



MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH PERTH CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026

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Introduction

With a new Council term underway and a shifting community landscape since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the time was right for the Municipality of North Perth to update their municipal corporate strategic plan. The following report details the strategy update process, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats environmental scan, and the updated municipal strategic plan designed to guide North Perth through the current Council term and into the next one.

The purpose of the strategy update was to reevaluate North Perth's previous corporate strategic plan based on community, staff, and Council consultation and provide the municipality with renewed focus and vision on current and future strategic priority areas. North Perth has experienced a number of changes since the completion of the last strategic plan, most notably, significant growth. Between 2016 and 2021 the population grew by an astounding 18%. Since undertaking the last corporate strategic plan, the municipality has undertaken a number of studies and strategies that were reviewed and considered to assist with updating their strategy, including the:

- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (County Wide) (2021-2024)
- Huron Perth Ag Science Centre Feasibility Project (2020)
- North Perth Agricultural Excellence Project Report (2022)
- North Perth Asset Management Plan (2022)
- Northeast Master Plan: Environmental Study (2020)

The update to North Perth's strategic plan was guided by in-depth consultation with the community, staff, and Council via a community survey, and community, staff, and Council workshops. Consultation activities sought to identify key themes of interest to the municipality, undertake a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats assessment, and assess the relevance and applicability of goals, priorities, and actions from the previous strategy going forward.

Consultation methods will involve surveys, facilitated workshop discussions, and drop-in style public consultation to allow for a diverse group of residents, businesses, partners, stakeholders, and staff to provide insight into the best opportunities and mechanisms to support a thriving North Perth. The following document summarizes key data points from consultation with the community and staff in the Municipality of North Perth.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The SWOT assessment was derived from the summary of all data collected.

Strengths

As a community, North Perth was noted as having strong recreation and childcare programs, good parks, and many other community assets such as schools and churches. The agricultural

sector is a key economic driver, and the community still retains a small town feel, with strong morals and strong community and service clubs. The Municipality has experienced increasing growth and diversity, which has been accompanied by new businesses locating or evolving and expanding within the community.

As a municipality, North Perth was noted as being innovative, striving for increased efficiency, strong collaboration between its internal departments, good customer service, and good public engagement and connection.

Weaknesses

While North Perth was considered a desirable community to live and work in, a number of areas that could be improved upon were noted through the consultation. From a community perspective, North Perth was challenged with access to a number of key amenities such as affordable housing, health care, childcare, transportation, good internet and cell connectivity, and a meaningful mix of entertainment, services, and resources. The pace of growth was identified as a concern within the community, and it was noted that the Municipality was experiencing increases in traffic issues, crime, discrimination, and homelessness. Consideration should also be given to enhancing the vibrancy of downtown, ensuring equal service provision across the community, and ensuring employers are able to find the labour they require, all which remain challenges.

Opportunities

There are many opportunities for North Perth to consider as their community grows and needs continue to shift. A key priority that was noted was the need to undertake growth in a sustainable manner. This includes preparation to remain sustainable from a municipal perspective, such as enhancing employee attraction and retention practices, planning for staff and fiscal needs responsibly, and exploring opportunities to improve processes, build new partnerships, and find efficiencies. This also includes positioning the community to be ready for growth, such as diversifying business and employment opportunities, creating a more inclusive, equitable, and connected community, improving housing and childcare options, supporting efforts to increase local health care access, and enhancing public spaces. The community also has exciting projects on the go, like the Set7 skills training centre and the proposed development of the Huron Perth Agriculture Science Centre.

Threats

The implementation of this strategy will always be impacted by external forces that can slow down, or as we saw with COVID-19, even halt the pursuit of the goals and vision. A number of threats were identified from the consultation including competition for staff, high cost of living, changing provincial or federal funding models and regulations, available space to grow, changing generational dynamics, and the increase levels of divisive and misleading information available, particularly through social media.

Updated Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The implementation of the new North Perth Corporate Strategic Plan will be guided by aspirational community and corporate values, as well as a vision. The Strategy contains goals, priorities, suggested actions, and suggested performance indicators to enable the municipality to monitor its impacts. All elements of the strategy are detailed below.

Community Values

Supportive and Friendly: We are a friendly, close, and welcoming community where people care to take the time to get involved and interact.

Welcoming: We are a community that feels like home; where it is easy to build and sustain long-term relationships and friendships.

