



The Corporation of the Township of Billings
Town hall Meeting Agenda
Park Centre – Henry Drive, Kagawong
Thursday February 1, 2024 from 2pm-4pm and 6pm – 8pm

1. Call to Order

Mayor Barker to call the meeting to order.

2. Item for which the Special Meeting was Called – Township of Billings Strategic Plan

Steve Lichty, Capital Park Consulting will facilitate the Town hall meeting and pose questions to the public in attendance. Attached to the agenda is Strategic Plan 2024-2029 Interim Report No. 1

- a) Welcome and Introductions
- b) Background to the Strategic Planning Process
- c) Results of the Online Survey of Residents
- d) Results of the Focus Groups
- e) Results of the Internal Stakeholder engagement activities with Council and Staff

3. Questions from the Public

4. Questions to the Public

- a) What kind of community do you want the Township of Billings to become?
- b) What innovative ideas or opportunities would you like the Township of Billings to pursue?
- c) What would you change if you could improve or modify anything about the Township of Billings?

5. Closing remarks and adjournment

Document Accessibility

The Township of Billings is committed to providing information in the format that meets your needs. We have made every attempt to make documents for this meeting accessible but there may still be difficulty in recognizing all of the information. Please contact us if you require assistance and we will make every attempt to provide this information in an alternative format.

Please note that third party documents received and found within this document will not be converted to an accessible format by the Township of Billings. However, upon request, we will attempt to obtain these documents in an appropriate accessible format from the third party.

For assistance or to make a request please call (705) 282-2611 or email tmills@billingstwp.ca



Strategic Plan 2024-2029 Interim Report No. 1



Capital Park Consulting Inc.
13 Craftsman Private
Ottawa, ON, K1Y 4W9

Date: October 10th, 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Township of Billings is in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan that will outline long term vision and values, alongside medium term objectives to be achieved with short term action plans.

Through an RFP process, the Township selected Capital Park Consulting Inc. to assist in the development of the new plan by:

- Assisting Council and staff in implementing a process to gather robust input from the community and other stakeholders to inform the development of the new strategic plan including services, vision for the future, values, mission, etc.
- Ensuring that Council is aware of municipal sector strategic plan precedents and “best practices” in the various components of a municipal strategic plan so that these can be considered when Billings is drafting its new strategic plan
- Helping to identify and review possible indicators that can be used to measure the Township’s success in achieving the goals it established in the new strategic plan
- Soliciting input from staff and ensure that the new strategic plan makes sense and is clearly understood from the staff perspective
- Ensuring meaningful participation and engagement of the public throughout the project
- Ensuring that the plan developed strikes an appropriate balance between being flexible enough to ensure that it is relevant if circumstances change, while also specific enough that it can be implemented decisively and measured clearly
- Ensuring that the new strategic plan builds on the municipality’s current initiatives and existing services

METHODOLOGY

Capital Park’s work plan includes the following components:

1. Kick-off meeting
2. Review background materials and research Strategic Plan precedents
3. Internal stakeholder engagement through interviews with members of Council and Township management staff
4. Virtual workshop with Township management staff
5. External stakeholder engagement through focus groups, online survey and public meetings
6. Two-day in person planning session with members of Council and Township senior
7. Development of the contents of the Strategic Plan
8. Review of draft Strategic Plan by Council and senior staff, amendment as required, and issuance of final version

APPROACH

The approach that is being taken is summarized in this graphic.



PURPOSE OF THIS INTERIM REPORT

The purpose of this first interim report is to:

- Summarize the findings from the review of background materials and research
- Identify six Strategic Plans from similar municipalities to be used to identify best practices (and practices to avoid)
- Serve as a briefing document for current councillors and senior staff
- Serve as resource material in the future for councillors, senior staff and other interested parties

PESTEL ANALYSIS

A PESTEL analysis has been used to summarize the external factors affecting the Town. PESTEL is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors. It is a strategic planning tool that focuses on these six influences to gather information about various external factors affecting an organization.



The advantages of a PESTEL Analysis include:

- It's a simple framework
- It is comprehensive and facilitates an understanding of the wider environment
- It encourages the development of strategic thinking
- It can enable an organisation to anticipate future threats and take action to avoid or minimize their impact
- It can enable an organisation to spot opportunities and exploit them fully

A PESTEL Analysis is often used in conjunction with other planning tools, such as a SWOT Analysis, which looks at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. During the first planning session the participants will be using the results of the PESTEL Analysis to conduct a SWOT analysis for Billings.

POLITICAL FACTORS

Municipal governments are affected a great deal by decisions made and policies implemented by higher levels of government, i.e. provincial and federal. It can be difficult to predict what changes will take place, particularly if there should happen to be a change in leadership of a governing party or an election that results in a different party coming into power. Here are some of the recent predictions that have been made:

Federal Outlook

“The Parliamentary Budget Office has trimmed its forecast for Canada’s economic growth this year.

The PBO’s latest economic and fiscal outlook predicts the economy will grow by 1.0 per cent this year followed by 1.6 per cent in 2024. The outlook compares with the agency’s October forecast for growth of 1.2 per cent for 2023 and 2.3 per cent in 2024.

It expects a decline in residential investment and weakness in consumer spending in the first half of the year, while businesses reduce their inventory investment over the course of 2023 as the growth in sales slows. The PBO also predicts the Bank of Canada will keep its key interest rate target on hold at 4.5 per cent for the rest of 2023 before starting to cut in 2024.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9523302/pbo-economic-forecast-2023-interest-rates/>

This prediction turned out to be inaccurate, as the Bank of Canada raised the prime rate to 5% on July 12th. On July 24th, 2023, the Globe and Mail reported:

“Since COVID-19, the economy has stagnated. Canada’s per-person GDP (adjusted for inflation) stood at \$56,206 in 2019, declined sharply in 2020 before recouping some of the losses in 2021. However, despite economic recovery from COVID, by the third quarter of 2022, GDP per person remained below prepandemic levels.”

“A 2021 study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that Canada will record the lowest level of per-person GDP growth among 32 advanced economies during the periods of 2020 to 2030 and 2030 to 2060. Countries such as Czechia, Estonia, Israel, South Korea, New Zealand, Slovenia and Turkey, which currently have lower levels of average per-person GDP, are expected to vault past Canada and achieve higher living standards by 2060.”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-canada-economy-trudeau-freeland>

What impact will high interest rates and sluggish growth have on Billings? Will it affect long-term debt, maintenance of infrastructure, etc.?

Provincial Outlook

The March 2023 provincial budget projects a small deficit for the current fiscal year and surpluses in future years.

“Overall, Budget 2023 is fiscally prudent and sets the Ontario government on a course for surplus next year, well ahead of schedule. Spending is limited to targeted areas for maximum impact and savings have been generated from a balanced pool of revenue streams.”

“While health care is getting the lion’s share of new spending, the government is planning to invest more in education, social services and “other programs.” <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/insights/sprinting-to-surplus-ontario-budget-2023>

It is noteworthy that that new provincial spending will focus on services that are not the responsibility of lower tier municipalities. (The one possible exception is additional funding for “infrastructure”, which will likely include municipal projects.)

