

Where You BELONG

Spring 2021 Strategic Plan Progress Report

essex



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.



	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Ensure financial stability of current and new infrastructure	Incorporate the Asset Management Plan into budget and forecasting process	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services & Corporate Services	Completed and Ongoing	Expanded asset management and lifecycle reserve sections incorporated into annual budgets to assist with understanding capital funding models. New formulas introduced for replacements/upgrades. Work is ongoing to improve condition assessments and introduce updated asset management plan.
	Review reserve financing for annual infrastructure replacement	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Completed and Ongoing	Review of reserve financing has become an integral part of capital budget process to identify funding sources for projects. Asset management budget meetings and corporate education efforts are also ongoing.
Invest in new infrastructure to meet the needs of all residents	Develop a sustainable priority plan for roads	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Road condition assessments are completed every five years along with ongoing efforts to create reliable data through traffic counts. Traffic counts, road patrols and maintenance, and forecast planning are also ongoing.
	Implement a rural drainage and sewage strategy	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Resident requests and complaints are centralized to improve monitoring and identification of issues. Ward 3/4 Sanitary Sewer and Ward 4 Storm Sewer modeling studies are nearing completion. A drainage maintenance financial forecast is in progress.
	Review funding models and long-term planning to meet sustainability objectives for roads, bridges, and other assets	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services & Corporate Services	Ongoing	Engineering design and capital projects are synchronized to inform the development of a funding model and boost return on investment. Condition assessments for roads and bridges will help schedule maintenance, capital investments, and improve financial forecasting. Currently evaluating need for assessment on underground infrastructure.
Identify and work with stakeholders and partners to meet infrastructure goals	Expand access to broadband Internet service	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services & Infrastructure Services	Completed and Ongoing	Launched community Internet testing platform, with data to be incorporated into meetings with local ISPs. Ongoing work with third parties to install infrastructure in Town right-of-way. Reviewing permit process for encroachments due to linear installation. Completed legal review of access agreements and by-laws.
	Improve the road assumption process	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	To Be Started	Council noted minimal direction on matter at Infrastructure Roundtable. Consideration and analysis needed on potential impacts to finance, operations, levels of service, asset management, and burden on capital budget.
	Develop formal partnerships to help achieve infrastructure goals	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services & Development Services	Completed and Ongoing	Continuing dialogue with MTO on Highway 3 project which has resulted in drainage works, road realignments, trails, and watermain extension. Working closely with County of Essex, CWATS, ERCA on active infrastructure, cycling promotions, and multi-use trails.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



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.

	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Mitigate the impact of climate change and reduce environmental footprint	Invest in new technology and process improvements for operations and new construction projects	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Completed and Ongoing	Significant investments in IT infrastructure to enhance flexibility throughout pandemic. Purchased new playground maintenance and building permit software while continuing to promote web-based solutions for citizens (EssexAlerts & EssexWorks). All departments working closely with GIS to improve mapping and operational planning. Continuing review and evaluation of new technology in preparation for 2022 Budget.
	Identify energy efficiencies in Town facilities	<div><div></div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Conducted an energy review of water/wastewater treatment facilities and continuing to review new technology with OCWA. Working towards Energy Conservation Demand Plan and energy efficient retrofits at all Town facilities. Participated in Regional Energy Task Force with ERCA and County. Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Ongoing review of new processes and equipment for infrastructure planning and budget.
	Continue to invest in flood mitigation and work with partners to reduce the impact of shoreline flooding	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Completing shoreline study for public land and completing drainage work in high risk flood areas. Launched the Shoreline Loan Assistance program. Continuing sandbag program and monitoring of lake levels. Participating in regional discussions with partners and stakeholders. Enhanced review process of stormwater management plans for new developments. Adopted 2018 Regional Stormwater Guidelines. Implementing Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
	Complete a storm water and sanitary master plan for urban centres	<div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Completing hydraulic assessment and modelling studies of Wards 3 and 4. Environmental Assessment for Southwest Ward 1 almost complete with detailed design of Phase 1 ongoing. Currently investigating the completion of a Master Plan to assess the needs of the Town as a whole.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



PROGRESSIVE

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.

