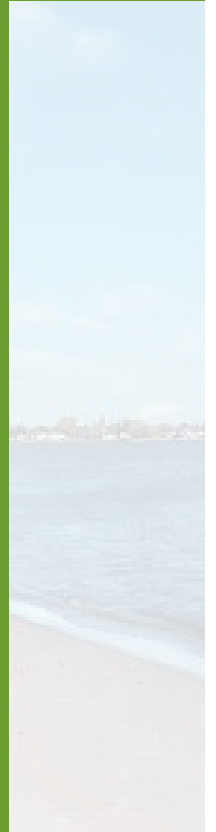
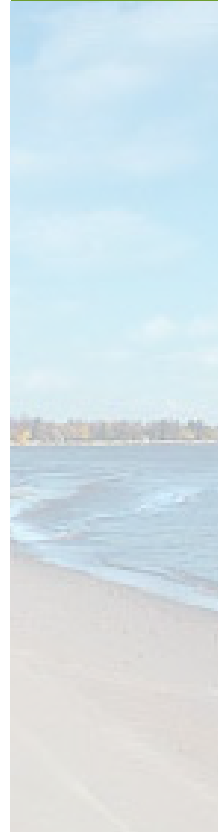
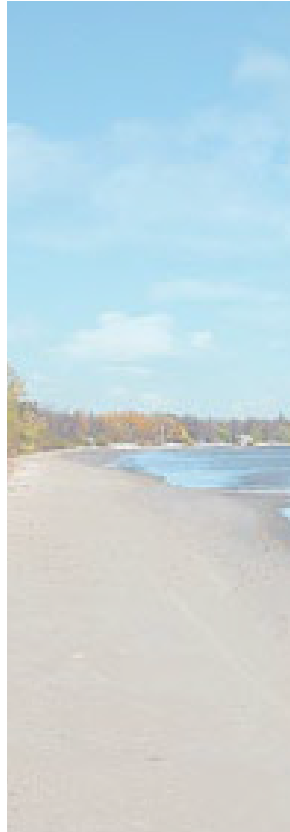


R.M. OF GIMLI



STRATEGIC PLAN

OCTOBER, 2008



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Introduction

For many years, the community of Gimli has regularly engaged its citizens in strategic planning exercises. The resulting guideposts have directed the broader governance principles that have moved the community forward. Major public and private investment in the Gimli waterfront and commercial district in the late 80's and early 90's and the resulting impact on economic development throughout the Eastern Interlake came as a result of strong community and regional planning initiatives. Since the last community-wide planning session in 1994, with the Gimli area now established as a Provincial destination and regional service centre, there has been much more forward movement, not the least of which is the merger of the Town of Gimli and the R.M. of Gimli in 2003, an achievement that gave the community of Gimli the efficiency of one government.

Since the merger, the Municipality of Gimli has been implementing various measures to improve governance and service delivery. Gimli Council of 2006-2010 has directed that a comprehensive Strategic Plan is required to guide the new municipality's decision-making, plans and policies over the long term. This plan results from significant community involvement and input. The plan is broad in scope and is intended to be a flexible, adaptable document that requires regular review and updating to respond to changing circumstances and new priorities within the R.M. of Gimli.



Plan Process: Developing the R.M. of Gimli Strategic Plan

In mid-2007, Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram – Landscape Architecture & Planning, and RLB Consulting were retained to assist the R.M. of Gimli in developing the Strategic Plan. Together, the R.M. and consulting team coordinated a number of means to inform the public and obtain input, including: an initial public meeting to introduce the Strategic Plan process; a Strategic Plan Questionnaire; a Strategic Planning Workshop; a Public Open House; and communication of key stages of the Plan (and how the public can get involved) on the R.M. website and in the R.M. of Gimli newsletter and Interlake Spectator. Key documents, such as the Draft Strategic Plan, were also made available to the public on the R.M. of Gimli website.

Step 1: Strategic Plan Introduction

On December 5, 2007, the R.M. of Gimli hosted a Year in Review public meeting where approximately 40 attendees were formally introduced to the Strategic Plan Process and informed as to how the public would have the opportunity to contribute to the Strategic Plan.

Step 2: Strategic Plan Questionnaire

A Strategic Plan Questionnaire was developed to gather opinions from the broader community. R.M. of Gimli residents were mailed the Questionnaire in a community newsletter and were invited to respond in person, by mail, or via the internet on the R.M. of Gimli website. In total, over 200 residents submitted their comments, perceptions and concerns regarding the future direction of the R.M. of Gimli.

Step 3: Background Overview Document

Research was undertaken to gather information about the R.M. of Gimli. The information was compiled into the R.M. of Gimli Background Overview Document, which includes key facts and trends pertaining to the R.M. of Gimli and the



results from the Strategic Plan Questionnaire. This document was provided to people who attended the Strategic Planning Session.

Step 4: Strategic Planning Session

On March 1, 2008, residents had the opportunity to provide further input on the future direction of the R.M. of Gimli at the Strategic Planning Session. Participants included: members of the business, arts, cultural, and heritage communities; citizens engaged in community services and volunteer organizations; youth representatives; Mayor and members of Council, and R.M. of Gimli staff.

