



Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Perth South

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Summary

Why A Strategic Plan?

Strategic plans are the most important documents that municipalities produce. They define the future direction of the municipality and guide its progress in getting there. Strategic plans are about change, and realizing the desired future of the organization. They identify what is important, and provide a basis for making decisions and choices about what to do, and about what not to do.

This strategic plan has been developed to provide a strategic direction for the Township of Perth South for the 2019-2022 period. It defines the direction for the municipality, and links with the strategic plans of the other member municipalities and Perth County.

Where It Came From

This is the second time that strategic plans have been developed by all of the municipalities within Perth County. The first set of strategic plans were developed for the period of 2012-2017. Development of this strategic plan was initiated in 2018 to define a long-term vision for the municipality, and to focus the strategic priorities of the municipality in the coming term.

Perth County and the four member municipalities chose to continue with a collaborative approach to strategic planning. This allows each municipality to set its own direction. It also allows creation of opportunities for collaboration, sharing and partnership opportunities between municipalities and within the County as a whole.

How It Was Built

These strategic plans were built based on a great deal of consultation and input. This included interviews, workshops and engagement sessions with in each municipality, including with:

- The public, businesses and community and service groups (online and in person).
- Outgoing and current Councils.
- Leadership teams and staff.

The content of each strategic plan is developed based on this input. This strategic plan reflects the aspirations and desires of the community, the political direction of Council and the needs of each corporation.



What It Contains

This strategic plan is intended to be an accessible, understandable and complete picture of the strategic priorities of Perth South. On the coming pages, you will find the following sections:

- **Municipal Overview.** An overview of the municipality, its structure and the services it provides, along with how those services align with other levels of government serving the community.
- **Strategic Priorities.** The enduring priorities of the municipality, including the mission, vision, community values and corporate values that define Perth South.
- **Strategic Plan.** A discussion of the overall goals—and the corresponding priorities and actions—that are of particular focus in the coming years.
- **Getting It All Done.** An overview of how the work of the strategic plan will be done, and how progress against the plan will be assessed and reported.

Municipal Overview

About

The Township of Perth South is a lower-tier municipality within Perth County, located in south-western Ontario. The municipality has a population of 3,810 and is 393 square kilometres in size.

Our Structure

The municipality is governed by a Mayor, Deputy Mayor and five councillors. Councillors are elected at large, and represent the municipality as a whole. The current Council was elected to office in October 2018.

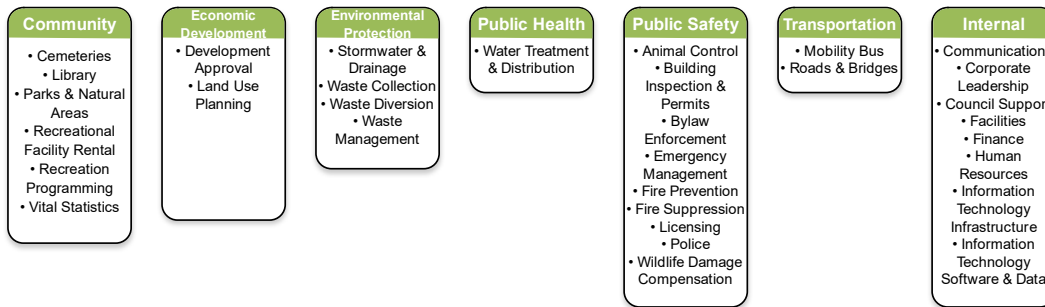
Municipal staff are responsible for running the corporation and delivering the services of the municipality in support of the direction of Council. The municipality is led by a Treasurer/Deputy Clerk/Administrator, and consists of the following departments.

- Administration
- Building
- Drainage
- Planning & Bylaw Enforcement
- Property Taxes & Finance
- Public Works

Our Services

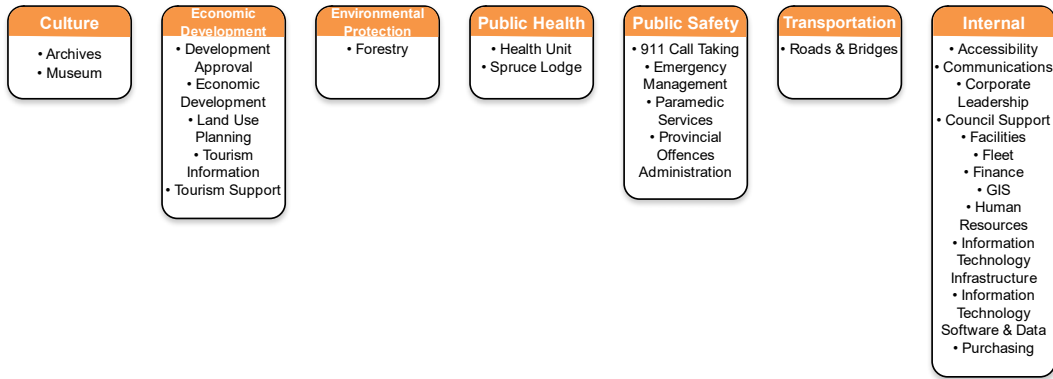
Services That We Deliver

Services delivered directly by Perth South for the benefit of residents are outlined in the following chart:



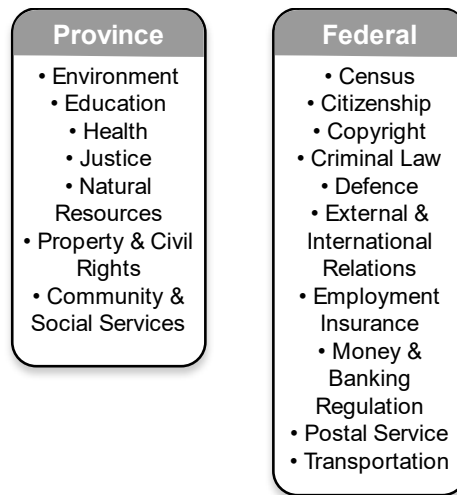
Services From Perth County

Services delivered by Perth County and provided for the benefit of all municipalities and residents within the County are outlined in the following chart:



Services From Other Levels Of Government

Services that are provided at the provincial and federal level include:



Our Strategic Priorities

Mission

Perth South is a progressive agricultural community that offers quiet country living and pastoral landscapes with robust, productive farmlands. The community is highly innovative, strongly entrepreneurial and staunchly agricultural while remaining tightly connected to the rest of the world through exceptional technology and transportation linkages. Residents are proud of their community, respectful of each other and dedicated to the long-term success of Perth South. Neighbours look after neighbours, community service is an essential value and stewardship of the land is a fundamental trust.

Vision

We are small, but we have ambition.

We are open to change. We want to keep the identity that we have, we want to maintain that identity and we want to build and maintain a community that people value.

Keeping that community means keeping the local feel that we value. It particularly means retaining and protecting our productive agricultural lands. And it means keeping the community involved in the community.

We want to promote entrepreneurship, and do so by leveraging the strengths that we have. That includes promoting on-farm business and agri-tourism.

We want to keep our youth, and keep attracting young families. That means keeping the school access that makes our community attractive to them.

We want our residents to experience exceptional service. We have staff that go the extra mile, and we want to keep that. We want to demonstrate what exceptional municipal leadership looks like.

To be successful in all that, we need to work together. We want to collaborate and pursue partnerships wherever there is a willingness to collaborate and pursue partnerships.

We also want to grow, but to grow responsibly, where growth happens at a level that we can manage and that we can sustain.

Community Values

Community values highlighted during the strategic planning engagement process are:

- Community. There is a long-term commitment and sense of belonging within the community.
- Entrepreneurism. We are an independent and innovative community where entrepreneurship thrives.

- Independence. We are private and safe community that values or independence and quality of life.
- Collaboration. We work well with those around us and are open to change.
- Respect. We are a respectful and supportive community where everyone is valued equally, from children to seniors.
- Supportive. We take care of each other, help each other in times of need and support the life of the community.
- Location. We are centrally located and close to essential services, while still retaining our rural lifestyle.
- Agriculture. We are a strong agricultural community with exceptional productive farm lands.

Corporate Values

Corporate values highlighted during the strategic planning process are:

- Responsive. We have excellent, skilled and supportive staff that are responsive to the needs of the community.
- Service Oriented. We strive to provide excellent service and exceptional customer service.
- Collaborative. We are open to collaboration in ensuring that we effectively deliver services to the community.
- Fiscally Responsible. We are cost effective, prudent and restrained in how we invest and spend our financial resources.
- Effective. We are a small, streamlined, efficient and well-run municipality that delivers services well.
- Resourceful. We do the best that we can with the resources available to us.

Our Strategic Plan

Overall Goals

The overall goals of the strategic plan for Perth South are:

- Growth & Economic Development
- Service Effectiveness
- Community Development
- Community Involvement & Participation
- Corporate Sustainability

These are explored further in the following sections.

Goal 1 – Growth & Economic Development

What We Heard

The community expressed a strong desire to maintain the viability and health of the community:

- Attainable housing to attract and retain young people needs to be a priority.
- Maintaining productive farmland and not losing it to industrial and residential development is vital.
- More flexible and creative housing options are essential
- Provide continued support and flexible options for entrepreneurship, including farm-based and residential business options.

