



REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

FROM: Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Elgin County Strategic Plan – Action Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Elgin County Strategic Plan – Action Plan Update report from the Chief Administrative Officer, dated May 4, 2020 be received and filed.

INTRODUCTION:

Elgin County Council recently endorsed its 2020-2022 Strategic Plan as well as an Action Plan developed by Management Team in support of Council's priorities. The Action Plan was presented to County Council in early March 2020 and has been revised to indicate progress to date as well as any impacts to the proposed timelines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION:

Council's Strategic Plan is a roadmap that aligns efforts and resources in a way that supports Elgin County to be the best County it can be. As we move forward, we recognize the importance of sharing our progress with our stakeholders in an open and transparent way in order to demonstrate progress and measure success.

CONCLUSION:

The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed a number of initiatives in the Action Plan. Additional updates will be provided to County Council on a monthly basis moving forward.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Julie Gonyou
Chief Administrative Officer



| Strategic Priorities and Goals | Objectives | 2020 Actions | Departmental Lead | Timelines | Objectives & Deliverables | Notes |
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| <p>Serving Elgin <i>To re-design how we respond to community need in a creative, sustainable way.</i></p> | <p>Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need</p> | <p>Conduct a municipal service delivery review (part I) and draft an action plan (part II)</p> | <p>Administrative Services</p> | <p>Interim-report completed mid-June 1, 2020</p> <p>Tentative completion date and posting of review of mid-September 2020</p> | <p>Elgin’s Municipal Service Delivery Review is underway and will identify actions and directions that could result in a more efficient and effective service delivery, organizational and operation arrangements and associated savings. COVID-19 Impact: The Municipal Service Delivery Review timelines and deliverables are adjusted on a weekly basis and are contingent upon staff and resource availability. Review of Long-Term Care Homes is on hold until further notice.</p> | <p>Transfer agreement with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing executed.</p> |
| | | <p>Review the organizational structure</p> | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>Ongoing - December 31, 2020</p> | <p>Departmental priorities include: Administration (Planning/Land Division), Engineering/Facilities Services and Economic Development. Succession planning will be ongoing throughout 2020. COVID-19 Impact: Manager of Planning recruitment in-progress. Review of Planning Dept. will commence following on-boarding of Manager of Planning. Human Resources has otherwise been preoccupied with staffing changes associated with Elgin’s response to COVID-19.</p> | <p>It is anticipated that additional priorities may be identified through the Municipal Service Delivery Review and as services continue to adapt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> |

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| | | Identify opportunities to improve the customer experience (i.e. Land Division Committee application process) | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | Complete a review of the Land Division Committee and application process following recruitment of Manager of Planning. | Link: Corporate Communications and Engagement Plans |
| | Exploring different ways of addressing community need | Work collaboratively with local municipal partners and stakeholders to address community need (i.e. shared multi-year accessibility plan, emergency management plan, County-wide infrastructure design standards) | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | <p>Priorities: Ensure successful delivery of Fire Training/CEMC resource, Accessibility, Museums of Elgin Database, Engineering/Transportation Services (i.e. Phragmites), Healthy Communities Partnership, MTAG assessment review, etc.</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: Fire Training Officer/CEMC has been preoccupied with Elgin's Declared State of Emergency and COVID-19 response efforts. It is anticipated that Fire Training work will commence mid-summer if possible. Work on the County-wide joint Accessibility Plan is ongoing. Additional status updates will be provided to County Council at a future meeting.</p> | Link: Municipal Service Delivery Review. |

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| | | Review best practices as per the service delivery review results | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | Focus on “modernization” of services – assess scalability of global innovative models of service from within and outside of the public sector. May 2020 note: Research in this area continues. | Link: Municipal Service Delivery Review. |
| | | Explore shared services and other opportunities to partner with neighbouring/ regional municipalities (i.e. libraries, museums) | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | Work together with neighbours, Western Ontario Wardens Caucus and beyond municipal borders to leverage resources and work collaboratively to find efficiencies and opportunities for shared services. May 2020 note: Elgin will reach out to assess local interest in the continuation of the joint-Integrity Commissioner/Closed Meeting Investigator position for Elgin County, Local Municipal Partners and Middlesex County. | |
| | Engaging with our community and other stakeholders | Improve corporate communications and engagement (*); develop a community engagement strategy and corporate communication plan. | Administrative Services | June 1, 2020 – Management Team review & Council review before June 30, 2020 | Together with the CAO, the Corporate Communications and Engagement Coordinator leads corporate communications with a portfolio that includes media relations, social media, content development and communications support for Elgin County and all corporate departments. Other responsibilities include delivery of | Corporate Communications and Engagement Coordinator hired on January 14, 2020. Other priorities include creating a clear avenue for public feedback, |