“This provincial budget will be a challenge for municipal finances. There was no mention of replacing municipal revenues lost as a result of Bill 23. The City of Toronto and municipalities generally did not receive any funds to address pressures resulting from COVID. A failure to support municipalities will result in reduced services and higher property taxes locally. At the same time, there were no obvious cuts or signs of austerity from the Ford government as many had predicted.” <https://omssa.com/blog-report-on-2023-ontario-budget-march-2023.php>

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability has become one of the most dominant issues at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. There is a consensus emerging that the primary challenge at all levels of government is to increase the supply.

The province of Ontario recently passed Bill 23, which has made fundamental changes to the land use planning system in Ontario through changes to the Development Charges Act, Planning Act, Municipal Act, and others. Although this legislation does not apply to all municipalities, it indicates the policy direction of the provincial government.

There is also a movement to have “complete communities”, i.e. the optimal mix of people, activities, and transport modes in each neighborhood. Should Billings adapt this policy for future residential and economic development? What will need to be done?

On June 16th, 2023, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation issued a report warning that we are moving in the wrong direction on housing affordability.

“Canada's federal housing agency is worried affordability will deteriorate unless the country acts on supply challenges and other housing measures soon.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation rang alarm bells last summer when it estimated the country needs to build 3.5 million more homes by 2030 than it is on track for, to reach some semblance of affordability.

While 271,000 homes were built two years ago and roughly 260,000 last year, chief economist Bob Dugan is now forecasting between 210,000 and 220,000 will be constructed this year.

Dugan believes this is a sign that the country is moving in the wrong direction and he is not optimistic that the country is on track to double the pace of housing starts.

Construction efforts have been constrained by labour shortages, higher interest rates and costs for materials, along with zoning issues and NIMBYism.

Dugan admits his outlook is not rosy but on the positive side, says moments of crisis can lead to innovation, which could positively alter the current housing forecast.”

<https://www.cp24.com/news/housing-affordability-will-deteriorate-unless-we-act-soon-cmhc-chief-economist-1.6444323>

ECONOMIC FACTORS

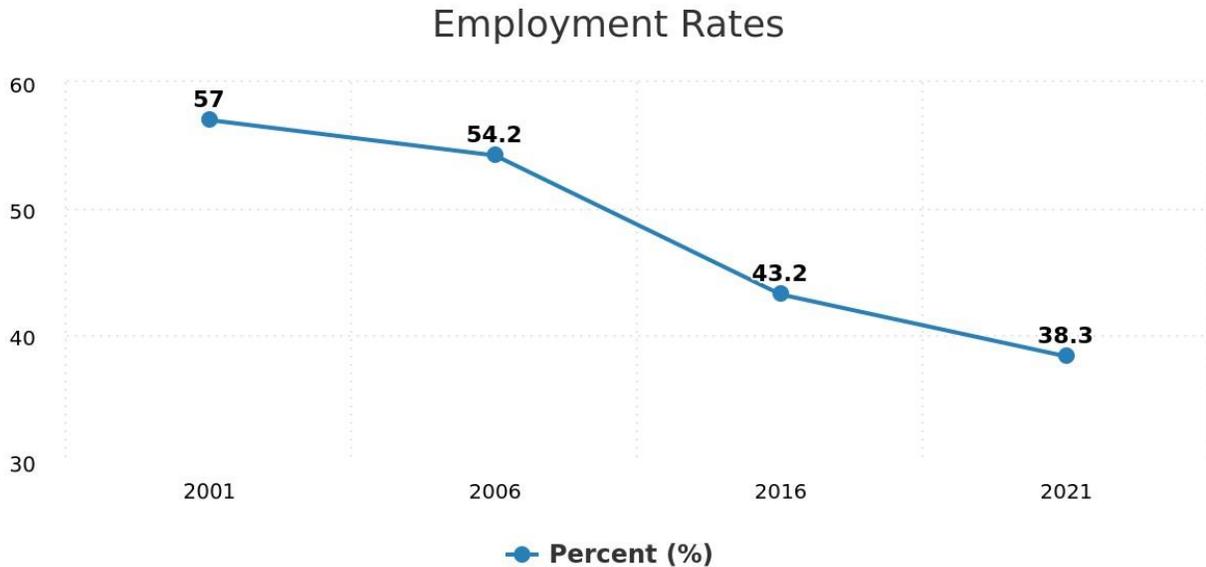
Most statistics in this section relate to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. Much of the analysis comes from <https://townfolio.co/on/billings/demographics>.

Please note the following:

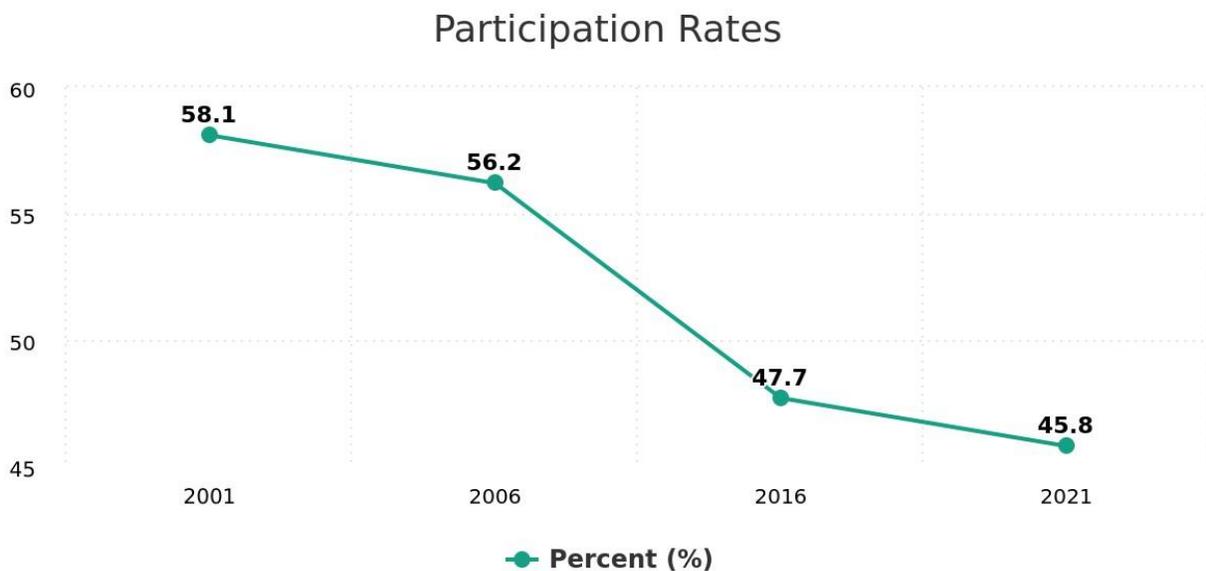
- StatsCan and Townfolio often round figures to the closest number divisible by five.
- The employment data from the 2021 Census should be read with caution, as they appear to be overly negative. This data, although reported in 2021, was the average for the three years from 2018 to 2021. Since this time period included the COVID lockdowns, the numbers are likely not representative of the situation in 2021. This information has been included because the data from 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 may be of some interest in identifying trends.

