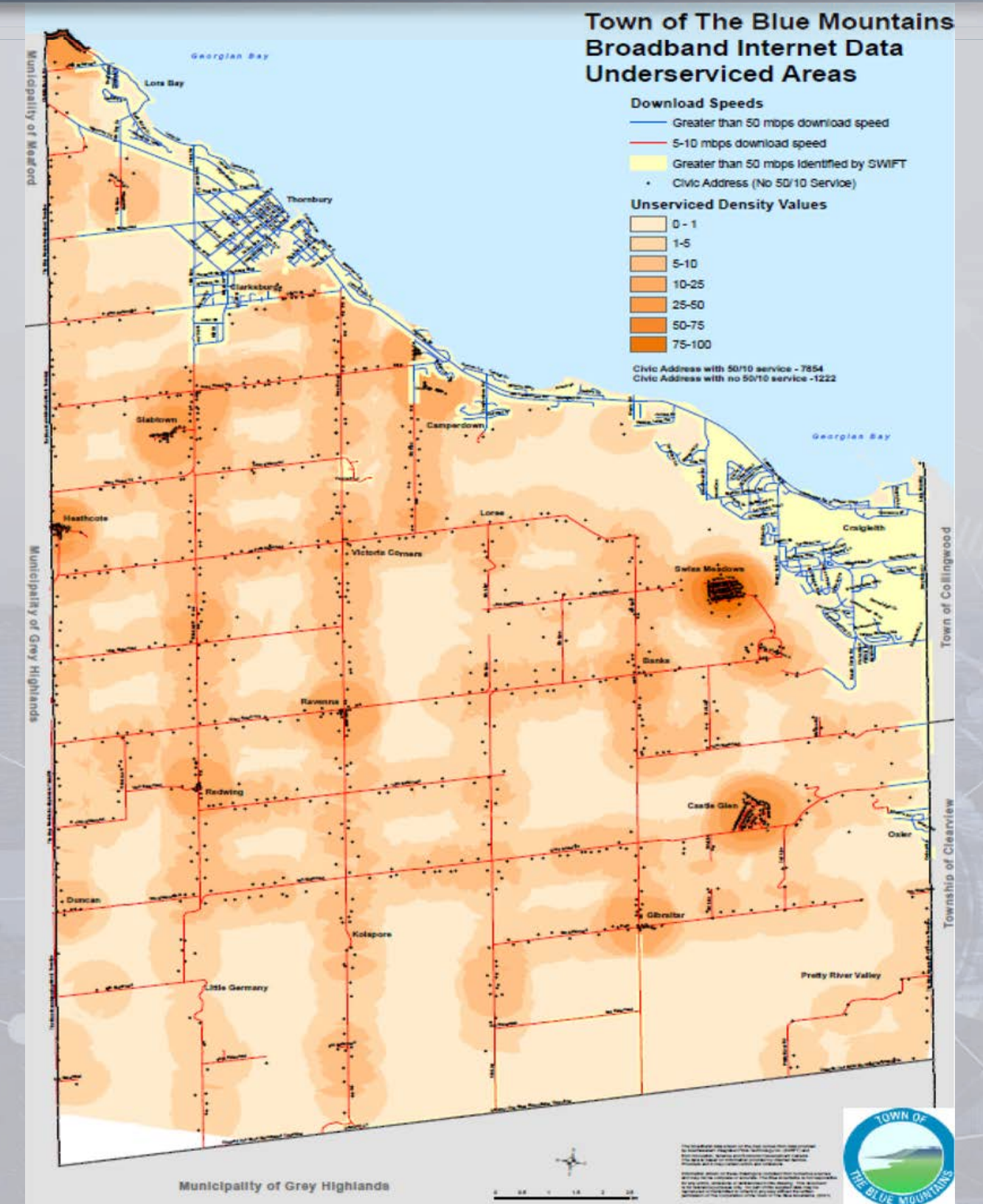
The Town of The Blue Mountains is comprised of diverse communities, both rural and urban, seasonal and permanent, and longtime resident and newcomer. The Town is the second fastest growing community in Canada with continued growth in full-time residents and transitions from seasonal to part-time. These rate payers are looking for service levels similar to their primary or former communities in urban settings.

While our hours, services, and collections trend more towards those of much larger communities, equity of service across our community continues to be a challenge. The BMPL service model has struggled to keep up with the growing needs of our community of communities. Rural and East End services in particular are limited, with comprehensive library services present only in the West End.

FILLING THE GAPS IN CONNECTIVITY

Rural libraries have become synonymous with internet over the past decade. Connectivity is a particularly important service to many residents due to the continued unreliability of current networks throughout much of our geography. The library provides internet access to all users, including a significant number of visitors and seasonal workers who are essential to the economic prosperity of our agriculture and tourism industries.