At the Session, the consulting team presented the Background Overview Document and gathered feedback from participants regarding the contents of the Document, such as the items believed to be Gimli's key characteristics. The Strategic Planning Session also allowed for discussion on the R.M. of Gimli's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints. Participants then focused on developing actions for the future direction of the community in regard to key topic areas including: the economy; environment and land use; culture and social services; and municipal governance, finance, and infrastructure.

Step 5: Draft Strategic Plan – Public Open House

A Draft Strategic Plan was developed from the background research and comments gathered from the Questionnaire and Strategic Planning Session. On May 3, 2008, residents were invited to an Open House to meet with members of the consultant team and Council to discuss the Draft Plan. Approximately 80 people attended the Open House and provided comment on the Draft Plan through discussions with the consulting team and Council and/or by filling-out a Public Comment Form.

Step 6: Final Plan

The Final Plan was revised to reflect comments received on the Draft Final Strategic Plan from the public and Council.



The R.M. of Gimli Strategic Plan

Strategic Goals and Actions

Strategic goals and actions provide a framework for the R.M. of Gimli's future direction. The strategic goals and actions have been developed through analyzing information gathered from the Strategic Plan Questionnaire, the Background Overview Document and the Strategic Planning Session. These goals and actions provide the R.M. of Gimli with strategic direction in its efforts to build upon its strengths and harness its opportunities, while seeking to mitigate or overcome weaknesses and constraints as identified during the plan process. The goals and actions are organized under the following six categories:

- Economic Development
- Physical Development
- Municipal Finance, Governance, Infrastructure and Services
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage
- Community Health, Vitality, and Care
- Environment

Strategic goals are the desired outcomes for each category. Many of these goals are inter-related; in some instances, strategic goals identified within one category may not be met without progress and success in others. Actions are the specific steps required to achieve the goals.



Economic Development

Strategic Goals:

The R.M. of Gimli will continue to support and enhance summer-oriented amenities and attractions to build upon its strength as a seasonal destination while encouraging tourism generating events and attractions in the “shoulder” and “low” seasons.

The R.M. of Gimli will support its existing businesses and attract new business development through coordinated and sustained economic development efforts.

Permanent residential development will be encouraged in the R.M. of Gimli to help sustain existing business while creating greater market opportunities for new business development.

The R.M. of Gimli's predominant economic strengths are its attractiveness as a tourism/recreation destination, diverse economy and levels of service, and growing population base. The community remains an appealing area to locate due to the number of available services within Gimli, its proximity to the Lake, and its proximity to Winnipeg. Although residential growth and increased seasonal tourism can help strengthen the local economy, the R.M. also requires focused coordination of economic development to support existing businesses and attract new business development.

Actions:

1. Support existing businesses, manufacturing and resource-based industries, and seek to diversify economic development within the community through:
 - Ensuring good communication with businesses and industries.
 - Offering a competitive tax-base.
 - Offering high-quality municipal services and infrastructure.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *We need to build on our tourism strengths and diversify tourism attractions.*
- *We need unity, cooperation and leadership for all businesses and industry.*
- *Every effort should be made to welcome prospective residents.*



2. Hire a professionally trained Economic Development Officer to lead and manage the R.M. of Gimli's economic developments, strategies and operations, and to:
 - Enhance communications with and amongst businesses, community organizations, and the three levels of government.
 - Work with Council, the municipal administration, other governments, businesses, and community groups to coordinate efforts to stimulate growth, attract/retain entrepreneurs, realize economic opportunities and secure funding for the R.M. of Gimli.
 - Identify target markets and oversee marketing/tourism strategies for the R.M. of Gimli.
 - Attract permanent residents.
 - Gather and track key economic planning data (e.g. seasonal population figures, tourism numbers) to develop and monitor baseline indicators of economic success.

3. Confirm assets and investigate the condition and capacities of the Gimli Industrial Business Park (GIBP) infrastructure and the GIBP's current organizational direction to:
 - Understand the infrastructure upgrades and investments required to make the GIBP a more attractive area for future development.
 - Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of the identified upgrades and investments.
 - Develop a business plan to focus efforts towards attracting industries or other types of developments that can best utilize the available services and infrastructure within the GIBP.

4. Support and establish tourism-generating attractions, especially in "shoulder" and "low" seasons.



5. Promote the R.M. of Gimli's high quality of life to attract new permanent residents.
 - Seek to attract residents who have flexible work situations, such as those who may work in other regions, but are able to commute from the R.M. of Gimli and/or work via the internet ("telecommuters") while having Gimli as their home base.
6. Encourage the revitalization of a local business association (such as a Chamber of Commerce) to lead and coordinate marketing efforts and communication amongst businesses.



Physical Development

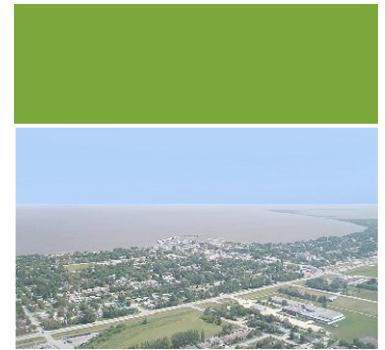
Strategic Goal:

The R.M. of Gimli will balance growth and renewal, while sustaining the quality of Gimli's natural and built environments.