Contributing: We are supported with vibrant groups and service clubs that are actively involved in shaping and supporting the community.

Progressive: We are a community that is innovative, creative, visionary and forward-thinking. We embrace growth and are welcoming of the need to change and evolve.

Sustainable: We are a responsible community that is environmentally conscious and recognizes the need for sustainability in our actions.

Thriving: We are a vibrant community where it is possible to build a business and thrive in a career.

Safe: We are a safe and clean community where people are comfortable. We are a great place to raise kids and build a family.

Well-Located: We are ideally situated near other urban centres. We are a hub between cities and cottage country.

Corporate Values

Efficient: We have a progressive and well-run corporation that effectively supports the municipality.

Fiscally Responsible: We are a financially stable and cost-effective municipality that manages its finances well.

Responsive: We have capable, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff who care about the community that they serve.

Service-Oriented: We provide effective and well-run services and great customer service.

Progressive: We are innovative, progressive and value planning and forward thinking in evaluating opportunities and delivering projects.

Collaborative: We recognize the value of collaboration and communication. We are open to feedback, seek input from others and are transparent in our communications.

Supportive: We maintain a positive and collaborative work environment where people support each other and recognize the value of teamwork.

Welcoming: We have friendly, dedicated, and enthusiastic staff that enjoy working with each other and interacting with the public.

Employer of Choice: We are a desirable place to work, easily attracting new employees and retaining our existing ones.

Communication: We effectively and transparently communicate and engage with the public, partners, and internally.

Vision

North Perth is a sustainable, inclusive, innovative, and progressive municipality that balances vibrant communities offering diverse housing options, with agricultural heritage and rural character, and is a brilliant place to do business. We are a global leader in agriculture and manufacturing and incorporate and encourage environmental practices that mitigate and address the impacts of climate change. The Municipality is a safe and welcoming place for people of all ages.

Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: Service Effectiveness

Goal 2: Corporate Sustainability

Goal 3: Growth and Economic Development

Goal 4: Community Planning and Development

Goal 1: Service Effectiveness

What this means:

North Perth effectively and efficiently delivers services to residents. This is supported by clear communication with public and partners on expectations.

What we heard:

Ensuring that the municipality effectively and efficiently delivers services is of critical importance. In recent years the municipality began a digital transformation, embracing new technology to assist with operations. With the significant growth that is expected to continue it is essential that the municipality play an active role in planning and resourcing current and future service delivery needs. It was noted that service levels have been increasing and service expectations are changing at the same time provincial downloading is taking place. Opportunities to consider demographic data when determining service levels could help focus on areas of greater need or identify unique needs. Lastly it was noted that the communication and transparency is critical towards the public, and multiple methods of communication need to be considered to ensure those who are not comfortable with the online environment can still access and engage with the Municipality.

Priority 1.1 Services Are Delivered Efficiently, Cost Effectively, and Sustainably

Actions:

- Services and service delivery considers demographic data in how best to meet the needs of the community
- Technology is considered when considering new ways to deliver or enhance services for maximum efficiency and effectiveness
- Explore opportunities to optimize and recover costs in the delivery of committed services
- Enhance the ability for the public to access services online, while ensuring those less digitally inclined residents can engage and access information in a meaningful way
- Maintain and expand partnerships to achieve and ensure efficient and effective delivery of services
- Ensure municipal capacity and resourcing responds to increasing service needs as a result of growth

Priority 1.2 There Is A Clear Definition Of Services And Service Levels Delivered To The Community

Actions:

- Clarify and define services and service levels provided by the municipality
- Proactively communicate committed services and service levels to new and existing residents
- Establish a customer service charter for response times and to guide interactions with the public

Suggested Performance Indicators:

- Service delivery resourcing (Cost of delivery, Staffing time required, Partnership contributions)
- Resident satisfaction (surveys, # of complaints)
- Front line staff satisfaction

Goal 2: Corporate Sustainability

What does this mean:

North Perth maintains sustainable operations through effective staff attraction and retention, planning and maintenance of infrastructure, and adoption of current technology and innovation to enhance operations.

What we heard:

Staff are considered the Municipality's most crucial resource and competition has never been fiercer to attract and retain them. We want to be a leader in creating an environment that allows staff to contribute and thrive, ensuring that they feel valued and want to stay for years to come. North Perth also needs to ensure that we are strategically maintaining and investing in our infrastructure assets to keep up with service needs. To cut costs and improve services there are opportunities to explore new innovative processes and technology. Preparing for all these elements will require a forward-thinking approach that obtains and allocates the needed resources in a fiscally responsible manner.

Priority 2.1 North Perth Staff Are Engaged, Have the Tools and Knowledge to be Successful, and Feel Valued

Actions:

- Continue implementation of the HR strategy and staffing plan to sustain service levels
- Ensure staffing levels and skillsets align with the needs of increasing service delivery and growth
- Develop and implement a succession plan for the municipality
- Explore ways to maximize work-life balance for staff
- Establish more regular opportunities for staff to connect with other staff, management, Council, and the community
- Deliver training and support to support front line staff as the type and nature of public interactions changes
- Regularly connect with staff to ensure they feel valued and respected

Priority 2.2 Municipal Infrastructure Is Robust And Sustainable

Actions:

- Implement asset management plan and financial plan
- Assess and evolve municipal facilities to efficiently deliver municipal services
- Undertake a data collection and modelling exercise to strategically map out community needs into the future and create a plan to prepare appropriately

Priority 2.3 Innovative Solutions and Decision-Making Support High-Quality, Efficient And Effective Service Delivery

Actions:

- Continue to implement an information technology master plan
- Investigate and invest in technology solutions to more effectively and efficiently support administration, services, and service delivery within the municipality
- Explore new and innovative solutions to on-going and upcoming municipal challenges and opportunities to enhance service effectiveness and efficiency
- Ensure North Perth is prepared for future emergencies with an updated emergency management plan incorporating new best practices

Suggested Performance Indicators:

- Staff retention, staff satisfaction, staffing levels meet service delivery needs
- Cost/capacity/time-saved from innovative decision-making
- Infrastructure length of life (expected vs actual)
- Cost/capacity of infrastructure and facility development and maintenance (expected vs actual)

Goal 3: Growth and Economic Development

What this means:

North Perth businesses are innovative and have the resources they require to grow, and residents have access to the retail and services they require.

What we heard:

The previous term of Council made meaningful headway under the growth and economic development goal, including through the establishment of the Set7 skills development centre and the completion of the Agriculture Excellence Project. Residents noted that they were interested in more diverse retail, service, and, in particular entertainment options. However, labour availability and skill remain a barrier to growth and sustainability for the business community. Other key remaining challenges noted from the consultation included a lack of affordable and available housing and childcare, access to health care and physician/health care recruitment, access to public transit, and traffic congestion.

Priority 3.1 Employers Have Access To A Skilled Workforce

Actions:

- Develop, attract and retain a skilled labour pool
- Explore opportunities to expand SET7 programming and enable more education and training to take place directly in North Perth
- Increase percentage of people that both live and work in North Perth
- Encourage collaboration between employers and educational institutions
- Promote availability of local educational opportunities
- Support the growth of cooperative, apprenticeship and mentoring opportunities
- Develop solutions to childcare space and attainable housing shortages

Priority 3.2 Establish and Promote North Perth as a Leader In Agricultural Sector Productivity and Innovation In Ontario

Actions:

- Actively work to preserve and sustain productive agricultural lands
- Implement the North Perth Agricultural Excellence Project recommendations
- Promote development of on-farm diversification and farm-gate sales
- Encourage transition of on-farm diversified activities to commercial and industrial properties as they succeed and grow
- Explore opportunities to support and leverage the Agricultural Science Centre to enhance branding and programming where it can support the agricultural sector

Priority 3.3 North Perth Has Robust, Diverse, and Innovative Commercial and Industrial Sectors That Deliver The Services and Employment Residents Require

Actions:

- Promote the attraction and retention of diverse but complementary commercial and industrial businesses
- Attract commercial and service businesses to address existing service gaps in the community and expand the diversity of options available to residents, in particular restaurants, retail, and entertainment
- Create a climate that supports growth of entrepreneurial start-ups in North Perth

Suggested Performance Indicators:

- Number of businesses (considering external economic factors)
- Number of new businesses from targeted sectors
- Employer satisfaction
- Employers are indicating their labour needs are being met
- Number of agriculture-related businesses
- Acres of agricultural land
- Percentage of agricultural land in production

Goal 4: Community Planning and Development

What this means:

North Perth grows at a sustainable pace and has the resources and assets required to offer residents a high quality of life and place.