In addition to our onsite technology, BMPL has a strong technology-lending program, which is part of our "Library of Things". This collection includes Chromebooks, tablets, tech toys, audio/videography equipment, cameras and is continuously growing.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Strategic Plan Process was approved at the May 20, 2021 Board Meeting including research model, timelines, and Phases of the Strategic Plan Development. At this meeting, the Board also established a Working Group tasked to oversee the planning process including a comprehensive community consultation process and development of Goals and Objectives to meet the expectations of a 21st century GLAM.

The 14-month 5 Phase Study began in April 2021.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE I: APRIL - AUGUST 2021

This was a very important phase and referred to as a "Listening Stage". During this five month period the Working Group, staff, volunteers, and members of the Board attended community activities, events, and interacted with community groups. This informal consultation had the goal of listening and hearing the interests and needs of the community--GLAM focused and other. In addition to listening and building awareness of our communities' needs, a series of short surveys was released to assist the Working Group in developing the formal consultation focus.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE II: SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2021

This second Phase was the "Formal Consultation" stage and lasted approximately four months. Beginning with a Town Hall, the Working Group gathered feedback on how to proceed through consultation during the pandemic. Consultation included one-on-one meetings, drop-in with the CEO and a Board member, the Post-It Note Activity, and focus groups on a variety of themes.

A total of 481 residents participated in these face-to-face and online consultations.



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

Our most successful event of the 2018-2022 consultation, our "Post-It Note" event, was repeated. Due to the pandemic this event was housed at both facilities for three weeks. Again it was a phenomenal success with more than 360 people providing 2,575 comments to the 12 questions.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

PHASE III: JANUARY - MARCH 2022

In the early months of 2022 the Working Group synthesized the community feedback and drafted Strategic Pillars and Goals. The draft plan was tested with a Community Feedback Survey. This step was included to ensure what we heard, is what the community said. While the Board originally planned to hold a face-to-face Town Hall for feedback, the survey was deemed a safer option during the pandemic.

PHASE IV: MARCH - APRIL 2022

In March the Board received and approved the final report of the survey results of the draft Strategic Pillars and Goals. In April 2022 the Working Group presented the final Strategic Plan, based on the comprehensive study.

PHASE V: MAY - JUNE 2022

The 2022-2026 Strategic Plan was presented to Council, published on our website, and the executive report was mailed to households.



WHAT MAKES UP OUR STRATEGIC PLAN?

3 PILLARS

COMMUNITY HUBS

EMPOWERING SERVICES

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

11 GOALS

2 UNDER-PINNING THEMES

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

COMMUNITY HUBS

Provide spaces to connect, explore and create.

GOALS FOR ACHIEVEMENT:

- Foster social cohesion in a time of growth and challenges.
- Develop multi-use spaces and provide outreach services.
- Provide technologically-connected spaces.

COMMUNITY SAID:

Better places for gathering in branches.
Opportunities for community interaction in welcoming spaces.
Provide pop-up GLAM, Library kiosks, and mobile library in rural communities.
Expand library and museum services in Craigleith.
Quiet spaces.
Provide collaborative learning spaces.
Update computer stations.
Expand technology onsite and for loan.

EMPOWERING SERVICES

Create a service model that reaches those who live, work, and play in The Town of the Blue Mountains.

GOALS FOR ACHIEVEMENT:

- Provide diverse GLAM services, collections and programs.
- Support 21st century literacy through resources, opportunities and coaching.
- Expand the Virtual Branch.

COMMUNITY SAID:

Dynamic, creative, and engaging programs.
Adaptable and flexible services.
Provide services not available elsewhere.
Multi-lingual collections.
Intergenerational programs.
Talk about tough topics.
Take on diversity and anti-racism head on.
Provide homebound services.
Coach us in modern literacies.
Build a multi-interest Library of Things.
An easier to navigate Virtual Branch.
More content online.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Grow BMPL as a key partner and community resource.

GOALS FOR ACHIEVEMENT:

- Retain and recruit personnel as an employer of choice.
- Demonstrate stewardship through transparency and accountability.
- Increase BMPL financial opportunities.
- Be a Key Partner within the municipality.
- Provide inclusive and engaging communications with and to the community.

COMMUNITY SAID:

Internal equity with TBM positions.
Show BMPL impacts on the community.
A diversely skilled Board.
Demonstrate leadership in diversity, Truth & Reconciliation, and anti-bias.
Partnerships that support the underserved and address community gaps.
Develop a volunteer core that uses our skills.
Cohesive and engaging branding.
More blogs, information sheets, and advertising.

L.E. SHORE BRANCH AND THE GALLERY

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