



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: April 26, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead
Report Number: COU24-043
Attachments: Finalized Strategic Priorities,
November 2023: Insights Summary

Title: City of Stratford Strategic Priorities 2024-2027

Objective: To recommend the adoption of the revised mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities for the remainder of the 2023-2027 term.

Background:

In July 2023, Council hired Overlap Associations Inc. (Overlap) to lead its Strategic Priority setting process and update the City's mission, vision, and values. These priorities will guide Council's main initiatives and staff work plans.

- The priority-setting project followed this process:
 - Initial planning meetings took place in August between City staff and Overlap to define project objectives, key dates, and milestones.
 - A staff working group, with representatives from each department, was formed to oversee the project and provide subject matter expertise.
 - In September, the Staff Working Group and Overlap held kick-off and engagement planning meetings to discuss the project plan, conduct an interest-holder analysis, and plan engagement strategies.
 - One-on-one interviews were conducted with the Mayor and Councillors to gather their priorities and insights from residents.
 - A workshop for the Corporate Management Team in October evaluated previous strategic priorities, identified key initiatives, and discussed challenges and successes.
 - In November, Council examined the organizational mission, vision, and values, and developed the initial draft of strategic priorities through two workshops.
 - Community consultation aimed to gather insights on residents' aspirations for the future of Stratford through various channels:

- Community Pop-Ups:
 - November 21, 2023: Stratford Public Library Book Club at the Queen’s Inn
 - December 18, 2023: The Local Community Food Centre’s Dinner & Community Access Market
- EngageStratford:
 - The Stories feature on the website allowed residents to share their vision of Stratford from January 5, 2024, to March 10, 2024.
 - Destination Stratford provided consultation data from the opening night of Lights on Stratford, where community members expressed their hopes for Stratford.
 - Additionally, we received ten detailed online submissions, gathered feedback from eighty-five individuals at the pop-ups, and received 147 responses from the Lights On Stratford event.
 - Data from recent community projects, such as Stratford Cultural Pathways, Community Safety and Well-being Plan, Sport Tourism Strategy, Project Welcoming Community, Community Climate Action Plan, Housing & Homelessness Plan, and Stratford Attainable Housing Project, was also considered.
- The staff working group analyzed community consultation data and Council’s feedback to review and refine the draft strategic priorities and objectives in a series of three workshops from November to January.
- Council finalized the strategic priorities in a workshop in February.
- The Corporate Leadership Team reviewed the draft priorities and objectives, resulting in the attached draft for Council’s formal consideration.

Analysis:

The City’s Strategic Priorities sets a plan for action that guides progress over the four-year term of Council towards our vision and represents a commitment to move forward on those things that are most important to our community. Each term of Council is an opportunity to set a new four-year agenda that builds on the progress made, while planning for the future and taking advantage of new opportunities to better serve the community.

The Strategic Priorities includes several key components which together reflect the City’s aspirations and commitments. These components include:

- *Vision, Mission & Values.* The vision statement reflects what the City as an organization is striving for on behalf of the community in the long-term. The mission reflects the purpose of the City as an organization. The values are a

set of core beliefs that guide the behaviour of the City as an organization. These were first established as part of the 2018-2022 Strategic Priorities. They were reviewed and revised by Council and the staff working group as part of this process.

- *Vision for 2027*: The Vision for 2027 takes the long-term vision and identifies an overarching theme for the strategic priorities. This component was introduced in this set of the Strategic Priorities.
- *Strategic Priorities*: These are key areas of focus that are crucial for achieving our mission and working toward our vision.
- *Objectives*: These are outcomes that we aim to achieve, guiding implementation and driving progress toward our priorities. The implementation of these objectives will take place through an annual Business Plan, with any required resource requests brought to Council through the annual Budget Process.

Vision for 2027:

The Vision for 2027 and overarching theme for the 2024-2027 Strategic Priorities is "*Thoughtfully Develop Our City*". By prioritizing specific areas for development, the city seeks to create a vibrant urban environment while preserving green spaces, promoting active transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and fostering community. This approach reflects a commitment to both future planning and addressing current needs, signaling transformative change.

