

# **Lakeshore Strategic Plan Laying Down the Basics**

*By Dr. JP Gedeon  
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## **BACKGROUND**

In early 2023, Lakeshore Council retained the services of Dr. JP Gedeon to help in the compilation of the Strategic Plan for this term of Council. Building on the success evidenced by Council to date and furthering the new priorities that have arisen after the 2022 election, this new Strategic Plan will guide the activities of the municipality into 2026 and beyond.

## **PROCESS**

The Strategic Planning process began in early 2023 when Dr. Gedeon facilitated an in-depth discussion intended to garner agreement on the best process to undertake to complete the Strategic Plan. After that discussion, staff undertook the task of completing comprehensive SWOT and PESTEL analyses (both departmentally and corporately) in order to ensure that Councillors had access to the most relevant and recent information regarding the state of municipality. These analyses were presented to Council in a full-day, in-person, and facilitated exercise, thereby priming the stage for further discussion and elucidation of the contents of the Strategic Plan.

## **IS THIS COUNCIL'S PLAN?**

It was important to Council to ensure that the eventual Strategic Plan reflect the voices and preferences of Councillors, with staff involvement being limited to research and the provision of information. As a result, after the initial facilitation involving both staff and Council, Dr. Gedeon engaged each Councillor exclusively in one-on-one interviews in order to more fully understand that Councillor's particular views and preferences. In addition, Dr. Gedeon compiled the information he received from Councillors and provided a questionnaire to Council intended to better clarify their thoughts and move toward a consensual decision regarding the contents of the Strategic Plan. Staff was not involved in this process of development and dialogue. As such, we can confidently assert that the proposed contents of this report reflect the thoughts of Council only. This Strategic Plan will, in every way, be definitively Council's plan.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the building blocks of the Strategic Plan – the building blocks asserted by the Councillors themselves, as measured and modulated by consensual viewpoints garnered through the Strategic Planning questionnaire. As such, this report presents the seminal areas of the Strategic Plan with proposed statements. Once ratified, the contents of this report will be used by Dr.

Gedeon and his team to pull together the final Strategic Plan that can be posted on the corporate website and used throughout the municipality as a guiding document of implementation for the activities of this term of Council

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The Vision Statement describes the “dreamed-about” end point of Strategic Planning. What are we going to build? And most importantly, who do we want to become? In discussing this question, Councillors had a few comments/concerns:

1. There was universal support for the notions of intentionality, diversity, and design
2. There was universal agreement that the various communities across Lakeshore are distinct and that their distinct characters are to be respected and fostered
3. There was also a push from Councillors to maintain simplicity in the Vision Statement, in order to broker clarity for the whole community

The questionnaire provided 5 options for a Vision Statement. Taking the viewpoints of Councillors into account (listed above), the new and proposed Vision Statement is a slight variation on Council’s preferred choice:

**Intentionally building connected, distinct and proud communities**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission Statement is intended to delineate what we do, for whom, and why. As such, the statement is intended to be more tactical and practical than the Vision Statement. In discussing this concept, Councillors had the following concerns/comments:

1. The statement should use clear language and remain simple in design
2. Councillors stated their belief in the importance of open communication and timely, accessible services for Lakeshore residents
3. Councillors wanted to ensure that strategic function serves to increase communication between the municipality and residents, in order to promote ever-better service in future

Of the proposed statements, one statement was voted as preferred by most Councillors. The proposed Mission Statement is as follows:

**Serving and celebrating our passionate communities by promoting civic communication, facilitating services, and planning our bright future**

## **OBJECTIVES**

Following from the concepts of the Vision and Mission statements, Councillors were asked to distill their preferences for actionable objectives intended to govern this term of Council. There was unilateral support to the Objective areas listed below. Subsequently, the questionnaire asked Councillors to rank the Objectives in terms of

importance. A higher ranking implies that the Objective should be undertaken before others and that it should also command a larger share of resources, in order to ensure its responsible completion.

Councillors had the following comments/concerns regarding Objectives:

1. The need to address the growth and management of Infrastructure is critical at the present time.
2. To better manage infrastructure development and construction, a long-ranging plan of municipal development is necessary, in order to ensure that Lakeshore communities retain their distinct characters as well as to properly allocate where infrastructure should be built and why.
3. The Municipal corporation itself needs attention to ensure that it is poised and ready to deliver on the substantial requirements of the coming years. Without this priority being followed, there are concerns that the Municipal system has “holes in its bucket” that would curtail actual progress on strategic priorities.

The ranked set of Objectives is as follows:

- 1. Building and Stewarding Municipal Infrastructure.**
- 2. Developing Our Future Communities.**
- 3. Modernizing and Enhancing Municipal Function.**
- 4. Become an Economic Leader in Essex County.**
- 5. Modernizing Resident-Centered Service.**

## **MEASURES**

For each of the Objectives listed above, a series of discreet and implementable actions must serve as accountability measures, in order to ensure that the intent of each Objective is pursued and attained. As part of the process, Councillors were asked to identify and rank possible actions under each Objective. The following represents the list of actions, as chosen and prioritized by the collective responses of all Councillors. The ranking number accompanying the actions is based on a scale where 1 = the highest priority. Ranking results were calculated by the automated system as averages based on the overall responses of each Councillor.

## MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVE #1: BUILDING AND STEWARDING MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The following reflects the chosen measures for Objective #1, ranked and rated according to Council's preferences:

Measure	Ranking
Update Asset Management Plan to align with Provincial legislative requirements	1.57
Complete Infrastructure delivery plans for water/wastewater and stormwater and develop a phased funding model to deliver (including setting of storm water levy)	2.00
Renew plans to convert gravel roads for conversion and establish a sustainable funding model to support lifecycling.	2.43

## MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVE #2: DEVELOPING OUR FUTURE COMMUNITIES

The following reflects the chosen measures for Objective #2, ranked and rated according to Council's preferences:

Measure	Ranking
Develop 25-year Community Plans for all communities/regions	1.57
Develop Wallace Woods Secondary Plan	2.14
Create a stakeholder engagement and management plan to identify and help leverage important community relationships, support collaboration with community members, and leverage local wisdom.	2.86
Design and build one park per term	3.43

## MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVE #3: MODERNIZING AND ENHANCING MUNICIPAL FUNCTION

The following reflects the chosen measures for Objective #3, ranked and rated according to Council's preferences:

Measure	Ranking
Compile, organize, and index files, records, and data across the corporation to further evolve evidence-based decision making and increase staff efficiencies accessing information.	1.43
Revise business processes to establish and employ a risk management framework, improved workflow management, and financial modelling to inform management of reserves.	1.96

Continue investment in modernized services, including the integration of current best practices and automation, by engaging in service transformation and process mapping"	2.71
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## MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVE #4: BECOMING AN ECONOMIC LEADER IN ESSEX

The following reflects the chosen measures for Objective #4, ranked and rated according to Council's preferences:

Measure	Ranking
Plan, partner, and design a regional industrial park	1.29
Develop a Business Attraction and Retention Plan	2.00
Plan and design the Greenhouse Business Park	3.00
Create a corporate branding and communication initiative (to boldly tell our story)	3.71

## MEASURES FOR OBJECTIVE #5: MODERNIZE CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

The following reflects the chosen measures for Objective #5, ranked and rated according to Council's preferences:

Measure	Ranking
By-Law Modernization (including a calendar of by-law review and effective enforcement strategies/capabilities	1.86
Conceiving and implementing a plan for resident-service standards (including establishing a response policy for all inquiries to the municipality, IT solutions/apps/portals, phone protocols, virtual enablement, self-serve portals	2.00
Setting policy and standard operating procedures for resident communication and followups	2.30

## THE ROAD FORWARD

Once ratified, the contents of this report will form the basis for a formalized and graphically designed Strategic Plan. This finalized plan will include additional sections and features (such as an address from the Mayor, an address from the CAO, a description of the municipality and its relevant history, among other things) that do not require Council approval.

Finally, staff will take the ratified Strategic Plan and use it as the guiding document for the remaining term of Council. The implementation plan will allow staff to bring forward periodic progress reports, keeping Council abreast of the work completed, resources

expended/needed, and the remaining work that needs to be completed. As such, the lines of communication between staff and Council will remain maximally open to ensure the smooth and informed implementation of each of Council's priorities.

Every spring a strategic plan review meeting will be held with Council to assess progress against the plan, determine what, if any barriers have arisen in achieving the stated goals, and review priorities to ensure they continue to reflect the direction of Council.