



Report to Council

Department: Office of the CAO
Division: Office of the CAO
Date: November 16, 2020
Prepared by: Chris Nepszy, P.Eng., PE, CAO
Report Number: CAO-2020-09
Subject: Corporate Strategic Plan: 2020 Progress Report
Number of Pages: 10

Recommendation(s)

That Report CAO-2020-09 entitled Corporate Strategic Plan: 2020 Progress Report prepared by Chris Nepszy, CAO dated November 16, 2020 be received for information.

Purpose

A Council-directed Corporate Strategic Plan is an essential tool which establishes overall direction and priorities, aligns organizational efforts, and supports future decision-making. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update to Council on the status of initiatives identified in the 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan.

Background and Discussion

The development of the 2019 – 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan included extensive preparation, engagement, and outreach.

Council established six key values for the Town's 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan as follows: 1) Progressive and Sustainable Infrastructure, 2) Healthy Community and Quality of Life, 3) Financial and Economic Stewardship, 4) Vibrant Growth and Development, 5) Citizen and Customer Experience and 6) Organizational Effectiveness and Resiliency.

Each priority area listed was broken down into recommended goals and actions based on the cumulative feedback from all who were engaged during the consultation process and can be viewed at www.essex.ca/StrategicPlan.

This progress report is not meant to be a complete description of the works completed by Administration during the past year. Staff are also engaged in delivering core services and participating in other significant Town initiatives.

Facing a global pandemic has made this year unprecedented and challenging for many in our community. Even with the required shift in focus, we maintained and delivered on our commitment to provide essential municipal services to citizens, stakeholders, and business owners. Staff members from across our organization have stepped up and found innovative ways to continue to not only provide critical programs and services, but to achieve progress on many of the initiatives identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan. Highlights of the progress are attached. As can be seen, all the priorities are not mutually exclusive. Although initiatives are grouped under the most relevant of the six (6) key values, many support the achievement in goals of multiple areas.

This is the first time Council has seen a progress report on the Strategic Plan. As a result of Council's commitment, many initiatives are trending in the desired direction. As we look forward to recovering from the pandemic, the work on the plan continues. That being said, continued dialogue on initiatives and their relevancy in these dynamic times is crucial for the plan's success. Administration is looking to meet with Council next spring (approximately ½ way through plan) to re-assess initiatives and determine if we continue with all, or implement a pivot strategy.

Financial Impact

Administration will continue to identify financial impacts associated with the recommended actions, some of which have already been included in the 2021 budget. Remaining work plan actions will be incorporated into future budgets for Council's consideration.

Consultations

Doug Sweet, Deputy CAO

Alex Denonville, Manager, Communications

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☐ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☐ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☐ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☐ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☒ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.
- ☐ Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.



Where You **BELONG**

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT



PROGRESSIVE | HEALTHY | STEWARDSHIP | VIBRANT | RESILIENCY | EXPERIENCE

PROGRESSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Manage, invest, and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets the current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.



OVER
35km

of drains brushed or cleaned to maintain/improve local drainage.

17

culverts built or reconstructed covering over 200m.

UPDATED
950

light fixtures to high-efficiency Light-emitting Diodes (LEDs).

RECYCLED
18,000

tons of aggregate from old roads and sidewalks to be used for future projects.

- Launched the Smart Community Internet Performance Testing platform, in partnership with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, to better understand Internet infrastructure gaps.
- Implemented a new Capital Projects Map to highlight upcoming capital works for residents and stakeholders. Continued progress made with GIS to keep infrastructure mapping up-to-date for internal use.
- Continuing to work closely with local developers to achieve infrastructure goals in all urban centres.
- Currently completing a hydraulic assessment and drainage modelling study in Ward 4. Master Plan to assess the needs of the entire municipality to follow.
- Early work on a Town-wide Energy Conservation Demand Plan has been completed, with goal of 2021 publication.
- Continuing to work with the Ontario Clean Water Agency to review new water treatment technology and processes.
- Launched the Shoreline Protection Loan program to assist property owners with protecting their properties without impacting Town finances.
- Modified the sandbag program to assist residents with protecting their properties.
- Participated in the Regional Energy Task Force to identify potential cost-saving measures within the corporation.
- Purchased and implemented new playground inspection software.



HEALTHY COMMUNITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Create a safe, friendly, and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.



OVER

22,000

views of Essex Plays at Home
program videos and activities.

HOSTED

745

individual community
recreation programs.

192

participants in Live At Home
activities.

INSTALLED

2

Bike Repair Stations in Essex Centre
and Colchester.

- Pivoted programming to online recreational videos and activities during the COVID-19 public health crisis.
- Work ongoing towards the Essex Centre Outdoor Sports Complex, including communication with partners and user groups and plans for phased approach to construction of facility.
- Added new part-time recreation programmer to increase and enhance programming in all four urban centres, with costs offset by user fees.
- Continued adherence to High Five accreditation recreation standards, which is Canada's quality standard for children's programs.
- Implemented beach water quality testing at Colchester Beach in lieu of Windsor-Essex County Health Unit testing.
- Participating in the County Wide Active Transportation System Committee.
- Completed the County Road 50 Active Transportation Route, and matched funds to install two bike repair stations and host bike safety rodeos and CanBike training events.
- Re-opened the Essex Recreation Complex, Essex Centre Sports Complex, and the Harrow and Colchester South Community Centre with new COVID-19 safety protocols in place.
- Implemented new signage at Colchester Beach to enhance visitor experience and promote the corporate website.



FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC STEWARDSHIP

Provide fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure the long-term financial health of the municipality.



0%

property tax increase in 2020.

\$5.8 million

dedicated to the Asset Management Plan Lifecycle Reserve.

MORE THAN

\$59 million

in reserves.

- Currently reviewing debt annually as part of five year financial plan and four year budget forecast.
- Implementing annual review of Community Services user fees to ensure parity with neighbouring municipalities.
- Continuing to promote the Asset Management Plan using new graphics and online materials for members of the public.
- Continuing to expand the use of the Asset Management Plan into decision-making, including budgeting and financial forecasts
- Continuing to leverage funds from all levels of governments, community partners, and private businesses to accomplish strategic goals, including the Harrow Streetscape Project, Digital Growth Grant, and Community Improvement Plans.
- Completed a Development Charges Study to balance competitiveness in attracting investments while ensuring taxpayers do not bear the costs of servicing growth.
- Undertaking a comprehensive corporate fee study.
- Maintained aggressive budget and financial forecast timelines.



VIBRANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.



OVER
\$72million

in 2020 construction value up to September.

OVER
3,800

visits to the Economic Development microsite.

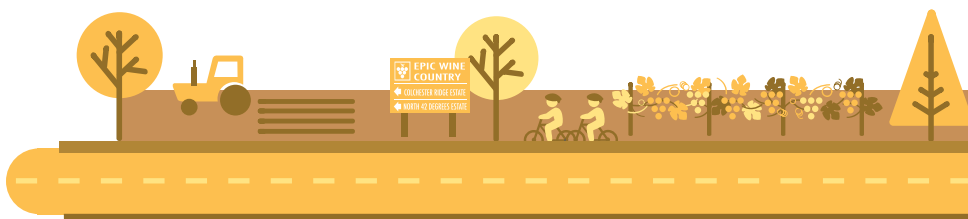
145

applications to growth & development programs (eg. CIPs, Digital Growth Grant.)

281

total development permits issued in 2020 up to September.

- Harrow Streetscape project currently in engineering phase with construction to begin in early 2021. Essex Streetscape project currently in preliminary design stage.
- Implemented new wayfinding signage in Colchester and McGregor, with follow up work to be completed as part of Harrow & Essex Centre streetscape projects.
- Continued to work closely with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to enhance opportunities for developable lands in the Highway 3 Corridor.
- Submitted a grant application for funding of a new agri-tourism strategy.
- Currently updating the Zoning By-law to permit detached Secondary Dwelling Units to improve housing/rental market, including affordable housing.
- Publication of new Development Standards Manual expected in early 2021.
- Continued promotion of the Join Us in Essex campaign and advertisements to promote and encourage small business investment.
- Worked closely with the Municipality of Leamington on route, pickup location, and in-person payment options for the LTW Transit Bus Line.
- Amended the Official Plan to align with Provincial Policy Statements designed to strengthen the agricultural sector.
- Continuing to promote the Community Improvement Plans along with changes to encourage on-farm diversification and residential development.



CITIZEN AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.



OVER

1,500

hits to the new Online Services Hub at essex.ca.

72

digital submissions to the new Essex Works Report a Problem System (March-September).

25

Council and Committee meetings publicly broadcast via YouTube.

- Created a new Online Services Hub (essex.ca/OnlineServices) featured prominently on the Town of Essex website and social media accounts.
- Implemented the new online EssexWorks Report a Problem System to improve customer service and transparency.
- Work ongoing towards the development of a business case for a potential customer care centre at the Harrow & Colchester South Community Centre.
- Investigating potential to increase use of Virtual City Hall for other municipal services and fees (eg. dog tags and building permits.)
- Implemented new procedures to enable citizen and stakeholder delegations during electronic Council meetings.
- Continued use and expansion of online surveys and other digital feedback options for citizens and stakeholders.
- Ongoing work towards survey standards to better align corporate efforts and improve opportunities for qualitative and quantitative analysis.



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND RESILIENCY

Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.



32

employees participating in the new Performance Management System.

NEARLY

2,400

taxpayers registered for pre-authorized monthly or quarterly payments.

\$1.1 million

in property tax payments processed through Virtual City Hall in 2020.

MORE THAN

300

online submissions to the 2020 Community Policing Satisfaction Survey.

- Conducted the 2020 Community Policing Satisfaction Survey, which provided data to Council on citizen's perceptions of local policing.
- Kicked off the HR Performance Management System to provide staff more effective and actionable feedback on their job performance and potential for growth within the corporation.
- Contracted StrategyCorp to conduct a full review of organizational capacity, internal service improvements, and shared services with Essex County and neighbouring municipalities.
- Implementing new accessible and less-ink document standards.
- Completed a full review of staff job descriptions to assist with succession planning/cross training opportunities.
- Working towards the implementation of an Intranet system to improve internal communications and staff engagement.
- Improved communications to staff members with regular updates, print products, and events hosted by the Office of the CAO.
- Launched a staff newsletter to improve internal communications and recognize staff achievements.

