



Report Presented To:	Township of Southgate Council Meeting
Meeting Date:	2025-02-05
Report Number	CAO2025-001
Title:	2024 Year in Review
Open/Closed Session:	Open Session
Prepared By:	Jim Ellis
Approved By:	Jim Ellis Interim Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

This report outlines the accomplishments and progress of the Township in 2024 in support of and implementing the visions and concepts in the 2023-2027 Southgate Community Strategic Plan. It also includes the Interim Chief Administrative Officer’s goals for 2025.

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Council receive Staff Report CAO2025-001 highlighting 2024 township accomplishments for information; and
That this report be placed on the website for public access.

Background:

The Southgate Community Strategic Plan has 3 Strategic Priorities, 13 Goals and 50 Action Items. Despite ongoing staffing issues, legislative changes and increased demands on municipal services, the Township initiated, had in process, or completed 41 Action Items in 2024.

Southgate Council appointed Public Works Manager Jim Ellis as Interim Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) December 18, 2024.

Analysis:

Southgate Department’s achievements and connections to the 2023-2027 Southgate Community Strategic Plan (CSP) are outlined in the following, aligning with the CSP priorities, goals & action items:

General Administration:

- Development Charge study underway and to be completed in 2025.
- Met with school board and working out plan for new school in 2024 & ongoing
- Hosted first volunteer committee luncheon to celebrate volunteers

- Created a Communication and Engagement Strategy (will implement what we can throughout future years)
- Created a Customer Service Standard and are working towards implementing

Human Resources/IT:

- Staff have taken various training
- Hired Director of Development & Community Services, and Executive Assistant to CAO
- Updated benefit plan to meet market check including dental benefits
- Purchase of new IT equipment including new phone system to increase security and efficiencies.

Grant Administration/Finance:

- Continue to work with SMART and GTR (Grey County funding)
- Applied for the Inclusive Community Grants Program for accessibility retrofits for the Frank McIntyre Building
- Applied for Housing Enabling Water and Wastewater Systems Fund (HEWSF) Phase 1 & 2 for wastewater treatment facility upgrades and Housing Enabling Core Services Fund (HECS) for Osprey Street reconstruction.
- Evaluated charges for water meters and waste carts, implemented new streamlined process with building department
- Adopted Asset Retirement Obligation (ARO) Policy

Recreation:

- Capital upgrades were completed at the Hopeville Pavilion
- Arena lighting was improved with new installations
- Pool accessibility enhancements were implemented

Public Works (Roads/Water/Wastewater/Waste):

- Completed the Victoria Street watermain upgrade and road construction.
- Southgate Road 24 between HWY 10 and 700m west of SDRD 75 underwent cold-in-place recycling and 50mm asphalt paving.
- Sideroad 15 between Southgate Road 08 and 12 completed with cold-in-place recycling and 50mm asphalt paving.
- Southgate Road 04 between SDRD 41 and 49 completed with cold-in-place recycling and 50mm asphalt paving.
- Reconstructed Southgate Road 26 between SDRD 41 and Homestead Road.
- Received Aggregate and Resources Act licencing for Southgate Road 22 Pit and began operations and extractions.
- Initiated culvert replacements on Southgate SDRD 49 between Southgate Road 08 and Grey Road 9.
- Purchased a new tandem plow truck for the Holstein Depot.
- Added an extra plow route out of the Hopeville Depot to shorten routes and improve winter maintenance services, increasing level of service.
- Completed a road sign asset management spreadsheet.
- Purchased a new waste collection truck for the Waste Department.
- Completed new cell excavation and original pile relocation at the Egremont Landfill.
- Installed a bulk water fill station at the Dundalk Water Tower.
- Hopeville cold storage shed upgrade and renovation with insulation and heating.

Communications and Strategic Initiatives:

- A new K-8 school was announced for Dundalk on May 27, 2024.
- The Organizational Review was completed.
- A Customer Service Standard identified key initiatives to enhance administrative services.
- Cloudpermit was adopted for the Bylaw complaint process.
- The Communication and Engagement Strategy was adopted.
- A Communications Plan was developed.
- Outreach goals identified in the Communications Strategy led to two public surveys being fielded.
- Launched a new and updated Township of Southgate website featuring:
 - A fresh design to enhance user experience and public engagement
 - Improved search functionality to reduce administrative redundancies
 - Compliance with current AODA and Anti-Spam legislation

Economic Development:

- Conducted a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) study. The study and report were completed and approved by Council in July 2024. Actions from the report will be implemented and tracked from July 2024 to June 2026.
- Increased participation in Southgate's Community Improvement Plan (CIP), with Council-approved applications rising to six in 2024.
 - Reformatted the CIP application process, reducing it to four pages for ease of use
 - Approved approximately \$47,000.00 in CIP grants, exceeding the \$45,000.00 target
- Participated in the Downtown Revitalization program, with plans approved in December 2024 for implementation in 2025
- Participated in Communities in Bloom, earning four out of five blooms and recognition for Heritage Preservation
- Secured a \$167,970 My Main Street 2.0 grant, hosting a "Celebrate Dundalk" festival and installing 11 murals in Dundalk's commercial core
- EDO won the Economic Development Council of Ontario's "Bright Ideas Competition."
- Renewed the MOU with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce for 2024-2026
- Hosted the second annual "Coffee with the Mayor" and "Hopeville Kite Festival."
- Employed two tourism summer students to support Economic Development initiatives

Fire Department:

- Completed a Community Risk Assessment.
- Completed Grain Rescue Training.
- Hosted and certified 12 members in NFPA 1002 Pump Operations.
- Held a Township-wide emergency exercise.
- Acquired a new tanker apparatus.
- Developed and implemented new Fireworks By-law
- Completed Council/Staff Essentials of Municipal Firefighting Training

Building and By-Law Enforcement Department:

- Issued 311 building permits and completed 2,008 inspections using Cloudpermit and Keystone. 2024 was a year of slower Dundalk residential housing builds, but still a number of growth-related infrastructure projects progressed and completed, which supports the continuation for Dundalk development. The majority of building permits were in rural Southgate in 2024.
- Addressed 104 By-law complaints and managed numerous stray dogs, ensuring humane shelter placement.

Planning Department:

- Processed 78 applications in 2024
- Partnered with Economic Development staff to complete six On-Farm Diversified Use site visits to address planning-related questions
- Authored 109 Planning Reports including proposed delegated Planning Authority, Renewable Energy policies and zoning, Communication Tower proposals, Accessory Building zoning clarification and Site Plan Control
- Expanded the department with the addition of a Senior Manager of Development & Community Services
- Held the first Community Planning Open House to engage the community in Additional Residential Unit zoning changes, delegated Authority changes, and planning processes.
- Instituted weekly cross-division meetings between Planning, Economic Development, and the Building Department
- Submitted a presentation proposal for the 2025 Canadian Institute of Planners Conference.
- Approved the final submission for the Dundalk McDonald's project
- Worked toward resolving multiple longstanding zoning compliance issues
- Managed major residential development applications in partnership with White Rose Park and Flato Developments Inc
- Fostered the development of Eco Park through Phase I and II
- Advanced discussions for completing a new Comprehensive Zoning By-law
- Implemented Source Water Protection provisions in the zoning by-law
- Initiated new policy and zoning provisions for renewable energy projects
- Began implementing Additional Residential Provisions mandated by the province
- Provided comments to the province and transitioned to the new Provincial Planning Statement 2024
- Collaborated with Grey County to address underutilized GIS technology in the Township

Clerks Department:

- Renewal of Agreements with the Dundalk Ag Society for their use of Dundalk Arena and our use of Baseball Diamond at Pat Dales Memorial Park
- Formally joined the Grey County Joint Police Service Board
- Sale of the former Proton Pit lands completed

Library:

- Held 521 programs with 7,401 participants
- Added 1,690 new materials and welcomed 17,791 visitors
- Conducted Baby and Toddler Story Time, Family Bingo Night, Teen Craft Workshops and adult Workshops using Canva and Cricut tools
- The Knitting Club continued to thrive, fostering community engagement.

Health & Safety:

- Developed a master assessment chart for the work alone program to enhance safety for staff working independently
- Township staff completed First Aid Training to meet legislative requirement

Interim CAO Goals

Goal 1: Update Asset Management Plan:

The Southgate Asset Management Plan (AMP) requires Regulatory updates for Phase 3 – July 1, 2024, and subsequently Phase 4 - July 1, 2025. This is a critical priority as Provincial Funding is connected to the AMP. Staff are engaging a consulting firm to update the AMP to the Regulation requirements. The AMP is comprised of the Township's core infrastructure assets, current Levels of Service (LoS), full Lifecycle activities, condition assessment, risk analysis and financial strategies. Updates required include the proposed LoS for a 10-year period, and development of a financial strategy to meet LoS lifecycle requirements.

Goal 2: Development Charges Bylaw Update:

The DC Study update has been ongoing and approaching final stages of completion involving Department Head Managers, Triton Engineering and Watson & Associates. It is anticipated to be completed with the public consultation requirements in the later summer of 2025.

Goal 3: Ministerial Zoning Order Monitoring:

Southgate has 3 Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZO's) in place. Ontario Regulation 161/22, O. Reg 162/22, and O. Reg 165/22. The Province MZO Watchlist monitors MZO's for progress and the Township has been updating and meeting with the Ministry on the status of the Orders regularly. All three of the MZO's are still moving forward in different stages:

- O. Reg 161/22, (Flato Ida Street) – Draft Plan of Subdivision application initial review completed, Southgate -Flato land swap for future administration/Council Chamber/ multi-use facility
- O. Reg 162/22, (Flato Eco Park Phase 2) - Draft Plan of Subdivision application underway, stage 2 archeological study and water balance to be completed
- O. Reg 165/22, (Flato Glenelg Phase 3) - Draft Plan of Subdivision approved, new school block created, with minor red-line revisions.

Goal 4: Supporting the New Dundalk School Build to Reach the Opening Target of September 2027:

Staff are working with Grey County and other agencies to facilitate a building permit for the Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) to begin construction for the new school in the Flato – Glenelg Phase 3 subdivision. Before the subdivision agreement is signed a temporary construction road would allow the BWDSB to purchase the 3.315-hectare parcel and start construction. The severance to create the school block and minor variances are before the Committee of Adjustment. Site plan approval is required before the building permit issuance and development agreement. This is a critical component supporting the growth in the Township.

Goal 5: Wastewater Lagoon & Treatment Plant Facility Upgrades:

The Township submitted the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Schedule C, Environmental Study Report for the expansion of the Dundalk Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) in the fall of 2023. The Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) amendment application was submitted in December 2024. The WWTF expansion is expected to increase the treatment capacity discharge from 1,832m³/day to 3,025m³/.

The pre-approved treatment technologies and upgrades include a new influent pumping station for increasing pumping capacity, enhanced aeration, and lagoon final cell floating cover blocks to improve algae removal, installing Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) technology, which will optimize ammonia reduction, upgrading to disk filters to ensure Total Suspended Solids removal, and an Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system reducing E. coli in the effluent waters.

The design is near completion and once the ECA amendment is approved the project will be tendered and build out in 2025, which will then result in wastewater Reserve Capacity allocation to be increased and available.

Goal 6: Eco Park Phase 2 – Road and Infrastructure Construction:

The road and infrastructure design are completed to the Township and Grey County standards. The Township's development partner is contributing around \$5 million dollars in cost sharing as outlined in the executed mutual agreement. The Township's portion of funding will come from Eco Park Phase 2 land sales.

A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) has been initiated and staff are involved in ongoing regularly scheduled meetings with The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) for the Highway 10 traffic signalization intersection and other Provincial interests. Tendering and road construction starting from the existing Eco Parkway, east towards Hwy 10 is proposed in 2025.

Goal 7: 2026 Recycling Collections for Southgate Non-Eligible Sources:

With the Blue Box transition, the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as of January 1, 2026, will changeover with the Circular Materials Ontario (CMO). The awarded contractor for Grey-Bruce, is Waste Management for Eligible Sources Blue Box collections services. Non-Eligible Sources that will not receive curbside collection services, as of January 2026 include commercial farms, Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional businesses in the EPR program.

During 2025, staff will be reporting to Council options on whether to continue providing curbside collections for Non-Eligible Sources. Currently with the CMO Agreement, with Southgate operating as the collection services contractor, the Non-Eligible Sources are co-mingled with Eligible Sources and a deduction calculation is applied to the CMO payments to the Township.

Concluding Comments:

“Rooted in community, embracing our future” the Township of Southgate Community Strategic Plan directives, guide staff for continual improvement, endeavouring to support a thriving economy; healthy, happy communities; and operational excellence.

Thank you, Southgate citizens, Council and staff, on our ongoing commitment, progress and successes in celebrating Southgate **25!!**

Staff will post the 2024 Year in Review Report on the Southgate website and other social media channels.

Internal Policy and Legislated Requirements:

Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure regulation (O.Reg. 588/17)

Rooted in community, embracing our future: Township of Southgate Community Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Financial and Resource Implications:

Southgate Operational and Capital Budgets are funding sources to support the CSP directives.

Strategic Priorities:

Priority: Operational Excellence

Goal: Goal 13: Advance Strategic Priorities and Improve Community Engagement

Action Item: 13 d) Improve Accountability and Transparency Measures and Efficient/Effective Meeting Practices