



Municipality of Port Hope

Staff Report

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Report Title: Strategic Plan Update and Community Engagement

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Date of meeting: April 4, 2023

Report Author:

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Department responsible:

Office of the CAO

Report Number: CS-07-23

Recommendation:

That staff be directed to begin community engagement on the draft Strategic Plan.

Highlights:

- The Strategic Plan 2019-2022 requires updating to refine and incorporate the priorities of the current term of Council.
- Broad community engagement occurred in 2019 to create the foundational priorities of the plan.
- Council met at an open meeting on January 20, 2023 to review priorities they heard during the campaign period.
- The existing plan has been blended with the new council priorities to create the draft plan attached.
- Community engagement is appropriate prior to presentation to Council for adoption and final approval.

Background:

By their very nature, municipal strategic plans are long range priority setting documents typically spanning ten-to-twenty-year time frames. They are created to help identify and guide decision making over extended periods as communities evolve over these time frames. Municipal strategic plans reflect community priorities on this scale and are intended to continue over individual terms of Council. Typically, as each term of Council begins, plans are refined or refreshed and Council sets priorities working within the general framework of the existing plan. The base plan is used as a starting framework and an iterative approach is used. Individual action priorities are also set reflecting the current Council's priorities.

The Port Hope Strategic plan was created in 2019 following community engagement with a variety of stakeholders and has served the community well. The Mission

Statement and Vision Statement are still reflective of our community and should be included in the upcoming consultation phase to update them if necessary.

The current Strategic Plan identifies six pillars:

- Infrastructure Sustainability
- Waterfront and Riverwalk Enhancement
- Intentional Growth Planning
- Multi-Generational Opportunities
- Affordable Housing
- Corporate Efficiencies.

Each pillar has a Priority and Goal statement and specific objectives. Progress is reported back to the community. The impact of COVID-19 was significant on the original workplan.

Discussion:

On January 20, 2023, Council held an open meeting with senior staff and an external consultant to review feedback they heard during the campaign period, one of the broadest forms of community engagement. A number of common themes emerged including Housing, Economic Development, By-Law and Governance and Climate/Sustainability. Although the terms might be different from the original version of the plan, many of the items are reflective of the intent of the original version and significant cross-over exists. In addition, lessons have been learned working through the first version of the plan.

Staff worked with facilitator Kelly Linton who was asked to blend the two priority lists together where appropriate to create a draft strategic plan to begin community engagement. (**Attachment 1**). The draft is attached and once again suggests six pillars:

- More Homes
- Strong Local Economy
- Welcoming & Livable Community
- Healthy Natural Environment
- Safe & Well-Maintained Infrastructure
- Good Governance.

Goal statements and suggested potential actions under each pillar also help to describe the pillar and allow for a better understanding of what could potentially be accomplished and why. In addition, for the first time, targeted outcomes are included in the discussion. The potential actions lists are inclusive and not intended to reflect what will be reasonably accomplished during the term. The municipality does not have staff dedicated to strategic priorities specifically and most approved actions are built into existing workplans and compete with daily operational requirements. Also included are some additional inputs generated by the discussion on January 20 as listed on page 4 of the attached.

Community engagement will begin shortly and continue for 6 weeks (April through May) with a final approval report scheduled for late May or early June.

For clarity, this report does not suggest starting a new strategic plan project. The approach followed builds on the current plan, takes an iterative approach and reinforces that community priorities do not arbitrarily change every four years. This approach also makes best use of limited resources.

Financial Considerations:

There are no additional significant costs to this phase of the Strategic Plan process related to community engagement costs.

Communication and Public Engagement:

Community engagement and support is critical to assist Council in setting priorities and enabling Council to adhere to them over the term. With requests far exceeding financial and human resource capacity, it is important priorities are clearly established. In some cases, conflicts are resolved through reliance on a strategic plan. Having broad buy-in assists in legitimizing the Strategic Plan.

An engagement page on myporthope.ca will be created to collect feedback on the draft plan which will be advertised through the regular channels; print and electronic media, social media etc. The draft plan will be shared with each committee of Council, the Mayor's Youth Delegation and all members of Council are encouraged to share the plan with their networks. A series of pop-up events are being planned in high traffic areas such as Jack Burger Sports Complex and Town Park Recreation Centre, downtown and the Riverwalk area. Displays at libraries will also be requested. Special effort will be placed on engaging rural residents.

Conclusion:

The attached draft Strategic Plan should form the basis of community engagement prior to the plan being finalized and approved by Council.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Municipality of Port Hope Strategic Priorities 2023 – 2027 Version 3.0