



Subject: *Strategic Plan 2025-2029 - Report #2*
To: Corporate & Residential Services Committee
Date Prepared: November 15, 2024
Related Motions:
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Approved by: Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

Summary

In November 2024, Council requested the CAO update the Strategic Plan based on feedback from staff, councillors and the various plans and strategies Council has set out. This process has concluded with a draft strategic plan as attached to the agenda. The proposed plan builds on the current 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, with a strengthening of objectives around emerging topics such as climate, housing, emergency management and community resilience. This report outlines changes at a high level, details of objectives and proposed initiatives are in the plan - *2025-2029 Strategic Plan - Growing Stronger, Together*.

Financial Impact Statement

None

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council review the draft strategic plan for discussion, amendment if necessary, and approval.

Recommended Motion

That the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommends to Council to approve the "2025-2029 Strategic Plan - Growing Stronger, Together" as attached to the September 16th, 2025 Executive Committee Agenda.

Background

East Hants has had a Strategic Plan for many years. The organization uses the Strategic Plan as a guide to prioritize work, prepare the capital investment plan and set the business plan for each year. The Strategic Plan guides the administrative function of the Municipality.

The process to review the current 2021-2024 Strategic Plan:

- Approval from Council on the approach
- Staff and Councillor surveys
- SWOT analysis by the management group across the organization
- Director level discussions on goals, objectives and initiatives that are reasonably achievable and relevant over the next 4 years
- Final review of the proposed new plan by the management group

Several of Council's current departmental level strategies came into play, as well as the anticipated outcomes of others that are ongoing or anticipated to happen over the next four years, i.e. the 2026 Plan Review.

Discussion

Public Engagement

Throughout the development of our Accessibility, Economic Development, Parks & Open Space, Tourism and Planning related planning documents, East Hants has engaged with our public. More recently, the Facilities Plan has done public consultation and will include consultation on the Diversity and Equity work being done. Each of these plans has informed the corporate Strategic Plan and therefore reflect the established needs of the public.

Elements of the Plan

The high-level key strategies of East Hants are very much driven by our status as a bedroom community of Halifax, our need for commercial development and our need to serve an ever-growing residential community, spread out across 52 individual communities. East Hants has built a name for itself as a vibrant, growing and innovative Municipality, which is reflected in the mission, vision and key strategies of this Plan. The key strategies remain unchanged in this proposal.

Accountability to the Plan

Feedback in the survey asked how we plan to measure success of the Plan and set performance targets. Our current accountability comes in the form of our Annual Report. Each objective is reported on with the initiatives that have moved the needle forward in any year. Over the course of a four-year plan, these reports show progress towards the objective and each objective is reviewed to inform the next Plan.

When governments prepare strategic plans there are four standards elements: 1) Establish the objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs); 2) Collect and analyze performance data; 3) Monitor and evaluate progress regularly; and, 4) Continuously adapt and adjust plans based on learnings - informing future planning.

Our Strategic Plans have historically been initiative based, building on established objectives with initiatives as we prepare the annual business plan. Establishing KPIs for measuring government services is commonly done through various methods of gathering data, including surveys for community feedback, administrative data from process records, interviews, and focus groups for qualitative insights. Currently, our strongest set of data comes from Economic and Business Development who are monitoring the progress of their new Plan with indicators. We have a tremendous amount of data being collected but we do not have a lot of data in the form of metrics data being collected in our systems.

Over the next four years, we will be looking at KPIs for our finances (currently we rely on broad Financial Condition Indicators from the Province that are three years out of date) as well as what metrics data would

benefit us and how we might set our systems up to collect it efficiently. This data could inform the next Strategic Plan.

Mission and Vision

The mission and vision received some feedback through the survey. Overall, 98% felt the Mission was effective and 91% of respondents felt the Vision was effective. Changes to both statements are being recommended, primarily to simplify and make them less wordy, yet maintain the intent.

MISSION

Current:

East Hants cares about people and their quality of life. Through program and service excellence, we are building a strong, thriving community.

Proposed:

Through program and service excellence, we are building strong, thriving communities.

VISION

Current:

East Hants is a vibrant, welcoming community that embraces rural and urban living. - a place where everyone feels connected.

Proposed:

East Hants is a vibrant, welcoming community that embraces rural and urban living.