EMPLOYMENT

The employment rates chart shows the percentage of people of working age who were employed for each of the past three census years.

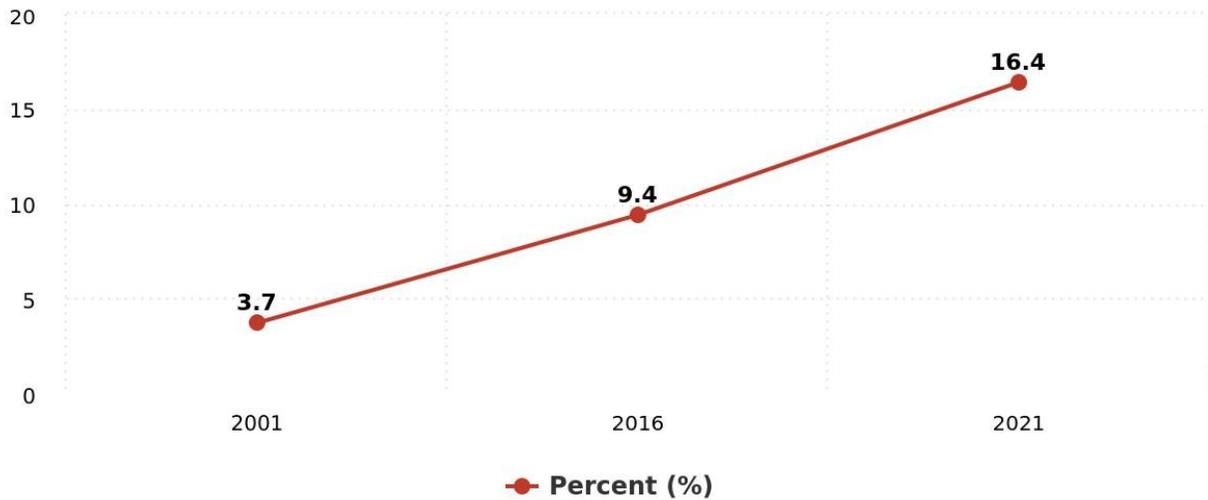


The participation rates chart shows the percentage of people who were either employed or are actively looking for work. A growing participation rate signals more people coming into the labour force whether younger people looking for first jobs, people of working age switching careers or jobs, or people re-entering the job market after job disruptions. Migration can significantly affect this economic metric.



The unemployment rate chart shows the number of unemployed workers and people searching for a paid job expressed as a percentage of the labour force. An increasing unemployment rate signals an “employer’s market” where there are more job seekers compared to the number of jobs available. People receiving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) during Covid would appear as unemployed.

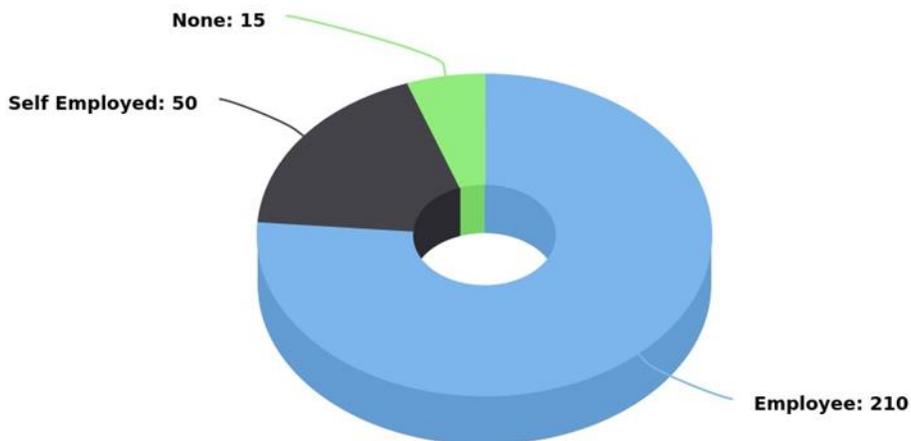
Unemployment Rates



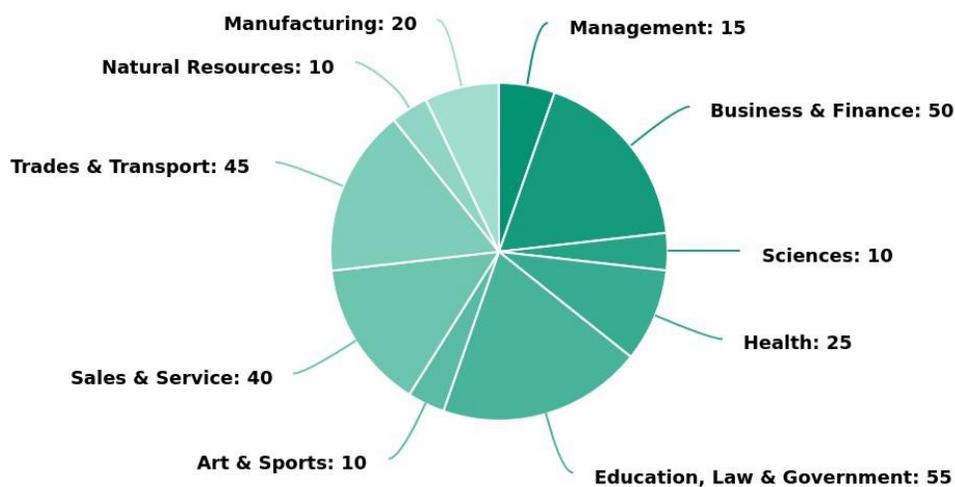
LABOUR FORCE

Over three-quarters of Billings’ labour force identify as employees, with 18% indicating that they are self employed.

Worker Classes



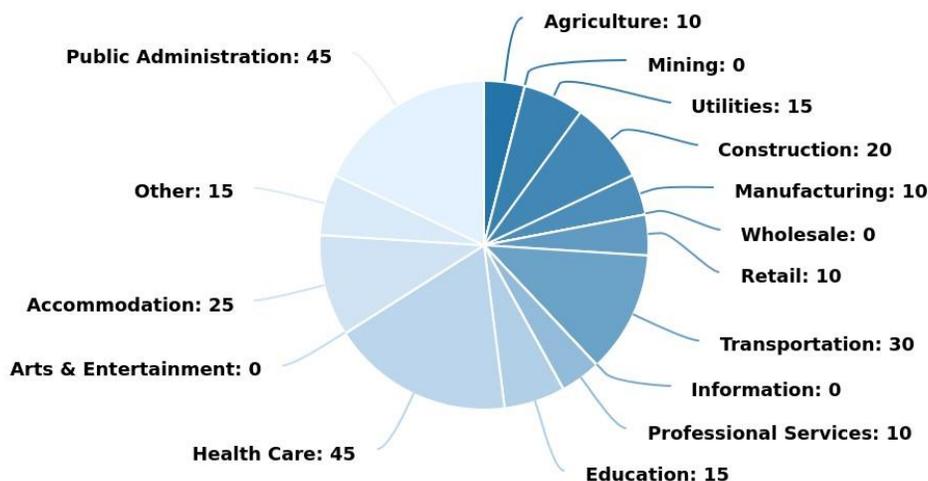
Labour Force by Occupation



Occupation	Number	Percentage
Education, Law & Government	55	20.37%
Business & Finance	50	18.52%
Trades & Transport	45	16.67%
Sales & Service	40	14.81%
Health	25	9.26%
Management	15	5.56%
Sciences	10	3.70%
Art & Sports	10	3.70%
Natural Resources	10	3.70%
Manufacturing	10	3.70%
Total	270	100.00%

Approximately three-quarters of the labour force work in service positions, with the other quarter in Trades and Transport, Natural Resources and Manufacturing.

