



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Andy Scott, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Business Development

Date: July 17, 2023

Report No: ES-009-23

Subject: 2023-27 Town of Milton Strategic Plan

**Recommendation: THAT Council receive this report for information;
AND THAT Council endorse the 2023-2027 Town of Milton
Strategic Plan as presented within ES-009-023.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council have worked collaboratively to identify a series of practical and tangible priorities for this term of council.
- These priorities were informed by quantitative and qualitative data, and developed through a comprehensive strategic planning process.
- These priorities will drive progress towards the vision of Milton 2051.
- Almost all priorities and actions identified are already contemplated in the Town's fiscal planning.
- Priorities established are the focus of Council and staff for this term of council.

REPORT

Background

The intent of this report is to outline the 2023-2027 strategic priorities for this term of the Town of Milton Council. This strategic plan (Appendix A) is time-bound and sets out a series of deliverables which are deemed necessary to support our progress towards the long range vision of Milton in 2051.

A Strategic Plan creates a shared vision for Council and staff. The plan will serve as the building blocks for advancing the Milton 2051 vision through activities and initiatives aligned to each of the strategic themes.

Background

Developing the Strategy

The strategy is underpinned by a range of quantitative and qualitative research and analysis.

Research included:

- An update to the Town's community profile that incorporated the 2021 census data.
- A statistically valid community survey ([ES-004-23](#))
- Focus groups
- Prior research conducted to inform topic specific masterplans and strategies
- Service delivery focused indicators and the adoption of an annual reporting cycle
- External scan of provincial and federal policies, and white papers which might impact local municipal government
- An environmental scan of research and thought leadership conducted by a range of institutes that outline municipal historical trending and future considerations

Council members participated in facilitated readiness and strategy sessions, underpinned by this key information, throughout the strategic planning process.

Throughout this term of Council's orientation program, key community and corporate information was embedded to share relevant information. Additionally, Council participated in an information session to introduce the strategic planning process, followed by two readiness sessions. A joint Council and Senior Leadership Team strategic planning session was also conducted in late April 2023.

Discussion

Proposed Strategic Framework

The plan's framework updates our corporate vision and mission statement to align with Council's previously approved planning vision ([DS-005-21](#)). This planning vision is foundational to the Town's Official Plan update. Alignment between our corporate vision and our growth planning ensures municipal service delivery today and future growth planning link with the future vision of the community.

The strategy includes a four-year practical vision to help the municipality prioritize the types of work needed at this point of time, that will move us forward and contribute to the Milton 2051 vision. As part of the practical vision, five strategic themes emerged with each theme having a series of 'imperatives' or critical results that must be achieved for the desired level of progress.

Discussion

The strategic themes identified are:

- Invest in People
- Innovate in Technology & Process
- Quality Facilities & Amenities
- Connected Transit & Mobility
- Planned Community Growth

The data driven rationale for each is as follows:

Invest in People

- The Town's workforce is the single most important organizational asset. As the Town has grown over the last 20 years, the municipal workforce has grown in order to deliver the necessary programs and services across the community. From 2004 to 2022, the total number of FTE's employed by the Town increased from 257 to 652. However, when applying a rate per 1,000 residents, the number of FTE's available to provide programming and service delivery has actually reduced from 5.7 FTE's per 1,000 residents in 2004, to 4.6 FTE's per 1,000 residents in 2022.

The Town's workforce will need to grow as the community grows, and the demand for service increases. Future recruitment is critical to meeting service delivery needs, but it must be built upon a foundation of employee retention. The Town must ensure its workforce is highly skilled and motivated, able to service the needs of an increasingly diverse community, and be flexible to the changing geographic and community composition.

Over the last three years our full time voluntary turnover rate has increased from 2.50% in 2020 to 6.49% in 2022. While a voluntary turnover rate between 5% and 8% is considered healthy for an organization, the Town is experiencing ongoing recruitment and replacement challenges. Job vacancies are becoming harder to fill with a greater number of employees exploring employment options while employers offer new and emerging value propositions to attract talent. Vacancies create a burden on maintaining service delivery and customer service demands.

Innovate in Technology & Process

- There has been a macro level trend over the last 20 years to deliver services and information digitally. The local community has expressed a similar desire over a similar time period. In 2013, a community survey was conducted which found 33% of residents accessed municipal information primarily via the Town's website. In 2023, this has increased to 60%. How people interact with a municipality or access services has evolved to a digital-first focused approach.

Enhancements in technology and process improvements are critical to the Town's ability to scale service delivery in line with the anticipated growth in the local

Discussion

population while also maintaining excellent customer service. 77% of residents report satisfaction in both the overall quality of service, and the quality of online services provided by the Town.

Quality Facilities & Amenities

There is a need to maximize the use of the Town's existing facilities and amenities to ensure full use from a programming and service delivery perspective.

