

2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan

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1. Message from the Mayor & Council

On behalf of the Town of Birch Hills, we are proud to present our 5-year Strategic Plan for 2026 – 2030. This plan represents our commitment to a thriving, sustainable, and inclusive community. It was developed with the input of municipal staff to guide decision making, resource allocation and long-term planning. Possession

2. Vision Statement

“A vibrant and forward-thinking community where families and businesses grow, neighbors’ connect and everyone belongs.”

3. Mission Statement

“To provide effective governance, responsive services, and sustainable development through transparent leadership and community engagement. Success of the municipality depends on public trust. This relationship with the public is achieved through open, transparent, and fair decision making, effective public policy, responsible financial management and effective communication. Our goal is to provide greater value to the community by improving the way we do business.”

4. Our Core Values

- Integrity – We act with honesty, accountability and fairness
- Service Excellence – we provide high quality, efficient, and responsive service.
- Collaboration – we engage with staff and residents.
- Innovation – We embrace change and seek continuous improvement.
- Sustainability – Sustainable Service - We protect our resources for current and future generations.
- Transparency
- Respect – Responsiveness – Resilience
- Vision
- Empowerment

5. Community Profile

- Population: 1,066
- Geographic Size: 2.39 square kilometres
- Key Industries: K – 12 Public School, Agriculture, Tourism – Museum, Duane Lowe Community Centre – Seniors Centre, Daycare, Senior Housing, Long Term Care Facility & Medical Clinic, Airport
- Unique Features: proximity to Highway 3 and Highway 25
 - Golf Course / Ball diamonds, Curling Rink, Skating Rink, Campground, Skatepark, Community Garden, Dance Centre

6. Strategic Priorities (2026 – 2030)

Infrastructure & Asset Management

Goal: Invest in modern and reliable infrastructure to support current and future needs.

Objectives:

- Upgrade aging water, sewer, and road infrastructure
- Improve connectivity through sidewalk and pathway expansion
- Pursue funding opportunities for capital projects

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Relining of Sewer Mains - CHIF Grant funding available	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	
Lagoon Expansion - Grant Funding - complete in 2028	\$510,000	\$510,000	\$250,000		
Cameraing & Jetting of Sewer Mains - continue on a year to year basis	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Pressure Reducing Valves (Wilson, 4th, 2nd, Maple - stabilize pressure in the town - engineering study done - feasible)					
Storm Sewer drainage - 5th street - CHIF grant funding available		\$100,000			
Paving - (\$1,000,000 / km) - continue to put funds in reserve	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Crack Sealing - pavement - purchase the tool for staff - budget for "material"	\$6,500	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Manhole Repairs - CHIF grant funding available - when repairs complete, place funds in reserve for future repairs	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Replacement - Water line from Reservoir to WTP & Pumphouse - 1 mile - place in reserve	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Sidewalks - council to decide which ones need to be done - continue to put funds in reserve	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Radar Signs - Ward Road					
Town Truck - Replacement	-	\$65,000	\$65,000	-	-
Tool Cat - trade in for replacement (\$45,000 replacement value, plus CANOE pricing)	\$65,000				
Gravel Truck - replacement of the current blue one					
Reservoir - Aeration - Grant Funding - CHIF					
New Shop - continue to place funds in the reserve - possible grant funding available	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
New Fire Hall - possible grant funding					
Civic Centre - roof repair / bathroom renovations					
TOTAL TO BUDGET YEARLY	\$1,206,500	\$1,303,000	\$913,000	\$598,000	\$298,000

Sustainable Growth & Development

Goal: Plan for balanced growth that supports housing, commercial expansion and environmental stewardship.

Objectives:

- Update the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw
 - Update every 10 years
 - Created in 2017 (cost to create was \$44,761.50)
 - To be updated in 2027
- Encourage infill development and mixed-use planning
 - Develop industrial area north of Alex Dunn road
 - Investigate possible uses and footprint of Town land and buildings to determine what should be a new build and what could be repurposed
- Expand access to affordable and diverse housing options
 - Develop plans for next phase of residential development
 - Prepare 10-15 new residential lots – offer discounted lots or tax incentives
 - Senior Housing Plan – aging-in-place options (like assisted living or smaller homes near the senior facility)
 - Review vacant lots and houses – advertisement and promotion to sell empty lots and kick start new builds
 - Develop and promote affordable housing solutions to attract and retain young families, seniors and low income – this could include seeking developer for multi-unit housing for rent

Community Health & Safety

Goal: Foster a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all residents.