During the plan process, residents expressed concerns regarding the current state of planning for growth and change in their community. Key issues include: the lack of affordable housing; public access to the shoreline; and the quality and characteristics of developments within the Central Business District.

Actions:

1. Investigate and establish procedures to ensure high quality in the planning, design, and construction of new development and in the redevelopment and renewal of existing developments or sites.
2. Encourage and support environmentally sustainable development.
3. Continue revitalization and beautification efforts in Gimli's core area (including the Central Business District) by developing a plan and a process for design review and approval for new development, redevelopment, and renewal in the area.
4. Merge the former R.M. and Town of Gimli zoning by-laws to develop a cohesive document to efficiently guide and regulate development in the R.M. of Gimli.
5. Encourage and support diversity in housing options, including rental units (apartments), to accommodate lower income families, youth and seniors.
6. Investigate and determine affordable housing needs within the R.M. of Gimli and seek means of developing affordable housing options.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *We must continue to preserve the natural surroundings that make the R.M. of Gimli a place to stay and play while fostering population and business growth.*
- *There should be a focus on affordable housing for low-income seniors and youth.*
- *New development should be compatible with existing development.*



7. Support infill development and development in areas with municipal services to utilize existing infrastructure and services more efficiently.
8. Retain and enhance public access to the Lake Winnipeg shoreline.
9. Preserve and maintain:
 - Heritage sites and buildings
 - Views and access to the Lake
 - Natural features
 - Open space



Municipal Governance, Finance, Infrastructure and Services

Strategic Goals:

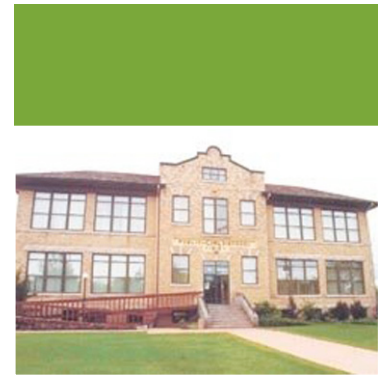
The R.M. of Gimli will commit to:

- *Serving its current and future residents more effectively*
- *Prudent financial planning and management*
- *Infrastructure rehabilitation and development*
- *Cost-effective service delivery*
- *Open communication*

Serving current and future community members effectively requires: clear Council-established policies and priorities; the staffing capabilities to respond to demands in an efficient and timely manner; and mechanisms to communicate with all residents and visitors.

Residents have identified the state of the R.M. of Gimli infrastructure as a key issue. Beyond the completion of the wastewater treatment facility, the R.M. of Gimli has a number of other infrastructure improvements and measures to consider, such as conducting an examination of the piped wastewater collection system and the water supply and distribution system.

Encouraging planned residential growth and further commercial and light industrial development can help service debt incurred from infrastructure improvements by increasing the assessment base, but the R.M. will need to seek ways to generate greater revenue diversification to reduce an over-reliance on property taxation.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *Government should be open and needs to communicate its policies to the public.*
- *The R.M. must find ways to diversify its revenue sources.*
- *The R.M. needs careful financial planning of investment in infrastructure - infrastructure requirements and service delivery programs should be researched and priorities should be communicated to residents.*



Actions:

Governance

1. Continue efforts to actively inform, and seek input and participation from the community on key issues, concerns, events and strategies through means such as:
 - The website
 - Open houses (including conducting open houses in different parts of the R.M. and in Winnipeg)
 - Surveys
2. Continue to maintain a well-trained and professional staff to support Council and provide excellence in services and operations.
3. Monitor service delivery and staffing to determine if Council's priorities and residents' demands/inquiries are being met in an effective manner.