Labour Force by Industry

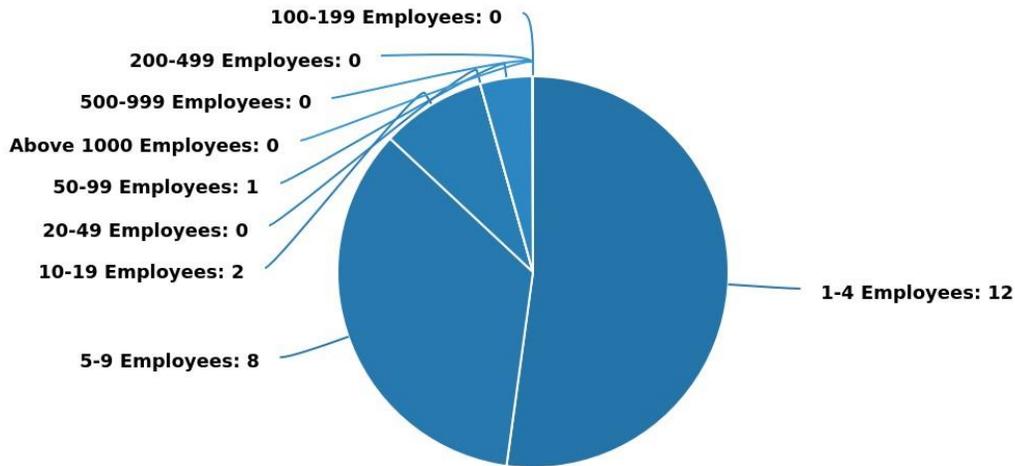


Industry	Number	Percentage
Health Care	45	18.00%
Public Administration	45	18.00%
Transportation	30	12.00%
Accommodation	25	10.00%
Construction	20	8.00%
Utilities	15	6.00%
Education	15	6.00%
Other	15	6.00%
Agriculture	10	4.00%
Manufacturing	10	4.00%
Retail	10	4.00%
Professional Services	10	4.00%
Mining	0	0.00%
Wholesale	0	0.00%
Information	0	0.00%
Finance	0	0.00%
Real Estate	0	0.00%
Management	0	0.00%
Administration	0	0.00%
Arts & Entertainment	0	0.00%
Total	250	100.00%

The variation in total numbers, (270 people in Labour Force by Occupation and 250 in Labour Force by Industry), is due to rounding.

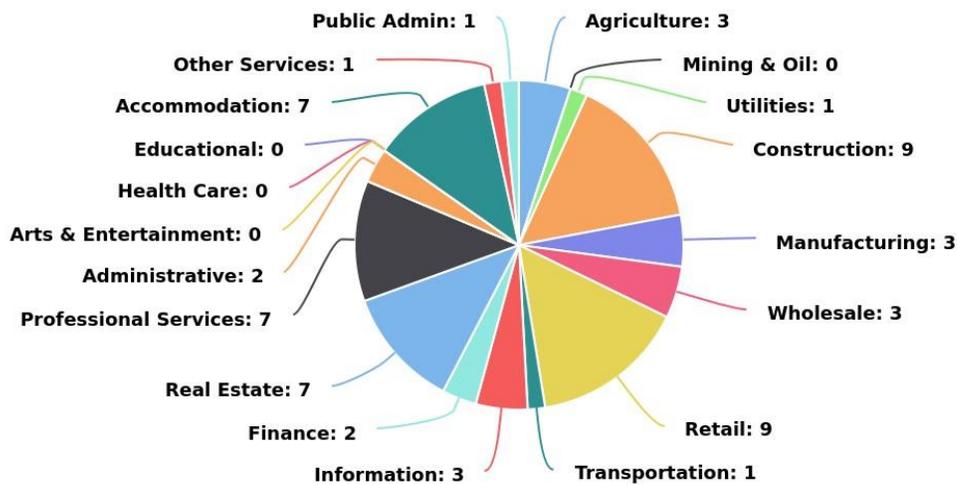
BUSINESSES IN THE TOWNSHIP

Business Sizes



Over half of all business in the Township have fewer than five employees. Another third has between five and nine employees. The largest sectors are Construction, Retail, Accommodation, Professional Services and Real Estate.

Business Industries



SOCIAL FACTORS

Social factors include demographics. Is the population growing, shrinking, or remaining constant? Is the age distribution of residents changing? What are the socio-economic indicators?

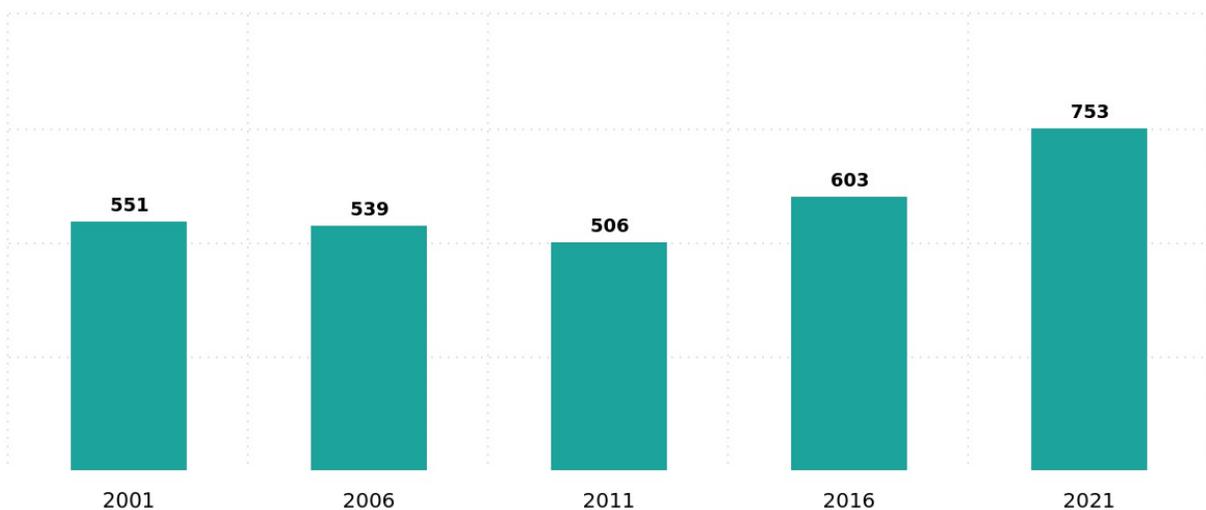
Most statistics in this section relate to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. Much of the analysis comes from <https://townfolio.co/on/billings/demographics>.

Please note that StatsCan and Townfolio often round figures to the closest number divisible by five. Thus some totals, e.g. Ages and Gender, will not match the total for Population because of rounding.