What The Data Are Saying

Perth South population has been declining steadily, from 4,300 in 2001 to just over 3,800 in 2016.

The youth population has declined significantly, from 1,400 in 2001 to just 930 in 2016. Seniors are the only sector of the population that is growing.

Single-detached homes represent 96% of housing units in the municipality.

Perth South has the highest average household income of any municipality within Perth County, at \$114,547 per household (compared to \$85,229 in Perth County and \$97,856 for the province of Ontario).

Why It Is Important

Encouraging growth and economic development is central to maintaining Perth South's viability.

Our population—and particularly the youth population—determine the presence and on-going retention of schools with the community. This means being able to attract and provide affordable housing and career options for youth and young families.

Making sure our productive agricultural lands are retained for agriculture is essential to maintain our viability as a farming community.

What We Are Doing

Priorities	Actions
Perth South grows at a positive and responsible pace	<p>Embrace and encourage diversity in attracting new residents</p> <p>Increase percentage of people living and working in Perth South</p> <p>Proactively support and pursue policies that support and encourage responsible growth and community vitality</p>
Quality, high-value agricultural lands are sustained	<p>Support preservation and sustainment of productive agricultural lands</p> <p>Promote development of on-farm incubators, value-added processing, secondary farm occupations and farm-gate sales</p>
Perth South has diverse housing options and improved housing density	<p>Support the County in the development of a modern, flexible and relevant Official Plan</p> <p>Establish policies that encourage and incent development of attainable housing and increases housing density in the municipality</p> <p>Explore opportunities for creative repurposing and development of non-productive agricultural land</p>
Perth South is a thriving entrepreneurial community	<p>Encourage and attract entrepreneurs to establish and develop businesses in Perth South</p> <p>Support and develop options for residentially-based entrepreneurial opportunities</p>

Goal 2 – Service Effectiveness

What We Heard

There is a significant desire to rethink how services are delivered within the municipality. This responds to two different drivers: ensuring effectiveness of

service delivery, and also ensuring that services can be sustainably delivered by the municipality.

The community identified the need to consider how services are accessed and delivered, including considering whether a bricks-and-mortar presence is required, and considering what services can be delivered online.

There is also a strong stated desire to reduce duplication of services and service delivery within the County, and to collaborate effectively and broadly in delivering services.

What The Data Are Saying

75% of residents surveyed perceive that it is very desirable or essential to develop strategies to more efficiently deliver services.

100% of residents desire an improvement in services levels and the quality of service delivery, with 50% of residents perceiving this as very desirable or essential.

61% of residents perceive it to be very desirable or essential to reduce duplication of services with the County.

Why It Is Important

Perth South has a reputation for trying to do more with less. We have worked to find strategies to improve services and reduce costs.

Continuing to find effective service delivery strategies is essential to ensure the viability of the municipality. Increased downloading of services from the province and reductions in provincial transfers mean more responsibility is falling on the municipality. Without finding efficiencies or partnership opportunities, this will have a corresponding impact on property tax bills for residents and businesses.

What We Are Doing

Priorities	Actions
Delivered services respond to community needs	Evaluate and define services that make a difference in attracting and retaining businesses and residents and the quality of life in the community Ensure effective delivery of services that make a difference in sustaining the community
Service level expectations are clearly understood and communicated	Clarify and define services and service levels provided by the municipality

	<p>Proactively communicate committed services and service levels to new and existing residents</p> <p>Provide transparency in the costs and value of all delivered services</p>
<p>Services are delivered efficiently and cost effectively</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to optimize the delivery of committed services</p> <p>Develop and enhance the ability to access services online</p> <p>Enthusiastically pursue and establish partnerships broadly to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services</p> <p>Develop service experiences that make interacting with the municipality easy and effortless</p> <p>Support opportunities within the County to collaboratively realize service efficiencies</p>

Goal 3 – Community Development

What We Heard

There is an extremely strong desire to maintain the sense of community and community identity that exists within Perth South. There is a desire to retain the rural character of the community, and to identify strategies that allow the municipality to sustain itself going forward.

Ensuring the viability and retention of primary and secondary schools is seen as critical, and there is a desire to explore options to optimize class sizes and collaborate with neighbouring municipalities to ensure sufficient enrollment to maintain the viability of schools within Perth South.

Tourism is recognized as a viable and important strategy in promoting economic development. The community reinforced the need to collaboratively develop agri-tourism strategies throughout the region.