Objectives:

- Support recruitment and training for emergency services
- Enhance mental health, wellness and recreation programming
- Strengthen emergency preparedness and response plans.
 - School crossing guard for morning and afternoon
 - More reflective sign cross walks in town
 - Radar speed signs – flashing “your speed” at town entrances remind drivers to slow down

- For the Welcome Sign & Beautification – a clean, structured entrance with a speed sign and “Please Drive Carefully – Children at Play” notice can set expectations
- Continue with the 3-way stop signs and consider a speed light on Ward Road
- Promote bylaw compliance and community policing partnerships.
 - Community Safety Officer program – partnership with surrounding communities on the concept of a CSO
 - Collaborate with surrounding municipalities
- Proactively protect public safety through responsible infrastructure, planning, maintenance and renewal

Economic Development & Local Business Support

Goal: Strengthen the local economy and support business innovation.

Objectives:

- Create a business retention and expansion (BRE) strategy.
 - Strengthening the local economy by proactively supporting existing businesses, identifying their challenges, and facilitating opportunities for growth.
 - Use Property taxes to attract – Tax Incentive program:
 - Daycare Operators
 - Trades
 - Cafes or shared workspaces
 - Convert underused buildings into home-based business hubs or maker spaces
- Market available commercial / industrial land.
 - Advertising lots – with the 2-year tax free incentive
 - Real estate portfolio management
- Promote tourism, cultural and community events.
 - Increase number of events
 - Main Street (Bellamy) Town owned commercial lot – use this lot as a community multi-use lot
 - Develop a “Tourism Birch Hills” with provincial wide advertising to draw in tourism
 - Add or upgrade walking paths, green space, and a small playground park in each housing area
- Collaborate with regional economic development partners.

- Housing / rental development companies to develop
- Partner with surrounding RM's to assist in attracting new businesses that both Town and RM's can benefit from
- Collaborate with nearby city and RM for
 - Joint applications for provincial housing or infrastructure grants
- Develop regional relationships to partner with for bulk buying items and services

Governance, Engagement & Service Excellence

Goal: Deliver transparent governance, strong leadership, and excellent municipal services.

Objectives:

- Improve communication and engagement with residents.
 - Update positive feedback with town Facebook page
 - Regular town newsletter
 - Surveys from the community
 - Create opportunities for open discussions with ratepayers
- Review and modernize municipal policies and procedures.
 - Ensure bylaws and policies are in place to address current and future needs
 - Work with available sources to review policies and procedures
 - Bylaw – requirements for empty lots and building by dates so the lots don't sit empty
 - Fireworks Bylaw
- Invest in staff and council training, retention and expansion
 - Annual training sessions
 - Employee retention and attraction
 - Engage with local businesses to advertise on a larger scale job opportunities to move to Birch Hills
 - Employee recognition program
- Enhance digital service delivery
 - Website redesign to improve online services and the accessibility of information on the Town
 - Resident Satisfaction Survey
 - Use social media (town's facebook page) to tell "Heart of the Community" stories

Risk Management

- Develop a Risk Management Plan
 - Financial Risk
 - Infrastructure

- Long term abandonment – we have 2 elevators in town that at some point could pose a substantial financial burden to ratepayers if the owners return the properties to the town as they deteriorate. Develop a strategy or policy to ensure these properties are maintained or is there something the town can do to protect them from possibly being responsible for demolition when building is no longer viable.
- Rural Water – do a full cost analysis breakdown for 20 years in the future of rural water vs town water operation and upgrades
- Population
- Economics

Implementation & Monitoring

Annual Action Plans

Each year, during budget time, the municipality will review the strategic priorities. This review will guide budgeting, staffing and resource allocation.

Review & Updates

The strategic plan will be reviewed mid-term (in 2028) and adjusted as needed based on progress, emerging issues and community feedback.

Approved as the 2026 – 2030 Town of Birch Hills Strategic Plan by the Council of the Town of Birch Hills

Date: January 28, 2026

(Resolution No. 26-047 approved January 28, 2026)