



## AGENDA ITEM REPORT

**Meeting:** Regular Meeting of Council, Operations - 16 Jun 2021  
**To:** Members of Council  
**From:** David Stewart, CAO/Treasurer  
**Department:** Administration  
**Subject:** Hastings Highlands Strategic Plan (2019-2023) Update 3

### Recommendation:

That Council accepts this report "Hastings Highlands Strategic Plan (2019-2023) Update 3" as submitted by the CAO/Treasurer, as information only.

### Origin:

Welcome Home is how we want our residents and visitors to feel about Hastings Highlands.

The Municipal Strategic Plan has been developed to guide Council and Staff into the future (2019-2023). It will be the focus over the next several years. It includes Guiding Principles that will influence decisions and actions. It also includes 4 Strategic Priorities and specific Actions under each.

### Background information:

The Hastings Highlands Strategic Plan 2019 to 2023 was approved by Council on November 20, 2019. The plan sets out the following:

- A vision statement
- A mission statement
- Three (3) Guiding principles
- Four (4) strategic priorities
- Sixteen (16) goals
- Thirty-three (33) action items

As part of the municipality's strategic plan, Council has requested a report regularly on the strategic plan implementation process.

A strategic plan update; including a summary of actions completed to date is below for Council to review. This update has been completed in consultation with members of the municipality's leadership team.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1 – FINANCIAL STABILITY**

### Goal: Maintain a Competitive Tax Rate

Action – Complete an alternative revenues study so that the municipality is prepared for the future in the event that intergovernmental aid is reduced

- In 2021, Council approved a 0.94% municipal tax rate increase in 2021.

### Goal: Promote Assessment Growth

Action – Undertake a review of the zoning bylaw with an eye to the future and building our community

- The update to the municipality's zoning bylaw is presently ongoing. The milestone dates are below: Revised Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw draft – 1st reading March 31 - (Public/Council meeting) – public comments on 1st reading up to April 30 - 2nd reading June 2 - (Public/Council meeting) – public comments on 2nd reading up to Jun 30 - 3rd reading July 21 - (Public/council meeting).
- The municipality's zoning bylaw must align with the Provincial Policy Statement and the Hastings County Official Plan.

### Goal: Maximize Resources

Action – Explore opportunities to sell unused assets such as land, buildings and facilities

- Council has approved a sale of surplus municipal land policy that deals with the sale of unused assets such as land, buildings and facilities and has actively listed and sold properties using this policy tool.
- Staff is considering a brainstorming session with Council to determine a priority list of properties Council is interested in selling. This would help create efficiencies so that ongoing preparation work could be completed.

### Goal: Increase Non Tax Revenue through Government Grants

Action – Investigate having an expert grant writing resource(s) available to research and respond to government grant application programs

- In 2020, Council approved an agreement with GrantMatch to act as the Municipality's expert grant writing agent. GrantMatch is an organization that develops and manages government funding application processes, including grant identification, funding matching, grant strategy development, funding application development and writing. Their services are on an ad-hoc, as needed basis and no funds are paid out for their services until Non-Tax Revenue through Government Grants are successfully received by the Municipality.
- Staff is in the process of preparing a report that will contain a list of 'grant ready' projects to be pre-approved by Council. This pre-approved list of projects will help staff with submissions when grant funding programs are announced. Often there are short turnarounds required so this will serve to streamline the process for staff and Council.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2 – RATIONALIZE INFRASTRUCTURE**

### Goal: Maintain Roads and Bridges

Action – Implement Hastings Highlands Road 62 revitalization plan

- In 2020, Over 5.7 kms of Hastings Highlands Road 62 was revitalized including downtown Maynooth. New road, storm sewers, guiderails, sidewalks, curbs were just some of the road enhancements completed.

- In terms of Hastings Highlands Road 62 Revitalization Plan Next Steps; The pre-engineering and pre-construction tender package for the next section of Hastings Highlands 62 from Robinson/Koss Road to Papineau Creek bridge (approximately 6.8 kms) has been completed. As a result, this section is classified as "shovel ready" in anticipation for any Federal and Provincial Infrastructure funding streams or should Council be interested in including this project in a future capital budget.
- In 2021, Council approved the Cost Evaluation to Complete Hastings Highlands Road 62 Report. This report will assist the Municipality with lobbying senior government partners for additional funding to complete the next steps in the plan.
- In 2021, a letter was sent to the Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Provincial Minister of Infrastructure and the Warden and Council of Hastings County to request immediate financial support to proceed with the revitalization of HH Road 62 (Formerly Provincial Highway 62).
- Presentation/delegation requests to speak to Cabinet Ministers on the Municipality's Hastings Highlands Road 62 Plan are ongoing and often take place at municipal associations conferences held twice per year.