What The Data Are Saying

Youth under the age of 20 are the most rapidly declining group within Perth South, with a decline of 36% since 2001.

68% of residents see it as very desirable or essential to create incentives to attract and retain youth in the community, and 79% perceive it as very

desirable or essential to promote the availability of skilled and valuable jobs to youth.

43% of residents perceive it as very desirable or essential to enhance community facilities and amenities.

Why It Is Important

Sustaining the community requires a diverse range of factors to be in place: the community needs to be economically healthy, there need to be amenities that attract and retain residents, residents need to be able to afford to live within the community and they require access to education and health care to raise their families.

While Perth South is a rural community, ensuring the essential amenities are maintained and enhanced is critical to its on-going success.

What We Are Doing

Priorities	Actions
Perth South is a recognized and attractive tourism destination	<p>Promote and develop Perth South as an agri-tourism destination</p> <p>Establish and promote a farmers market to celebrate local products and attract tourism</p> <p>Establish a farm-gate sales network and tourism route</p> <p>Collaboratively contribute to regional tourism strategies that benefit the region as a whole</p>
Amenities in Perth South meet the needs of all residents	<p>Sustain viability of recreational facilities</p> <p>Explore and encourage development of a seniors residence</p> <p>Encourage and promote amenities that attract and retain youth and young families</p> <p>Establish and promote a tree-planting program that combines municipal involvement and resident participation</p>
A variety of education opportunities are available in the municipality	<p>Collaborate and explore opportunities to maintain viability of</p>

	<p>primary and secondary schools in the community</p> <p>Partner and collaborate with adjoining municipalities to balance and ensure optimal class sizes</p> <p>Encourage and promote opportunities for on-going learning, career advancement and skills development</p>
<p>There are a variety of transportation options within the community</p>	<p>Collaborate in the development of the County transportation network</p>

Goal 4 – Community Involvement & Participation

What We Heard

Residents strongly value the sense of community and community involvement that exists within Perth South. Community service and volunteerism is considered to be an essential value.

Retention of youth is seen as particularly vital. While it is recognized that youth retention strategies have been in place for 10 years or more, there is concern that not much has been accomplished to date. The need to revisit and find appropriate means of effectively retaining youth are seen as critical.

Residents also highlighted the desire to ensure volunteerism and community service continues to be an essential part of community life.

What The Data Are Saying

The youth population has declined significantly, from 1,400 in 2001 to just 930 in 2016.

Only 25% of residents identify themselves as young families.

86% of residents have volunteered within the community in the past, with 36% currently identifying as volunteers or having volunteered within the past year.

Why It Is Important

Perth South has actively relied upon community service and volunteer groups. Volunteerism and community service are considered core values of the community.

Many of the facilities and amenities within the municipality have been developed and are run with the support of community service groups, and many recreational programs are delivered by volunteers.

Continuing to thrive as a community means ensuring that Perth South continues to attract young families. This means addressing a number of factors, including the affordability of the community for young families.

What We Are Doing

Priorities	Actions
Perth South is a desirable community for youth and young families to call home	Implement and sustain the Perth4Youth strategy
Volunteerism is actively embraced	Develop a strategy for on-going volunteerism and community involvement Support community and service groups in maintaining volunteer participation and identifying and responding to grant opportunities
Perth South actively promotes community engagement and involvement	Encourage and promote events and activities that support community interaction and involvement Support the on-going vitality of service groups, churches and other community organizations

Goal 5 – Corporate Sustainability

What We Heard

Residents value the staff within the municipality, and the services and level of customer service that they provide.

There is a strong desire to maintain the municipal identity of Perth South, and to maintain the municipality in its current form. There is recognition that this requires finding efficiencies in how services are delivered, and continuing to partner and collaborate on service delivery opportunities (including outside of Perth County.)

What The Data Are Saying

75% of residents view it as very desirable or essential to develop strategies to more efficiently deliver services.

86% of residents perceive it as very desirable or essential to improve collaboration with other municipalities in how services are delivered.

61% of residents are very concerned or extremely concerned about the ability to maintain municipal infrastructure.

43% of residents are very concerned or extremely concerned about the potential for the loss of qualified staff from the municipality.

Why It Is Important

As a small municipality, every employee of Perth South plays a variety of roles, and each one is vital. We are fortunate to have dedicated and well-qualified staff, but continuing to retain existing staff (and attract new staff members) is challenging.

Enhancing service delivery means not just finding ways to partner and share, but also to deliver services more efficiently. This means looking at alternative delivery strategies and the use of technology to also support service delivery.

Maintaining municipal infrastructure is vital. Failing to maintain and repair our infrastructure in a timely manner means increased costs in the future.

