

► Council Strategic Plan

2019-2022

Town of Smithers



Prepared by:

CENTRE for
SUSTAINABILITY
WHISTLER

Town of
Smithers
BRITISH COLUMBIA CANADA

Council Strategic Plan

Message from Mayor and Council

On behalf of Smithers Town Council, I'm pleased to present our Strategic Priorities for 2019-2022. They are the outcome of a planning retreat held March 28-29, 2019.

Strategic Priorities are key initiatives Council feels will move our community forward. They cover a wide range of topics and they have been chosen with the long-term well-being of our community in mind. While this Strategic Plan describes Council's key Strategic Priorities, please note that it does not represent an exhaustive list of all the projects the Town will complete over this term. There are many activities that fall under normal Town operations and still others that will emerge over the coming years.

Council and I are committed to making this a living document. Through our Standing Committee on Strategic Priorities we will be periodically evaluating our progress and making adjustments where necessary. We welcome your feedback.

In closing I'd like to thank the Town's senior staff members for their collaboration and feedback throughout the strategic priorities process. Their professionalism, dedication and hard work will be essential in realizing our ambitious goals.

Taylor Bachrach
Mayor



Introduction

At the end of March, 2019, Council and senior management convened for a day and a half in a strategic planning workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to identify the Strategic Priorities that Council wished to focus on during their Council term, 2019-2022. Council first established the following six Focus Areas, which describe the range of community systems that we are responsible for, and that we wish to take leadership on. While each of these Focus Areas describe a specific community topic, they are inter-connected, and many initiatives are related to more than one Focus Area. The six Focus Areas are:



In order to identify the Strategic Priorities for the Council term, Council first discussed “Where do we want to go?” by crafting a clear goal for each Focus Area, and together with senior management, articulated a set of ‘descriptions of success’ that describe what success would look like if the goal of each Focus Area was achieved.

Council and senior management also discussed “Where are we now?” by identifying the key assets/positive factors and challenges/negative factors that may have an impact on the community, and that need to be addressed through strategic planning initiatives. Once a clear picture of the goals, descriptions of success and key positive and negative factors were determined, Council and staff then identified the strategic initiatives to be undertaken.

In June, Council and senior staff met again to review and refine the draft strategic priorities.

A snapshot of where we are now

The Town of Smithers is a friendly community with many natural and built assets. It is walkable and bikeable with a vibrant and unique downtown. A strong economy, including a strong resource sector, and key services, are important assets for our community. The beautiful mountain setting, engaged and passionate citizens and volunteers, a thriving arts scene and an entrepreneurial spirit make it a desirable community for residents to stay generation after generation, as well as for the growing number of visitors who are discovering Smithers for first time, or coming back time after time.

At the same time, while Smithers is the regional hub for many services, the high airfares and limited carriers makes it challenging to move around. There is a lack in diversity of housing, including rental, multi-family, and seniors’ housing. Air quality can be very poor at times of the year. There is a concern that some services will be lost to bigger centres, and big box stores threaten the independent businesses downtown. An infrastructure deficit with no increase in tax base is an ongoing concern. Recruiting and retaining staff is also a challenge experienced by the Town as well as the community as a whole.

Considering these main assets and challenges, and the articulated goals and descriptions of success, Council and senior staff identified the Strategic Priorities that they will focus on over the course of the Council term, organized by each Focus Area.

Our Economy

Goal: Foster and enhance a diverse and vibrant economy

Descriptions of Success

- We have a highly skilled workforce that is tooled up for the 21st century, we have enough people to fill jobs, and our unemployment rate is low
- Our community maintains its current business mix, and also has a number of new businesses, including local commercial and light industrial
- Our service centre, including the airport, has expanded
- There is greater control and circulation of local capital due to increased local ownership of businesses
- Effective succession planning has created a good age mix in the business community
- Our average household income is high, and residents are not living in poverty
- The commercial vacancy downtown is low

Strategic Priorities

1. Improve the long-term viability of the airport.

- Restore RDBN capital funding for airport
- Upgrade airport water system
- Achieve competitive air fares