What we heard:

Sustainable growth, housing, transportation, health care, and diversity and inclusivity must remain a key consideration for community planning and development activities. Development of recreational and public assets and space should take an inclusive approach to ensuring the needs of residents of all ages are met, considering youth and seniors. Climate change remains a consideration and concern as to the impact on future municipal activities.

Priority 4.1 North Perth Grows At A Sustainable and Responsible Pace

Actions:

- Integrate the outcomes of the adoption of the Perth County Official Plan
- Update and implement a master growth plan for the municipality
- Establish and sustain a high quality of life through a balance of urban and rural amenities for the community
- Support and welcome newcomers to North Perth
- Future growth planning maximizes protection of agricultural lands
- Future growth planning ensures environmental impacts and the preservation of environmental integrity are considered
- Residents of all ages are engaged in decision-making on changes, challenges, opportunities, and growth in the community

Priority 4.2 North Perth Plays An Active Role In Creating Diverse Housing Options And Improving Housing Density

Actions:

- Investigate and determine current and future housing needs to support effective community planning
- Promote and encourage a range of housing options and densities in new developments
- Establish policies that encourage and incent development of attainable housing and increases housing density in the municipality
- Lead the development of diverse housing options for residents of all demographic groups. These should consider the development of a complete cluster of services, amenities, and connections to the broader community (i.e. via active transportation)

Priority 4.3 North Perth Is Easy To Move Around And There Are Diverse Transportation Options

Actions:

- Implement the Transportation Master Plan
- Establish an alternative transportation corridor for commercial truck traffic
- Collaborate with the County to explore next steps in sustainability for PC Connect or future alternative models
- Support the development of flexible transportation options throughout southwestern Ontario
- Connect and promote an active transportation system that supports connections between housing, employment, services, and communities through North Perth

Priority 4.4 North Perth Is A Diverse And Inclusive Community

Actions:

- Broadly promote and support diversity in the community
- Promote and ensure community programs are relevant to residents with diverse needs
- Utilize the DEI Advisory Committee to pursue initiatives that establish North Perth as a diverse, friendly, welcoming, inclusive, and equitable community
- Encourage and embrace change and innovation in the community and the municipality

Priority 4.5: North Perth Offers a High Quality of Life for Residents Of All Ages

Actions:

- Preserve, enhance, and promote vibrant and attractive community spaces and downtowns
- Promote, enhance and explore the development of destination amenities, trails, and parks
- Support and promote North Perth as a Community of Character
- Work with partner organizations to develop and implement a volunteer strategy to maintain volunteerism and community participation
- Support the development of a community hub for social services
- Expand and enhance availability of early childhood development programs within North Perth
- Explore opportunities to enhance programming and activities for youth, including beyond sports programming
- Work with providers to improve cell phone and internet connectivity

Priority 4.6 North Perth Offers Robust Recreational Facilities And Programming To Residents

Actions:

- Develop facilities that support multiple uses and allow them to evolve and be repurposed as the community evolves
- Development of new facilities and programming considers demographic data and targets programming to the most relevant demographics, in particular seniors and youth
- Develop and support events and activities throughout the municipality
- Ensure accessibility and AODA compliance of all municipal facilities

Priority 4.7 North Perth is a Leader in Mitigating and Adapting to the Challenges of Climate Change

Actions:

- Promote greenhouse gas reduction by the community and the municipality
- Promote recycling, waste diversion and reduction of resource consumption by residents and businesses
- Actively make choices that reduce the municipality's environmental footprint, and create opportunities for residents to do the same
- A climate lens is applied to municipal decision making

Priority 4.8 North Perth Plays An Active Role In Health Care Recruitment And Improving Local Health Care Access

Actions:

- Actively position North Perth as a community willing to be a leader in innovating new approaches to health care and piloting new programs
- Advocate with provincial leaders on key rural health care issues
- Support the activities of the Physician Recruitment Committee
- Promote North Perth as a community of choice for health care professionals
- Work with the Listowel Wingham Hospital Alliance, Listowel-Wingham and Area Family Health Team, and other community groups/organizations on health care issues, solutions, and initiatives

Suggested Performance Indicators:

- Increase in waste diversion
- Environmental footprint is reduced
- Acres of agricultural land
- Engagement in consultation across age groups
- Increase in different types of housing options from single family homes

- Decrease in average home and rental cost
- Percentage of cell and high-speed internet connectivity in municipality
- Distance travelled by residents to access key services and amenities
- Participation in recreation activities across demographics
- Number of health care professionals recruited