Values

The Council survey indicated that Councillors were supportive of the values we have established. There was some discussion around other words that we could use, but for the most part these aligned with our current core and organizational values, i.e. a suggestion of “honesty” fits into integrity. Discussion was also had around this importance of relationship building in all that we do. Our core values introduction has been updated to include the reference to how the core values will guide how our employees to build relationships and serve our community.

Key Strategies

The key strategic goals of the municipality for the next four years remain mostly unchanged.

Key Strategy: Sustainable Infrastructure

CURRENT: Infrastructure represents the foundation of any community. It includes roads, facilities, and systems that keep the community functional and people moving. **Our goal is to provide infrastructure that addresses the needs of our growing community.**

PROPOSED: Infrastructure represents the foundation of any community. It includes roads, facilities, and systems which keep the community functional and people moving. **Our goal is to provide resilient infrastructure that addresses the needs of our growing community.**

The word resilient has been added to this goal as a reflection of the climate planning and asset management work that is being done and will be reflected in our business plans over the next four years.

Otherwise, the objectives for this goal remain consistent with what was in the previous plan.

Key Strategy: Corporate Excellence

CURRENT: Success of the municipality depends on public trust. This relationship with the public is achieved through open, transparent and fair decision-making, effective public policy, responsible financial management, exceptional service delivery, and effective communication. **Our goal is to provide greater value to the community by improving the way we do business.**

PROPOSED: Success of the Municipality depends on public trust. This relationship with the public is achieved through open, transparent and fair decision-making, effective public policy, responsible financial management, exceptional service delivery, and effective communications. **Our goal is to provide value to the community by continuously improving our governance, the way we do business, honouring our values and supporting one another.**

We have expanded on “how” we will improve the way we do business, taking sentiment from the Customer Service Strategy approved by Council last year.

The objectives in this section are for the most part continuing with the addition of reference to the Equitable East Hants Plan, the Accessibility Plan and the work that is coming up around solid waste processing, Extended Producer Responsibility, organics, etc.

Key Strategy: Strong Community

NO CHANGE: A strong community is where people feel a sense of pride, are safe, connected and active. This is achieved through long-range community planning and by supporting those who live, work and visit in East Hants. **Our goal is to provide services, programs and facilities, through direct service delivery and collaboration with others, that allow people and businesses to thrive.**

Although the goal remains unchanged, the objectives in this section have been updated to include the housing strategy discussions being had by Council and the work being mandated by the Province on EMO planning. There are two reports currently being done at the Provincial level that may impact how Council deals with policing and fire services in the coming years, this work has been incorporated into the Plan.

A renewed Climate Change Action Plan will generate a plan around resilient communities for action over the next four years. Completion of the three key flood studies being done should result in the development of a flood mitigation strategy for the growth management areas.

Key Strategy: Economic Prosperity

CURRENT: A strong, competitive economy encourages entrepreneurship, stimulates opportunity, creates jobs and enhances the community’s attractiveness. Through investment attraction, land inventory management and business support services, East Hants continuously improves the community’s business environment and commercial tax base. **Our goal is to have vibrant commercial districts that support the current and future needs of our community.**

PROPOSED: A strong, competitive economy encourages a thriving and growing community with vibrant commercial districts and a robust, skilled workforce. Fostering further economic growth in East Hants will require a focus on growing investment and supporting workforce development. **Our goal is to grow investment by**

attracting new businesses to the area, supporting existing local businesses and attracting and developing workforce talent.

The updates to this section reflect the current direction of Council and the updated Economic Development Plan, approved by Council in 2023. There are two key goals of the Economic Development Plan: 1. Grow Investment; 2. Support Workforce Development. The new objectives support these goals and support the growth of our communities, be it through social infrastructure advocacy, tourism business support or enabling growth in our village cores.

Initiatives

The initiatives outlined in each section are not exhaustive. These are current or proposed initiatives to help the reader visualize the implementation of the Plan. These will guide the development of Annual Business Plans and Council will approve these plans at budget time. Nothing in this Plan binds Council to act.

Alternatives

1. Provide feedback from Committee on amendments to the key strategies, objectives or initiatives outlined in the Plan.

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan is a very important document for the Municipality. Although it is a high-level document, this is the document that will guide our business and community planning over the next four years.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council review and provide feedback on the proposed Strategic Plan for adoption by Council.