

## **Council Vision and Strategic Priorities for the Next Four Years and Beyond**

Council met for a day long session to develop a list of strategic priorities that it feels represents the principal opportunities facing the Town of Windsor and for which it is committed to achieving. In pursuing these strategic directions Council understands that it still has an obligation to conduct the business of the Town and to maintain the day to day services. The roads will be fixed and the snow removed and the garbage will be picked up. But Council also understands that it is not the day to day business that will lead to the future prosperity of Windsor but rather success in achieving the stated strategic priorities. Council, too, recognizes that it cannot achieve all of this alone and must work cooperatively with many stakeholders including the citizens of Windsor. These strategic priorities present a new opportunity for the citizens of Windsor to be truly co-architects on their future and build towards a new and vibrant Windsor; a place that people will want to visit and live and a place where local enterprise and new business can thrive. In essence the strategic priorities represents a new spirit in which there is room for all to participate.

For Council to be effective stewards of the strategic plan, it will have to operate somewhat differently. As in the past there will be times where council will be concerned primarily with direct service delivery. However there will also be times when the role of Council will be to facilitate the conversation, to delegate or enable the community, to bring together relevant stakeholders, to develop strategic partnerships, to lobby for changes in policy or simply to be a cheerleader. At all times, Council will be mindful of the trust that has been placed in them by the citizens of Windsor and will do all it can to create a bright future for all. This strategic plan is the first step in this commitment.

These strategic priorities will not just be words on paper but will inform all decisions within the Town. Whether an expenditure or a program or a service is appropriate will now be judged against the degree to which it helps to achieve Council's strategic goals. It will inform such things as the budget, services, programs and relationships.

Finally, all good plans are dynamic; that is they evolve as they incorporate learning from experience and unfolding events. This will be true of this plan as well and so it must be seen as a living and breathing document

### **Strategic Priorities**

Council recognizes that there are many initiatives that could all be important but the strategic priorities that best represented what they need to do to make Windsor the best little town anywhere in North America during their mandate were the following five strategies:

1. Establishing the best governance structure to achieve Councils goals
2. Vibrant Downtown and Waterfront including Fort Edward Lands
3. An Encompassing Communications Strategy

4. Diverse and Welcoming Community
5. Greater Emphasis on Arts, Culture & Recreation
6. Partner and Develop our Community Fibre Network
7. Competitive Tax Structure

### **Establishing the Best Governance Structure to Achieve Council Goals**

Council recognizes that governance is an important ingredient for success. It is therefore committed to improving the governance model which includes its relationship with other governments, citizens and stakeholders. The council also recognizes that it must conduct its own affairs in a way that demonstrates best practices.

- Continue conversations with West Hants and other municipalities to determine how we can best work together
- Recognize that in order to address the issues that will bring prosperity to Windsor that Council must engage and work cooperatively with a variety of stakeholders
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with neighbouring municipalities to determine mutual interests and to develop coordinated strategies that will be of benefit to all.
- An ongoing commitment to citizen engagement that recognizes and respects citizens as an important part of the decision making process.
- A belief that the Town council and staff must model the very behaviour that it expects of others
- A commitment to making decisions on the basis of the best available evidence to ensure that its decisions truly meet the long term needs of Windsor.

### **Vibrant Downtown and Waterfront Including Fort Edward Lands**

Council believes that a revitalized downtown is a key ingredient towards establishing the economic success of Windsor. The Fort Edward Lands provide a truly unique and perhaps unparalleled opportunity to bring focus to Windsor by an international community. Additionally the positioning of Windsor as the gateway Town to the valley and its proximity to the largest population in Atlantic Canada is an advantage that should not be overlooked.