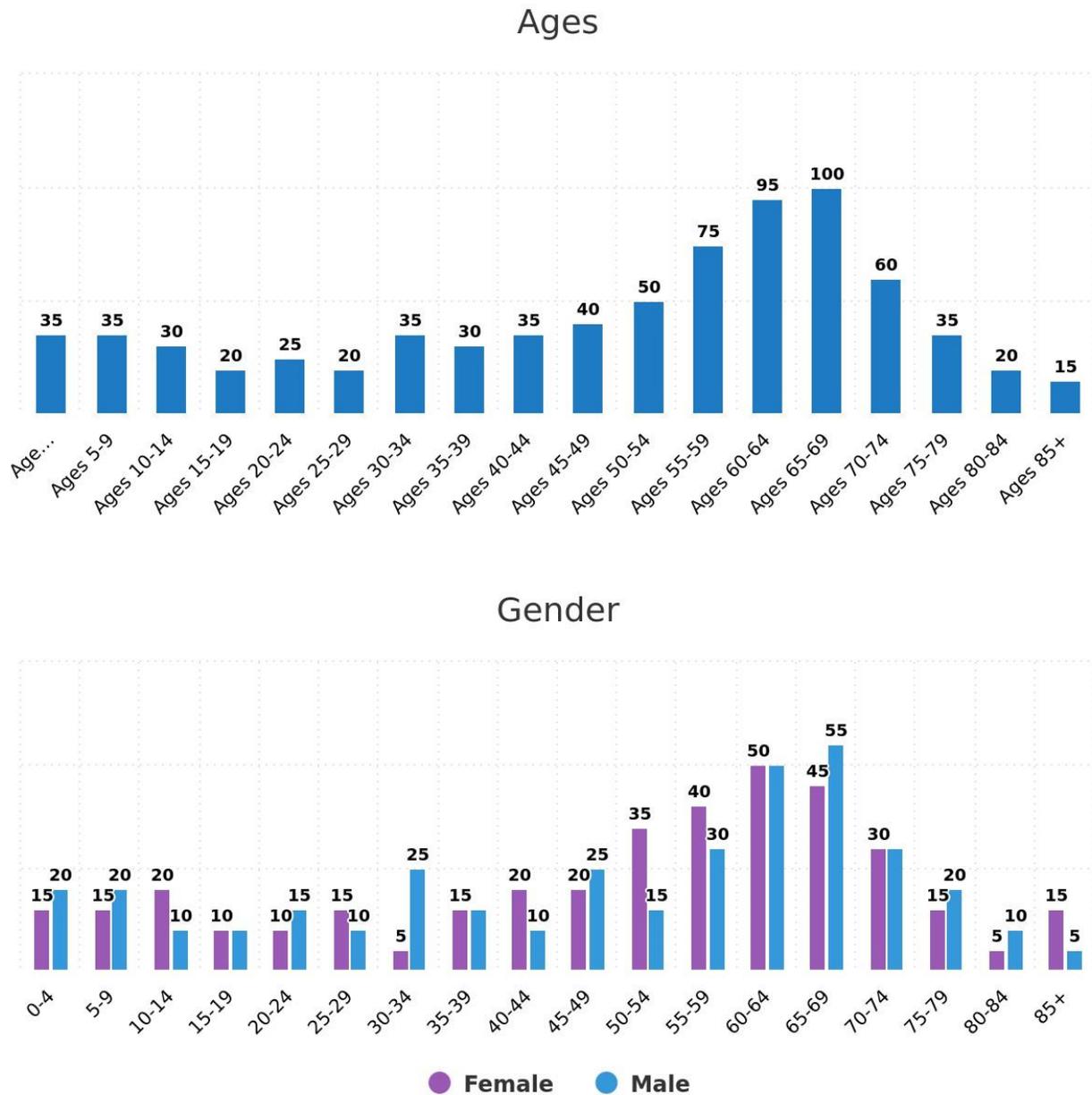
POPULATION

The total population of the Township increased significantly from 2016 to 2021. It is assumed that the primary reason for the increase is that more people started working from home during Covid and preferred to live in a smaller community. Many seasonal residents likely made the Township their permanent home. Will this migration from other centres to Billings continue?

Population



AGES AND GENDER

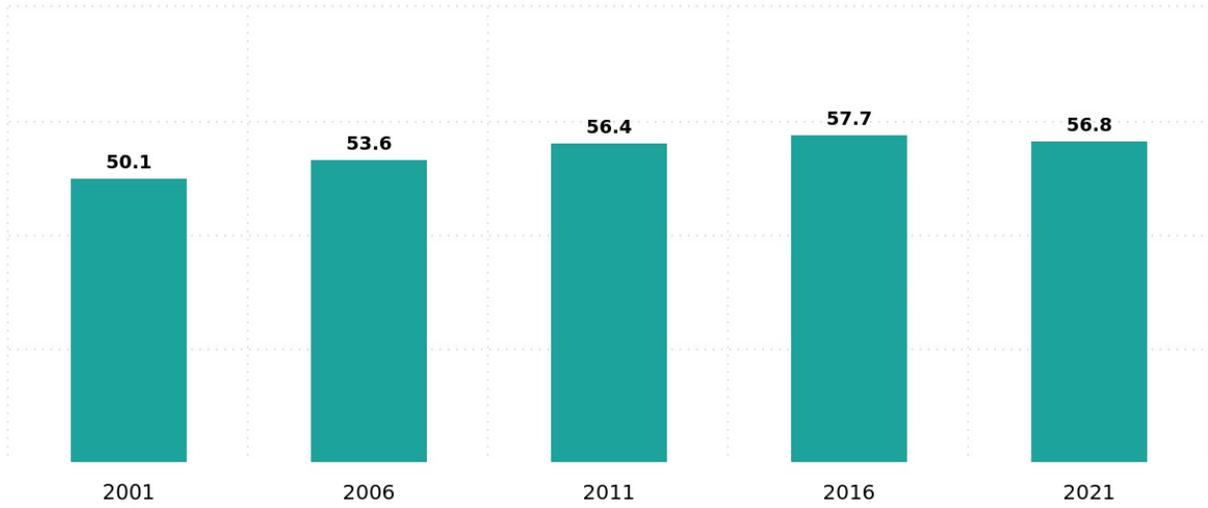


The population graph is unusual in that so much of the population, (approximately 53%), is 55 years of age and older. This is also assumed to be an affect of Covid in that it was primarily older people who migrated from larger centres to more rural communities.

If the “bulge” in the graph moves 20 years to the right, what will be the impact to the Township in 2043?

It is also noteworthy how few females there are in the 15 to 34 years of age cohorts.