Action – Review, refine and implement Road Needs Study

- In 2020, Council approved the 2021-2025 Roads Needs Plan which was developed alongside the Municipality's asset management planning efforts compiling data from each road in the Municipality's roads network. The development of the next five (5) year Roads Plan is crucial to continue with the progress that has been made to date by implementing the previous plan.

#### Goal: Maintain Buildings and Facilities

Action – Implement the municipal building and facility strategic plan

- Council continues to review and implement recommendations contained within the building and facility strategic plan. In 2021, Council approved \$200,000 to fund the reserve for building capital expenses to assist with funding future building and facility needs.

#### Goal: Be Stewards of Municipal Assets

Action – Regularly update the municipality's asset management plan

- In 2021, parts of the Municipality's Asset Management Plan will be updated to comply with Ontario Regulation 588/17. Every municipality shall prepare an asset management plan in respect of its core municipal infrastructure assets by July 1, 2021, and in respect of all of its other municipal infrastructure assets by July 1, 2023. NOTE - Due to Covid-19 challenges the Ministry of Infrastructure has extended deadlines as follows: July 1, 2022 – plans are required for core municipal assets, July 1, 2024 – plans are required for all municipal assets and July 1, 2025 – plans are required to include service levels and their appropriateness; a lifecycle management and financial strategy; funding sources and needs; and other assumptions.

#### Goal: Fire Services Plan

Action – Update establishing and regulatory bylaw

- In 2020, Council updated its establishing regulatory bylaw as part of the fire services plan.

Action – Complete a review of fire services

- The Municipal Fire Task Force Ad Hoc Committee has approved the Draft Master Fire Plan for the Fire Services and it will be read up to three separate times by Council on the pathway to approval.

Action – Develop a viability plan

- The Municipal Fire Task Force Ad Hoc Committee has approved the Draft Master Fire Plan for the Fire Services and it will be read up to three separate times by Council on the pathway to approval.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3 – BUILD OUR COMMUNITY**

#### Goal: Affordable Housing

Action – Investigate opportunities for tiny homes

- Select Members of Council have been appointed to take the lead on this initiative 'Housing Action Plan – Tiny Homes' with a focus on the seniors demographic. A further investigation will be completed by the Municipal Planner once the Municipality's zoning bylaw update is complete.
- Council has approved adjustments to municipal zoning to permit Tiny Homes being constructed in Hastings Highlands.

Action – Create an investment package to attract future development

- In 2019, Council applied for a rural economic development grant to create capacity to accomplish this task, however, the grant application was unsuccessful. As a result of the unsuccessful application, no further action has been taken on this item.

#### Goal: Enhance the Quality of Life

Action – Develop a community safety and well-being plan in partnership with other municipalities

- Hastings Highlands has worked on this with other municipalities and a finalized plan is will be ready to come before Council shortly.

Action – Strengthen recreation programming

- The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has placed an indefinite hold on this action item until public health measures improve.
- Municipal staff are preparing a programming continuity plan for select municipal facilities if the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic is still a concerning factor for winter 2021–2022. As an example, if permitted to open under public health, a continuity plan to open outdoor rink facilities will be prepared in consultation with the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) and approved by Council.

Action – Improve and promote programming at municipal facilities

- The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has indefinitely postponed programming at municipal facilities. Once public health measures improve, a plan to safely re-open municipal facilities will commence.

#### Goal: Care for the Environment

Action – Develop and implement a flood response plan

- The Community Emergency Management Coordinator(s) will be working on this action item in 2022

Action – Investigate a septic inspection program

- Presentations/delegations have been made to the provincial government on this topic area.
- The Building Department's 'home page' on the municipal website has been updated to include educational resources and videos on this topic.
- The Chief Building Official authored a report to Council in 2019 with options as part of the investigate a septic inspection program. Further reports are on hold at the present time. This is due to the building services department being in the busy/peak construction season.

Action – Improve water quality within lakes located in Hastings Highlands through implementing water quality impact tests

- In an effort to care for the environment, Council has approved implementing water quality impact tests as a document to be registered on title.
- Council continues to investigate ways to improve shoreline health in Hastings Highlands through education, policy development and manageable enforcement. Presently there is a working group consisting of Council Members, Hastings County staff and Hastings Highlands staff who are working on this investigation.

#### Goal: Succession Planning

Action – Create deputy department head positions in a timely manner in an effort to train/nurture them for key leadership positions

- Council has approved the creation of deputy department head positions in a timely manner to address succession planning needs.
- In 2021, the Municipality won a national award through the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) for its succession planning program implemented to date.
- Municipal staff will continue to plan and establish plans for succession on an ongoing basis.

#### Goal: Leaders in Waste Management

Action – Research and implement alternative solutions to waste management

- The Waste Management Committee is actively researching and implementing alternative solutions to waste management. A Waste Optimization Study was completed in 2020.

Action – Educate stakeholders on waste and recycling management practices in the province.

- The Chair of the Waste Management Committee has met with the Ministry of the Environment to request for funding to educate stakeholders on waste and recycle management practices in the province.

