



Prince Edward County

Corporate

Strategic Plan





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Message from the Mayor

Dear Friends,

Our government has been hard at work on preparing a plan for the future to continue delivering on our promise of providing the highest quality of service possible. This report is our commitment to deliver on that promise to residents and businesses.

The Corporate Strategic Plan will be a fundamental report for tracking performance and accountability across the County. It is based on broad public outreach and thorough analysis, and it reflects the values and priorities of the people of Prince Edward County. The plan calls for improved financial sustainability, a more robust business-friendly environment, and the fostering of a community where people can work and afford to live.

Our vision for the County is an ambitious one: **“To be a County that is recognized as a welcoming, healthy, prosperous, safe and cohesive community with a strong, open municipal government that provides cost effective services and stable well-funded infrastructure.”** To that end, the Plan contains objectives and related strategic priorities that provide a road map for how we can achieve this vision over the council term and beyond.

The Plan is meant to inspire all of us to consider how we can together work to achieve a prosperous and sustainable community. While the Plan’s priorities won’t be reached overnight, progress will be made year by year and the County will report to residents regularly on how we are doing.

For Council and County staff, the Corporate Strategic Plan will be an important tool for setting priorities, making decisions, and managing operations for years to come.

I am often impressed by the tremendous passion residents of this County have for their community. That passion was in evidence throughout the strategic planning process, and it will certainly serve us well as, together, we strive to make Prince Edward County **“Canada’s model rural community”**.

Sincerely,

Mayor Robert Quaiff



Special Thanks

On behalf of the County of Prince Edward, The Mayor and members of Council would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the development of this Corporate Strategic Plan. Their hard work, dedication and commitment to the strategic planning process was instrumental in the creation of this Plan



Introduction

Why a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning is a process by which an organization assesses how it is doing, figures out where it wants to go, and charts a path to get there. Strategic plans also help define important goals, set specific directions, and clarify policy and budget priorities. Given Prince Edward County's infrastructure obligations in contrast to its revenue growth potential and increasing demands for services, it is essential that the County has a corporate strategic plan that effectively articulates a long term vision for the community and establishes the priorities that will enable Council and County staff to manage municipal operations and make informed decisions for years to come.

How will the Plan be used?

This plan will enable County Administration, business and community stakeholders and County Council to work collectively to champion a sustainable growth agenda for the community.

For the public, this plan is meant to:

- Communicate a long term vision for the County and the related priorities for this term of Council.
- Reflect the community's aspirations and input for the services they receive.
- Formalize County Council's commitment to customer service and satisfaction for all residents of the County.

For businesses and community organizations, this plan is meant to:

- Reflect the County's commitment to partnering with businesses and community organizations to achieve the County's long term goals.

For County Council, managers, and employees, this plan is meant to:

- Inform policy, operational, and budget decisions
- Provide a structure to ensure oversight and management of County programs and services

This plan is designed to be realized beyond the current term of Council. However, consideration has been given to the implementation of those actions that will have the most immediate impact on the County's long term financial sustainability, economic growth and prosperity.





Strategic Plan Process

Phase 1 Project Initiation

- In November 2015, Council approved the process for the creation of a Corporate Strategic Plan. A communications plan was created and the stage was set for an effective process to gather information from across the community on the future of the County

Phase 2 Strategic Listening

- Stakeholder input to the Plan was provided through a series of one-on-one interviews with elected officials, staff, elected officials and others. The engagement results from the Official Plan and the Community Development Strategic Plan were also used to inform the Corporate Strategic Plan.

Phase 3 Developing the Framework

- A draft plan was developed and reviewed by members of County Council and the Senior Management Team. The Plan included a proposed vision statement and the identification of corporate priorities.

Phase 4 Validating the Framework

- Validation of the vision and corporate priorities was done through a telephone survey with local residents, completed in March 2016. The input from over 300 individuals was shared with County Council and staff resulting in further refinements to the Plan. The results of the survey have been appended to this plan.

