

# Town of Essex Strategic Plan



2016-2018



# Message from the CAO

On behalf of Council and the Town's Senior Management Team, I am pleased to present the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan for the Town of Essex.

This document is the result of a facilitated strategic planning session held in March 2015, followed by a series of information presentations designed to provide Council with background analysis and an assessment of the current realities on the following topics:

- Roles and responsibilities of Council and Administration;
- Economic development;
- Asset management and long-term infrastructure plans;
- Parks, recreation and culture, including Community Services Master Plan update; and
- Financial overview and long-term plan.

By the close of 2015, Administration was able to identify the key issues facing Council and the municipality. These issues are expressed in the Strategic Plan as primary objectives Council wants to achieve during this term. Specific areas of focus that support those strategic objectives have been identified, along with recommended actions.

It is important to note that the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan sets out the high level direction for the municipality during this term of Council. As such, it is intended to guide and inform the development of annual business plans and budgets to assist Council and Administration in achieving results.

We look forward to reporting annually on the results of our Strategic Plan implementation.

Respectfully submitted to Council on March 7, 2016 by

Russ Phillips  
Chief Administrative Officer

# Background

The Town of Essex stretches from the centre of Essex County at Essex Centre to the north shore of Lake Erie. It borders three municipalities: the Town of Amherstburg, the Town of Lakeshore, and the Town of Kingsville.

Providing policy direction is the responsibility of a seven-member Council comprised of a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and five Councillors. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor also serve as members of County Council. The Town's administration is under the overall direction of a Chief Administrative Officer who leads, directs and coordinates departmental staff in developing, implementing and administering the objectives, policies and programs as established and approved by Council. Municipal services are organized as follows:

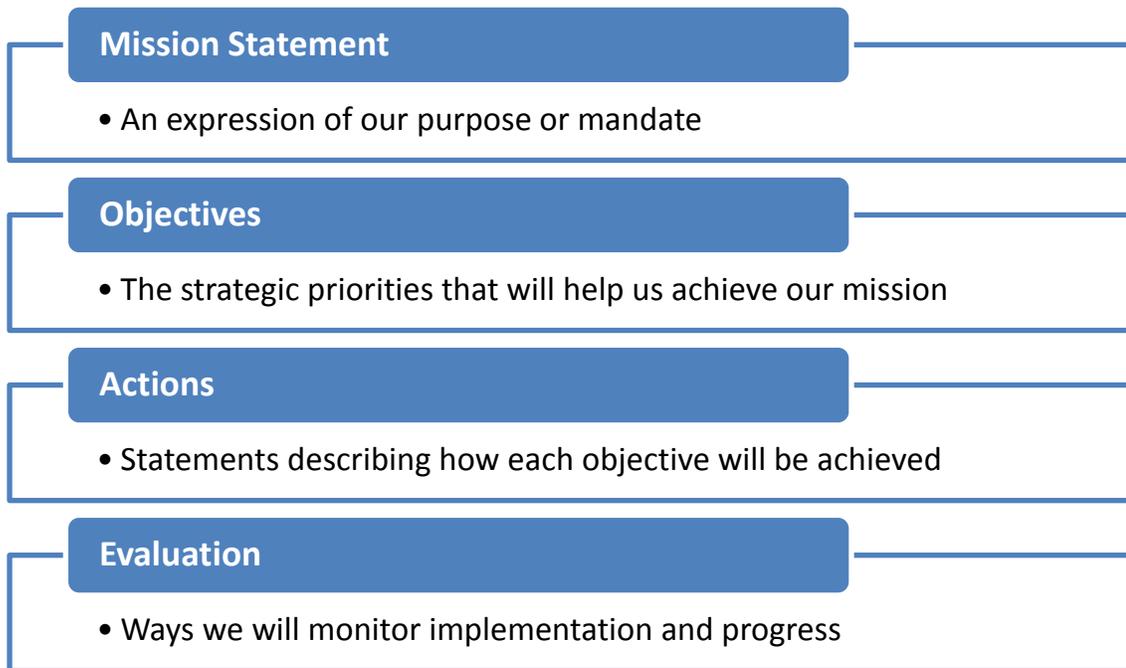
- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
  - Communications
  - Economic Development
  - Human Resources
- Community Services
  - Parks and Facilities
  - Recreation and Culture
- Corporate Services
  - Finance and Business Services
  - Information Technology and Geographical Information Services
  - Legislative Services/Clerk
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Infrastructure and Development Services
  - Capital Works and Infrastructure
  - Drainage
  - Environmental Services
  - Operations
  - Building and By-law Enforcement
  - Planning

The Town of Essex contracts the services of the Ontario Provincial Police for police protection. The policing contract is administered by the Essex Police Services Board.

Other services, including emergency management coordination, land ambulance, libraries, and social services, are coordinated and provided by the County of Essex.

# Components of the Strategic Plan

The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan contains four key elements:



## Mission Statement

The Town of Essex is committed to providing services, facilities and infrastructure to help improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of our communities, and to deliver an outstanding life experience for present and future residents, businesses and visitors.

