



## REPORT

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**TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**FROM:** Susan Silver, Senior Advisor – Strategic Initiatives

**DATE:** September 20, 2021

**REPORT NO.:** ADMIN-2021-0035

**SUBJECT:** Council's Strategic Plan Status Update

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. ADMIN-2021-0035 dated September 20, 2021, regarding Council's Strategic Plan Status Update be received for information;

AND FURTHER THAT information available on the town's website be updated to include appendix A, a summary of accomplishments to date.

### KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Council's Strategic Plan sets out Council's mission, vision, values and establishes priorities and focus areas for its four-year term of office.
- The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan was developed via a facilitated workshop and referenced the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy, a blueprint to 2060 which was created with extensive community consultation.
- This report provides an update on the status of the Strategic Plan and highlights some of the important achievements.

### BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Setting priorities through the development of a Strategic Plan is an integral part of the town's business planning cycle. A strategic plan is established each term of Council to identify the key priorities and set direction for the term and allows Council and staff to focus resources and implementation activities.

The Town of Halton Hills 2019-2022 Strategic Plan was approved in August 2020 through Report [ADMIN-2020-0021](#), “Council Strategic Plan Finalization” and the following priority areas were identified:

- Shaping growth
- Transportation
- Climate change and environment
- Fiscal and corporate management
- Local autonomy and advocacy
- Ensure a vibrant agricultural community
- Youth and seniors initiatives

The purpose of this report is to give council a progress update which aligns plans, actions and accomplishments with the strategic priorities identified by Council and provides both Council and the public an overview of progress in the identified areas. Staff have reviewed progress to date on the Strategic Plan priorities as input into the proposed 2022 departmental business plans and to inform the 2022 Budget Directions report.

### **Implementing a Strategic Plan during a global pandemic**

It has been a challenging year since the Strategic Plan was approved and despite staff and Council having to pivot to address the response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic, significant progress has been made in pursuing Council’s Strategic Plan priorities. In addition to this report, two recent staff reports and associated [Council presentations](#) provide meaningful context with respect to Council and staff’s response to the global pandemic, specifically:

- Report [ADMIN-2021-0023](#), “COVID-19 – One Year Review & Future Direction” dated April 23, 2021 detailed the response and accomplishments during twelve plus months of the global pandemic and highlighted the operational response, communications, business continuity activities and community/business supports put in place.  
More recently, significant efforts have been directed at developing a return to the office strategy based on health and safety needs along with policies to protect staff and the community during this time.
- Report [CORPSERV-2021-0028](#), “Operating Budget Status as at May 31, 2021 and COVID-19 Update” dated August 4, 2021 provides an update on the 2021 operating results as at May 31, 2021, including financial implications of COVID-19 and the related financial support available through the Federal-Provincial Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) Funding.

## **Strategic Planning Framework**

Council's Strategic Plan is realized using the town's Strategic Planning Framework, which was first introduced in 2016 conceptually and subsequently developed and implemented over the next five years.

One objective of the Strategic Planning Framework (*Confidential report ADMIN-2017-0008*) was to ensure Council's strategic plan drove resource allocation and strategic decision making. To accomplish this, the framework and subsequent processes developed in support of the framework sought to integrate the:

- Annual budget and business planning cycle
- Council's strategic priorities
- 10 year capital program forecast
- Long range financial plan model
- Approved master plans and strategies

The ability to review and make recommendations utilizing multiple sources of information allows staff, including senior management, to evaluate and rank capital projects each year using criteria from the asset management program and council's strategic priorities. By incorporating service levels, condition assessments and ranking based on strategic priority assignment, staff have access to an integrated decision-making lens. This integrated decision making is a key component of the strategic planning framework as originally designed.

Similarly, prioritization of needs which are assessed corporately on an annual basis supporting operating budgets use a hierarchy based on:

1. Maintaining core services
2. Addressing mandatory/legislative non-discretionary costs
3. Costs required to support increases in population
4. Enhancements/service expansion

With this in mind, and by evaluating and incorporating incremental improvements with each cycle, the Strategic Planning Framework is a tool that has helped enable the Town of Halton Hills to continue to deliver accomplishments for the current term of Council despite the challenges faced over the last 18+ months.

## **2019-2022 Strategic Plan Progress and Accomplishments**

The following summarizes the accomplishments under each priority area of the strategic plan. As a companion to this report, information sheets have been created (Appendix A to this report) for Council's review and will be featured on the town's website.