Strategic Priorities & Objectives:

Enhance Our Infrastructure

To invest in our infrastructure is to support the community's overall well-being. We will address key aspects such as transportation, utilities, energy transition and emissions. By making targeted investments, our focus is to create a resilient foundation that fosters sustainable growth, ensuring a high quality of life for residents and promoting economic stability for years to come.

Objectives:

- Enhance energy efficiency by implementing the short-term initiatives from the Corporate Energy Emission Plan to help us achieve our climate action goals.
- Improve the pedestrian, cycling, and transportation experience by implementing the short-term initiatives from the Transportation Master Plan.
- Advance key infrastructure maintenance and new growth-related projects in the 10-year capital forecast.

Build Housing Stability

Housing affordability remains a challenge in our community. Tackling this complex problem requires support from other levels of government. Yet, we can act—by reducing barriers to building, advancing our supportive housing projects, prioritizing

housing in the Official Plan Review and partnering with our community. Together we help provide safe, attainable, affordable, and supportive places to live.

Objectives:

- Streamlining the approvals process and enhance opportunities for new forms of residential development through the Official Plan Review, including provisions for inclusionary zoning and suitable intensification.
- Partner with a nonprofit agency to use municipal land for the development of affordable homeownership or affordable rentals.
- Provide safety and stability for unhoused community members by constructing new supportive/supported housing, taking an evidenced-based approach to addressing homelessness.

Work Together For Greater Impact

Stratford is full of creative, innovative, solution-focused people and organizations—the City must support them to respond to the needs of the community. Strengthening the City’s relationships with the community will allow us all to share resources, knowledge, and expertise. By working together, we can make a bigger impact. The City will need to foster a creative and proactive culture to embrace this role.

Objectives:

- Initiate the Grand Trunk Renewal development through a formal partnership model.
- Build meaningful partnerships to address community needs.
- Implement the Sports Tourism strategy in partnership with both Destination Stratford and local sports development groups and industry partners.

Intentionally Change To Support The Future

Change is a consistent presence in our community, presenting both challenges and opportunities. As we look ahead to the future, it is crucial to base our decisions on this evolving context. We need to genuinely explore what these changes mean for the well-being and economic foundation of our community. We have an opportunity to reconsider who we are as a community, what is important to us, and what makes our community special. This will require many of us as we aspire to lead through this transformation. We must be people-centered in our decision-making, lead from our values, and align our internal narrative with the identity of the Stratford community.

Objectives:

- Support economic growth and diversification by bringing new industrial lands to market.
- Improve efficiency and service standards by implementing the findings of the Corporate Service Delivery Review.

- Implement recommendations from the Municipal Cultural Plan to create programs that celebrate diversity and promote inclusion for everyone.

Next Steps:

- Pending Council approval, the final document will be posted online and in alternative formats for public access.
- The updated mission, vision and values will be widely posted throughout the City, including at a range of City facilities and the City's website.
- To track implementation, a Business Plan will be developed to capture the activities and milestones associated with Strategic Priority objectives for the purpose of regular reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team, Council, and the public.
- Any resources required from the funds earmarked in the 2024 Budget for the implementation of the Strategic Priorities will be brought forward to Council for direction.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Initiatives associated with the Strategic Priorities objectives are subject to the regular budget approval process and/or direction from Council. In the 2024 City Budget, there is approximately \$100,000 allocated to support the implementation of the Strategic Priorities. The use of these funds is subject to Council approval. Beyond this, there are no further impacts anticipated at this time.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

To be determined. Any initiatives associated with the Strategic Priorities are subject to the regular budget approval process.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

This report relates to revised strategic priorities for this term of Council.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Zero Carbon Energy

Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables.

Staff Recommendation: THAT Council adopt the Strategic Priorities as presented in Report COU24-043 to guide and focus Council's key activities over its term;

THAT the Mission, Vision, and Values for the City of Stratford attached to Report COU24-043 be formally adopted;

THAT staff be directed to use the Strategic Priorities to guide its work in advising Council and in exercising its administrative responsibilities;

AND THAT staff provide regular updates to monitor the progress of the Strategic Priorities.

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