## Strategic Objectives

Council and Administration have identified 6 primary objectives for 2016-18. The following list is numbered but the numbers do not reflect the priority of each objective.

**1. Enhance communications and community engagement.**

**2. Manage the Town's finances and human resources in a responsible manner.**

**3. Enhance economic development activities through business retention and expansion, attraction of light industrial businesses, and downtown improvements.**

**4. Manage the Town's infrastructure in a responsible and efficient manner.**

**5. Promote healthy and active living through recreational and cultural opportunities.**

**6. Promote a healthy, safe and environmentally conscious community.**

## Strategic Actions

Specific areas of focus that support the 6 strategic objectives are identified below, along with recommended actions. The actions focus on strategic as opposed to routine, day-to-day items and are not listed in any priority.

<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Enhance communications and community engagement</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Communications (Internal and External)</p> <p>Community and Citizen Engagement</p> <p>Collaboration and Teamwork</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify methods and activities to engage citizens and obtain input (e.g. surveys, open houses, meet and greets, walkabouts)</li> <li>• Continue to use appropriate forms of media to inform, educate and communicate with the public</li> <li>• Identify efficiency tools and techniques to enhance internal communication (e.g. meeting manager software, records retention and storage tools, intranet)</li> <li>• Create cross-functional working groups, including internal and external participants, to increase collaborative efforts</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Manage the Town’s finances and human resources in a responsible manner</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Financial stability and predictability</p> <p>Efficient and effective delivery of services</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a five-year financial plan</li> <li>• Create a plan to reduce debt to \$15 million by end of Council term</li> <li>• Establish and manage a plan for reserves that reflects both short and longer term financial objectives</li> <li>• Develop a succession plan that addresses retirements and anticipates staffing needs</li> <li>• Undertake a Service Delivery Review</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 3</b>	<b>Enhance economic development activities through business retention and expansion, attraction of light industrial businesses, and downtown improvements.</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Development ready lands  Community Improvement Plan program uptake  Socio-economic health of the business community  Wayfinding</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an Economic Development Plan addressing business retention and expansion, attraction of light industrial businesses, and downtown improvements</li> <li>• Assemble a blue ribbon panel of community business leaders</li> <li>• Facilitate the rezoning of lands to accommodate light industrial development</li> <li>• Encourage and support the development of industrial parks</li> <li>• Promote Community Improvement Plans, increase uptake and monitor success</li> <li>• Pursue grant opportunities</li> <li>• Implement the first phases of wayfinding signage plan</li> <li>• Strengthen and maintain liaison with the business community, encouraging business retention and expansion and supporting positive developments</li> <li>• Safeguard community viability by ensuring our communities have an appropriate mix of businesses, services, institutions and facilities (Harrow District High School)</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 4</b>	<b>Manage the Town’s infrastructure in a responsible and efficient manner</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Asset management (infrastructure, fleet, facility)</p> <p>Storm water management – urban, rural, municipal drainage</p> <p>Roads maintenance</p> <p>Shared road issues</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward eliminating funding gap for infrastructure replacement and renewal</li> <li>• Pursue grant opportunities</li> <li>• Develop a 5-year roads improvement/maintenance plan</li> <li>• Continue Essex Centre storm water infrastructure improvement projects</li> <li>• Complete storm water management policy/standards review and implement improvements/policies/strategies</li> <li>• Complete sanitary and storm water infrastructure review in Harrow Centre</li> <li>• Create shared road agreements with Amherstburg</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 5</b>	<b>Promote healthy and active living through recreational and cultural opportunities</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Healthy and active community</p> <p>Service delivery and facility management</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Community Services Master Plan, including recreational, cultural and social opportunities for people of all ages</li> <li>• Continue to work towards divestiture of Colchester Harbour</li> <li>• Continue to support and participate in the development of trails</li> <li>• Continue to look for opportunities to develop and promote an age-friendly community with specific attention on engaging youth</li> <li>• Maintain and explore new and creative service delivery methods for programming to all age groups</li> <li>• Maintain current sport and recreation facilities to ensure maximum usage</li> <li>• Continue to explore marketing and sponsorship opportunities to promote facilities</li> <li>• Continue to explore revenue generation opportunities through marketing and sponsorships</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 6</b>	<b>Promote a healthy, safe and environmentally conscious community</b>
<b>Primary Areas of Focus</b>	<p>Waste diversion</p> <p>Water quality</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>Animal welfare</p> <p>By-law enforcement</p>
<b>Actions to Meet this Objective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study and implement waste diversion methods</li> <li>• Reduce harmful effluents impacting the Great Lakes</li> <li>• Continue to reduce energy consumption in municipal facilities, monitor energy consumption and implement practices focused on alternative energy and energy conservation</li> <li>• Continue to implement practices that promote animal welfare</li> <li>• Develop a focused strategy aimed at improving the physical state of the community and aimed at improving livability</li> </ul>

**Evaluation**

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be carried out through relevant departmental oversight, identifying the strategic objectives achieved by each project, plan, initiative or action submitted for Council approval.

The Town’s Senior Management Team, under the direction of the CAO, will provide Council with an annual report detailing the progress in implementing the plan.