



PRELIMINARY COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Introduction

In 2020, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc adopted a Strategic Plan reflecting community input and indicating general directions for the coming decade. That Plan provided the Municipality's vision and mission, and six broad goals for the decade.

Vision – Strathroy-Caradoc communities will provide economic opportunities, wellbeing and places to call home for residents and businesses

Mission – We serve the communities of Strathroy-Caradoc by delivering modern municipal services, proactively planning for the future and facilitating partnerships that advance our goals.

Goal: Local Infrastructure

Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc will be supported by reliable, financially responsible, and well-maintained infrastructure networks.

Goal: Economic Development

Strathroy-Caradoc will have a diverse tax base and be a place that offers a variety of economic opportunities to current and prospective residents and businesses.

Goal: Community Well-being

Residents of all ages in Strathroy-Caradoc will have access to community amenities and activities that are accessible and support active lifestyles and wellbeing.

Goal: Customer Service

The municipality offers seamless, responsive service and an exceptional experience for every customer.

Goal: Growth Management

Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources.

Goal: Destination Building

Strathroy-Caradoc will provide distinct experiences that celebrate its past and future by prioritizing innovative new ideas that set the community apart.

Shorter-term Priorities with Long-term Goals

Goals such as these tend to remain applicable for a decade or more (and indeed are very similar in many municipalities). The challenge facing the Municipal Council in each new term (and doubly so when, as in Strathroy-Caradoc, Council membership has changed substantially) is to decide:

- what is going to be done in this term about the longer-term goals?
- what meaning should they be given under the current circumstances?
- what strides will this Council make toward realization of the goals?
- What are THIS Council's priorities and issues to be addressed for 2023-2026??

This Document - Preliminary Council Priorities and Issues To Be Addressed 2023-2026

This document does not represent the final thinking or any commitment on the part of the 2023-2026 Strathroy-Caradoc Council. It is simply the first step on the path toward establishing Council's priorities and issues to be addressed in this term; intended to serve as a basis for focussed community input, further fact-finding, and subsequent Council workshops in 2024.

These items derive primarily from Council workshops in late November 2023 and January 2024, in addition to interviews with each member of Council. Based on community input and on its own further consideration in at least two future workshops, Council's collective priorities and tactics for the term will certainly be further refined.

This Council is eager to determine ITS OWN COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES, to specify the projects and changes it collectively intends to initiate, and to give clear collective direction to staff. It is time to look ahead and move forward. Council is expecting that a new Mayor and a new CAO will provide the leadership for progress in Strathroy-Caradoc.

FOR DISCUSSION: Preliminary Council Priorities and Issues to be Addressed

1. Local Infrastructure and Capital Investment

- A wide range of \$1 million-plus potential capital projects have previously been identified in plans, studies, and public consultations. Council will place them all in a 10-year timetable, but also identify those that will take priority in this term
- Before making a budget commitment to each project among the 2023-2026 priorities, Council (with advice from staff) will review the project's objectives, scale and scope, prerequisites, partnership opportunities, and funding sources such as reserves, grants, DCs, debt
- Council's preliminary inclination favours major projects related to piped services and road improvements, projects supportive of economic development, and those related to public health and safety (e.g., fire, police)
- Council recognizes that emergency situations can crop up that could change the priorities
- Reliable infrastructure underpins several other priorities such as growth in industry and jobs, community well-being, and growth management
- An update of the Development Charges study and development charges will be required in order to support a growth-related infrastructure funding strategy

2. Economic Development, Industry and Jobs

- Strathroy-Caradoc is running out of designated and available employment land
- The advantage of Highway 402 and the imperative to minimize the residential tax burden remain top of mind.
- Council supports an active program to attract new business investment to Strathroy-Caradoc
- Issues to be addressed include:
 - o Water and wastewater servicing, particularly in the Mount Brydges area
 - o Ongoing OP review re urban settlement boundaries

- Identifying and supporting key economic sectors, such as agri-business
- Encouragements for developers to move ahead with rental and mid-density housing

3. Community Well-being: Activities that Enhance Quality of Life

- Council remains committed to recreation and culture programs and activities that enhance Strathroy-Caradoc's high quality of life and community well-being. This includes recreation and culture programs, special events, festivals, bike and walking opportunities, etc. and particularly – at this point in time – activities that require relatively little new capital investment
- The emphasis will be on partnering with community organizations, local businesses, etc.
- Activities will be supported that are inclusive and visible in all parts of the Municipality
- We want to encourage and expand activities that appeal to visitors as well as residents
- Our changing demographic make-up needs to be better understood

4. Community Well-being: Community Safety

- Community safety is fundamental to community well-being, and all relevant services (for example, Fire, Bylaw, Building Inspectors) and organizations (including the Hospital) have key roles to play
- The Municipality values its community-based Police Service and will work closely with it on projects such as the required modernization of the 9-1-1 emergency response system.
- All relevant services and organizations will be encouraged to work together on emerging issues related to homelessness/drugs/petty crime.

5. Customer Service

- The Municipality will take steps to build connection/trust between residents and the municipal administration
- Municipal leaders will take steps to be visible in and accessible to the community
- We will establish and monitor response time standards and response tracking
- Council encourages a “customer-first” approach to our services and will provide a mandate for staff to be helpful in serving residents, particularly with regard to building review
- Work hard to ensure that the Municipality works – and is seen to work – for all parts
- Ensure effective channels of communication to/feedback from residents and businesses
- The public continues to expect a balance among in-person, telephone, and digital service

6. The Challenges of Growth for the Municipal Organization

- We are committed to maintaining operational efficiency and economies of scale through these times of change.
- As Strathroy-Caradoc grows and as resident expectations change, Council will grapple with the need to calibrate the resources available with the volume and level of service expected.
- For example, at what thresholds (e.g., population, service calls, etc.) does the Municipality's (and the Police Service's) need for resources (or specialization of resources) increase?
- In examining these questions, we intend to consider:

- Our relationship with the County: can it be a co-op to provide specialized resources for local municipalities? Or can some County services be better provided by Strathroy-Caradoc?
- Our relationship with other municipalities: can we find co-op ways to provide specialized resources (including bulk purchasing)?
- Our relationship with non-government organizations: can we partner with other orgs to reduce Municipal requirements?