Residents across Milton demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the existing parks and sports fields (87% satisfied) and indoor facilities (79% satisfied). Maximizing the availability of these facilities and amenities will be of particular importance as Milton experiences an increase in the number of young adults (19 to 24) coming to our community to engage with our new post-secondary institutions. Additionally, this age group will access our municipal facilities and services, therefore plans will need to be developed to consider their needs and use patterns.

When asked about service levels relative to taxation, 22% of respondents suggested the Town should add new services and facilities (beyond anticipated growth levels) even if it means an increase in taxation and user fees. 44% suggested service levels should be maintained, with a further 34% suggesting service levels should be reduced to maintain the same levels of property tax and user fee rates.

Connected Transit & Mobility

Historically, the Town is below municipal comparators for public transit. . A metric used frequently across public transit system operators is the *hours of service offered per year, per capita*. Most comparable communities offer one hour of service per capita per year, the Town of Milton has typically offered around 0.3 hours per capita per year.

When asked via the community engagement survey, almost half of all respondents (48%) suggest the single biggest issue facing residents today is linked to transit and mobility.

42% of residents report satisfaction with the service offered today. These results suggest there is a strong desire from the community to make enhancements to our existing transit service a priority.

In addition, as Milton continues to grow and expand our transit-oriented neighbourhoods, the need to enhance our transit system must grow proportionately.

Lastly, post-secondary students are proven to be high public transit users, and with a Council identified priority to increase the presence of post-secondary partners in Milton, the service will need to adjust to meet these rider needs.

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Planned Community Growth

Community growth and development in Milton is expected to undergo a transitional phase within this term of Council with approved mixed-use, higher density uses across Milton. The Mobility Transit Study Areas (MTSAs) around the Milton Go Station (Uptown) and the Milton Education Village are areas expected to see significant construction activity within the next 5 to 10 years that will drive population and economic growth within the community. Early estimates suggest that Milton's population could be approximately 190,000 residents by 2027 with approximately 11,000 more dwellings (Source: Environics analytics - 2022 estimates).

55% of respondents to the community survey suggested they were dissatisfied with the way in which growth is being managed. Similarly, 40% of all respondents identified development and infrastructure as the single biggest issue facing the community.

Milton's approach to growth is deliberate and planned, with a focus on the right uses in the right places.

Appendix A outlines the strategic imperatives to support advancing each of the strategic themes. These strategic imperatives are the medium term focus to progress the community towards the long term vision of Milton. Staff will prioritize these strategic imperatives, dedicating time, resources, and effort in achieving these over this term of council.

Next Steps

Subject to Council's approval of this Strategic Plan, staff will begin implementation by incorporating the strategic themes into departmental business plans, budgets, work plans. Additionally, a reporting and performance methodology will be developed, outlining a set of key performance indicators. A communication plan has been developed to support a two-phase launch of the Strategic Plan, with a focus of launching the plan after endorsement of this report, with a broader internal launch once the plan has been incorporated into our annual business planning approach.

Financial Impact

The initiatives that are reflected within the proposed four-year practical vision have largely been considered in the Town's existing budget and forecast, along with the Town's fiscal impact study. Based on the prioritization process undertaken as part of the strategic planning process, the timing that was previously reflected may require adjustment. In some instances, additional or new costing information may also be required to ensure that Council's expectations are achieved.

Appendix B is attached, and provides capital and operating budget implications in relation to the strategic imperatives, where feasible, and based on the information that is available



at this time. In many instances, these estimates will be further refined as the projects proceed to more detailed phases of implementation.

The initiatives that are expected to require a notable capital investment during the four-year period include the transit maintenance facility, the civic precinct and a number of investments technology enhancements. These same items will also result in operating budget and property tax rate impacts, as will several of the other anticipated investments in services envisioned in the plan.

In the short term, the Town's most recent approved budget projected pressure on the Town's local property tax rate of 8.24% and 7.64% in 2024 and 2025, respectively. Since the time of those projections, further financial pressures has been identified in relation to inflationary pressure on services and infrastructure as well as legislative changes such as increases to the minimum wage. As such, in order to progress on priority items during this term of Council, further growth in the Town's property tax rates and/or the deferral or cancelation of other projected investments may be required.

In the longer term, the most recent fiscal impact study projected the gradual reduction in the Town's infrastructure funding deficit over a 20-year period, and continuation of the existing service levels during that timeframe. Expansion of services, including a new transit facility, civic precinct and investments in technology were all incorporated into that projection. The results showed an average annual property tax increase of 5.5% during the first ten years and 4.3% per year overall. These average amounts may be higher due to the recent spike in inflationary pressures, but overall are not expected to be materially affected by the priorities that have been confirmed through the strategic planning process.

Respectfully submitted,

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For questions, please contact: Andy Scott

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Attachments

Appendix A – Strategic Plan Vision, Themes and Imperatives Document

Appendix B – Estimated Financial Impacts

Approved by CAO
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer



Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.