Median Age

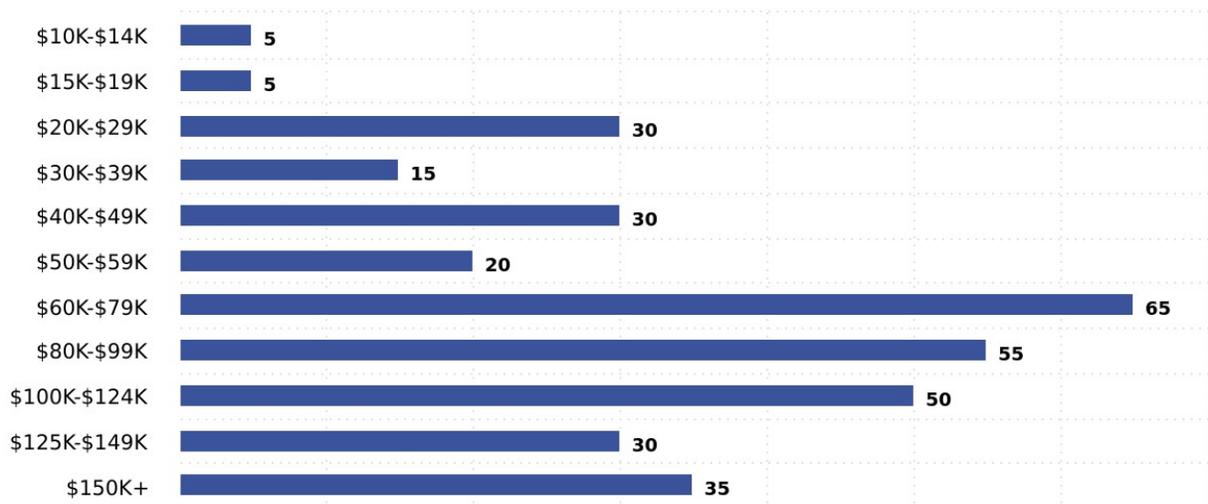


The median age indicates the age separating the population group into two halves of equal size. Most municipalities have seen a steady increase in the median age over the past 20 years. Billings Township is somewhat unusual in that the median age declined from 2016 to 2021.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The household incomes chart shows how many households fall in each of the income brackets specified by Statistics Canada.

Household Income

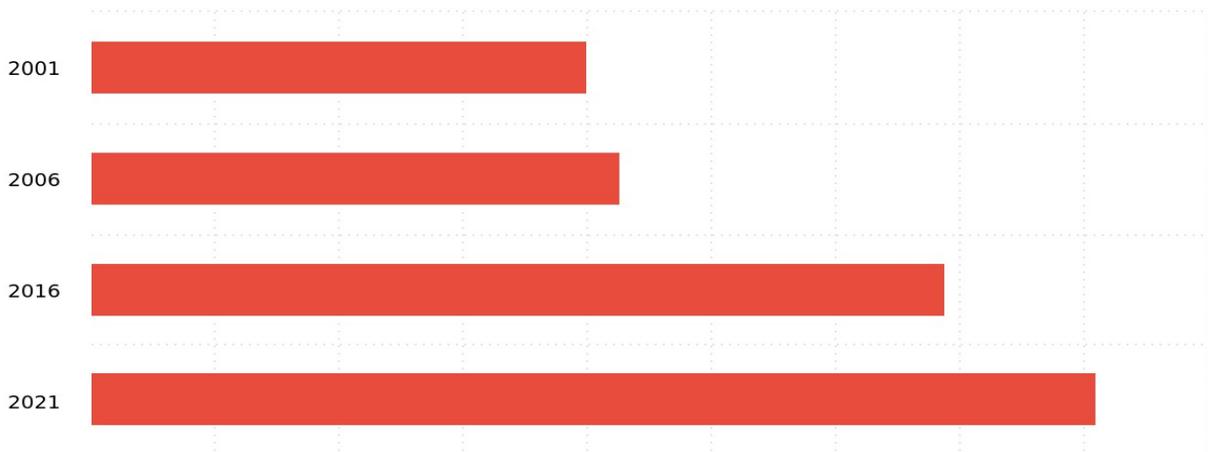


The median income indicates the income bracket separating the income earners into two halves of equal size. This table shows the median household income by province and territory in 2021.

Census Year 2021	Median Household Income Before Taxes
Canada	\$92,764
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$87,392
Prince Edward Island	\$74,210
Nova Scotia	\$76,797
New Brunswick	\$72,786
Quebec	\$77,306
Ontario	\$97,856
Manitoba	\$85,373
Saskatchewan	\$93,942
Alberta	\$125,522
British Columbia	\$90,354
Yukon Territories	\$98,739
Northwest Territories	\$134,794
Nunavut	\$115,823

The following table and chart show the increases in the median household income for Billings since 2001.

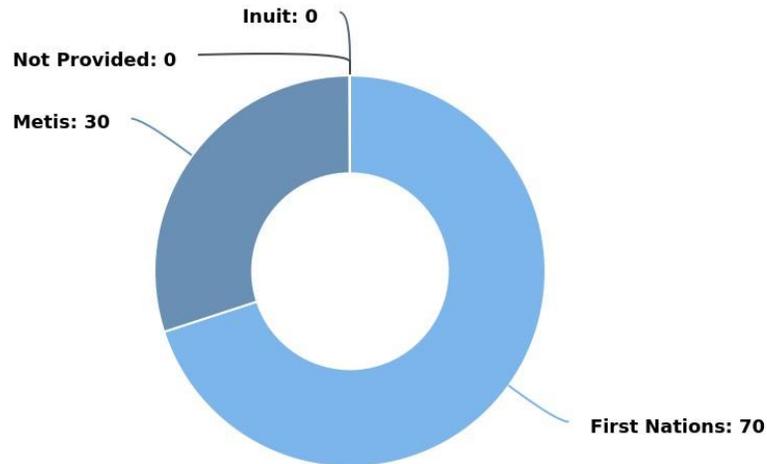
Median Household Income



Census Year	Median Household Income (Billings)	Percentage Increase since 2001
2001	\$40,038	
2006	\$42,733	6.73%
2016	\$68,779	71.78%
2021	\$81,000	102.31%

INDIGENOUS IDENTIFICATION

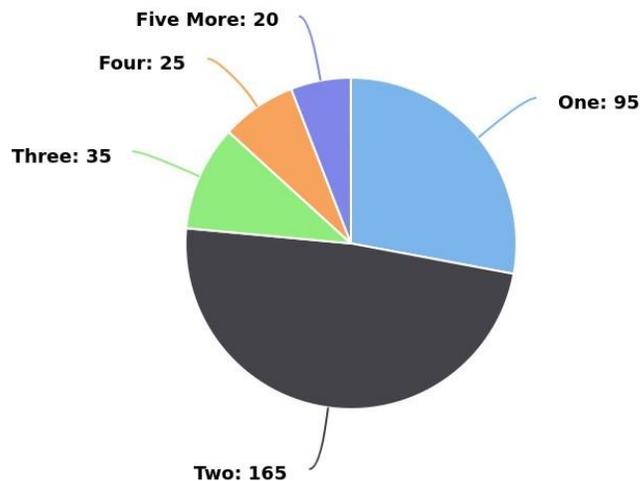
Indigenous Identification



Approximately 100 Billings residents identify as Metis or First Nations.

