

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

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A LETTER TO WEST GREY CITIZENS

Happy New Year!

As we all look forward to 2021, most certainly 2020 will be remembered as a year like no other. The global pandemic affected everyone – from how we interact and stay connected to how we work together to take care of our families, our neighbours and our community. I am proud of our community's commitment to follow public health's instructions, while keeping true to our small town values of being kind to each other and helping where we can.

The COVID-19 crisis influenced how we delivered on the goals of our 2020-2022 Strategic Vision Plan: working together, building a better future, and promoting our community. I have seen these three goals in action and this Year in Review provides an excellent snapshot of some key accomplishments. We launched a new website and social media channels that will continue to evolve to become the one-stop resource for information. We implemented more online services to ensure we are meeting the needs of the public. From navigating the building permit process to shifting to online council meetings, we will continue investigating and offering alternate ways to work with your local government.

When I think of the goal of "building a better future", I am so pleased that our Community Improvement Plan is now a reality. This is an important grant-matching program that will help spur commercial investment and contribute to West Grey's economic future. We worked with Grey County for a transit service line for West Grey, we maintained and repaired essential infrastructure and we even had a few 'socially-distanced' community events that saw hundreds come out and enjoy some good old-fashioned family fun.

These initiatives promote our community and illustrate that ongoing commitment to creating a vibrant West Grey.

Significant work has been done to meet the future needs of West Grey. We are attracting newcomers and I am pleased to see an increase in the variety of housing options available here. We are at the exciting planning stage for the new Rockwood Terrace, and we are moving toward the construction of the new station for West Grey Police Service.

As we prepare for a busy 2021, a moment of pause to thank everyone for your efforts in 2020. Thank you for shopping local and supporting community organizations. Thank you to West Grey companies who modified operations to produce personal protective equipment. Thank you to our teachers, our volunteers, our workers at our food bank and those deemed critical services. Thank you to West Grey Police and Fire for your tireless work keeping our community safe. Thank you to all first responders, emergency workers, and long-term care staff. Thank you, everyone, for your commitment to West Grey.

As West Grey council begins working on the 2021 budget, we remain focused on building and investing in our community. I encourage everyone to get involved, stay engaged and participate. Your voice matters and your contributions help shape West Grey.

On behalf of council, our best wishes for 2021,

Mayor Christine Robison

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Municipality of West Grey invested \$9.64 million into infrastructure this year.

BRIDGES

West Grey has more than 100 bridges and culverts and we continue leveraging provincial and federal funding to keep pathways open for residents, farmers and visitors.

- » Wooden decking on Bridge 17 on Concession 4 was complete in December 2020 and is now open
- » Engineering is underway for the McQuarrie Bridge on Concession 2-3N lot 43, with a fall 2021 expected completion.
- » West Grey received Rural and Northern Grant funding for the Lantz Bridge. The environmental assessment is expected to be completed in fall 2021.
- » Engineering work is underway for the Garafraxa Bridge as a Connecting Link Project, scheduled for completion by late 2021.

ROADS

The Bruce & Lambton Streets reconstruction was completed in 2020. An additional 2.9 kilometres of roads were paved through a joint project with the Municipality of Grey Highlands. West Grey saw 20 kilometres of single surface treatment and gravel added to roughly 170 kilometres of road.

SIDEWALKS

The engineering for the sidewalk replacement on Louisa Street in Ayton is underway. The municipal-wide sidewalk winter maintenance program was enhanced with the purchase of a new trackless plow and a float trailer.

FACILITIES

A significant number of special maintenance projects and upgrades at West Grey facilities were completed throughout 2020.

OTHER PROJECTS

- » A new grader was purchased and arrived in December 2020.
- » A chlorine analyzer was purchased and installed this summer at the Neustadt pump station.
- » Public works oversaw erosion control at the Neustadt sewage lagoons. Concrete cable mats were installed this fall with one more section to be completed in 2021.
- » The Durham sewage treatment plant saw several repairs including the installation of the clarifier chains and grease fittings.
- » The public works department also introduced MESH, a work order software tool. This program will update workflow processes, road patrolling and work order programming for the municipality.



WEST GREY POLICE SERVICE

A major investment into West Grey's infrastructure included the purchase of land and initial work on drawings and plans for a new police station. Watch for updates as we work toward a 2022 grand opening.



WEST GREY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Answering the call! A new pumper truck was delivered to the West Grey Fire department in December.

BUILDING AND PLANNING



Building and planning activity continue to grow each year. By fall of 2020, permit applications surpassed all of 2019. What's even more exciting is that the value of construction has increased for the second consecutive year.

The building department introduced Cloudpermit, an online program to apply for permits and to book inspections. This option has streamlined the permit application and inspection process from beginning to end.

West Grey's development charges were reviewed and updated. Further review will come in 2021.

The department worked closely with Grey County to develop a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is a grant-matching program with several streams. The program outlines options for businesses interested in improving their property, enhancing accessibility, completing environmental assessments, or exploring secondary suites.

West Grey hosted a virtual public meeting on December 15 to introduce the proposed official plan revisions, provide opportunities for feedback and questions, and outline next steps in this review.

Council approved a pole banner program to launch in spring 2021. We are developing an interactive way to share your ideas on themes and designs. Stay tuned!

YOUTH AND RECREATION

Recreation continues its role of supporting the community and the recreation department is the point-of-contact with public health.

Other highlights include:

- » Opened a modified summer camp.
- » Completed a playground condition audit.
- » Launched a community garden program.
- » Hosted a Halloween drive-thru event.
- » Launched the Festive Lights Tour.
- » Established a youth committee.
- » Supported community beautification projects.

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Administration continues to focus on legislative requirements, digital upgrades, customer service and accessibility. The department leveraged funds from a provincial modernization grant to launch a new website, provide virtual council meetings, streamline meeting agenda and minutes through software updates (eScribe), maintain AODA standards by subscription to remediation software (Equidox) and complete an operational and compensation review.

Several accessibility renovations were completed at the municipal administration building including an elevator, new push-button door openers and washroom upgrades.

OTHER PROJECTS

- » A joint project with Grey Highlands and Georgian College, funded through the Rural Economic Development grant, was developed to connect, support and mentor social entrepreneurs, as well as provide networking opportunities and resources.
- » We continue to provide ongoing support of the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) roll out of expanded high-speed broadband services.
- » Council adopted a Strategic Vision Plan, Social Media Policy, Communications Strategy and a revised council meeting schedule to encourage public participation.
- » Successful applications to several grants equaling over \$1-million in grant funding.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

The municipality will continue to focus on goals of the West Grey Strategic Vision Plan, as well as community priorities.

We will...

- » Prioritize asset management.
- » Investment in West Grey's infrastructure.
- » Recruit volunteers for West Grey committees.

- » Implement sustainable practices at municipal facilities.
- » Work to divert waste from landfill sites.
- » Work with the business community.
- » Continue to work with, engage and listen to the community in order to work toward a brighter future.



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