100%
Completed
or Ongoing

	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Provide every resident with access to parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities and improve quality of life through affordable, inclusive and accessible programming and recreational facilities	Continue to offer a wide range of programming in all four urban centres and continue to promote current sport facilities to reach optimal usage and limit downtime	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Continued promotions of programs and facilities. New part-time program staff position to increase and enhance programming in all four centres. Expanded virtual programming throughout COVID-19 to keep residents active.
	Explore the potential for Town-facilitated sports leagues	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Exploring options to have Town-administered leagues to fill facility down time, with potential to implement in 2022.
	Maintain High Five accreditation, which sets out principles and goals for youth programming, throughout 2021	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Maintained High Five accreditation in 2021. Recreation and Culture division continues to adhere to standards for programs and best practices for additional staff training (eg. anti-bullying).
Expand our active transportation network, including multi-use paths and trails	Optimize active infrastructure investment by continuing to work with CWATS to connect the entire municipality	<div></div>	Infrastructure Services & Development Services	Ongoing	Continuing coordination between departments to plan locations and timelines. Ongoing partnership with CWATS, including installation of bike repair stations and hosting of cycling events and programs. Partnered with ERCA and County on Greenway crossing in Harrow.
	Evaluate active transportation gaps in urban centres to develop a plan to provide trails to connect neighbourhoods	<div></div>	Development Services & Community Services	Ongoing	Potential role in community engagement to assess gaps. Continued coordination with Development and Infrastructure teams on plans to connect neighbourhoods with new trails in residential developments. New Development Standards Manual to include AT considerations.
	Implement the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan recommendation to hard surface all trails in urban centres	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Majority of current trails are now hard surfaced. Funding currently identified in budget and four year forecast to expand hard surfaced trails.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



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.

	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Conduct a review of recreation facilities	Identify potential for refurbishment of aging facilities	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	2015 Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan identified gaps in facilities. Continuing to seek grant funding for facility refurbishments.
	Develop business plans for capital and operating costs on potential new recreation facilities to show annual impact on Town budgets	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Creating business plans for any new capital facility to show annual operating costs and true cost impact.
	Continue to develop Heritage Park to become a destination within Essex Centre	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Adding amenities annually in line with the Essex Streetscape plan. New BIA Pavilion constructed with future capital plans for power, washrooms, and amphitheater. Improvements will also be undertaken during Essex Streetscape project.
	Implement Master Plan recommendation on sport field shortage in Essex Centre by creating a strategy to develop the Essex Centre Sport fields	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Continuing to seek grant funding for sports fields. Plans completed with options to phase in development, if required. Meeting and communications ongoing with all current user groups on phase-in approach and fundraising requirements.
	Make sustainable choices to minimize our environmental footprint	<div></div>	Community Services	Ongoing	Continuing to seek energy saving equipment to minimize carbon footprint. Implementation of Climate Change Adaptation Plan is ongoing in consultation with internal staff and external stakeholders.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