### **SHAPING GROWTH**

**Shaping Growth** encompasses a wide range of focus areas, including residential greenfield growth, intensification, downtown revitalization, employment lands, affordable

housing and water and wastewater infrastructure. The following represent a snapshot of accomplishments in this area over the course of Council's term:

- ✓ [Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan](#) (OPA 32) approved by Town and Region, currently before the Ontario Land Tribunal
- ✓ **Halton Hills Premier Gateway** Phase 1B Secondary Plan (OPA 30, 31A and 31B) approved by the Region in 2021, which included the additional replacement employment lands added to the study area.
- ✓ Halton Hills Premier Gateway Phase 2B Secondary Plan Project well underway with significant background work completed and public engagement sessions held.
- ✓ **Intensification Study** completed in 2020.
- ✓ Revised **Glen Williams Secondary Plan** anticipated to be adopted in 2021.
- ✓ **Southeast Georgetown** and **Stewarttown Secondary Plan** Projects underway with public engagement
- ✓ Input provided to Halton Region on the **Integrated Growth Management Strategy** to the 2051 planning horizon including the Growth Concepts and the initial Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 48)
- ✓ Town's **Employment Lands Needs Study** completed.
- ✓ **Destination Downtown Secondary Plan** approved by the Region in 2021.
- ✓ Commenced the **Cultural Heritage Master Plan** process.
- ✓ Further updates to the **Town's Heritage Register** completed.
- ✓ Compilation of the [Economic Development, Innovation and Culture 2020 Annual Report](#) which includes information on the business retention and expansion program, newly introduced Business Concierge service, Community Improvement Plan, and the Digital Main Street program which provided additional business supports in response to pandemic shutdowns.
- ✓ **Economic Development and Tourism Strategy:** Launch and implementation of the new 5-year [Economic Development and Tourism Strategy \(2021-2026\)](#) to strengthen, grow and diversify the Halton Hills economy. Strategy was approved by Council in February 2021.
- ✓ **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy:** Launch of the Town's first-ever [Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\) Strategy](#) to attract new non-residential investment and jobs, approved by Council in March 2020.
- ✓ **Business Concierge Program:** Developed and launched the Business Concierge Program to streamline the delivery of major non-residential investments.
- ✓ **Economic Recovery and Support Task Force:** Established the Economic Recovery and Support Task Force and implemented over 25 business supports in light of COVID-19, including the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan.
- ✓ **Affordable Housing Working Group:** Established the Affordable Housing Working Group in 2019 to guide the Town's affordable housing initiatives and assigned dedicated staff (Economic Development and Special Projects Coordinator) to lead affordable housing initiatives. Several affordable housing

projects have already been advanced/supported, including 17 Guelph Street, 37 King Street, 47 Maria Street and a rental project at Winston Churchill Boulevard.

- ✓ **Community Improvement Plan:** Undertook an update of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) as one of the Town's key economic development tools and to support private sector investment, and help advance related focus areas, including affordable housing, climate change, heritage, etc.
- ✓ **Support for the Arts and Culture Sector:** Launched a range of new funding and professional development opportunities including the Artrepreneur Halton Hills (business development program for creatives), The Artist Next Door (funding new community-engaged art and culture projects), and Arts & Culture Meet-ups (monthly professional development & networking opportunities).
- ✓ **Quality of Life and Investment Attraction:** Contributed to raising quality of life and creating opportunities for businesses, residents and visitors by strengthening the local arts and culture sector and offering new cultural experiences including the installation of the Town's first public art projects 'After Nature' (2020) & Under Wraps (2021) and new cultural programming including for Black History Month and Indigenous History Month.
- ✓ **Tourism Advisory Committee:** Established the Tourism Advisory Committee to amplify the economic benefits of tourism and help create and enhance opportunities for businesses and visitors. About 200 Halton Hills businesses relate to tourism.
- ✓ **Truth and Reconciliation:** Launched an interim workplan to begin advancing Truth and Reconciliation - including assigning a dedicated staff lead.
- ✓ **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion:** Commissioned Community Development Halton to conduct an environmental review to determine gaps in programs, services and data to help guide the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Transportation** includes focus areas pertaining to trucks, traffic safety, transit and bike lanes.

- ✓ **Transit Service Strategy** and Implementation plan approved by Council in June 2019 with a phased approach as outlined in [executive summary report](#).
- ✓ **Specialized Transit Master Plan** to improve Activan service, including AODA compliance, endorsed by Council July 2021.
- ✓ **Truck Strategy** study completed and approved by Council in May 2019 and improvements initiated as noted in [executive summary report](#). These include implementation of permissive signage and truck inspection stations.
- ✓ Approval of **Active Transportation Master Plan** in October 2020 and associated [executive summary report](#) which included lenses related to culture, sustainability and growth.
- ✓ Maple Avenue cycling feasibility study completed in 2020 which includes a combination of on-road bike lanes and multi-use pathway; construction initiated in 2021.