Phase 5 Strategic Plan refinement, endorsement and communication

- Having refined the Plan with the results of the public input, the Plan was again circulated to Senior Staff. The resulting Prince Edward County Corporate Strategic Plan has been approved by County Council and will serve as the guiding document under which all County initiatives are aligned.



Looking to the Future

In developing this Corporate Strategic Plan, Prince Edward County has given consideration to a wide range of issues, challenges and opportunities that may impact the long term sustainability of our community – some within our ability to influence and some that are not.

Challenges

Fiscal Constraints

Prince Edward County has and will continue to face significant financial challenges for the foreseeable future. These challenges result in large part from the limits on available provincial and federal funding associated with maintaining core infrastructure. These challenges are also impacted by slow population growth, limited taxation options and service level requirements that are prescribed for many of the County's services. With limited resources, the County will need to consider how best to provide services to an increasingly older population, while continuing to appeal to both future residents and business investment.



Trust in Government / Good Governance

Governments today face ongoing challenges to maintain the public's trust and establish better accountability to residents for the tax dollars that are collected and



spent on their behalf. Prince Edward County is no different. Transparency and accountability will be central to achieving the desired outcomes of the strategic plan.

Effective communication between Council and senior staff will ensure the prioritization of actions based on current capacities and resources. Good governance requires trust in the expertise and experience of municipal staff and an understanding of roles and responsibilities in the delivery of municipal services to residents.

Changing Customer Base and Expectations

Rural communities are facing a number of challenges related to their changing human capital needs such as stagnant population growth, an aging population and the out-migration of youth. The County is being challenged with a similar outlook. Low population growth and outmigration have put pressures on local schools. While an aging population has the County facing residents' demands to maintain the hospital presence.

Technology and other innovations are also changing business and customer expectations for how products and services are delivered. Rural broadband is becoming an essential tool for business, whether that business is a retailer, a farmer, a winery or a professional service firm. It is essential that the County be able to support the integration of new technologies if it is to ensure the sustainability of its economy over the long term.





Urban and Rural Settlement Requirements

Prince Edward County faces challenges in its role as a provider of services to both urban and rural settlement areas. With population growth focused on the more urban areas of the County, more attention to issues such as downtown revitalization, housing supply and infrastructure needs is critical to the long term health of these communities.

This focus will be challenged by the increasing number of tourism and agriculture related businesses seeking to develop in the rural areas of the County and impacting the costs associated with maintaining the County's extensive road network.

Housing Supply and Affordability

There has been growing concern over the rising costs of living in the County. The popularity of the County for tourists, weekend residents and retirees has placed upward pressure on land values and the price and availability of housing in the County making living in the County unaffordable for some.

In addition, the County has seen an increasing net loss of rental units in recent years and only a fraction of new development have been apartments units. A key reason for this decline is the conversion of rental units to owner occupied units and vacation rentals. The County is committed towards providing affordable housing as prescribed by Provincial guidelines.

Emerging Trends

An Expanding Base of Cultural Amenities

The Community Development Strategic Plan identified more than 200 cultural assets in the County, with the majority located in proximity to the 'millennium trail'. These assets are widely recognized as integral to the County's quality of place as they help to define and characterize the community.

Cultural amenities are an effective tool in the attraction of new residents, visitors and business investment when leveraged effectively. The emergence of Prince Edward County's creative food economy is seen by many municipalities and regions across Canada as a success story in the area of rural economic development, tourism and investment attraction and ultimately the preservation of the County's historic charm and heritage.

An Economy Dominated by Small Business and Entrepreneurs

As with many rural communities in Ontario, the majority of business activity is driven by small business operations and entrepreneurs. This has implications for economic development business support activities and programming in the County, as well as land use and infrastructure planning across the region.