What We Are Doing

Priorities	Actions
Perth South staff are engaged and successful	Establish a succession plan and collaborate with municipal partners to provide staff development opportunities
Deliver robust and effective customer service to the community	Establish processes that make it easy and efficient to access municipal services Promote and encourage community engagement and participation in the municipality
Municipal infrastructure is robust and sustainable	Develop and implement a comprehensive asset management plan and relevant systems Investigate and pursue options that ensure municipal facilities are cost effective and optimally used
Technology solutions support efficient and effective service delivery	Develop and implement strategies to sustain municipal information technology solutions Investigate and invest in technology solutions to more effectively and efficiently support service delivery within the municipality

<p>Perth South actively partners and collaborates broadly</p>	<p>Collaborate and proactively work with school boards, health units and other agencies to ensure sustained delivery of services to the community</p> <p>Partner with other municipalities to share services, collaborate and innovatively deliver services</p> <p>Proactively advocate with other levels of government to maintain viability and health of the municipality</p>
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Getting It All Done How We Plan To Deliver



This strategic plan sets the direction for the municipality. There are two related planning documents that define how we will take action:

- **Corporate Implementation Plan.** The corporate implementation plan is an annual plan for the municipality that defines our actions in implementing this strategic plan for each year. It defines the immediate priorities to be addressed for the community and corporation for the year.
- **Department Plans.** Department plans define the work of each department for the year. This includes how each department supports the corporate implementation plan (and in turn the strategic plan). It also includes any planned improvements within the department, and the service delivery plan of how the department's services are delivered. These plans feed into the development of the annual budget for the municipality. They also firmly connect the work of each employee to the overall priorities of the organization.

How This Relates To Other Plans

In addition to the strategic plan, there are many other plans within municipalities. There are master plans, asset management plans, economic development plans, official plans and feasibility studies.

Each of these documents looks at some aspect of the municipality, and defines priorities and direction for its area of focus. An asset management plan, for example, defines the infrastructure assets in the municipality, their condition and the maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement plans for each. This is a schedule of the optimal process of maintaining each asset.

While plans may lay out an optimal schedule, that doesn't mean the municipality needs to proceed based on that schedule. Investments can be accelerated, and they can also be deferred. There is risk in doing either, and that risk needs to be understood. But there can also be good reasons to make those choices.

Subsidiary plans set out the optimal approach for what they are focused on. The strategic plan is where those choices are ultimately made. Every other plan in the municipality is an input to the strategic planning process. The strategic plan and its related implementation plan define the committed priorities of the organization. It is where the actual choices are made of what will be done and when.

How We Will Partner

Any strategic plan results in a great deal of work to be done. It is work that the organization cannot do alone. Successful realization of the planned results will involve the effort and contribution of many people, and many other organizations.

In implementing the strategies and actions in this strategic plan, the municipality will partner with a number of organizations, including:

- **Member municipalities.** This strategic plan has been deliberately developed in collaboration with the member municipalities in Perth County. We have worked with the other municipalities in the County to identify opportunities for cooperation, collaboration and sharing of services and resources between municipalities.
- **The County.** In addition to the member municipalities, we have also identified strategies to work with the County to better deliver on municipal priorities. We have explored where there are collaboration opportunities that can streamline services and improve service delivery to our residents and across the County.
- **Other municipalities.** We are committed to partnering with other municipalities that can help us to better ensure effective and affordable service delivery. That includes looking at opportunities to

collaborate and work with Stratford, St. Marys and municipalities outside of the County.

- **Volunteer and service groups.** This is a strategic plan for the municipality as a whole. Some of the work will be delivered by the corporation. There are also opportunities for the community as a whole, and the volunteer and service groups that play such a vital role in Perth South, to contribute to the realization of the goals contained here.
- **Businesses and business groups.** Businesses and business groups within the municipality also have opportunities to contribute. This is particularly true in areas of economic development. We will work with business to promote the health and viability of the municipality, and promote the development of jobs and economic opportunities.

How We Will Keep Track

Plans are important. Results from those plans are even more important. We will continue to monitor the results of the plan—and report those results to Council and to the community on a regular basis. Tracking and reporting will involve two important perspectives:

- **Attainment of the plan.** This answers the question, are we doing the things we said we would do? We will monitor and ensure that each of the actions that were identified in the plan have been undertaken, and that they have delivered on their intended results.
- **Attainment of results.** This answers the question, is what we are doing making a difference? The purpose of the strategic plan is to make meaningful change for the community. Part of our evaluation will be ensuring that the changes that were desired are actually occurring.