- ✓ Greater effort has been made to promote use of active transportation in the community through the “Greenbelt Route” connector signs and way-finding signs.
- ✓ Purchased bike racks and installed them at the Acton Youth Centre and made them available to various local businesses.
- ✓ Implemented pavement markings on the roadways and multi-use pathways to delineate active transportation infrastructure.
- ✓ Initiated on road bike lanes on Tanner Drive from Churchill Road North to Churchill Road South and Barber Drive (east) from Mountainview Road to Argyll Road. In 2021, one major sidewalk improvement at McCullough Crescent was completed.
- ✓ Constructed on Maple Avenue a combination of on-road bike lanes and multi-use pathway from Main Street to Mountainview Road
- ✓ Installed solar flashing beacons at 3 locations within the community.
- ✓ Implemented Churchill Road South Neighbourhood Traffic Calming project
- ✓ In 2021, staff have commenced with a **40km/h posted speed limit pilot project** which includes complimentary both non-intrusive and intrusive traffic calming measures to determine their effectiveness.
- ✓ Implemented flexible bollards at various locations within the community
- ✓ Acquired lands and initiated additional trail construction in sections of Hungry Hollow from West Branch Drive to Park Avenue; secured a trail development agreement in the Upper Canada College lands.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

**Climate change and environment** remains focused on action, resilient infrastructure, low carbon transition and tree canopy.

- ✓ In 2019, Council approved the reorganization of the Sustainability Department which is now Climate Change and Asset Management. The combination of these two portfolios and the movement of the group to the Office of the CAO has provided significant focus to support the Climate Change Emergency Declaration made by Council in May 2019. A course of action was presented to Council via Report [ADMIN-2019-0035](#).
  - The *Climate Change Action Task Force*, the *Climate Change Low Carbon Transition Steering Committee* and the *Climate Change Resiliency Steering Committee* were created to provide direction to staff in achieving the Town’s climate change objectives.
  - The Town’s assets and infrastructure play a critical role in combating climate change and building a low carbon resilient community. The adoption of a Low Carbon Resilience Framework allows the Town to put on a climate change lens from both mitigation and adaptation perspectives when managing and making investment decisions on assets and infrastructure.
- ✓ **Climate Change Adaptation Plan** accomplishments: infrastructure vulnerability assessment, phase 2 of the natural asset management project, development of a tree canopy management framework, and outreach/education initiatives including

a flood risk/prevention campaign, adaptation video, and youth outreach through the Youth Challenge International (YCI) program.

- ✓ **Home Retrofit Program** update: The project has progressed as scheduled and staff have secured \$300,800 in FCM Community Efficiency Financing funding, completed a business case, finalized key program administration and design criteria, completed internal staff engagement through two key workshops, and conducted an online homeowner survey via Let's Talk Halton Hills.
- ✓ **Natural Assets condition assessments:** Two study sites selected and data gathered.
- ✓ **Climate Change Community Investment Fund (CCIF)** launched, with first intake in August 2021.
- ✓ **Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP):** Hungry Hollow plan completed in June 2020, currently in the implementation phase and three-year workplan.
- ✓ **Private Tree Management** strategy workshop with Council held July 2021; draft strategy expected to be completed fall 2021.
- ✓ Introduced **online tree sales** achieving 1,000 trees purchased annually
- ✓ Continuation of the **tree planting program** and **urban street tree inventory** collection.
- ✓ **Low Carbon Transition Strategy (LCTS)** under development to provide a roadmap to achieving the Town's climate change mitigation targets and goal to achieve net zero by 2030.
- ✓ Created a **Low Carbon Mobility Working Group**.
- ✓ The Town received multiple accolades at the **2020 Mayors' Megawatt Challenge Forum** for its leadership role in energy consumption and mitigating climate change.
- ✓ Updated **Green Development Standards 3 (GDS v3)** approved by Council June 2021. This most recent update to the Standards will be applicable to all developments and major additions subject to an Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision, or Site Plan Control approval as of June 15, 2021.
- ✓ Completed the **Low Carbon Design Brief** for Town Hall and the developed low carbon pathways for Mold-Masters SportsPlex and Acton Arena.
- ✓ Integrated the Clean Technology sector as one of the focus sectors in the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, as well as the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Attraction Strategy.
- ✓ Inclusion of Climate Change as one of the focus areas to be considered in the Community Improvement Plan Update.
- ✓ Included Climate Change Initiatives as one of the top ten directions in the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan approved in November 2020.
- ✓ **Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargers:** Signed an agreement with Ivey, an affiliate of Ontario Power Generation (OPG), to provide 11 EV chargers at Town owned parking areas for public use.
- ✓ Initiated purchase of the **Town's first Electric Vehicle (EV)**

