
Strategic Plan

Planning for Success (2023-2027)

November 2023





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Council 2022-2026 (left to right)

Back Row Councillor Bill Rodnick,
Councillor Laurie Siydock, Councillor
Shawn Pigeon, Councillor Joe Florent

Front Row Councillor Joan Kuiack,
Mayor Ethel LaValley, Councillor
Sandra Collins

Table of Contents

<u>Land Acknowledgement</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Executive Summary</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Message from the Mayor</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Message from the CAO/Clerk</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Background</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Mission Statement</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Vision Statement</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Core Values</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Key Priorities and Action Items</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Strategic Plan At-a-Glance</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Sample Report Card</u>	<u>39</u>





Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the Township is located on the unceded Traditional Territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people, specifically the Matouweskarini (people of the Madawaska River).

We further acknowledge that the Algonquin People have been stewards of this land since time immemorial and we strive to treat the land along with the flora and fauna it supports, the people, their customs and traditions, with honour and respect.

Today, this area is home to people of all walks of life, and we acknowledge the shared opportunities and responsibilities to live, work and survive within this beautiful territory.

Chi-miigwetch, All my relations

Executive Summary

Strategic Plans establish priorities for municipalities to focus on and to allocate their resources, to achieve short, medium and long-term goals and visions. Undertaking a Strategic Planning exercise ensures that challenges and goals are carefully identified, and a plan is put in place to respond. A Strategic Plan should be adopted early in a new term of Council to leverage the clarity that it will offer over the 4-year term.

In August 2023, Council directed that a Term-of-Council Strategic Plan be prepared for the Township of South Algonquin. Extensive consultations and interviews occurred to help inform strategic plan content. Consultations included one-on-one interviews with all members of Council and a group workshop with senior administration team members, as well as follow up inquiries. To garner local sentiment, a community survey was made available online and in print for a period of three weeks. There were over 100 respondents to the community survey. The consulting team also conducted comprehensive data mining to ensure evidence-based findings.

Consultations yielded six categories of Common Themes referred to as Key Priorities to address over the term of Council. The most dominant of Key Priorities by far was Housing and Employment.

Executive Summary

Consultations culminated in the preparation of a Preliminary Findings Workshop in which Council members provided additional insights so that this Strategic Plan could be prepared. Council further reinforced the selection of recommended Key Priorities and Action Items.

This plan will carry into the next four years to ensure business continuity and as a new Council assumes office at the end of this term. Regular monitoring and reporting of the strategic plan is essential to ensure the Township is on track to deliver planned priorities. Course corrections can be made when prudent, as part of the monitoring and reporting processes. Doing so, concurrent with annual budget deliberations, allows for corresponding financial decisions to be made. To support budget decisions, Action Item Priority Rankings will be reviewed annually by Council. Timelines are at Council's discretion, and it is possible for some Action Items to carry into the next Strategic Plan.

Annual reporting of the strategic plan and approval of the budget will inform the development of annual departmental workplans. Departmental workplans are utilized by the administration to operationalize Council's priorities, ensure they are coordinated across departments and to set measurable deliverables. The CAO/Clerk-Treasurer will champion these critical steps.

Message from Mayor Ethel LaValley

Facilitated by Municipal Government Wayfinders, and with the insights of members of Council, staff and the public, a strategic plan exercise provided Council with an opportunity to set out a comprehensive blueprint of the goals and objectives, planned projects and specifies key performance indicators (KPI's) to determine success for our next term, specifically 2023-2027. The strategic plan is designed to be a living document and will be reviewed on an annual basis and executed in coordination with operational plans, such as the annual capital and operational budgets.

As Mayor, I am fully committed to overseeing the municipal strategic planning process, ensuring that the plan is forward-thinking and can be used to guide positive change in the municipality.

I was very pleased with the process and how Wayfinders conducted themselves. They were always professional and respectful.



Message from the CAO/Clerk-Treasurer



Our Strategic Plan reflects community priorities and will guide Council and staff when making decisions about budget and project priorities over the next few years. Mayor LaValley and members of Council recognize the importance of adopting a Strategic Plan to set goals and objectives based on community input and the priorities of this term of Council.

Along with employees and dedicated municipal volunteers, and the support of the community, I am confident we will achieve the priorities set-out in our Strategic Plan to meet Council's long-term vision of a safe, thriving and vibrant community.

Thank you Michael and David from Municipal Government Wayfinders for guiding us through this Strategic Planning exercise.

Bryan Martin, CMMIII

Background



The Township of South Algonquin is a small and somewhat remote single tier rural municipality, situated in the District of Nipissing along the south-eastern boundary of Algonquin Provincial Park. Although a member municipality of the District of Nipissing, the Township is separated from the rest of the district by Algonquin Park. This separation from the district has presented some challenges resulting in the Township acquiring some services from the County of Renfrew, which the Township is more closely situated with.

A review of comparator municipalities indicates that the Township of South Algonquin is in an enviable financial position. Financial data provided from the Township's 2022 Financial Statements, demonstrates that the Municipal Finance Officers Association (MFOA) Financial Indicators for the Township are all rated as a "Low Financial Risk". It is unusual to see all financial indicators rated as "low".

Background

Notwithstanding its excellent financial position, the Township faces many common challenges shared by small Ontario municipalities. These include, housing and employment short-falls, inflationary pressures, the growing infrastructure funding gap, lingering COVID-19 pandemic issues and an ever-changing municipal legislative landscape. These all place added burdens on the Township's finite resources.

By taking a strategic approach to service delivery and problem solving, the Township will be better positioned for success.

This Strategic Plan responds to the Council's strategic priorities and goals, as well as known opportunities for improvement. This plan will guide major decision making with respect to allocation of resources and assets from 2023 through 2027. All staff reports should reference Strategic Plan goals, key priorities and action items to ensure they align well with Council's vision for the Township.

Mission Statement

The Township of South Algonquin delivers affordable, efficient and reliable core services to our community.

The Township's Mission Statement is founded on the belief that our primary purpose is to deliver excellent core services to our community. We recognize that our community depends on us to serve them in a manner that is both financially responsible and proficient. We will work as a team to realize our collective mission.



Vision Statement

South Algonquin aspires to be a safe and vibrant Township responsive to the community's desire for enhanced services, housing and employment.

Our Vision Statement is a declaration of our goals and objectives. It confirms what we desire the most for our community. Our Vision Statement is deliberate and measurable. Achieving our Vision Statement will be indicative of our success.



Core Values

Our Core Values are our beliefs. They are what guide our actions. Our Core Values are a statement about who we are as a municipal government. In addition, our Core Values confirm who we are as a Council, staff and volunteers. Our Core Values remind us of how we will administer our affairs, deal with issues or respond to the people. They will guide our day to day, as well as our long-term decision making.



Core Values

A. Integrity and Respect

We strive for high standards of professionalism and ethical behaviour in the workplace. We are honest, open and welcoming. We strive for equitable and fair treatment of everyone.

B. Teamwork

Our Council and staff work together for the benefit of the community. We foster an environment of equality where all people are valued. We build internal and external relationships to achieve common goals.

C. Accountability and Transparency

We believe in taking responsibility for our ourselves and our work. We aim to live up to our commitments and to communicate the outcomes to our residents.



Core Values

D. Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability

We recognize that we are entrusted to deliver services affordably and efficiently. We will accomplish this through adhering to sound fiscal policies, increasing reserves to fund large expenditures and by delivering core services through implementing prudent financial practices.

E. Innovation

We will consistently strive to be better. We will improve the way we conduct Township business by introducing new approaches, ideas and best practices, or by using new tools and technologies.

Key Priorities and Action Items

Key Priorities and Action Items are where our Vision is turned into action. They are the steps we will take to realize our goals, objectives and vision. Key Priorities and Action Items are measurable for future monitoring and reporting purposes. Each Action Item is accompanied with a recommended priority ranking for planning purposes. Action Items may span a year, multiple years or require permanent on-going effort. Priority rankings are not cast in stone and may require adjustments. Priorities will be reviewed annually by Council.

We will monitor and report on our Key Priorities and Action Items annually to ensure our plan maintains positive momentum.



Key Priorities and Action Items

Our six (6) Key Priorities are derived from common themes that emerged from our consultative Strategic Planning workshops. They also align well with evidenced-based research and the community feedback.

- Asset Management
- Master Planning
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Service Delivery
- Housing and Employment

Key Priority: Asset Management

“Municipal governments own more of Ontario’s core infrastructure than any other order of government. These facilities are essential to our economic prosperity, health and quality of life.” Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2021

Strategic Goal:

To reduce the infrastructure funding deficit and expand the use of effective strategies and innovative tools to manage long-term infrastructure needs.



Key Priority: Asset Management

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
AM-1	Repair Paved Surfaces Major Lake Rd., Hay Creek Rd., Nipissing Rd., Church Hill St., Airy Rd.	P1
AM-2	Implement Drainage Improvements Convert Culverts to HDP and Ditching	P2
AM-3	Implement a Rolling Re-gravel Program	P2

Key Priority: Asset Management

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
AM-4	Replace the 1996 Whitney Pumper	P3
AM-5	Replace the 1998 Madawaska Mini-Pumper	P3
AM-6	Renovate the Whitney Fire Hall (washrooms/shower facilities)	P3

Key Priority: Master Planning

*“A master plan is a dynamic, long-term planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide the future growth and development of your organization.”
Justine Ebzery*

Strategic Goal:

To identify long-term goals through consultation and analysis. To develop a sustainable planned approach to goal achievement.



Key Priority: Master Planning

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
MP-1	Finalize the Update to the Comprehensive Zoning By-law	P1
MP-2	Continue Regular Long-term Monitoring and Planning of Landfill Sites (for Expansion and Closure)	P1
MP-3	Adopt a Vehicles and Equipment Replacement Plan	P1
MP-4	Form Strategic Partnerships with Algonquin Park, Business Community, Algonquins, Mills, Local Schools, etc. to Realize Mutual Goals	P1

Key Priority: Master Planning

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
MP-5	Track Service Requests – Leverage Data to Improve Service Delivery	P1
MP-6	Report Annually on Master Plans and Strategies (monitoring)	P1
MP-7	Develop a Strategy to Increase High-speed Internet and Improve Cell Coverage	P1

Key Priority: Human Resources

“Train people well enough so they can leave, treat them well enough so they don't want to.” Sir Richard Branson

Strategic Goal:

To take the best care of employees and ensure the best fit between employees and jobs while avoiding manpower shortages or surpluses.



Key Priority: Human Resources

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
HR-1	Implement a Professional Development Program for Council and Staff	P1
HR-2	Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Attract Young Fire Fighters	P1
HR-3	Implement a Succession Plan Strategy	P1
HR-4	Undertake an Organizational Review informed by a Service Delivery Review	P2

Key Priority: Finance

*“Municipal governments are responsible for delivering services to local residents and must manage their finances effectively.”
Province of Ontario*

Strategic Goal:

To develop strategies to achieve long-term financial sustainability as we deliver high-quality core services.



Key Priority: Finance

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
F-1	Integrate an Asset Management Financial Plan with the Annual Budget	P1
F-2	Implement a 10-year Long-Range Capital Forecast (Harmonized with other master plans)	P1
F-3	Adopt a Strategy to Increase Reserves (Pay-As-You-Go)	P1
F-4	Adopt a Budget Approval Timeline to Approve the Budget by February	P1
F-5	Adopt a Grant Monitoring and Acquisition Strategy Policy	P1

Key Priority: Finance

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
F-6	Separate Operating and Capital Budgets	P2
F-7	Develop a Corporate Strategy for Full Implementation of New Financial Software	P2
F-8	Finalize the Asset Management Plan to Meet 2025 Statutory Requirements	P2
F-9	Prepare a Staff Report Outlining the Merits and Drawbacks of Implementing Multi-year Budgets	P3

Key Priority: Service Delivery

“There are ever-increasing expectations for governments to make informed choices about the services they provide to their citizens. This is evident for municipalities whether facing times of positive economic growth or periods of fiscal constraint.” Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Strategic Goal:

To implement strategies, policies and programs designed to enhance the delivery of core Township services.



Key Priority: Service Delivery

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
SD-1	Conduct a Service Delivery Review to Ensure Core Services are Delivered Efficiently as well as Inform an Org Review (so we are properly resourced)	P1
SD-2	Develop an Internal and External Communication Strategy (in conjunction with a “Roadmap to Services”)	P1
SD-3	Develop a “Roadmap to Services” to Clearly Communicate How Residents Can Access Services (in conjunction with Communication Strategy)	P1
SD-4	Conduct a Pilot Program to Test the Efficiency of a “Committee of the Whole” Governance Model	P2

Key Priority: Service Delivery

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
SD-5	Review the Establishing and Regulating By-law	P2
SD-6	Investigate and Pursue the Recycling Transition - <i>Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016</i>	P2
SD-7	Consider Options for Garbage Collection Service Levels	P2
SD-8	Consult with Recreation Committees to Coordinate Services and Consider Ways to Offer More Township Support	P3
SD-9	Investigate Opportunities to Increase Capacity of Boat Launches	P3

Key Priority: Housing and Employment

*“The housing affordability crisis is significantly impacting the ability of businesses to attract and retain talent, exacerbating challenges associated with ongoing labour shortages, an aging workforce, and the housing crisis itself”
Ontario Chamber of Commerce, July 2023*

Strategic Goal:

To carefully adopt new plans and policies that will help attract new housing and employment opportunities that are the best fit for all residents of the Township.



Key Priority: Housing and Employment

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
HE-1	Implement a Local Housing Strategy (including review of opportunities to increase available lots, more homes – built on the Nipissing Strategy)	P1
HE-2	Develop a Temporary Housing Strategy for Migrant Workers (coordinate with the Local Housing Strategy)	P1
HE-3	In conjunction with an SDR Identify and Implement Tools to Assist with Housing and Economic Development Strategies	P1
HE-4	Transition from the Long-Term Care Arrangement (\$110,000/yr.)	P1

Key Priority: Housing and Employment

Ref. #	Action Item	Priority Ranking
HE-5	Develop a “Seniors-at-Home” Plan	P2
HE-6	Work with DNSSAB to Identify Short-term Accommodations Options for EMS	P2
HE-7	Implement an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Tailored for South Algonquin (safe, small-town feel)	P2
HE-8	Identify Business Opportunities with Lumber Industry (furniture, fibre, cogeneration)	P3

Strategic Plan At-A-Glance Summary Sheet



Mission: The Township of South Algonquin delivers affordable, efficient and reliable core services to our community.

Vision: South Algonquin aspires to be a safe and vibrant Township responsive to the community’s desire for enhanced services, housing and employment.

Core Values: Integrity & Respect, Teamwork, Accountability & Transparency, Fiscal Responsibility & Sustainability, Innovation

Key Priorities and Actions

Asset Management	Master Planning	Human Resources	Finance	Service Delivery	Housing & Employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair Paved Surfaces • Implement Drainage Improvements • Rolling Re-gravel Program • Replace 1996 Whitney Pumper • Replace 1998 Madawaska Mini-Pumper • Renovate Whitney Fire Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize CZBL • Monitoring & Planning of Landfill Sites • Vehicles & Equipment Replacement Plan • Form Strategic Partnerships • Track Service Requests • Report Annually on Master Plans & Strategies • Strategy for High-speed Internet & Cell Coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Program for Council & Staff • Recruitment Strategy for Young Fire Fighters • Succession Plan Strategy • Organizational Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Asset Management Financial Plan with Budget • 10-year Long-Range Capital Forecast • Strategy to Increase Reserves (PAYG) • Adopt the Budget by February • Grant Monitoring & Acquisition Strategy • Separate Operating & Capital Budgets • Corporate Strategy New Financial Software • Finalize AMP to Meet 2025 Requirements • Multi-year Budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Delivery Rev. with an Org Rev. • Communication Strategy • Develop a “Roadmap to Services” • Pilot Program CofW Gov. Model • Establishing and Regulating By-law • Investigate & Pursue Recycling Transition • Garbage Collection Service Levels Options • Coordinate with & Support Rec. Committees • Boat Launch Capacity Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Housing Strategy • Temporary Housing Strategy for Migrant Workers • Tools to Assist with Housing & Ec. Dev Strategies • Transition from LTC • Seniors-at-Home Plan • Short-term Accommodations Options for EMS • Ec. Dev. & Tourism Strategy • Business Opportunities with Lumber Industry

Sample: Key Priority and Action Item Report Card

Key Priority: Human Resources

Strategic Goal: To take the best care of employees and ensure the best fit between employees and jobs while avoiding manpower shortages or surpluses.

Action	Priority	Lead	Status
Implement a Professional Development Program for Council and Staff	P1	CAO	S
Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Attract Young Fire Fighters	P1	FC	C
Implement a Succession Plan Strategy	P1	CAO	D

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Fire Chief (FC), Deputy Treasurer (DT), Deputy Clerk (DC) etc.

Started (S), Not Started (NS), Completed (C), Delayed (D)

Facilitated and compiled for the Township of South Algonquin by:



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