Ensuring access to the right information and services; including reducing barriers for those looking to start, manage or grow their business are essential. Through client-



focused services that aim to reduce the timing and complexity of development approvals; access to organizations that offer strategic guidance to support the expansion of local businesses; and strategically deployed municipal incentives that assist with the creation of space for new businesses, the County is well positioned to sustain the continued growth of its business community.

An Integrated Tourism Industry

There is fierce competition between Ontario travel markets. Many of Ontario's travel regions and communities are targeting residents of the province, particularly residents of the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton, with a wide array of offers and experiences, and investing significantly in their marketing efforts to attract these visitors. The advent of Web based e-marketing and social media makes it easier and easier to get the information necessary to make an informed travel choice.

Building on the success of its Gastronomic Capital status, the County has seen the steady growth of its tourism sector and related investment. The sector including agri-tourism and cultural tourism remains a strong contributor to the region's economy and a major factor in the attraction of future residents to the County. With a continued focus on strengthening the sectors 'shoulder' seasons, there will be sustainable employment available to local residents and a stronger local economy over the long term.



The Road to Success

Prince Edward County Council and administration will be guided in the implementation of the Corporate Strategic Plan by the following Mission, Vision and Corporate Values.

The Mission Statement and Corporate Values speak explicitly to the County's purpose and values in realizing a long term vision for the community. In contrast, the Vision Statement expresses the aspirations of the County and will guide the transformative initiatives in the Plan.

Mission Statement

The municipal government of Prince Edward County champions the economic and social vitality of the community. Our actions are guided by the following principles:

- The delivery of cost effective services
- The development of sustainable infrastructure
- The promotion of a healthy, liveable and vibrant community

Vision Statement

Our County is recognized as a welcoming, healthy, prosperous, safe and cohesive community with a strong, open municipal government that provides cost effective services and stable well-funded infrastructure. We will earn this reputation by:

- **Ensuring financial sustainability** with a financial plan for sustainability in place and reserves that allow us to achieve our objectives
- **Maintaining our unique culture and historical roots** while adapting to and providing services for the technological age.
- **Enhancing the health of our community** by supporting a new hospital, collaborating with local health services, and promotion of healthy lifestyles
- Becoming known as **Canada's model "smart" rural community**, with a diverse cultural and economic fabric and a sustainable approach to growth

Corporate Values

The following values reflect our beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of our County government:

- **Collaborative** – We work together effectively within the organization and in collaboration with other governments, private entities and community partners.
- **Service-oriented** – We listen and respond to our customers in a culturally responsive way and prioritize their satisfaction as we do our work.
- **Results-focused** – We establish community driven goals, measure our performance, and report to the public on our success in meeting those goals.
- **Accountable** – We are responsive and transparent to the public in our roles, functions and actions as individuals and as a government.
- **Innovative** – We are creative, learn from experience and results, and seek out new and efficient ways to solve problems and serve the public.



Achieving our Goals

The goals and priorities of the corporate strategic plan are the framework that will guide Prince Edward County's policies, initiatives and operations for the remainder of this Council term and into the future.

While the priorities describe the results the County intends to achieve through the implementation of this plan, they are also intended to be enduring, as they may continue beyond the lifespan of this plan. They are meant to reflect the breadth of the County's responsibilities and its role as a service provider.

To effectively implement the Strategic Plan and achieve its goals, there are roles for everyone in the community to play. Actions undertaken by Council and staff to implement that plan and monitor progress will be critical. To this end, Council objectives will be identified annually and departmental planning will be linked directly to the priorities and objectives of this Strategic Plan.

Finally, a sound implementation plan and measurement framework that establishes accountability and tracks performance will ensure that the Strategic Plan generates concrete results. There are many linkages and ways in which the priorities and respective strategies are interrelated. By advancing one particular objective or strategy it intends to have an impact on multiple priorities. Strategic plans are an opportunity to take stock, look forward, and prepare for the future. The objectives and strategies that follow reflect the priorities of Prince Edward County's stakeholders. They are designed to guide budget and policy decisions moving forward, making sure the most important issues are addressed. As conditions change, the Plan will remain a key source of strategic direction.