## FISCAL AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

**Fiscal and corporate management** as a priority includes a broad range of focus areas around fiscal planning, maintaining services, capital assets and liabilities management and communications.

- ✓ **Long Range Financial Plan** model has been completed and is now fully operational as a decision-making tool.
- ✓ Completed **Corporate Technology Plan** projects including Great Plains (GP) financial system upgrade, Centrac traffic light monitoring and control, Amanda upgrade, Construction Inspection Software, corporate network hardware replacements, phone system upgrade to enhance remote working functionality, town website replacement and introduction of eService options for dog licenses, marriage licenses, and burn permits.
- ✓ New **tax software** is operational with billing that is more flexible and transparent than the previous software and will result in accurate reporting and billing of taxes coupled with improved staff time efficiency.
- ✓ A draft **Core Asset Management Plan** has been developed that addresses the requirements of O.Reg 588/17. The integration of climate change into the Town's levels of service framework has been completed for recreation facilities and is in progress for roads & right-of-way, bridges & culverts, stormwater, and parks & open spaces.
- ✓ **Asset Management Information System (AMIS)** implementation is in progress. This will enable electronic work orders and improved asset records to assist in asset related decision making.
- ✓ Advanced components of the **Corporate Fleet Management Strategy**, including: centralization of fleet management practices and implementation of a computerized maintenance management system
- ✓ Work with consultants is currently underway to develop a new Development Charge (**DC**) Study/Bylaw and **Community Benefits Charge Strategy/Bylaw**.
- ✓ State of Emergency / COVID response through establishment of **Emergency Control Group (ECG)** and **Emergency Support Group (ESG)**.
- ✓ **Delivered significant capital projects** while strategically deferring projects from 2020 during COVID response to **manage the Town's cashflow** during the period of uncertainty. Through 2020 & 2021 have:
  - Completed the reconstruction of **Young Street and Queen St** in Acton. Included the addition of bike lanes for active transportation and the Town's first use of the Superior Performing Asphalt Pavements (Superpave) mix design.
  - Completed the reconstruction of **Armstrong Avenue** including the extension of the multi-use path from Sinclair Avenue to Guelph Street for Active Transportation and minimal disruptions for local businesses.
  - Completed the intersection improvement of **Guelph Street and Maple Avenue** including the construction of a multi-use path from Main Street to Guelph Street as well as bike lanes on Maple Avenue between Guelph Street and Mountainview Road for Active Transportation.



- Commenced the Phase 2 reconstruction of **22 Sideroad** from 50m East of Elizabeth Street, Limehouse, to Highway 7. Included a paved shoulder for active transportation, stormwater management improvements, and the intersection improvement at Sixth line.
- Completed the rehabilitation of the **Main Street North CNR Bridge and the Mountainview Road North CNR Bridge**. Both projects include provisions for future Active Transportation facilities (Bike Lanes).
- Completed the rehabilitation of the **Fairy Lake dam** and retaining wall reconstruction (Joint Region Project) to support the Region's Permit-To-Take-Water requirements for the Acton water supply system.
- Commenced the Town's **Stormwater Master Plan** study which is scheduled to be finalized in 2023.
- ✓ New Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and FDI Strategy to **attract, retain and grow non-residential assessment**.
- ✓ Implementing Business Concierge Program to attract major non-residential assessment and **improve the residential to non-residential assessment** ratio.
- ✓ Leveraged **Town-owned land** such as 17 Guelph Street and 9985 Winston Churchill Boulevard to increase **local affordable housing opportunities**.
- ✓ Continued participation in **Municipal Modernization funding** intake opportunities made available through Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Have successfully secured additional new funding under intake 2 of over \$143,000.

## LOCAL AUTONOMY AND ADVOCACY

**Local autonomy and advocacy** speaks to efforts at both the provincial and federal levels, in addition to continued diligence monitoring local municipal issues.

