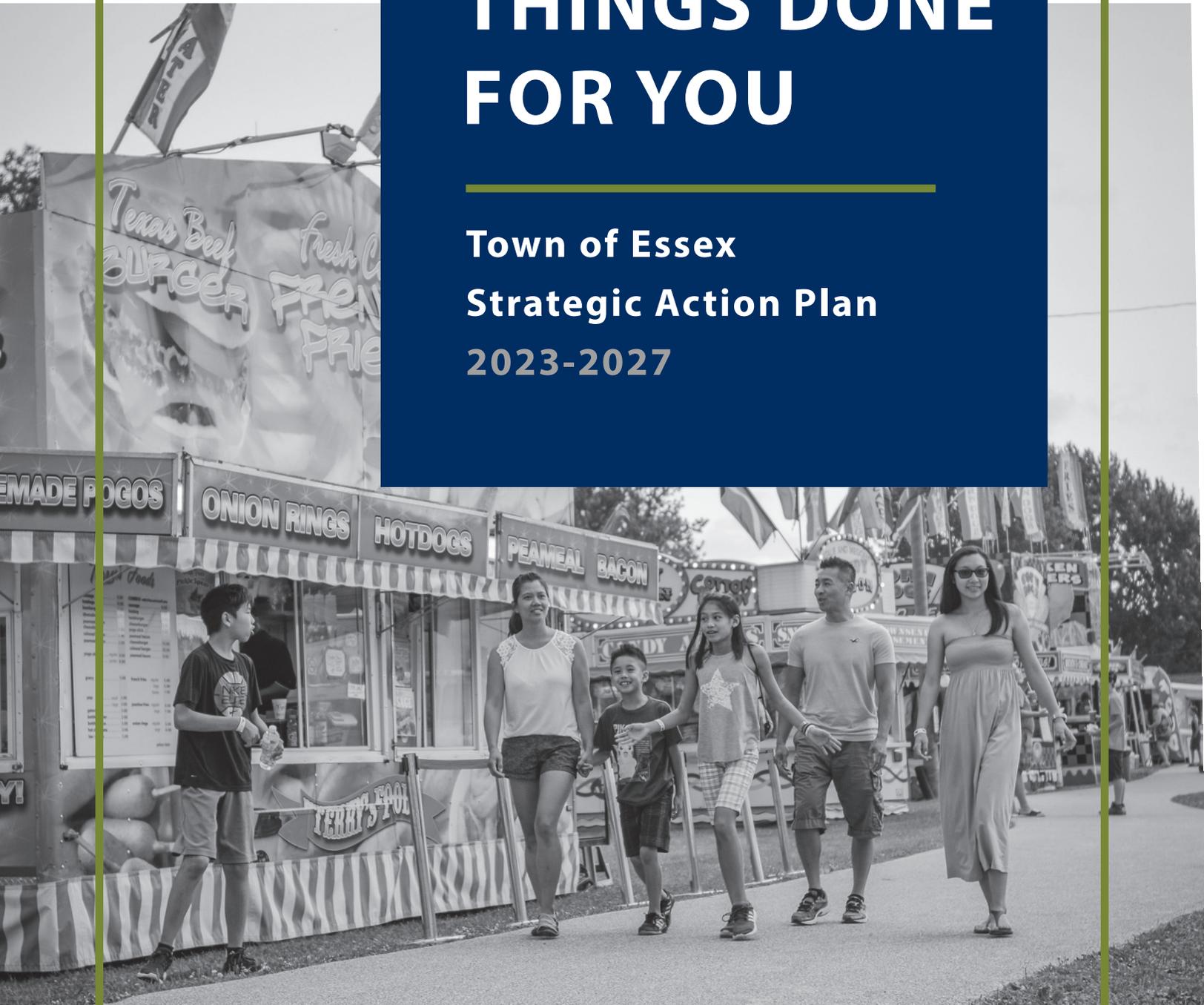


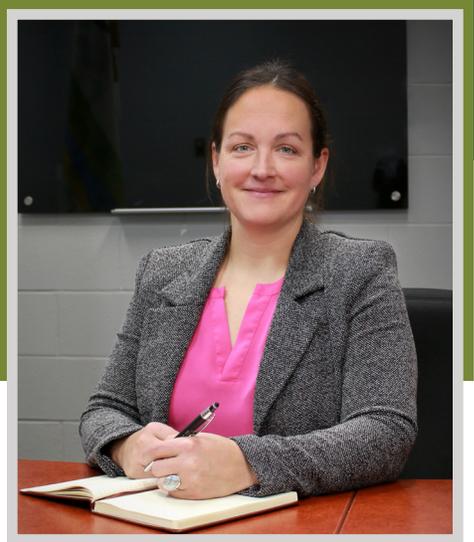
GETTING THINGS DONE FOR YOU

Town of Essex
Strategic Action Plan
2023-2027



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MAYOR

I am proud to present our 2023-2027 Strategic Action Plan! This is our roadmap to get things done to make the Town of Essex an even better place to live. The Town is committed to always striving to be the best that we can be. We recognize that our ability as a Leadership Team to consistently deliver exceptional services to our community depends on spending our time, energy and money on the things that matter most to our residents. That is why this Plan is based on what we heard from you.



ONE ESSEX TEAM working together to get things done for you.



You told us that we need to improve the quality of our roads and take good care of our municipality-owned infrastructure. You asked us to find ways to bring new local jobs and investment to our Town. You want us to protect our natural environment and strengthen a sense of belonging to everyone who makes the Town of Essex home. And you told us that it is important that our staff provide friendly and exceptional customer service...all the time.

You want us to demonstrate that we deserve your support by treating each other and our staff with respect! On behalf of myself, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council, CAO Doug Sweet, our senior managers, and our entire Essex team, we are committed to working as ONE ESSEX TEAM to get things done for you!

Sherry Bondy

Mayor Sherry Bondy

WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU

This project began with an invitation to our residents to tell us why Essex is a great place and what we can do to make it even better. Between February 28 - March 31, 2023, residents had the opportunity to provide their responses to an online questionnaire. A total of 489 residents provided valuable input that helped shape this Plan.

We asked you what local government services were most important to you and your household. You told us:

ROADS

“Safe and well-maintained roads” was the most popular selection, with an average score of 4.2/5.

PARKS

“Parks, trails, playgrounds and open spaces” was the second most popular selection with an average score of 3.85/5.

COMMUNICATION

“Timely communication from the Municipality” was the third most popular selection with an average score of 3.8/5.

OUR GOALS



Safe and Reliable
Infrastructure



Jobs and Economic
Opportunities

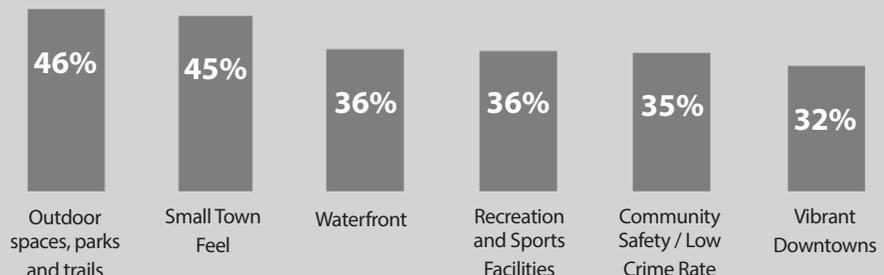


Welcoming and
Caring Community



Responsible and People-
Focused Government

YOUR TOP 6 REASONS WHY ESSEX IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE





SAFE AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

1.1 - Taking an evidence-based approach to infrastructure renewal projects.

- Complete a review of Town-owned buildings to identify current and future needs and costs.
- Complete a Roads Master Plan (+ active transportation) to establish future transportation network requirements.
- Complete Water/Wastewater Servicing Plan to establish a prioritized list of required projects to accommodate growth.
- Review current capital forecasting and procurement policies/practices to better align infrastructure projects costs to budgeting.

1.2 - Investing in our roads.

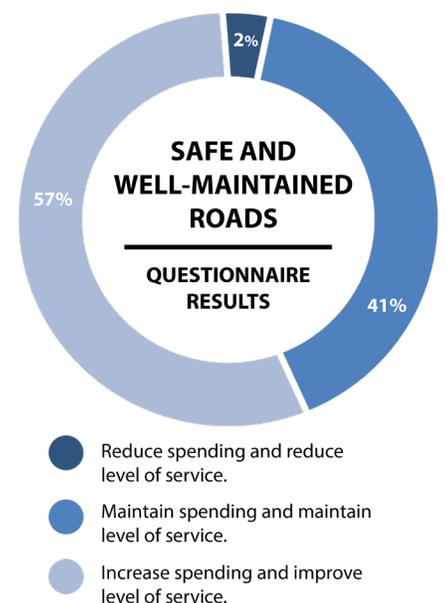
- Move forward on roads projects already approved by Council, including Maidstone/Talbot intersection improvements and Hanlan extension.
- Complete a 10-year Roads Forecast with a prioritized list of required future roads projects and projected costs.
- Implement a “Rebuilding Essex Roads” dedicated capital levy to fund road rebuilding projects based on the Town’s asset management plan.

1.3 - Optimizing the community benefits from our municipally owned buildings and property.

- Design a high-level concept plan with estimated costs for the best use of the Harrow High School property.
- Develop standard clauses for all property/building lease agreements ensure consistency/fairness with all community partnerships.

1.4 - Providing reliable water, storm water, and wastewater services.