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS

Household By Size

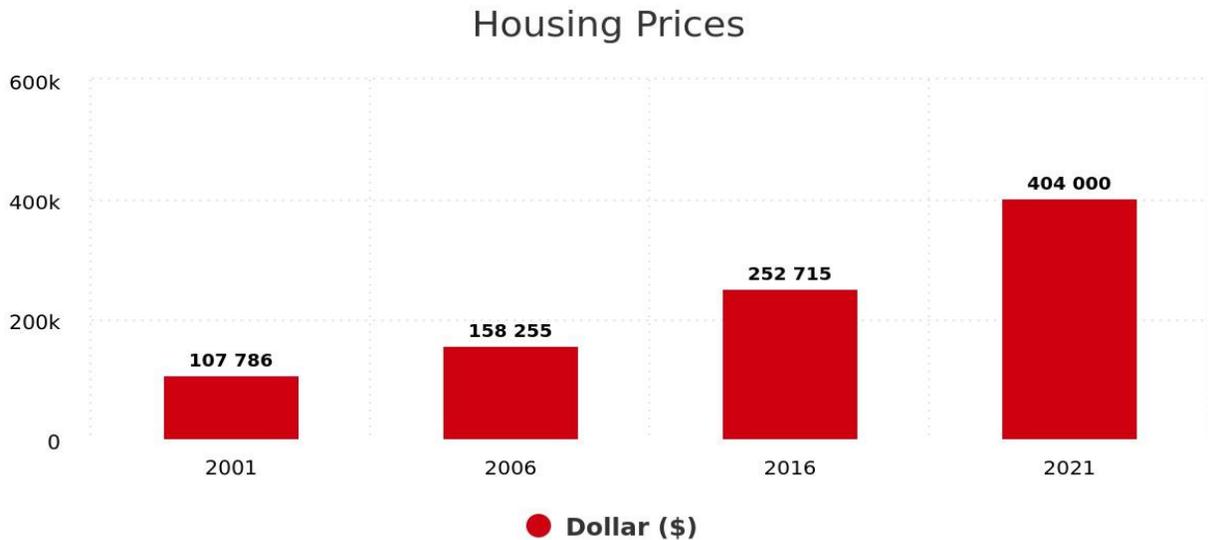


There are relatively few families in the Township of Billings, with over three-quarters of all households having one or two persons.

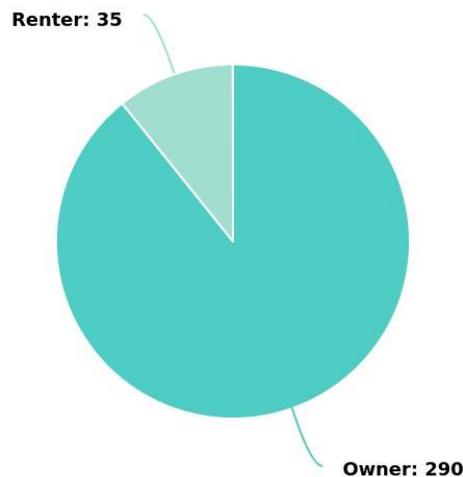
CHILDCARE

Childcare is a major challenge for municipalities across Canada. Lack of childcare options inhibits residential growth, limits the employment choices of parents, and causes a great deal of stress. A municipality that can resolve this challenge will have significant advantages over other municipalities.

HOUSING



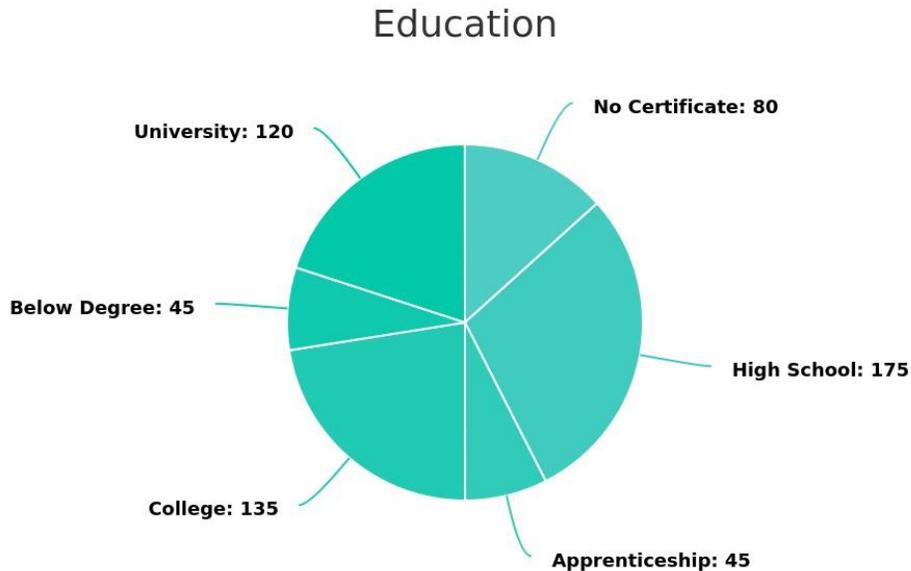
Home Ownership



While housing prices are low in relation to other parts of Canada, there has been a significant increase in recent years. Most residents of Billings Township own their own home.

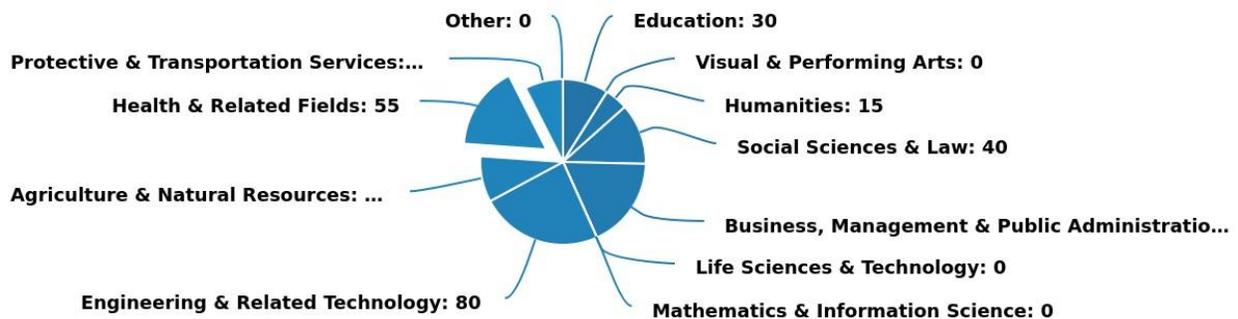
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment refers to the highest degree of education an individual has completed, and this chart shows the number of residents for each level of education.



The major field of study chart shows the predominant disciplines or areas of learning or training of a person's highest completed postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree classified by Statistics Canada.

Major Field of Study



HEALTH ISSUES

The Township of Billings has recognized multiple health issues in the Township, including:

- The life expectancy of Northern residents is more than two years lower than the Ontario average.
- Mental health and addictions are at a four-times higher rate for Northern residents.
- One in eight Northern residents does not have access to a family doctor, and many must travel long distances to access healthcare services.
- Communities in Northern Ontario require access to equitable health care, especially underserved rural and Indigenous communities.

TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

From one year to the next, technological change proves constant—and new technology brings both challenges and opportunities. Automation trends and innovations can make it challenging to meet the evolving expectations of ratepayers, provide training to help municipal staff adjust to new roles, and juggle the human impact of eliminating jobs to pay for automation.