HEALTHY

Financial and Economic Stewardship

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

100%

Completed or Ongoing

	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Maintain financial sustainability and manage the Town's financial reserves	Manage appropriate levels of debt	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Completed & Ongoing	Reviewing debt annually and as part of the five year financial plan and four year forecast. Additional planning is required for debt that is not related directly to the municipality (eg. drainage).
	Investigate new revenue sources to maintain affordability and competitiveness while attracting investment	<div><div></div></div>	Office of the CAO & Development Services	Ongoing	Recently completed fee study. Continued efforts to look at new programming or facility use to generate revenue. Ongoing annual reviews of user fees for Parks, Facilities, & Fire Services.
	Explore opportunities to diversify the municipality's economy	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Office of the CAO	Completed and Ongoing	Ongoing promotion of Town as tourism destination as well as business attraction, business retention and business expansion initiatives. Launched large development financing strategy in 2021.
	Formalize a Reserve Management Plan	<div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Reserves are reviewed annually as part of budget and forecast process. Working towards a separate reserve management plan in 2021.
Invest in sustainable infrastructure and assets	Update the Asset Management Plan at least every five years to maintain relevance and reliability for future financial planning of all Town assets	<div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services & Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Infrastructure and Corporate Services continuing to cooperate on plan updates. Staff attended joint workshop on AMPs for roads. More condition assessments needed for underground infrastructure and other asset gaps.
Increase long-term financial planning processes	Expand the current five-year financial plan to ten years for capital and include the plan in the forecast portion of the annual budget	<div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Expanding budget timelines and ongoing interdepartmental cooperation to plan further in advance. Corporate Services assisting other departments to aid long-term planning.
Ensure the Town is a destination of choice to newcomers and investors	Promote the new development charge regime to external investors	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services	Completed & Ongoing	Continued promotion of DCs in tandem with other incentives (eg. CIPs). Recently completed Development Charges study including external consultation and notification. New by-law posted to website, media release, and shared with developers.
	Ensure services are efficient and tax increases are affordable	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Corporate Services	Completed & Ongoing	Zero per cent tax increase in 2021. Continuing review of levels of service to ensure efficiency and alignment with strategic priorities.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



Vibrant Growth and Development

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



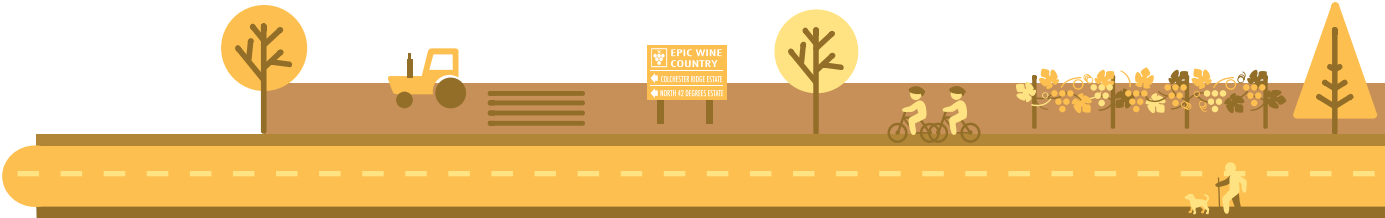
	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Provide for diverse, development-ready opportunities	Review affordable housing strategies and strengthen existing policies	<div></div>	Development Services	Ongoing	Updating of Zoning By-law to permit detached Secondary Dwelling Units in Residential and Agricultural Zoning Districts. Completed evaluation of infill residential opportunities. Updating Official Plan to incorporate stronger policies to provide for a greater range of affordable housing options.
	Develop an industrial and commercial development plan for the Highway 3 Corridor	<div></div>	Development Services & Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Engagement and discussions ongoing with Invest WindsorEssex and local developers. Ongoing coordination with Infrastructure Services for long-term servicing plans. Amendments to area to be considered during Official Plan review.
	Review policies to create development-ready areas	<div></div>	Development Services	Ongoing	Updating Colchester South Secondary Plan Area and Colchester rezoning. Review and update of Official Plan to commence in 2021.
	Develop partnerships with utilities to provide serviceable lands	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Completed and Ongoing	Continuing to work with utilities to strengthen existing partnerships. Successfully engaged MTO in Highway 3 project to mitigate utility impacts and to ensure Town's infrastructure needs are met.
	Emphasize the agricultural economy	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services	Completed and Ongoing	Successfully developed the Agritourism Development Strategy in early 2021, with implementation ongoing
Support small businesses, while investing in revitalization and beautification	Review and build upon the Community Improvement Plans (CIP)	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services	Completed and Ongoing	Fully reviewed CIPs in 2019 and implemented changes to expand funding eligibility for alternative types of accommodations. Continued promotion of CIP to local business owners and developers prior to expiry in Harrow and Essex in 2021. Continued focus will be on County Road 50 for on-farm diversified uses and agri-tourism developments.
	Develop a small business retention and attraction program	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services	Completed and Ongoing	Developed and implemented the "Join Us in Essex" campaign with continued promotions to market Essex as an attractive place to open a business. Development of a new and updated small business retention and attraction program is planned for 2022.
	Implement aesthetic and streetscaping improvement plans for urban centres	<div></div>	Infrastructure Services	Ongoing	Harrow Streetscape construction ongoing. Essex Centre Streetscape construction to start in 2022.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



Vibrant Growth and Development

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

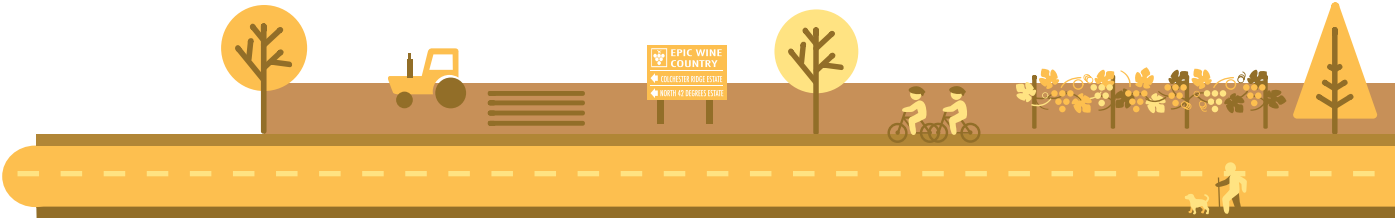
	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Promote the Town as a premier tourism destination	Develop a comprehensive tourism strategy	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services & Office of the CAO	To Be Started and Ongoing	Budget funding to be considered in 2022 for comprehensive tourism strategy. Roll out of 2021 tourism promotions has begun, including new video and print advertisements.
	Develop agri- and eco-tourism offerings	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services	Ongoing	Partnered with ERCA to build the Town of Essex Tourism Hub at the John R. Park Homestead. Continued cooperation with partners and stakeholders (eg. Explore the Shore, EPIC, TWEPI, and SWOTC. Ongoing implementation of agri-tourism strategy.
Improve connectivity between neighbourhoods	Continue to work with partners to enhance regional transit	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Worked with Leamington and Windsor Transit to establish transit stop on the Leamington to Windsor transit line. Ongoing discussions with local partners on expansion of regional transit.
	Develop and implement a wayfinding signage strategy	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Development Services, Community Services, and Infrastructure Services	Completed and Ongoing	Implemented rural wayfinding signs in Colchester, and McGregor. Harrow and Essex Centre signage to be included in streetscape projects. New park signage also installed throughout municipality.
	Review Town-owned properties and develop a surplus property plan	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Office of the CAO	Ongoing	Collection of data on all Town-owned property is currently ongoing. Filtering information to consider classification and legal implications. Alley closing policy drafted. Declaration of surplus property by-law under review.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