- Complete a 5-year Capital Forecast for future water, wastewater and storm water projects, including funding model options.
- Review feasibility of extending water/wastewater services to McGregor with neighbouring municipality.





JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL: Leverage our Town’s competitive advantages to promote jobs and economic investment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

2.1 - Optimizing land to increase employment opportunities.

- Complete a land review with the objective of optimizing opportunities for future jobs and investment.
- Explore using targeted Community Improvement Plan (CIP) incentives to attract new businesses.

2.2 - Fostering an environment that attracts and retains businesses and creates jobs.

- Conduct a review of small business resources to identify grants, services, and programs that could be leveraged to support local small businesses and job creations.
- Enhance and promote a public-facing inventory of commercial properties to assist with inquiries from new and expanding businesses.

2.3 - Promoting tourism as an economic driver.

- Develop a Tourism Marketing Strategy Action Plan to promote positioning the Town of Essex as a premier Agritourism Destination in Ontario.
- Review parking challenges in Colchester Park/Beach to determine short-term and long-term solutions.
- Develop a plan to attract sports/athletics tournaments and events.
- Revisit discussions with commercial property owners and hotel brands to identify opportunities for accommodation developments in Essex.



Essex residents told us that local jobs matter.

Questionnaire responses for the importance of attracting “local jobs and economic development”

5 Extremely important

Average response was 3.1 out of 5

1 Not important at all



WELCOMING AND CARING COMMUNITY

GOAL: Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone who makes Essex “home”.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

3.1 - Collaborating with community organizations and groups.

- Review, improve and communicate the Community Partnership Fund to achieve intended results.
- Create a volunteer registry to support local groups and organizations.

3.2 - Protecting our natural environment.

- Create a page on the Town website sharing the community’s natural features and providing tips for the public to help protect these features.
- Expand and increase promotion of the Town’s Memorial Tree and Bench program to increase number of trees planted.
- Develop EV Fleet plan with targets based on best municipal practices.

3.3 - Expanding opportunities for healthy living and recreation.

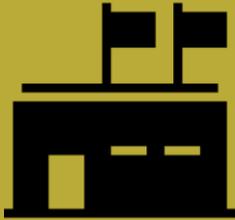
- Complete the Community Services Master Plan and identify priority recommendations to be considered in annual budgets for the next three years. This Plan will include exploring costs and benefits of offering additional community programs/services/increased maintenance.
- Establish a standard of shade for all Essex parks and identify costs to achieve this standard.
- Establish maintenance standards on Town-owned trails.

3.4 - Contributing to making Essex more affordable.

- Establish a citizen-based Essex Housing Task Force with a mandate to provide practical recommendations to Council to make living in Essex more affordable.
- Establish areas within the Town where higher density housing options are encouraged.

3.5 - Managing our growth to maintain our “small town feel.”

- Review the Town of Essex Urban Design Guidelines for Downtown Harrow and Essex Centre to ensure it promotes the unique features of our downtowns and residential areas.
- Identify areas within the Town where the development of mixed-used buildings (commercial/residential) should be encouraged.
- Host public open houses to gather valuable information from residents on what “small town feel” means to them.
- Collaborate with local organizations/groups to provide family-friendly neighbourhoods events.



RESPONSIBLE AND PEOPLE-FOCUSED GOVERNMENT

GOAL: Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

4.1 - Diversifying our revenue sources to reduce reliance on residential taxpayers.

- Complete an investment strategy to maximize the Town's investment revenue.
- Explore the implementation of a Municipal Accommodation Tax.
- Review surplus municipally owned lands for potential sale.
- Initiate a sponsorship/naming rights program to provide opportunities to local businesses and drive non-tax revenue.

4.2 - Providing open government and financial accountability by improving 2-way communication with citizens.

- Introduce a digital engagement platform to enhance the public participation in the Town's budget and ongoing decision-making processes.
- Introduce creative ways to enhance our communication with our residents.
- Host an annual interactive Town Hall event in each community with the involvement of the Mayor, Council and the senior management team.
- Establish customer service standards for all Town facilities; provide training where required.

4.3 - Recognizing excellence among our staff team.

- Identify meaningful formal and informal ways of recognizing staff who do good work.
- CAO to facilitate bi-annual Staff Town Hall sessions to providing updates on important projects and recognizing valuable staff contributions.

4.4 - Promoting workplace flexibility, inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

- Complete staff capacity / succession planning study to determine human resource requirements over the next few years.
- Introduce the first bi-annual employee satisfaction survey; establish benchmarks and performance targets.
- Explore flexible work policies/practices that promote a positive work-life balance while ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality community programs and services.
- Review hiring/promotion practices to remove any barriers to diversity and inclusion.



ONE ESSEX TEAM
WORKING TOGETHER TO GET
THINGS DONE FOR YOU.



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