



Hastings Highlands

Beautiful By Nature

Hastings Highlands Community Strategic Plan 2019–2023 Update #4

The Municipality’s strategic plan is on the home page of the website and displayed in council chambers for members of Council, Staff, and Stakeholders to see daily.

Our **Vision Statement**:

“An enviable community, with a progressive vision and financial stability, prepared for the future.”

The municipality’s vision statement appears in staff email signatures, on the reverse of business cards, on the wall in Council Chambers and now on Council and Committee Agendas.

Our **Mission Statement**:

“To provide a community that is Beautiful by Nature for all residents and visitors to thrive, prosper and enjoy life.”

Our **Guiding Principles**:

- We Care
- We’re All In This Together
- Welcome Home

The municipality’s guiding principles appear on the reverse of business cards and on the wall in Council Chambers. CAO refers to these frequently when communicating with municipal employees and stakeholders.



Our **Strategic Priorities:**

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.
 - No summary of action is available for this update.

- **Goal: Promote Assessment Growth**
 - **Action – Undertake a review of the zoning bylaw with an eye to the future and building our community.**
 - In 2021, the municipality's zoning bylaw was updated and approved by Council. The updated bylaw has since been revoked by Council due to a staff error in providing proper notice under *The Planning Act*. The planning team is in the process of working through two new separate amendments to the municipality's pre-existing zoning bylaw to make sure that it aligns with the Provincial Policy Statement and the Hastings County Official Plan. Expected completion is 2022.

- **Goal: Maximize Resources**
 - **Action – Explore opportunities to sell unused assets such as land, buildings and facilities.**
 - In 2020, Council approved a sale of surplus municipal land policy that addresses the sale of unused assets such as land, buildings and facilities and has actively listed and sold properties using this policy tool.

- **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.



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. This plan is costed annually through the municipality's capital budget.

➤ **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 2022, the Municipality’s Asset Management Plan will be updated to comply with Ontario Regulation 588/17. 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 regulatory bylaw.

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

Action – Complete a review of fire services.

- In 2021, a Master Fire Plan for the Fire Services was passed in principle by Council.

Action – Develop a viability plan.

- In 2021, a Master Fire Plan for the Fire Services was passed in principle by Council.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3 – BUILD OUR COMMUNITY

➤ Goal: Affordable Housing

Action – Investigate opportunities for tiny homes.

- In 2021, Mayor Hagar along with Councillor Matheson and representatives from the Economic Development Team at Hastings County met regularly to investigate opportunities for tiny homes.
- In 2022, Mayor Hagar and Councillor Matheson will be updating Council via a report on the proposed Housing Action Plan – Tiny Homes

Action – Create an investment package to attract future development.

- No summary of action is available for this update.

➤ Goal: Enhance the Quality of Life

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

- In 2021, Council approved the community safety and well-being plan in principle that was created in partnership with other municipalities in Hastings County through a coordinating committee. The coordinating committee is still meeting to revise the plan and an updated plan will be presented to Council in 2022.

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 have prepared continuity plans for recreation programming at select municipal facilities while following public health guidelines.

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.

- In 2019, the Chief Building Official authored a report to Council for information on the topic of investigating a septic inspection program.
- In 2020, the building department updated their home page on the municipality's website to include educational resources and videos on this topic.



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

- 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.
- In 2021, the working group invited experts/professionals in the field of water and shoreline health to provide Expert Talks/Presentations to Council to help the working group build/create an educational information tool by spring 2022 that would be provided to contractors and real estate agents on existing regulations for maintain shoreline health. The working group acknowledges that Hastings Highlands is a lake based economy with six (6) cold water at capacity lakes that must be given a responsible level of consideration in order to be stewards of the lakes. Shoreline health is a primary consideration when making decisions in the municipality.
- In 2021, Council approved a new user fee for a silt fence deposit for building permits issued within 30 meters of a water body that is refunded once proof of the silt fence installation is satisfactory to the municipality.

➤ **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.
- In 2022, 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.

- In 2020 and 2021, the Chair of the Waste Management Committee met with the Ministry of the Environment to request for funding to educate stakeholders on waste and recycle management practices in the province.



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

- In 2020, the Waste Management Committee reviewed the Waste Management Optimization study and has recommended to Council not to downsize or close any waste sites.
- In 2021, Council 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.
- In 2021, more municipal departments started plugging into the system as we continue to build the program.

➤ **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, Council updated the municipality's emergency management program and emergency management response plan 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.

- In 2020, an emergency station has been set up outside the Council chambers that contains a defibrillator, first aid kit along with the municipality's emergency response plan.
- In 2021, enhanced 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.
- In 2021, the Joint Health and Safety Committee 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.

- The Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) or Alternate 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.
- CAO continues to ensure that investments are made into providing the team with the materials and equipment they need to do their work has been demonstrated as we continue to successfully manage through the Covid-19 pandemic by way of the municipality's business continuity plan all while still checking important action items off the corporate strategic plan and meeting the evolving day to day customer demands.

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

- In 2020 and 2021 Both staff and Council members have had the opportunity to attend professional development sessions through professional municipal government associations and world-renowned leadership institutions in the last few years. This culture will continue in 2022 and beyond to improve service and support.
- In 2021, the CAO arranged a virtual training session for Council and select staff. Topics included: The Importance of Good Governance, The Legal and Policy Framework and Leading Together.
- In 2021, the CAO received Council's support for four (4) designated team building/development and wellness days to support staff and improve service.



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

- In 2021, Council received updated training on Good Governance.

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

- In 2020, Council approved the rebranding of Hastings Highlands Fire Service stations and vehicles that eliminated municipal boundaries.
- In 2020, Council Vacancy Policy was updated to remove reference to Wards.

Action – Report regularly on the Community Strategic Plan implementation process.

- Fourth update report – June 19, 2022, by CAO