VIBRANT

Citizen and Customer Experience

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



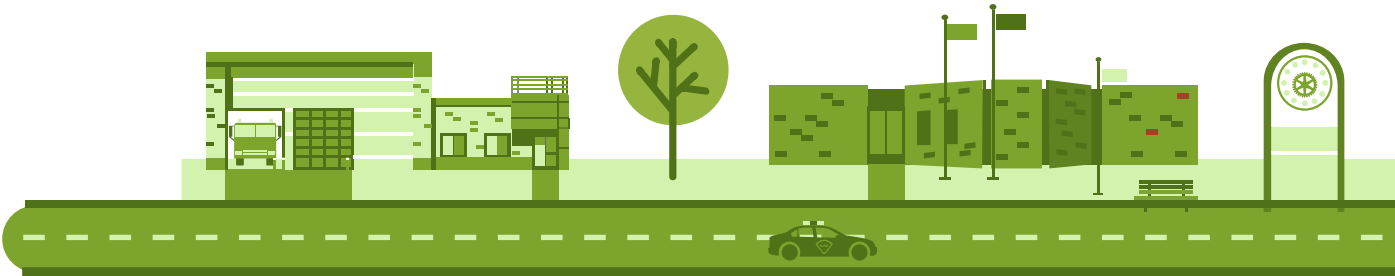
	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Improve the flow of information and delivery of services to citizens and customers	Improve service delivery with customer service kiosks hosted at Town facilities		Community Services	Ongoing	Business case for customer service kiosk to be provided to Council in Q3 2021. Promotion of new kiosk(s) to be conducted in conjunction with Communications.
	Review brick and mortar facilities and their capacity to provide high quality customer experience		Community Services	Ongoing	Completed review of Town Hall and Gesto Offices and identified options to consolidate services into one facility with subsequent business plan for using funds on facilities or renovations. Federal/provincial grant funding received for customer service improvements at Town Hall and Essex Recreation Complex.
	Utilize digital and web-based technology to improved access to information and increase citizen knowledge of Town programs and services		Office of the CAO	Ongoing	Expanded use of virtual tools for recreation and culture programming as well as information campaigns. Launched online virtual tours for Heritage Week, with potential to expand to other facilities. Continued use of video content to supplement digital and print promotions (eg. short-term rental process). Currently implementing electronic building permit and inspection platform.
	Create a single repository for online services (e-Service Hub)		Office of the CAO & Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Online Services hub has been established during pandemic at essex.ca/Online Services. Continued consideration of user experience and addition of new online services.
	Implement a Best Practices manual for gathering public feedback		Office of the CAO	In Progress	Ongoing work to standardize digital forms to capture relevant information and ensure positive user experience. Formalization of standards needed to ensure corporate-wide adherence to standards.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



EXPERIENCE

Citizen and Customer Experience

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

	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Develop a comprehensive customer and citizen service policy	Incorporate citizen and customer feedback to improve service policies and procedures	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Office of the CAO and Community Services	Completed and Ongoing	Implemented EssexWorks platform to accept citizen submissions and update when items are addressed. Data on response times and issues provided to Council quarterly and incorporated/analyzed for operational planning.
	Review Customer Relationship Management software to provide central way to effectively address issues	<div><div></div></div>	N/A	To Be Started	Software costs to be considered in 2022 budget process.
Mitigate the impact of geographic distance on civic participation	Develop policy/procedure for hosting public meetings in accessible locations for all citizens	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	N/A	In Progress and To Be Started	Pandemic limited ability to host in-person community meetings. Prior to pandemic, initial research had been conducted on policy options for meeting location protocols and procedures. Item to be rolled into other standardization of public feedback procedures and processes.
	Provide a variety of mechanisms for citizens to give feedback on Council agenda items	<div><div></div></div>	Office of the CAO	In Progress	Ongoing support of all departments to implement new and streamlined feedback options for citizens. Includes roll out of multimedia content and implementation of survey standards.

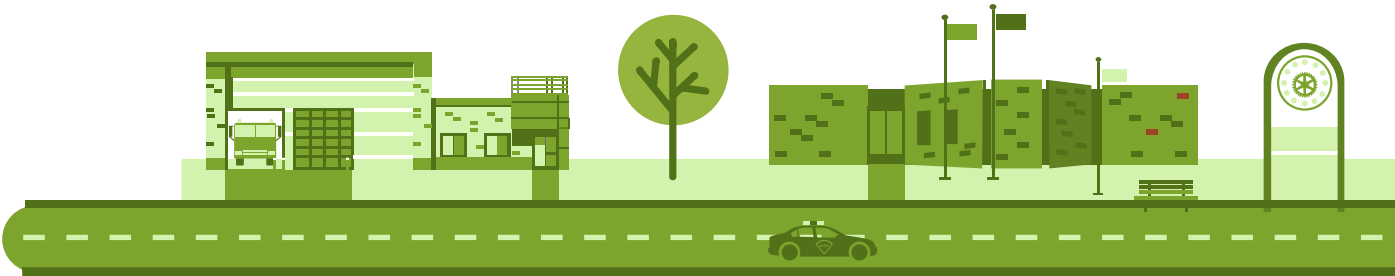
Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

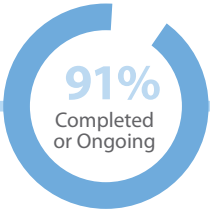
Completed

EXPERIENCE



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 fact of unanticipated changes or disruptions.



	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Increase organizational capacity by developing staff	Create a formal staffing plan to include succession planning and cross-training		Corporate Services	Ongoing	Continuing to promote internal training for staff who wish to be promoted in the organization. Considering attrition as an opportunity to cross train in divisions and departments.
	Implement a Performance Management System which provides concrete goals for staff to develop in their positions		Corporate Services	Completed and Ongoing	Performance Management System rolled out in 2020. Currently finalizing 2021-22 phase to identify individual strategic goals and professional development opportunities.
	Review and formalize staff training and education policies		Office of the CAO & Corporate Services	To Be Started	Review and formalization of staff training and education policy has been included in Human Resource division's 2021-22 work plan.
	Maintain annual staff performance evaluations to identify areas of improvement		Corporate Services	Completed and Ongoing	Prior performance evaluation regime has been incorporated into Performance Management System.
	Assess the potential for flexible work arrangements to enhance access to services for citizens and improve work conditions for staff		Corporate Services & Office of the CAO	Ongoing	Work from home implemented where possible during pandemic while ensuring limited impact on citizen service. Considering potential for extending work from home and flexible work arrangements for post-pandemic operations.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



OWNERS
RESILIENT

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 fact of unanticipated changes or disruptions.

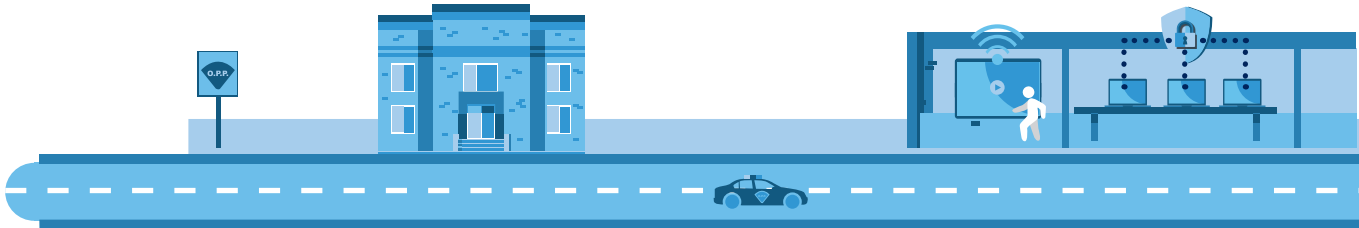
	Goals	Status	Corporate Lead	Anticipated Timeline	Details
Enhance internal and external access to corporate records and documents	Development of a Records Management Plan and update policies, procedures, and staffing resources related to corporate recordkeeping	<div></div>	Office of the CAO	Ongoing	New Records Retention By-law has been drafted. Records Management Manual in development. Clerks Division currently attending a County-wide Records Management collaboration group. Ongoing research into feasibility and budget impacts of records management system.
	Expand the use of Laserfiche to convert physical records to digital formats	<div></div>	Office of the CAO	Ongoing	Best practices policy has been drafted, based on continuing consultation with County-wide Records Management collaboration group.
	Implement a corporate paper reduction plan	<div></div>	Office of the CAO & Development Services	Ongoing	Corporate paper reduction identified in Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Implementation ongoing.
Explore efficiencies in service delivery by working with partners and stakeholders	Initiate a service review with Essex County and neighbouring municipalities	<div></div>	Office of the CAO	Complete	Service and organizational review completed and presented to Council in 2020 as part of municipal modernization grant funding.
	Explore other opportunities to reduce service duplication and inefficiencies	<div></div>	Office of the CAO	Completed and Ongoing	Working with County and partners on regional projects (eg. compost, road rationalization, garbage collection). Working with region and Union Water Supply System on governance. Working with Amherstburg on infrastructure (water and sewage) partnership opportunities.
	Review the current policing strategy	<div></div>	Office of the CAO	Ongoing	Completed Community Policing Survey in 2020. Continuing to communicate with local OPP administration and the Police Services Board to identify opportunities to improve local policing. Awaiting provincial decision regarding separation of boards.

Legend

To Be Started

Ongoing

Completed



OWNERS
RESILIENT