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| | | | | | <p>communications that elevate resident experience, address feedback, prepare residents for new services and support County Council’s services and activities. With support of the CAO, the Corporate Engagement Coordinator will develop, coordinate, deliver and evaluate corporate communications and public relations strategies that advance the goals, priorities and policies of Elgin County Council and County services.</p> <p>Engage Local Municipal Partners and staff by assessing pitfalls and opportunities as they pertain to internal/external communications.</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: Corporate communications has temporarily shifted focus to COVID-19. It is anticipated that project and policy work in this area will resume in the coming months.</p> | <p>involvement in public information sessions, and project-specific communications planning including construction/Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and Economic Development/Tourism.</p> |
| | | <p>Provide input into and participate in current provincial modernization initiatives (i.e. Elgin Ontario Health Team, Emergency Health Services, Public Health modernization, Part III transfer)</p> | <p>Administrative Services, Financial Services</p> | <p>December 31, 2020</p> | <p>Be leaders in the Provincial Offences Administration – Part III transfers (Spring 2020);</p> <p>May 2020 update: work continues in this area and an update will be provided to County Council in June/July 2020.</p> | <p>Ontario Health Team work may be resource-intensive.</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>Ontario Health Team participation in application preparation (CAO/Director of Homes and Seniors Services). Participate in local, regional and provincial-led conversations re: Municipal Modernization Initiatives.</p> <p>May 2020 update: Meeting held with Provincial Health Advisor (April 2020); it is unlikely that there will be opportunities for input for the next two or so months. Work on Elgin's Ontario Health Team is suspended during the pandemic.</p> | |
| <p>Growing Elgin <i>To be the place where people want to live, work, and play.</i></p> | <p>Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth</p> | <p>Develop a workforce strategy for existing staff that includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employee engagement and wellness strategy Robust Health and Safety Program Leadership Training Management Team Development | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>August 31, 2020</p> | <p>Develop current complement of staff.</p> <p>Evaluate and support the activities of the Social and Events Committee.</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: Work of the Social and Events Committee is suspended. Warden's Golf Tournament scheduled for June 2020 delayed until September 2020. Many conferences and developmental opportunities have been cancelled and/or postponed while municipalities respond to the pandemic. Staff development opportunities will likely resume later in the year. Wellness initiatives and staff engagement has been a focus during COVID-19.</p> | <p>Link: Corporate Communications and Engagement</p> |

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| | | e. Health human resources strategy, with a focus on recruitment and retention | Human Resources, Homes, Economic Development | June 30, 2020 | <p>Focus on Long Term Care Homes recruitment and retention strategies, claims management, provide Council with options regarding benefits provider.</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: Human Resources' recruitment and retention strategies for Long-Term Care have continued during the pandemic. To ensure sufficient staffing/resources during the pandemic within the Long-Term Care Homes, staff have been reassigned from other departments.</p> | Plan for leadership vacancies (cross-training). |
| | | f. Local labour/workforce gap analysis | Economic Development | September 30, 2020 | <p>Supplement existing workforce data with information obtained from the business community and Community Improvement Plan recipients to assess recruitment challenges in Elgin County.</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: Two surveys have been issued to the Business Community with content specific to their needs/concerns during the pandemic.</p> | Preliminary report with suggestions to be presented to Council in June 2020. |
| | | g. Develop new community and professional partners and allies (i.e. involvement in Low | Community Services | December 31, 2020 | <p>Provide County Council with a list of current community and professional partners and allies.</p> <p>May 2020 update: work is ongoing.</p> | |

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| | | German Networking Committee) | | | Assess whether current and proposed community and professional partners and allies aligns with Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. | |
| | | Work with local municipal partners to identify serviceable industrial land and opportunities to facilitate and promote development (i.e. Ford property, St. Thomas airport, job site challenge) | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | Find solutions to address infrastructure gaps that exist which are limiting development. Explore opportunities for Local Municipal Partners to leverage the County's capacity for debt/loan program. May 2020 update: work is on hold. | |
| | | Explore how to link agri-business producers and buyers | Economic Development | November 30, 2020 | Investigate and provide options (March 2020) to County Council regarding a "Made in Elgin" local food campaign. May 2020 update: work is on hold. | |
| | | Complete a five year review of the Official Plan | Administrative Services | Ongoing | Manager of Planning to provide Council with an overview of legislative requirements and proposed timeline (March 2020). May 2020 update: Manager of Planning (incumbent) will provide this update following on-boarding. | |

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| | | | | | Consider background materials required, including, but not limited to, Elgin Natural Heritage Systems Study. | |
| | | Evaluate the Community Improvement Program (CIP) and present options to Council | Economic Development | November 30, 2020 | General Manager to develop a survey and seek Council approval (April 2020); present a program evaluation (October 2020); present options for Council's consideration including future investment in the Community Improvement Program (November 2020). May 2020 update: work is on hold. | Current program ends at the end of 2020. Council will be required to provide direction, including whether there will be continued investment in this program in advance of the 2021 budget deliberations. |
| | Fostering a healthy environment | Create a staff working group to develop an annual plan that identifies ways to reduce the County's environmental footprint | Management Team | June 1, 2020 | Establish staff working group by June 1, 2020; report suggestions and group activities to Council in December 2020. Management Team to draft Terms of Reference for the working group (March 2020); May 2020 update: work on the Terms of Reference has begun. Working Group to investigate workplace strategies that reduce the County's environmental footprint and make recommendations to County Council. | |

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| | | Review the Woodlands conservation by-law | Administrative Services (Tree Commissioner) | May 30, 2020 | Provide recommendations and options for County Council's consideration. May 2020 update: work is on-going – timeline to be extended by one month (June 2020). | Also, renew agreement for back-up with Middlesex County and review agreement with Kettle Creek Conservation Authority. May 2020 update: not yet complete. |
| | | Assess roadside environments | Engineering Services | March 30, 2020 | Evaluation of Road Maintenance Agreement regarding roadsides. Deliver a phragmites program. May 2020 update: Report presented to County Council in April 2020. All other work in this area is on-going. | |
| | | Develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan | Administrative Services | December 31, 2020 | Lead the CSWB development process on behalf of Elgin, Local Municipal Partners and the City of St. Thomas. COVID-19 Impact: Advisory Committee Meeting, scheduled for April 3, 2020, was postponed. A pre-recorded webinar and survey will be sent to community partners and agencies for input in the coming weeks. Research has been ongoing and format for public and partner information sessions will be adjusted as a result of COVID-19. | May 2020 update: timelines for completion likely to be extended by the Solicitor General. |

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| | | Update the Cycling Master Plan | Engineering Services | December 31, 2020 | May 2020 update: work is ongoing, preliminary report presented to County Council in April 2020. | Using OTM Cycling Manual |
| | Enhancing quality of place | Work with local municipal partners and local businesses to identify opportunities to enhance the overall Elgin experience | Economic Development | December 31, 2020 | Review Sponsorships/Grants programs COVID-19 Impact: Rural Initiatives and Planning Advisory Committee (RIPA Committee) reviewed applications. County Council provided funding to three applicants. The RIPA Committee has requested updates on programs/services from applicants and will adjust allocations accordingly. It is anticipated that a report will be presented to County Council on May 26, 2020. | |
| | | Support local municipal partners in their efforts to create affordable housing | Administrative Services | December 31, 2020 | May 2020 update: work is ongoing. | Link to County Official Plan review and Economic Development Dept. |

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| | | Explore private partnerships, inter-municipal strategies, and other options for a county-wide transit solution | Administrative Services | December 31, 2020 | Regional Transit Pilot (next steps) Explore options for funding/feasibility May 2020 update: work is on hold due to COVID-19. | Link to Economic Development Dept. |
| | | Develop a business case with private providers to ensure wider access to reliable, affordable internet | Administrative Services | December 31, 2020 | Connect with businesses to identify gaps in service and opportunities for joint ventures. Consider hosting a local Internet Summit. COVID-19 Impact: research is ongoing and work in this area is progressing, though slower than anticipated due to COVID-19. Opportunities to advocate for additional funding and to support local telecommunication providers in their applications for government funding will be presented to County Council. | SWIFT investment Link to Economic Development Dept. |
| | | Establish a local Economic Development Committee as a committee of County Council | Administrative Services | July 1, 2020 | May 2020 update: work is on hold. | |

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| <p>Investing in Elgin <i>To make responsible financial decisions.</i></p> | | Terrace Lodge Redevelopment | Building Working Group | Summer 2020 | <p>Link to Terrace Lodge Fundraising Committee.</p> <p>Break Ground July 2020 (event)</p> <p>COVID-19 Impact: It is likely that the Terrace Lodge Redevelopment Project will be delayed by at least three (3) months due to COVID-19. Ministry-imposed visitor restrictions in place at Terrace Lodge limits contractor/prospective contractor's ability to access the site – a necessary component of the Request for Proposal process.</p> | |
| | | Undertake a corporate facility condition assessment | Engineering Services | December 31, 2020 | <p>Complete a Facility Condition Assessment as an extension of the Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>May 2020 update: work is ongoing.</p> | Leverage the expertise of the TL Project Manager/Owner Rep. |
| | | Implement GIS service provision to all County departments, with the opportunity to support local municipal partners and agencies | Engineering Services | April 30, 2020 | <p>May 2020 update: GIS Coordinator hired. County Engineer continues to explore opportunities to work collaboratively with local municipal partners with respect to GIS services.</p> | |

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| | | Construct a new Port Bruce bridge | Engineering Services | December 31, 2020 | May 2020 update: Work is ongoing. | |
| | | Rehabilitate the King George VI lift bridge | Engineering Services | May 31, 2021 | May 2020 update: Work is ongoing. | |
| | | Leverage technology to streamline and enhance service delivery, including: a. Explore the implementation of artificial intelligence facility management software | Management Team Engineering Services | December 31, 2020 April 30, 2020 | Consider: Agenda/meeting software; HR/Recruitment software; intranet, records management software, Artificial Intelligence. COVID-19 Impact: IT Services has begun livestreaming Council Meetings to Facebook and is utilizing conferencing equipment in the Administrative Services Board Room. | |
| | | b. Complete an information technology strategy | Financial Services | June 30, 2020 | Equipment replacement schedule. COVID-19 Impact: priorities for the IT department were reprioritized with the onset of COVID-19 as equipment was needed to support virtual service delivery, electronic Council meetings, etc. Advanced planning in this area is required. | |

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| | | Plan for vacant space at 450 Sunset and other corporate facilities | Administrative Services | September 1, 2020 | Assess internal and partner needs for space (including storage) May 2020 update: Floor plan for 450 Sunset Drive – County Administration Building will be reviewed by Council in May 2020. | Work has begun. |
| | | Conduct a corporate policy review | Administrative Services | December 31, 2020 | Inventory and categorize all corporate/departmental policies. Develop a schedule for review. May 2020 update: work in this area is on-hold. | |
| | | Seek sources of revenue and funding to support and enhance programs, services, and infrastructure | Management Team | December 31, 2020 | COVID-19 Impact: staff continue to focus on general sources of funding/revenue as well as any COVID-19 relief funding that is currently available or anticipated. | |
| | | Modernize the budget process and financial reporting to enhance accountability and transparency | Financial Services | June 30, 2020 | Debrief with the Budget Committee. May 2020 update: the opportunity to review the 2020 Budget Process changes with the Budget Committee will likely take place in July 2020. | |

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| | Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively | Further develop and implement the Asset Management Plan | Engineering Services, Financial Services | December 31, 2020 | May 2020 update: work is on-going. | |
| | | Implement opportunities for savings as identified in the service delivery review and other areas (i.e. employee benefits, claims management) | Management Team | June 1 to December 31, 2020 | | |
| | | Create a ten-year Master Plan for Emergency Medical Services | Administrative Services | November 1, 2020 | COVID-19 Impact: on hold. | |
| | | Implement best practice guidelines through the Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) at long-term care homes | Homes | March 31, 2020 and ongoing | COVID-19 Impact: on hold. | |