- Bill 177 will be used to make amendments to the MPS so we can address brownfields and downtown commercial properties needing major renovations
- Planning (MPS) document to be reviewed for downtown centre and waterfront changes
- Citizen engagement campaign to take ownership for the town's cleanliness, and having all citizens engaged in helping the Town
- Making property owners accountable for deserted and abandoned properties through appropriate taxation models (1% surtax)
- Rolling out the Mayors Task Force on Revitalization of Downtown and the Waterfront
- Operationalize recommendations coming out of the studies on the downtown and waterfront and Mayors Task Force on the Arts & Culture
- Developing a farmers market worthy of a little town in partnership with West Hants and local farmers
- Develop plans for Jewish League monument / history

### **An Encompassing Communications Strategy**

The communications strategy will have two principal themes. The first will focus on improving communications within the Town so that residents will have multiple avenues for learning about the day to day goings on, the affairs of the Town including its future plans and how best to get involved and contribute to the future success of the Town. The second will focus on improving communications with those outside the Town. This would include potential businesses and residents, tourists and immigrants.

- Improve the layout, utility and general appeal of the Website
- Align the content of the website with the strategic priorities of the Town
- Partner with other municipalities in developing an overall regional communication strategy
- Recognize the importance of social media in connecting with various population segments
- Attract targeted populations by utilizing different languages on our website and signage
- Re-establish the Mayors newsletter and other information organs
- Develop a consistent branding and signage policy

### **Diverse and Welcoming Community**

Council recognizes that that the future of Windsor depends upon attracting new people and establishing local enterprise. This will require a re population of Windsor that is likely to come from outside to Town and from non traditional sources. Council also recognizes that attracting a population that is diverse in culture, ethnicity and experience will be an important ingredient in establishing the future prosperity of Windsor.

- Becoming a diverse and welcoming community and developing the necessary local supports that will make newcomers feel welcome i.e., a support center for immigrants
- Change the highway and other signage so that immigrant communities will feel welcome. Perhaps include Mandarin and Hebrew
- Examine ways to provide funding support for immigrants moving to Windsor
- Seek the help of churches in partnering with the community to host and support immigrants who could be encouraged to live here and start a business
- Develop a mentoring program for newcomers that will assist with settlement and help to overcome obstacles associated with professional practice, establishing a business and various listening requirements.
- View our seniors as an untapped reservoir of talent, experience and energy.

### **Greater Emphasis on Arts, Culture & Recreation**

Council believes that arts and culture and the associated public spaces contribute greatly to the fabric of our local community. It provides a creative outlet, enhances employment for the sector, helps to make Windsor a more appealing point of destination and compliments other strategic directions such as a farmer's market and immigration

- Implement recommendations from the Mayors Task Force on the Arts & Culture

- Explore a location for the arts community
- Utilizing empty storefront, and modifying it to accommodate artists, a farmer's market, an immigration center, etc

### **Partner and Develop our Community Fiber Technology Asset**

Council believes utilizing the Valley Community Fiber Network (VCFN) can serve to provide short and long term benefits for our region's citizens and local business communities. Further utilized to its potential, the fiber network asset could serve as a foundation to attract new business while driving economic development and technology based employment in our Windsor and West Hants region.

- Identify the short and long-term opportunities to optimize the use of the existing fiber optic network to the advantage of our region, its citizens and our business communities
- Explore market options for expanded technology beyond our current use for deployment in our communities
- Explore opportunities to attract new business and economic development in our region including small / micro businesses as well as cooperative community & educational program
- Utilize our technology asset to support our community's other strategic objectives.

### **Competitive Tax Structure**

Municipalities use property taxation as their primary source of funding to provide services that are requested by their taxpayers. Roughly 80% of municipal revenue in the Town of Windsor is collected through property taxation. The remaining is collected through user fees, permit fees and a portion of equalization payments from the Province. Town Council is cognizant of the fact that tax rates both commercial and residential are high. Council is committed to ensuring that our tax rates are competitive and not a disincentive to growth.

- Do a review of the recent studies on property taxes in Nova Scotia
- Address the value of Bill 177 and its impact on the economy of the Town
- Review the commercial tax rate and its impact on commerce and business in Town