Action – Develop and implement a waste management plan to address the need to significantly downsize waste sites.

- The Waste Management Committee has reviewed the Waste Management Optimization study and has recommended to Council not to downsize or close any waste sites.
- Council has updated select waste user fees so that cost recovery is being maintained for select user pay waste services.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITY #4 – EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND GOVERNANCE**

#### Goal: Build a Strong Customer Service Culture

Action – Provide a resource designated to promote and implement exceptional and quality customer service

- In 2020, Council approved a new resource portal designed to promote and implement exceptional and quality customer service. As part of the new portal was a series of four (4) new policy governance tools to enhance the municipality's customer service experience and create a more consistent experience for all customers.
- In 2021, the municipality created an online community engagement site - 'Have Your Say Hastings Highlands'. This platform allows the public to share ideas to help shape municipal decisions on projects, policies and initiatives that are important to the community.

Action – Implement a customer service management system

- In 2020, a new customer service management system was implemented for Hastings Highlands as part of the municipality's goal of building a strong customer service culture.

## Goal: Plan and Implement Emergency Management

Action – Ensure compliance with applicable legislation in community emergency management and planning

- In 2020, Council approved the appointment of the roles of Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) and two (2) Alternate Community Emergency Management Coordinator's.
- In 2021, the Municipality Municipal Emergency Plan will be updated to ensure up-to-date compliance with the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

Action – Strengthen our safety and security protocols at municipal buildings and facilities.

- An emergency station has been set up outside the Council chambers that contains a defibrillator, first aid kit along with the municipality's emergency management plan.
- New safety measures have been installed at the Hastings Highlands Centre to address public health, safety, security, and well-being while complying with public health and safety guidelines.
- The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) has been restructured and additional staff have been certified in provincial legislation to strengthen corporate safety and security of municipal employees in the workplace.

Action – Complete regular Hastings Highlands Centre building evacuation drills and emergency management exercises

- Fire Services in coordination with the Municipality's Community Emergency Planning Coordinator or designate will be planning regular Hastings Highlands Centre building evacuation drills.
- The Community Emergency Management Coordinator or designate will be working with the Field Officer from the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management to conduct provincially mandated emergency management exercises.

## Goal: Strengthen Performance Management and Accountability for Results Across the Organization

Action – Ensure employees are supported with relevant tools, knowledge and skills to deliver on the community strategic plan

- CAO has been utilizing regular staff meetings to introduce policy and procedure changes as well as offer any supportive resources or training staff may require for enhancing individual skill sets to strengthen performance management and accountability across the organization.
- CAO is instituting regular personal development sessions with department heads in 2021 to strengthen performance management. CAO is hopeful that department heads will implement similar regular personal and professional development sessions with staff throughout the organization. Note that these regular personal and professional development sessions do not replace annual performance evaluations, they are in addition to.

Action – Invest in/support the professional development of both staff and council to improve service and support

- Both staff and Council members have had the opportunity to attend professional development sessions through professional municipal government associations and world-renowned leadership institutions the last few years. This culture will continue in 2021 and beyond to improve service and support.
- CAO has arranged a virtual training session for Council and select staff for August 11, 2021. Topics include: The Importance of Good Governance, The Legal and Policy Framework and Leading Together.

Action – Ensure both staff and council live by their signed code of conduct

- Legal and Policy Framework will form part of the Council Training agenda scheduled for August 11, 2021.

Action – Make decisions as a Municipality as a whole and not as wards

- Council approved the rebranding of Hastings Highlands Fire Service stations and vehicles that eliminated municipal boundaries.
- Council Vacancy Policy was updated to remove reference to Wards.

Action – Report regularly on the Community Strategic Plan implementation process

- First update report – June 17, 2020 by CAO/Treasurer
- Second update report – November 18, 2020 by CAO/Treasurer
- Third update report - June 16, 2021 by CAO/Treasurer

### **Additional Notes**

Municipal staff have made significant progress to improve the municipality's technology ecosystem so that the public can watch Hastings Highlands Council Meetings anytime and anywhere. The addition of live streamed meetings and the municipality's YouTube channel are recent examples of modernizing municipal government in Hastings Highlands.

At this time, the CAO/Treasurer would encourage Council to have a brief informal discussion around outstanding priority items within the approved strategic plan, so that the CAO/Treasurer can be updated on where to mobilize resources to ensure Council's targets are being achieved.

### **Financial impact:**

Not Applicable

### **Link to strategic plan:**

Strategic Priority #4 - Exceptional Service and Governance

Goal: Strengthen Performance Management and Accountability for Results Across the Organization

Action: Report regularly on the Community Strategic Plan implementation process

### **References:**

Not Applicable

### **Prepared By:**

David Stewart, CAO/Treasurer

**Reviewed By:** Municipal Clerk June 1, 2021

**Reviewed By:** CAO/Treasurer June 9, 2021