Corporate Priorities

During planning sessions at which Council and senior staff considered the needs, challenges and opportunities of the county, five priorities emerged. Council is committed to achieving these five priorities which are aligned through several business plans and Council priorities.





1. Financial Sustainability

Objective: Ensuring financial sustainability with a financial plan in place and reserves that allow us achieve our financial objectives

1. Create a sustainable water and wastewater plan.
2. Prepare a Long-Term Financial Plan that provides funding strategies and adequate reserves while promoting stable taxes.
3. Develop multiyear operating and capital budgets.
4. Develop a funding strategy for the Asset Management Plan focussed on maintaining core existing infrastructure and services.





2. Business-Friendly Environment

Objective: Continue to grow and diversify our economy into areas where we have a competitive advantage and unused capacity.

1. Build a network of amenities to attract start-ups and businesses.
2. Establish and Implement a Development Framework for Council.
3. Encourage growth within our settlement areas.
4. Continue to grow our profile outside of the County.
5. Develop incentives to encourage private sector development
6. Place an emphasis on increasing new housing starts.





3. Maintain Rural and Historic Character

Objective: Maintain the rural and historical character of the County through good planning processes

1. Adopt and implement progressive heritage and agriculture policies in the County's forthcoming Official Plan.
2. Promote and support value-added agriculture and agri-tourism.
3. Support and facilitate adaptive reuse of heritage assets and discourage removals.
4. Recognize the importance of our historical communities.





4. A Community with Stable Employment and Affordable Housing

Objective: Create a community where all residents can work and afford to live

1. Promote the development of diverse housing options.
2. Support existing businesses by encouraging succession planning and matching existing building space to potential employment generators.
3. Promote the importance of buying local.
4. Provide opportunities for the education and skills training of our residents.
5. Support access to food for our residents.
6. Invest in affordable transportation.





5. Sustainable Community Healthcare

Objective: Sustainable community healthcare that serves us through all stages of life

1. Maintain a strong voice towards our upper levels of government to keep our healthcare facilities viable and services accessible.
2. Support a coordinated community approach to Physician and Healthcare Provider Recruitment and retention.
3. Promote healthy and active living in our communities.
4. Implement the County's Age in Place concept.





Corporate Work Plan

Priority / Strategy	2016	2017	2018
1. Fiscal Sustainability			
- Create a sustainable water and wastewater plan			
- Prepare a Long-Term Financial Plan that provides funding strategies and adequate reserves while promoting stable taxes.			
- Develop multiyear operating and capital budgets			
- Develop a funding strategy for the asset management plan focussed on maintaining core existing infrastructure and services			
2. Business-Friendly Environment			
- Build a network of amenities to attract start-ups and businesses			
- Establish and Implement a Development Framework for Council.			
- Encourage growth within our settlement areas.			
- Continue to grow our profile outside of the county			
- Develop incentives to encourage private sector development			
- Place an emphasis on increasing new housing starts.			
3. Maintain Rural and Historic Character			
- Adopt and implement progressive heritage and agriculture policies in the County's forthcoming Official Plan.			
- Promote and support value-added agriculture and agri-tourism.			
- Support and facilitate adaptive reuse of heritage assets and discourage removals.			
- Recognize the importance of our historical communities			
4. A Community with Stable Employment and Affordable Housing			
- Promote the development of diverse housing options			
- Support existing businesses by encouraging succession planning and matching existing building space to potential employment generators			
- Promote the importance of buying local			
- Provide opportunities for the education and skills training of our residents			
- Support access to food for our residents			
- Invest in affordable transportation			



Priority / Strategy	2016	2017	2018
5. Sustainable Community Healthcare			
- Maintain a strong voice to upper levels of government to keep our healthcare facilities viable and services accessible			
- Support a coordinated community approach to Physician and Healthcare Provider Recruitment and retention.			
- Promote healthy and active living in our communities			
- Implement the County's age in place concept			