2. Improve housing affordability and diversity in the community.

- Undertake housing needs study (including an inventory of existing plans/groups)
- Apply for and manage incentives for building rental housing (through NDI)
- Create a housing task force
- Secure provincial land between Broadway and Willowvale
- Encourage infill small-lot development, secondary suites and carriage houses
- Pursue remediation of the LB Warner site

3. Increase community economic development.

- Create a Community Economic Development Strategy
- Lobby Province to include Smithers in Resort Municipality Initiative Program

Community Livability

Goal: Continue to make Smithers a place where people want to live and visit

Descriptions of Success

- We have a range of housing that is adequate and affordable along economic and demographic spectrums
- Our population remains stable among all ages, or has increased, while maintaining a smalltown feel
- Visitor numbers are growing each year
- Our downtown is vibrant and strong, with an increased diversity of services
- We have a strong mix of amenities for all ages
- Cultural expression in the town is increasing, and is increasingly diverse
- Our drinking water is clean, safe and untreated
- The air is clean and our airshed is healthy

Strategic Priorities

4. Enhance vitality of downtown, including Central Park.

- Develop a Central Park Plan
- Implement Downtown Landscape Plan
- Develop programming for Bovill Square
- Plant street trees on downtown side streets
- Continue all-ages accessibility upgrades
- Replace trees lost on Town-owned properties

5. Enhance community life, culture and recreation.

- Complete the redevelopment of the Chandler Park fields
- Build new Library-Gallery building
- Develop a Recreation and Parks Master Plan
- Update the Official Community Plan (OCP).

6. Increase and facilitate active transportation.

- Implement Active Transportation Plan
- Support Cycle 16 bike trail to Telkwa

7. Update Smithers' Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw

Environmental Responsibility

Goal: Protect our natural environment and resources by reducing our waste, pollution and footprint

Descriptions of Success

- Water entering the river is clean
- The number of air advisory days is minimal
- Our community is no longer on the provincial bad air quality list
- Storm and sanitary sewer have been separated
- Greenhouse gas emission reductions have met targets
- There is more park space
- Waste is reduced
- There are more trees throughout the community
- Recycling services and compliance are increased

Strategic Priorities

8. Reduce corporate greenhouse gases and facilitate the reduction of community greenhouse gases.

- Update 2012 greenhouse gas emissions reduction plans
- Facilitate Energy Step Code training for local builders
- Phase in electric vehicles for Town fleet
- Implement energy efficiency upgrades at Civic Centre and Arena-Pool heat reclamation

Our Relationship with the Wet'suwet'en

Goal: Continue to enhance our relationship with the Wet'suwet'en

Descriptions of Success

- The protocol agreement between the Town and the Wet'suwet'en has been renewed
- Members of government meet more frequently, and community to community meetings occur more frequently
- Channels of communication between the Town and the Wet'suwet'en are open
- Visibility of First Nations culture in town is increased
- Indigenous people feel safe and welcome in our community

Strategic Priorities

9. Work with the Wet'suwet'en peoples to strengthen relationships and collaborate on opportunities.

- Renew, maintain and respect protocol agreement
- Create a permanent commemoration of Indiantown
- Create forums for Council to better understand reconciliation

Asset Management

Goal: Responsibly manage our municipal infrastructure over the long-term

Descriptions of Success

- All decisions are guided by our asset management plan, and new assets are evaluated from a life-cycle cost perspective
- Residents have equal access to the town's assets
- Kilometres of repaved surfaces is increased
- Natural assets are accounted for in asset management
- Our asset planning and management is Innovative and future proof

Strategic Priorities

10. Develop and implement a long-term asset management plan for all Town assets

- Incorporate asset management recommendations for water, sewer, storm and roads into 5-year capital budget
- Develop asset management plan for Town-owned buildings
- Identify buildings for potential divestment
- Develop a Council Asset Management Policy
- Develop a communications strategy for asset literacy
- Develop a strategy for managing legacy funds in perpetuity

11. Undertake priority infrastructure renewal projects

- Complete South Trunk Storm Sewer project
- Complete river bank erosion study

12. Enhance financial planning for capital assets

- Identify funding sources and strengthen financial reserves
- Transition from 5-year to 10-year capital financial plans

Organizational Effectiveness

Goal: Create an effective and accountable organization with strong governance structures

Descriptions of Success

- Employee/staff retention is high, within Town Hall as well as in community businesses
- Staff are happy and satisfied
- The community is satisfied with the service from the Town
- We are an adaptable and resilient organization
- We have strong relations and communications with other governments (including the RD)
- Communication between staff and Council is good
- Our residents are informed

Strategic Priorities

13. Strengthen organizational effectiveness and culture.

- Strengthen performance measures process
- Provide opportunities for good communication and collaboration between council and staff
- Initiate succession planning strategies

14. Increase communication and engagement with residents

- Complete a community engagement strategy
- Develop a system for tracking resident inquiries/satisfaction
- Build a new Town website
- Adopt social media policy
- Adopt communications policy

	2019	2020	2021	2022
A. ECONOMY				
1. Improve Long-term Viability of the Airport				
Restore RDBN capital funding for airport				
Upgrade airport water system				
Achieve competitive air fares				
2. Improve housing affordability and diversity in the community				
Undertake housing needs study (including an inventory of existing plans/groups)				
Apply for and manage incentives for building rental housing (through NDIT)				
Create a housing task force				
Secure provincial land between Broadway and Willowvale				
Encourage infill small-lot development, secondary suites and carriage houses				
Pursue remediation of the LB Warner site				
3. Increase Community Economic Development				
Create a Community Economic Development Strategy				
Lobby Province to include Smithers in Resort Municipality Program				
B. COMMUNITY LIVABILITY				
4. Enhance vitality of downtown, including Central Park				
Develop a Central Park Plan				
Implement Downtown Landscape Plan				
Develop programming for Bovill Square				
Plant street trees on downtown side streets				
Continue all-ages accessibility upgrades				
Replace trees lost on Town-owned properties				
5. Enhance culture and recreation facilities and programming				
Complete the redevelopment of Chandler Park playing fields				
Build new Library-Gallery building				
Develop a Recreation and Parks Master Plan				
6. Increase and facilitate active transportation				
Implement Active Transportation Plan				
Support Cycle 16 bike trail to Telkwa				
7. Update Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw				
C. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY				
8. Reduce corporate greenhouse gases and facilitate reduction of community greenhouse gases				
Update 2012 greenhouse gas emissions reduction plans				
Facilitate Energy Step Code training for local builders				

Phase in electric vehicles for Town fleet				
Energy efficiency upgrades at Civic Centre and Arena-Pool heat reclaim				
D. RELATIONSHIP WITH WET'SUWET'EN				
9. Work with the Wet'suwet'en to strengthen relationships and collaborate on opportunities				
Renew, maintain and respect protocol agreement				
Create a permanent commemoration of Indiantown				
Create forums for Council to better understand reconciliation				
E. ASSET MANAGEMENT				
10. Develop and implement a long-term asset management plan for all Town assets				
Incorporate asset management recommendations for water, sewer, storm and roads into 5-year capital budget				
Develop asset management plan for Town-owned buildings				
Identify buildings for potential divestment				
Develop a Council Asset Management Policy				
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Develop a strategy for managing legacy funds in perpetuity				
11. Undertake priority infrastructure renewal projects				
Complete South Trunk Storm Sewer project				
Complete river bank erosion study				
12. Enhance Financial Planning for capital assets				
Identify funding sources and strengthen financial reserves				
Transition from 5-year to 10-year capital financial plans				
F. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS				
13. Strengthen organizational effectiveness and culture				
Strengthen performance measures process				
Provide opportunities for good communication and collaboration between council/staff				
Initiate succession planning strategies				
14. Increase communication and engagement with citizens				
Complete a citizen engagement strategy				
Develop a system for tracking resident inquiries/satisfaction				
Build a new Town website				
Adopt social media policy				
Adopt communications policy				