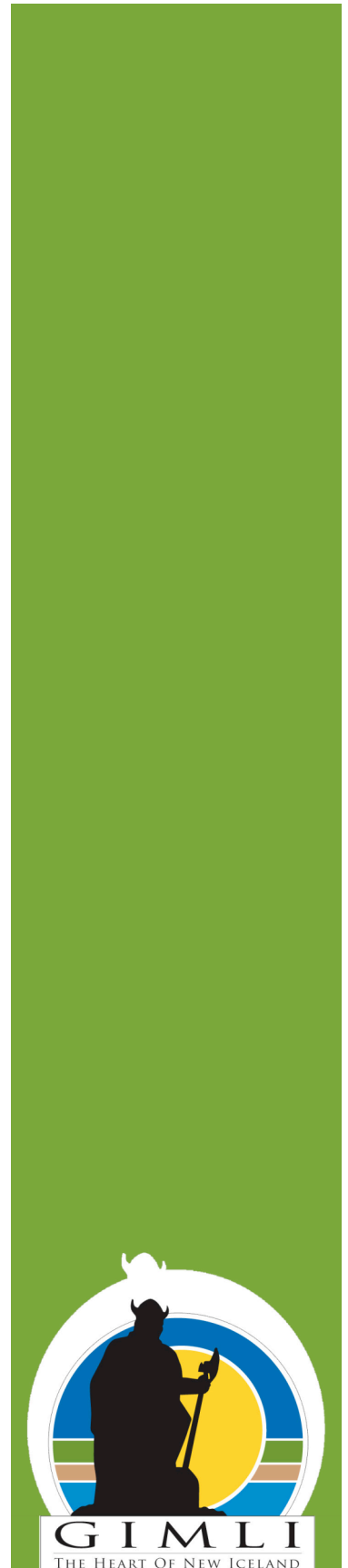
Finance

1. Seek means of greater revenue diversification to reduce reliance on property taxes.
2. Develop a long-range capital plan for municipal infrastructure upgrades.
3. Formalize a management strategy of using assessment growth to fund new or improved initiatives while minimizing impact on tax rates.
4. Continue to expand the development of reserve funds to reduce reliance on borrowing.



Infrastructure and Services

1. Develop an ongoing program to review and monitor effectiveness of service delivery to ensure optimal cost/benefit performance for each municipal service (e.g. road grading, garbage collection).
2. Examine the status of the wastewater collection system to determine remedies required to reduce groundwater infiltration into the wastewater treatment facility.
3. Conduct an assessment of the R.M.'s water supply and distribution system to determine the capacity and condition of the infrastructure and potential upgrades and replacement requirements.
4. Conduct a utility rate study to determine the most cost-effective rates required for providing utility services to residents.
5. Examine requirements and priorities for upgrading and renovating existing streets and sidewalks.
6. Encourage and support "green" or active transportation infrastructure such as bike paths and walking trails.
7. Establish priorities for future municipal infrastructure upgrades and expenditures.



Arts, Culture, and Heritage

Strategic Goal:

Building from its unique heritage, the R.M. of Gimli will strive to be the pre-eminent arts and cultural centre of rural Manitoba.

Arts, culture, and heritage play a significant role in Gimli's community life and tourism draw/potential. The R.M. of Gimli continues to celebrate its heritage while the arts and cultural community provides the R.M. with a number of unique events and attractions. The above goal reflects the ambition and passion of the arts and cultural community to increase its profile and enhance cultural events and programming in the R.M. of Gimli.

Actions:

1. Continue to foster and strengthen relations with arts, culture and heritage groups and support initiatives to enhance arts, cultural, and heritage experiences and learning opportunities in the R.M. of Gimli.
2. Work in conjunction with economic development initiatives to develop a communications and marketing strategy that will promote and further develop the arts, culture and heritage experiences/attractions available in the R.M. of Gimli.
3. Support existing organizations while seeking to attract new arts, cultural, and heritage groups, initiatives, businesses, and events to the community.
4. Encourage arts and cultural activities or events in the winter and "shoulder" seasons.
5. Promote the R.M of Gimli as a settlement destination for the arts community.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *Our Icelandic Heritage makes us very unique...we have had a huge amount of recognition in this regard and we should capitalize on it.*
- *We should increase community awareness of the arts and cultural attractions/groups in the R.M.*
- *We need to work towards having the community identified as a Manitoba centre for arts and culture.*



6. Working with local arts, culture and heritage groups, evaluate the potential of existing facilities in the R.M. of Gimli to accommodate arts, culture, heritage events/organizations.



Community Health, Vitality, and Care

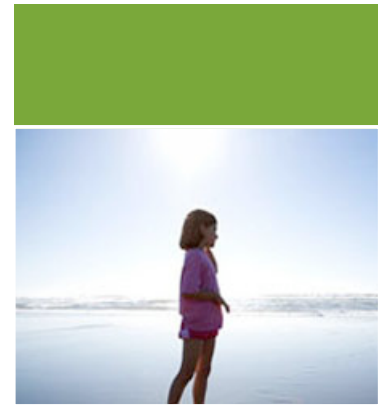
Strategic Goal:

The R.M. of Gimli will continue to offer an outstanding quality of life characterized by inclusiveness, safety, and the delivery of exceptional community services.

There is an abundance of commercial, government and community services available to the R.M. of Gimli's growing population. Partnerships, continuous support and collaboration with new residents, institutions, service providers and organizations are key to maintaining a thriving municipality.

Actions:

1. Foster and support relationships between seasonal and permanent residents and municipal government to build a strong, united community.
2. Encourage and support participation from all residents – from youth to seniors – in community events, activities and organizations.
3. Promote, support, and celebrate volunteerism.
4. Seek ways to engage the community in efforts to sustain safety levels in the R.M. (e.g. neighbourhood watch, safety audits) and maintain effective R.C.M.P. and emergency service levels to ensure that residents' safety is not compromised with the growth of the community.
5. Seek to address health care requirements and concerns (such as funding and staffing shortages) through regular communication with local service providers and appropriate provincial authorities.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *Youth need to be involved in all community issues, not just "youth" issues.*
- *Let's try to enhance the level of health care in Gimli (e.g. retain more physicians).*
- *I want to continue living in a community where I'm not worried about locking my door.*



6. Coordinate with the school board to monitor educational service requirements and report key community indicators (such as population growth/decline).
7. Seek opportunities to expand post-secondary or technical/trade programs within the community.
8. Investigate the feasibility of developing a multi-purpose community centre and swimming pool.



Environment

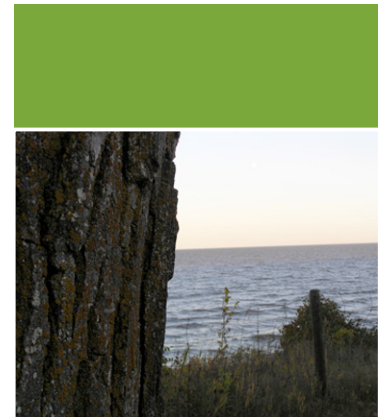
Strategic Goal:

The R.M. of Gimli will become a model for water and environmental stewardship.

Residents have identified Lake Winnipeg, its beaches and the opportunities this tremendous asset presents as the R.M. of Gimli's greatest strengths. As community members rely on this resource for their livelihoods, recreation, and inspiration, it comes as no surprise that citizens feel passionate about doing their best to retain the integrity of the Lake while helping to preserve the state of the environment.

Actions:

1. Incorporate best watershed management practices in planning and development to sustain the quality of groundwater and surface water resources and the Lake environment.
2. Continue to raise local, regional, provincial, federal, and international consciousness towards Lake Winnipeg challenges through:
 - Working with the provincial and federal governments to enhance Lake and watershed management educational opportunities for residents and visitors.
 - Coordinating with neighbouring and similar Manitoba municipalities in developing and incorporating watershed management solutions.
 - Working with provincial and federal authorities to resolve Lake and watershed management issues.
3. Support and develop opportunities for residents to become environmental stewards of the Lake, parks, trails, and conservation areas within the R.M. of Gimli.



What We Heard:

(Quotes from the Session and/or Questionnaire)

- *Let's make Gimli the absolute leader in Lake Winnipeg cleanup & protection - the Lake is what brought/keeps people here.*
- *We must do everything possible to restore our greatest asset - Lake Winnipeg.*
- *I see establishing Gimli as the cutting-edge "green" rural community in Canada.*



4. Continue to invest in improvements to waste management and treatment.
5. Preserve and protect the Lake Winnipeg shoreline and other significant natural areas.
6. Adopt policies, procedures and practices to make existing and future municipal buildings, services, and developments more environmentally sustainable.
 - Develop policies and sustainable development targets to guide operations and practices within the R.M. (e.g. energy efficiency, wastewater treatment, pesticide/herbicide use, recycling, waste minimization, road development and maintenance, active transportation infrastructure, water conservation).



Implementation, Monitoring, and Reporting Progress

Implementation

This strategic plan is intended to be a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with evolving economic, environmental, social, and governance needs and priorities. Once adopted, the plan will guide policies, actions, capital plans and budget allocations developed and undertaken by the R.M. of Gimli.

Monitoring and Reporting Progress

Regular monitoring of the plan and reporting progress is important to the strategic plan's success. Monitoring progress on action items and goals will help to keep the plan a living, flexible document by identifying: the advancement on actions; actions that have been completed; areas that require further investigation and/or action; and the gaps remaining to fulfill strategic goals.

Regular public reporting on the plan's progress ensures residents that the plan is being implemented and exemplifies good governance. Council has established that a public year-in-review meeting will be held every November. At that meeting, Council and Staff will report on the Strategic Plan's progress to date, and present an action plan for further implementation.



Summary of Background Information

The following sections provide a summary of the information presented in more detail in the separate Background Overview Document and information gathered/synthesized from the Strategic Plan Questionnaire, Strategic Planning Session, and Public Open House.



Key Characteristics of the R.M. of Gimli

Location

The R.M. of Gimli is located along the southwestern shores of Lake Winnipeg, approximately 80 kilometres north of Winnipeg. The municipality has a total area of approximately 282 square kilometres spanning from Silver Harbour in the north to the Sandy Hook area in the south. Two Provincial Highways (8 and 9) and a rail line directly connect the municipality to Winnipeg and southern Manitoba, while a number of other Provincial Roads link the R.M. of Gimli to the rest of Manitoba.

Natural Environment

Lake Winnipeg and its beaches are the most defining natural features within the R.M. of Gimli. The Lake is fundamental to the livelihood and character of Gimli as it sustains a resource-based industry (fishing), while providing a major tourism and recreational attraction to the R.M. Over the past ten or more years, Lake Winnipeg's water quality has been subject to increasing concern due to incidents of high bacteria counts, nutrient loading and algae blooms. These concerns have resonated throughout the public and have fuelled efforts, such as the creation of the Lake Winnipeg Action Plan and the Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board, to restore the Lake's water quality.

The R.M. of Gimli is also home to agriculturally productive land. Over 50% of the R.M.'s land base is comprised of Class 1 to 3 soils, or soils that represent highly capable agricultural land according to the Canada Land Inventory System.

What is the R.M. of Gimli?

Within the Strategic Plan Questionnaire, R.M. of Gimli residents were asked to "list three words that would define the character of the R.M. of Gimli to a person who doesn't know the community." The top three responses were:

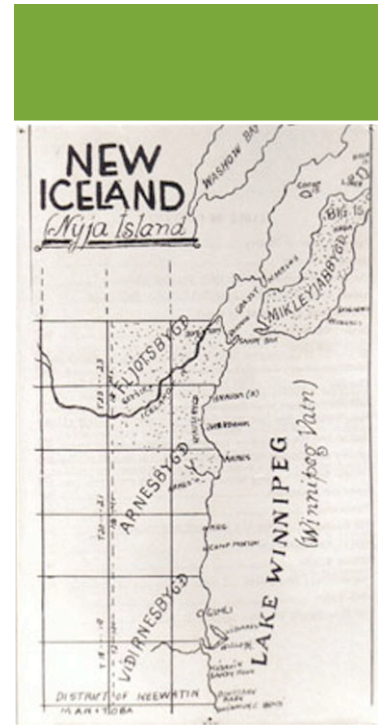
- *Friendly*
- *Beautiful*
- *Safe*



History, Arts, & Culture

The R.M. of Gimli has a unique history stemming from its settlement by Icelandic immigrants in the fall of 1875. These early pioneers were granted sole settlement rights by the Government of Canada to formulate their own laws and constitution in a territory known as “New Iceland.” When the Province of Manitoba extended its boundaries in the 1880s to include “New Iceland,” a municipal form of government was adopted in the area. Despite the cessation of “New Iceland” as a political entity, the Gimli area remains steeped in Icelandic heritage, culture, and mystique as it continues to celebrate Icelandic tradition through festivals, cultural events, and the arts.

The R.M. of Gimli is also enriched by the culture and traditions of First Nations – who were first to occupy and harvest resources in the area – and other early settlers in the region, such as those from Eastern Europe. Today, Gimli continues to experience an influx of cultural diversity from those generating its recent and current population growth. The diversity of cultures in the area combined with the active arts and cultural groups, provide a “cosmopolitan” atmosphere in the rural community.



Population & Settlement

Unlike many Canadian rural municipalities, the R.M. of Gimli is growing. According to Statistics Canada, the R.M. of Gimli's permanent population grew by 23.4% between 1996 and 2006 from 4,698 to 5,797 people.

A significant characteristic of Gimli's population is its high proportion of seasonal residents. Although statistical information is not available for seasonal population totals, it is estimated that Gimli's 2006 seasonal population was 4,935, or nearly equivalent to Gimli's permanent population.¹

If Gimli's population (seasonal and permanent) continues to grow at the same rate that the permanent population has grown over the past decade it is projected that the R.M. of Gimli will have a total (seasonal and permanent) population of 13,244 by 2016.

Population	2006	2016
R.M. of Gimli Permanent Population Total	5,797*	7,154**
R.M. of Gimli Estimated Seasonal Population Total**	4,935	6,090
R.M. of Gimli Estimated Combined Seasonal & Permanent Population Total**	10,732	13,244

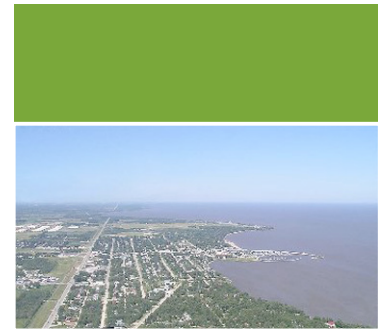
* Statistics Canada

** Estimated

In 2006, 47.9% of Gimli's permanent population was 55 years of age or older. This strong representation in older age classes is reflected in the 2006 median age for the R.M. of Gimli of 53.7, which is much higher than the Manitoba average of 38.1.

The vast majority of the R.M. of Gimli's residential development is located within one kilometer of the shore of Lake Winnipeg, with the key local urban settlement and service centre being the former Town of Gimli and environs.

¹ The seasonal population total was determined by subtracting the R.M. of Gimli's "private dwellings occupied by usual residents" (2,675) from Gimli's "total private dwellings" (5,025) and multiplying this total by the R.M. of Gimli's average household size (2.1): (5,025 - 2,675) X 2.1 = 4,935. All information obtained from Statistics Canada (2006).



Economy

The R.M. of Gimli has a diverse economy that includes natural resource-based industries (such as farming and fishing), manufacturing, tourism, sales and services. The R.M.'s local businesses are predominantly located near or within Gimli's urban area. In recent years the R.M. has experienced a significant increase in construction values – namely in the residential sector – in conjunction with its population growth.

According to Statistics Canada data, the R.M. of Gimli's unemployment rate has been declining. The 2001 Census reported that the R.M. of Gimli had an unemployment rate of 9.6%, which was 3.5% higher than the Manitoba average of 6.1% for the same year. According to the 2006 Census, Gimli's unemployment rate was on par with the Manitoba average of 5.5%.

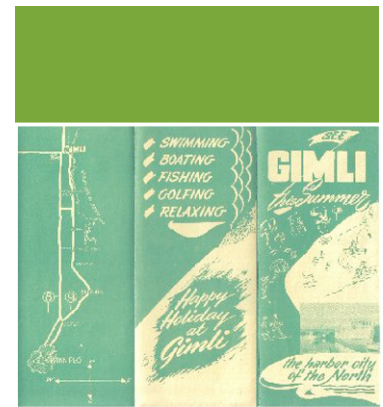
Municipal Financial Base

A diverse and growing assessment roll provides Gimli with a sound tax base upon which financial plans can be developed. The blend of residential, commercial and industrial property types allows for a broad distribution of the property tax burden and affords a degree of stability to the municipality's financial base. It is worth noting, however, that the two holdings of a single-owner industrial property represent virtually 10% of the R.M.'s taxable assessment.

When compared to other municipalities in Manitoba, Gimli's revenue and expenditure patterns are generally in line with the norm.

Growth in the assessment base over the past several years has provided the municipality with the ability to address outstanding servicing needs without having to significantly increase property tax rates. Over at least the near-term future, development demand continues to look strong and this growth will further enhance the assessment base.

Municipal infrastructure needs in Gimli are being continuously evaluated from both a local servicing perspective, as well as the obligation to comply with policy decisions of senior levels of government. Gimli's 5-year



capital expenditure plans are evolving to reflect the expectations being placed on its water and waste disposal systems.

Municipal Infrastructure and Services

The R.M. of Gimli has made a significant investment towards improving its wastewater treatment in constructing a new wastewater treatment facility. A key aspect of this facility is that it reduces phosphorous levels in the wastewater to below 1 mg/L prior to discharge. The wastewater treatment facility is designed to service an estimated 17,000 residents.

Piped sewer services are available in the R.M. including within the urban area of Gimli, Aspen Park, Pelican Beach, Gimli Industrial Park, Misty Lake, King's Park Estates, Gilwell Estates, along PR 222, and in parts of Loni Beach and South Beach. Residents not serviced by the R.M.'s sewer system have private wastewater treatment/disposal systems.

Groundwater infiltration into the wastewater collection system is a reported concern as such infiltration can impact the efficiency of the wastewater treatment facility.

Piped water services are provided to many parts of the R.M. including the urban centre of Gimli, Aspen Park, Pelican Beach, and Gimli Industrial Business Park. Three groundwater sources provide the R.M. of Gimli with its water supply for piped services. The municipal water supply and distribution system has not been subject to a comprehensive engineering review, consequently, there is some uncertainty regarding the status of the water supply and condition of the distribution system. Those not serviced by the R.M.'s water system have private wells.

Solid waste collection, including garbage, composting and brush pick-up is provided throughout the municipality. The recycling program is administered by Cornerstone Enterprises. Roadside recycling pick-up is provided in the R.M.'s "built-up" regions such as the urban area of Gimli. The R.M. of Gimli is currently reviewing approaches to managing its waste-pick up and disposal more effectively.



Social and Community Services

Residents of the R.M. of Gimli have access to a wide range of social and community services. Some notable social and community services/facilities include:

- The Evergreen Regional Library
- Three schools (serving the Kindergarten to Grade 12 population)
- The Evergreen Technological Entrepreneurship Centre (which offers continuing education courses)
- The Gimli Community Health Centre (which offers diagnostic services, a physicians' clinic, inpatient beds, palliative care, and a variety of health care services)
- Betel Personal Care Home (the primary long-term care home)
- The Waterfront Centre (which includes the New Iceland Heritage Museum)
- Senior's housing facilities (five in total)
- The Eastern Interlake Handi-Van
- Emergency services (including a 911 service, an R.C.M.P. detachment, and a local volunteer fire department)

Other social/community services are also available that are supported either by the Province of Manitoba, or not-for-profit groups and volunteer organizations.

Recreational services are organized and administered by the R.M. of Gimli Recreational Authority. Key recreational facilities and amenities managed by the Recreational Authority include:

- The Gimli and District Recreation Centre
- Baseball diamonds and soccer fields
- Gimli Beach

Other notable recreational facilities and amenities include:

- A motorsports park
- Two marinas
- Camp Morton Provincial Park
- The school gyms
- A number of privately operated recreational attractions



The R.M. of Gimli's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Constraints

Identifying and understanding Gimli's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints for growth and development were important steps in building the Strategic Plan. The R.M. of Gimli's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints were identified through analysis of facts gathered from the Background Overview Document and synthesis of this information with comments obtained from the Strategic Plan Questionnaire and Strategic Planning Session. The following is a summary of key findings.

Key Strengths

Lake Winnipeg and Beaches

- Lake Winnipeg and its beaches are the dominant natural features in the R.M. of Gimli.
- The Lake's importance spans beyond economic factors (such as providing the R.M. with a resource-based economy in fishing, and recognition as a tourism/recreational destination), as it is fundamental to Gimli's character, identity and "quality of life."

Growth

- The R.M. of Gimli is a strong, growing community.

History and Cultural Identity

- The R.M. of Gimli has a distinct history, and a strong arts, and cultural presence.

Services and Commercial Centre

- The R.M. of Gimli offers a diverse range of services (including business, municipal, education and health), making the R.M. a key service centre for the Interlake region.
- Gimli's Central Business District is relatively compact and easily accessible to R.M. residents. The District is also a notable tourism attraction that is within walking distance from amenities such as the Public Beach and Harbour.

The R.M. of Gimli's Strengths

Within the Strategic Plan Questionnaire, R.M. of Gimli residents were asked to identify what they considered to be the R.M. of Gimli's strengths or assets. The top three responses were:

- *The Lake, its associated amenities and opportunities*
- *Location (including proximity to Winnipeg)*
- *Small town or rural atmosphere*



Recreation

- The R.M. offers residents and visitors an abundance of recreational amenities and facilities.

Wastewater Treatment

- The R.M. of Gimli has recently invested in a wastewater treatment facility that is designed to significantly reduce phosphorous levels prior to discharge.

Tourism

- The R.M. of Gimli has a unique combination of natural assets and tourism infrastructure in urban and rural settings, which distinguishes the community from many other destinations in the Prairie Region.

Location

- The R.M. is accessible via well-developed transportation systems (including highway and rail), and close to major Manitoba centres, the most notable being Winnipeg.

Rural Feel

- The R.M. of Gimli is friendly and informal.

Water

- The R.M. has high quality drinking water.

Safe

- The R.M. of Gimli is a relatively crime-free community.



Key Weaknesses

Seasonality of the Economy

- The residential and visitor populations are significantly higher in the summer (and lower in other seasons), which presents challenges for businesses to operate on a full-time basis, and presents challenges for the delivery of municipal services.

Coordinated Economic Development

- Gimli's business community lacks an organization to gather, represent and communicate its collective interests to the municipality, residents and visitors.
- The R.M. of Gimli lacks sustained leadership in economic development that includes focused research and marketing initiatives.

Housing

- The R.M. of Gimli lacks a diverse range of housing options, including rental accommodations.

Affordable Housing

- Some residents believe that there are not enough affordable housing units within the municipality.

Lack of a Strategic Plan

- Some respondents to the Strategic Plan Questionnaire believed that the lack of a strategic plan or a long-range vision was a significant weakness.

Planning

- Some residents are of the view that there is a lack of coordination and focus regarding planning for future development in the R.M. of Gimli.

Municipal Services

- The condition and capacity of some of the R.M.'s piped water and sewer infrastructure is unknown and requires further investigation.

Healthcare

- Healthcare services within Gimli require staffing and greater funding.

The R.M. of Gimli's Weaknesses

Respondents of the Strategic Plan Questionnaire identified the following three items as the R.M. of Gimli's primary issues or weaknesses:

- *The condition and capacity of municipal services and infrastructure*
- *Lack of coordination and focus with regard to physical development, planning and growth*
- *Environmental concerns – surface and groundwater quality*



Social & Recreational Services

- Some residents believe that key social/recreational infrastructure such as a multi-purpose community centre and a pool, is lacking within the municipality.

Environment

- The health of the Lake remains a key concern.
- Some residents have identified malfunctioning septic fields as an issue in the municipality.

Community Demographics

- The R.M. of Gimli has a relatively low proportion of young people and/or families settling in the municipality.



Key Opportunities

Growth

- The R.M. of Gimli's proximity to Winnipeg, natural features, services, and quality of life are aspects that can attract new residents, especially those seeking an alternative to the city, but still desire having access to services.
- Strong development demand puts the R.M. of Gimli in better position to promote high quality standards for new development.

Arts and Culture

- Gimli can promote its strengths in the arts and cultural community to expand its arts and cultural profile in Manitoba and the Prairie Region.

Tourism

- Efforts can be made to diversify tourism ventures during the summer and develop/expand tourism-generating events in the winter and/or "shoulder" seasons.

Environmental Stewardship

- The R.M. can continue its efforts to become a model of environmental stewardship to raise its environmental profile as a "green community."

Gimli Industrial Business Park

- The GIBP has ample space, with municipal services and road access to accommodate new businesses and industries.

Services

- Gimli offers a range of commercial and social services and has the potential to strengthen its role as a major service centre in the Interlake.



Key Constraints

Seasonality of Economy

- Gimli's natural attractions are predominantly a summer-season draw.
- Gimli's residential and tourism populations will continue to peak in the summer.

Growth and Housing

- Residential demand is increasing housing and land prices in the R.M., making the cost of housing less affordable.

Healthcare

- Lack of funding and staff shortages limit the health services available in Gimli.

Shoreline Development

- The supply of undeveloped land near the Lake is limited.
- Some residents fear that further development near the Lake will reduce public access to the shoreline.

Lake Water Quality

- Water quality problems and perceptions of water quality problems in Lake Winnipeg threaten Gimli's attractiveness for tourism and recreation.

Gimli Industrial Business Park

- The condition and capacity of the existing infrastructure within the GIBP requires further investigation.
- The GIBP lacks coordinated and focused direction to attract development.

Finance

- Potential to refurbish or upgrade ageing piped water and/or sewer infrastructure may be constrained by costs and the R.M.'s debt servicing level.