- The technology boom of the early 21st century increased the quality of life for millions of people, making it easier than ever to access critical goods and services with a few taps on a phone. As a result, citizens have come to expect quick, efficient, and highly-responsive services — which local governments don't always have the resources to provide.
- A technologically connected world has increased cybersecurity threats, including the number of ransomware and malware attacks that public organizations experience. Many local governments invest in cybersecurity and other IT technology solutions to counter these attacks. Cloud-based infrastructure helps governments get up and running more quickly after a cyber attack — and with less data loss — than those that rely on physical servers alone.
- Paper-based workflows slow down government processes, making it challenging for municipal employees to do their jobs efficiently and effectively.
- Many parts of Canada do not have access to high-speed internet, reliable cell service, or the technology to have virtual meetings as more people work from home. Do all parts of Billings have sufficient capacity for high-speed connectivity?

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

In an era of ecological crises and climate change concerns, it's more important than ever for municipalities to pay attention to environmental issues as they arise.

There is growing public concern about the impact of climate change. *“Municipalities have influence over roughly 50% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. By adopting practices that reduce, remove or avoid GHG emissions and pursuing meaningful ways to adapt to changing climate realities, municipalities can improve their residents' quality of life while saving money in operating costs.”*

<https://fcm.ca/en/programs/municipalities-climate-innovation-program>

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has published numerous reports on environmental stewardship. *“There are many municipal roles related to environmental stewardship. To illustrate, listed below are a few examples of AMO's environmental policy files.*

Municipal Water Stewardship

Municipal governments across Ontario have a longstanding responsibility for protecting public health and the environment through water stewardship:

- *Municipal governments are responsible for delivering safe drinking water that meets exacting quality.*
- *Municipal wastewater treatment is also subject to high quality standards for treatment and effluent.*
- *Stormwater systems are built, operated, and maintained to contain and treat runoff to lakes and rivers.*
- *Source water protection regulations also assign municipalities responsibility for ensuring the protection of drinking water sources and municipalities work with their communities to ensure these sources are protected.*

Waste Diversion

Municipal waste diversion programs reduce the amount of garbage dumped in landfills and waste disposal sites. Municipal governments play a crucial role in ensuring that residential waste is properly managed to safeguard the health of our communities and our environment. This means ensuring that waste is managed safely, including litter clean up, managing residual waste in our wastewater treatment facilities, and through recycling and disposal programs. While significant progress has been made in developing integrated waste management systems that divert about half of Ontario's residential waste stream, household recycling has stalled, the amount of waste keeps increasing along with costs to manage it while municipalities have little control over the waste that is produced.

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) refers to a policy that places financial and operational responsibility for the end-of-life management of a product or packaging to those who produce it – such as manufacturers, packagers, or retailers. Municipal governments have been strongly supportive of EPR as it creates economic opportunities, incentivizes innovation, improves our environment, and reduces the burden on Ontario's taxpayers.

Climate Change

Climate change is a growing global concern, and its effects are being experienced on a local level, including across Ontario. When dangerous heat waves, flooding and storms occur, municipal services are often the first to respond. Combatting climate change has been a longstanding advocacy issue for AMO because municipal governments across Ontario are at the forefront of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Over the years, municipal councils have declared climate change emergencies and developed climate change action plans to complement the municipal energy plans they are required to complete and help address the local impacts of climate change.

Environmental Assessment

Federal and provincial legislation on Environmental Assessment (EA) lays out the framework and process for evaluating the potential environmental effects of a project. AMO and municipal staff associations, including the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA), have long called for changes to streamline the EA process to make it easier and faster to undertake projects that communities need to increase prosperity while protecting important ecosystems and natural capital.”

<https://www.amo.on.ca/advocacy/energy-climate-change/municipal-environmental-stewardship> (abridged to shorten the length of the article)

Septic Systems

Much of the Township relies on septic systems. Aging septic systems can be problematic, particularly near lakes and rivers. The Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA) has been advocating for mandatory re-inspection programs.

“In Ontario, on-site sewage systems are regulated by the Building Code Act, 1992 and the Ontario Building Code (O. Reg. 332/12). Enforcement is carried out by designated Principal Authorities (Municipalities, Conservation Authorities or Health Units). Municipalities may, through an agreement, delegate the responsibility for oversight of septic systems to Conservation Authorities, Health Units or upper-tier municipalities. Ontario’s Building Code was amended by Ontario Regulation 315/10 to provide the legislative authority for on-site sewage system maintenance inspections. Mandatory inspections occur along the shorelines of Lake Simcoe and all provincial source water protection areas, as defined in the Clean Water Act (that is, areas that directly influence municipal water systems, wells or surface water intakes). For these systems, re-inspections are mandated every 5 years, with 3rd-party certificates of compliance being permitted by the principle authority, in some cases. According to provincial data released in 2018, of the 5,048 sewage systems that fit this classification, 95% received mandatory inspections. Less than 2% were found to require major maintenance, while 9% required minor maintenance.”

- *“Education is key to a successful municipal re-inspection program.*
- *Volunteer programs are unlikely to reach the systems most in need of re-inspection!*
- *Residents may fear the cost of needed repair will be overwhelming.*
- *Many older systems are not itemized in municipal records.*
- *There will always be some residents in favour of re-inspection programs, and other residents opposed.*
- *Septic re-inspection programs only find failures or deficiencies that already exist.*
- *Municipalities considering a re-inspection program do not need to reinvent the wheel.”*

<https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/FOCA-Septic-Reinspection-Project-Report-FULL-DOCUMENT-2019-1.pdf>

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Township's landfill site is currently over capacity. The Township has applied to the ministry for an expansion and approval would extend the lifespan by over 20 years. Consideration is being given to waste diversion strategies, including the establishment of a re-use centre. The Township is having discussions with other municipalities and Indigenous groups on Manitoulin Island about joint efforts.

LEGAL FACTORS

This PESTEL factor differs from its political counterpart because it focuses on current laws rather than potential ones. In order to maintain both integrity and sustainability, a municipality must observe evolving intellectual property, antidiscrimination, and privacy laws as well as numerous more traditional legal issues.

Municipalities face unique legal challenges as creatures of statute having to adapt to quickly changing provincial, national and even international regulatory contexts and market forces. Recent court cases in Canada have included cases related to the following issues:

- land acquisition, assembly and expropriation projects
- urban renewal and other projects combining land acquisition and land use planning
- brownfield redevelopment
- infrastructure and environmental assessment matters
- conservation authority matters
- cultural heritage designations and disputes
- development charges and other fees and charges
- other revenue tools and cost-sharing agreements
- municipal governance matters
- code of conduct and integrity matters
- opinions on municipal powers
- preparation of bylaws
- bylaw challenges
- cannabis retail, production and related matters
- emerging sectors such as autonomous vehicles, cutting-edge service delivery technologies, etc.

Many rural municipalities are now dealing with the relatively new issue of Short-Term Rentals such as Airbnb. A short, non-exclusive list of issues includes:

- taxes
- neighbourhood relations/quality of life
- land use/zoning
- safety
- garbage
- parking
- fire and building safety
- neighbourhood character