- ✓ Establishment of the **Economic Recovery and Support Task Force** and advocacy on business supports to other levels of government.
- ✓ **GTA West designation** by federal Minister of the Environment under the federal Impact Assessment Act in response to requests from the public including the Town of Halton Hills.
- ✓ Advocating to the Minister of Transportation for the implementation of the **Truck Inspection Station and Acton By-Pass Feasibility Study** and necessary funding.
- ✓ Participating in regional programs related to **broadband and 5G**.
- ✓ **Small Urban GTHA Mayors** formed in 2020 with representation by the Mayor.
- ✓ Input to Halton Region on a Made in Halton Hills post 2031 growth strategy as part of the **Regional Official Plan Review**.
- ✓ Continued **pursuit of funding** opportunities and partnerships offered by other levels of government, community groups and other agencies and associations that can assist in advancing Council's priorities.
- ✓ Initiated development of government-to-government relationships with **Indigenous Nations**.

## VIBRANT AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY

**Ensure a vibrant agricultural community** includes protection of agricultural land and promotion of agri-tourism.

- ✓ Provided input to Halton Region on **matters of concern to the farming community** through staff comments on the Integrated Growth Management Growth Concepts.
- ✓ New Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and FDI Attraction Strategy **include agri-business and agri-tourism as focus sectors.**
- ✓ Agri-business included as a key area of consideration in the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Update.

## YOUTH AND SENIORS

**Youth and seniors initiatives** focuses on engagement and provision of services and facilities.

- ✓ **Gellert Community Park skate park** opened in May 2019.
- ✓ High Five and CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) certification renewals for program excellence in children, youth and seniors programming (2019).
- ✓ The adoption of an updated [Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan](#) in November 2020 addresses not only youth and seniors, but a wide range of goals impacting the entire community. These range from active living and connection to nature to fostering supportive environments that encourage inclusion and participation.
- ✓ A Senior Manager of Community Development was approved through the 2020 budget and staff was reorganized to establish Community Development as a division within Recreation and Parks. This division will focus on capacity building for recreation, community wellbeing and community and neighbourhood engagement in support of the R&P Strategic Action Plan.
- ✓ **Acton Youth Centre** construction (opening September 2021) completed on-budget at \$980K.
- ✓ **Seniors Service Delivery Review** approved by Council in 2020; provides a framework for additional support for the operation of the Hillsview Active Living Centres.
- ✓ **Neighbourhood Engagement and Skate Park Ambassadors** programs launched in 2020.
- ✓ Youth and seniors outreach and curbside program enhancements during the pandemic.
- ✓ Reduced facility rental rates or loan deferrals for groups offering services to youth.
- ✓ Trafalgar Sports Park Field of Dreams opening in 2021.
- ✓ Completed the Affordable Housing Awareness and Engagement Strategy to engage residents and generate awareness on local housing issues and potential solutions, which included conducting educational programming with high school

students, and organizing the Town's first Affordable Housing Open House which was well attended with approximately 60 participants.

- ✓ Activan Master Plan: **Specialized Transit Plan** endorsed 2021 including options for a monthly pass.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value(s) to:

- foster a healthy community that provides a clean environment and range of economic and social opportunities to ensure a superior quality of life in our community.
- preserve, protect and enhance our natural environment for the health benefits and enjoyment it provides to present and future generations.
- protect and enhance the viability of our agricultural land base and agricultural industry.
- foster a prosperous economy, maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the town through the provision of a wide range of opportunities for economic development.
- preserve, protect and promote our distinctive historical urban and rural character of Halton Hills through the conservation and promotion of our built heritage, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources.
- preserve, protect and enhance the open space character of our countryside.
- achieve sustainable growth to ensure that growth is managed so as to ensure a balanced, sustainable, well planned community infrastructure and services to meet the needs of its residents and businesses.
- provide responsive, effective municipal government and strong leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact climate change, but does address the advancement of Council's objectives to achieve net zero as set out in Council's Climate Change Emergency Declaration and the climate change priorities established in Council's Strategic Plan.

### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Public Engagement will be required and efforts have begun to develop information for use on the Town's website to inform the public of progress towards achievement of Council's Strategic Priorities.

**INTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

All members of Senior Management Team (SMT), which includes Acting CAO, Commissioners/Department Heads along with Directors of Communications, Economic Development, Strategic Initiatives, Town Clerk and Director of Legislative Services, and Town Treasurer and were consulted to compile this report.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications. The Strategic Planning Framework integrates long range plans with the annual budget and business planning cycle and promotes strategic decision making in line with Council's priorities. Financial decisions are reflected in budget documents and staff reports.

Reviewed and approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Mills". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer