

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: August 2, 2022

Subject: Summary of Council's Strategic Priority Accomplishments from 2019-2022

Recommendation(s)

1. That Report CAO-22-08 Summary of Council's Strategic Priority Accomplishments from 2019-2022 dated August 2, 2022 be received.

Purpose

To provide Council with a summary of the key accomplishments related to the strategic plan.

Background

Overview of Grimsby Town Council's Strategic Priorities

In September of 2019, Town Council engaged in a priority setting process. The goal of the initiative was to establish forward-thinking priorities for the current Council term, ending in 2022.

On December 2, 2019, Council approved the Council Strategic Priorities 2019-2022. This plan identified twenty-two (22) initiatives categorized under the following seven (7) items:

1. Responsible Development;
2. Business Attraction, Growth, and Retention;
3. Accountability and Transparency;
4. Transportation and Road Safety;
5. Heritage and Culture;
6. Environment; and
7. Community Amenities.

By setting the stage and providing clear direction, Council set a bold and courageous plan for their 2019-2022 term. To support its implementation Council approved the 2020, 2021, and 2022 budgets, which allocated financial resources to ensure the achievement of the Strategic Priority initiatives while managing day-to-day operations.

Overview of Strategic Priority Accomplishments

The 2019-2022 term has been an incredibly impactful period by Council, as they developed their **first-ever strategic priorities document** for the Town of Grimsby.

The following items are by no means a comprehensive list of all that Council has accomplished during their term, but encompasses only the **major accomplishments** under each Strategic Priority achieved by Council. It should be noted that these milestones were accomplished while the Town was battling a global pandemic, which caused financial and Staff resources to be redeployed and redistributed in order to support the Town's day-to-day operations, as well as the needs of its residents and businesses.

Responsible Development

Encouraging development that reflects the aims and priorities of the community.

- Council and Staff approved over \$750 million of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development applications, including over 1,000,000 sq. ft. of commercial/industrial developments.
- Highlights of the approved developments include:
 - The redevelopment of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital (WLMH) and evolution of a healthcare hub, including:
 - Addition of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation building
 - Expansion of McNally House Hospice
 - Deer Park Villa
 - 5th Wheel Development, which included the negotiated transaction of an additional 400 metres of land and dedication to creating parkland on the waterfront. The development land will house a 1,300 unit development with approximately 75,000 sq. ft. of employment floor space

- Century Condos Downtown, which implemented the first-ever Urban Design Panel to help shape the development and its features. It also included the implementation of the Town's first geothermal energy supported development
- A 750,000 sq. ft. industrial employment development at Kelson and South Service Road which will bring a minimum of 500 new jobs to the Town of Grimsby
- Supportive Housing Development at 25 Bartlett Avenue
- Planning for 1.2 kilometers of waterfront parkland at the northerly end of Casablanca Boulevard for the Town's next park location
- In conjunction with the construction of the new watermain on Main Street, the 'Downtown Reimagined' project was created, which reimagines the downtown as a destination, achieved through pedestrian-friendly and visually-appealing streetscapes
 - To date, the Town of Grimsby has had over 2,000 views of the proposed concepts and had direct input from over 650 residents
- Developed the Alleyway Collaborative Project with private sector organizations in the downtown core
- Investigating potential land options for Grimsby Secondary School site and the surrounding area
- Town Staff have been engaged with Ontario Land Tribunal, appealing four (4) development applications
- Council approved the adoption of the Grimsby Beach Secondary Plan to protect the character of the Town, and completed the Land Use Planning Study to:
 - Ensure heritage-focused policies were implemented within the Plan
 - Create Urban Design and Heritage Guidelines (that align with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada)
 - Encourage the requirement for Heritage Impact Assessments for alterations within the core area
 - Identify and protect important views and vistas
 - Provide protection for 90 properties under the Ontario Heritage Act

- Created the Town's first-ever Community Benefits Working Group, specific to the Winston neighbourhood
- Initiation of the Official Plan
- Completion of the Development Charge (DC) study and approval of the by-law, which included public consultation. The study forecasts capital infrastructure needs to accommodate future growth and establishes fees to be collected through development charges to help fund future infrastructure projects

Business Attraction, Growth and Retention

Fostering a vibrant business environment in Grimsby.

- Investment in the Town's first-ever Economic Development Officer
- Launch of Grimsby's Local Business and Service Directory, which includes 500 businesses
- Launched the *Let's Talk Business* section on the Town of Grimsby's website
- Successfully implemented the Digital Main Street program, which assisted small businesses in establishing an online presence
- Successfully launched the Concierge Service to assist companies in the development application and building permit application processes
 - Most recently, Council approved a new 750,000 sq. ft. industrial development that will foster 500 new direct jobs
 - Assisted several start-ups with building and zoning related issues
 - Expedited several building permit applications for local manufacturing and service businesses
- Created the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (2022-2025), which:
 - Included an economic baseline analysis which was prepared by the Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB)
 - Incorporated the Business Retention Expansion input through OMAFRA's survey on 75 businesses
 - Hosted Business Roundtable workshops with over 20 local C-Suite Executives

- Created an extensive Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Town
- The Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (2022-2025) is based on the following key pillars:
 - Business Retention Expansion
 - Workforce Development & Alignment
 - Business Attraction and Investment Readiness
 - Collaborative Marketing
 - Support Innovative Entrepreneurship and Home Businesses
- Implemented the Corporate Visitation Program. To date, the Town has met with 25 businesses
- Assisted the Niagara Region in finalizing their 10-year Economic Development Strategy
- Launched efforts on the development of a Community Profile and a Vacant Land Directory, which includes between 25-30 properties to help attract potential businesses to Grimsby
- Participated in Foreign Direct Investment's (FDI) "European Union Day" in Niagara, where EDOs were invited to meet with the European Consuls General from over 25 countries
- Assisted local businesses with COVID-19 restrictions by:
 - Launching the *Grimsby's Got It!* buy local campaign
 - Established innovative solutions to accommodate local businesses with outdoor seating arrangements by issuing expedited patio permits in Grimsby on the Lake and the downtown core at no charge

Accountability and Transparency

Building trust and confidence in the Town's operations and services and establishing a strong reputation for the corporation.

- Introduced the “Committee of the Whole” governance model, and confirmed that the Statutory Clerk attends all Committee meetings to ensure consistent procedures and minutes
- Implementation of live-streaming of all Committee/Council meetings
- Implementation of Zoom/Microsoft Teams, and hybrid council meetings
- Implemented a revised procedural by-law
- Implemented a Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Implemented a Code of Conduct for Staff
- Implemented an internal Whistleblower policy
- Established new policies and revised a number of by-laws, which were made available in an internal public library
- Completed the Ward Boundary review
- Preparation for the 2022 Municipal Election
- Implemented procurement updates:
 - Centralized the procurement process
 - Renewed the Procurement By-Law, which hadn't been updated in 17 years and did not comply with the Free Trade Agreement
 - Implemented Bids & Tenders to make RFPs visible to a broader range of suppliers and to increase record-keeping and auditing processes
 - Created bi-annual procurement reports to improve transparency of purchases
 - Achieved annual cost improvements of \$250,000
- Introduced a new Corporate Purchase Card procedure, which streamlined the purchasing process and enhanced the internal controls

- Asset Management evaluated the condition of over \$700 million of core assets and identified the Town's existing infrastructure gap to meet the Province's obligation
- Implemented new financial management best practices, including:
 - Establishment of the new reserve policy and rationalized 73 services to 38
 - Modernized the investment policy
 - Significantly improved timeliness and content of quarterly variance and provincial (FIR) reporting
 - Created a new cost allocation methodology
 - Established multi-year funding model for municipal contribution of \$9.3 million to the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital
 - Established funding model for expansion of Peach King Centre
 - Sold the biodigester
 - More timely completion of Annual Financial Audits
 - Approval of a Revised Sewer Taxation Methodology policy, which will shift from a property assessment model to a user-pay model (hybrid for 2023)
 - Implemented an Asset Management Plan for the Town's core assets
 - Improved the Corporate budgeting process, so that it is now aligned to Council's strategic priorities
 - Sought public input on the platform for *Let's Talk Grimsby*
 - Improved the financial health of the organization from a deficit position in 2018 to a surplus position. The Town's financial reserves have increased by \$8 million over the past three years
- Implemented new customer service / public consultation measures, including:
 - Introduced *Let's Talk Grimsby*, which has had tens of thousands of hits on a number of projects
 - Increased social media engagement by 200% year after year

- Launched Service Grimsby which:
 - Established Customer Service standards across the Corporation
 - Expanded the hours of service for residents by utilizing Peach King Centre's reception
- Ranked as one of the top municipalities in compliance for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Creation of self-service tools for residents to use
- The Grimsby Public Library became fine free in order to offer equitable service to every member of our community
- Adopted a Land Acknowledgement in collaboration with the Region and Local Area Municipalities (LAMs)
- High-speed internet investments have been made to more than 4,800 homes in Niagara above the escarpment by the Province
- *Emily 911* project completed through the installation of address signs in rural farmlands to improve emergency response times
- Launched public facing Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping system
- Introduced an Open Air Fire by-law
- Proactively protected the Town's electronic data and technology infrastructure by conducting a third party cyber security audit
- Modernized the Corporation by:
 - Digitizing aspects of the development approval process, with the aim of reducing processing time by 25%
 - Digitizing traffic engineering data in order to improve service
 - Installing mobile data terminals in Fire vehicles to provide real-time access to crucial information for Fire Services which aims to improve emergency response by 1-minute
 - Implementing a comprehensive Maintenance Management System to better manage \$1.3 billion of existing assets

- Enhancing space planning of Town Hall to adapt to alternative work arrangements and extend the capacity of the existing space
- Implemented 'Shared Services' including:
 - Joint procurement initiatives with co-operative buying groups and other municipalities (e.g. Animal Control, Legal Services, telecommunications) which will save the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars annually
 - The Joint Fire Services Pilot with the Town of Lincoln, which received the first ever Collaboration Award of Excellence from the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA). This project is also forecasted to save millions of dollars of cost avoidance in the future
 - Purchased a new ladder truck, which achieved a \$170,000 cost improvement
- Unprecedented advocacy with upper levels of government including 20 formal delegations with Ministers, which led to:
 - **\$33 million of funding**
 - Improved traffic safety by the installation of flashing beacons on Grimsby diamond

Transportation and Road Safety

Providing safe and efficient transportation options throughout Grimsby.

- Initiated the Transportation Master Plan
- Launching the first-ever local transit service. Since its inception on August 17, 2020 uptake of resident ridership has been remarkable, representing over 53,000 rides in Grimsby
- Supporting the consolidation of six (6) separate transit operations into one Regional transit service which will become effective January 2023
- Continued advocacy and progress within the Region, Metrolinx, and Province to provide GO Service in Grimsby
- Niagara Region has funded the Environmental Assessment of a North/South Escarpment crossing in West Niagara. In addition, the Town has participated in numerous delegations with the Minister of Transportation on this matter

- Improved pedestrian sidewalk connectivity to St. John School in partnership with the Town of Lincoln
- A traffic and parking study is underway in support of the next phase of 'Downtown Reimagined'
- Nelles Road South & Dorchester Drive traffic study has been completed. Recommendations from this study are currently being implemented
- Enhancements have been made to the existing school crossing at Our Lady of Fatima and Lakeview Public Schools
- Collaboratively working with Niagara Regional Police (NRP) Staff Sergeant on improving traffic safety
- Implemented the in-road flexible bollards pilot program in six (6) locations: Winston Road, Roberts Road, Kerman Avenue, Baker Road South, Central Avenue, and Nelles Road South
- Leveraged technology for:
 - Four (4) radar display boards, which are used as a traffic calming measure to reinforce driver speed compliance by providing active feedback to drivers
 - Two (2) non-intrusive speed monitoring devices, which are used to measure driver speeds without altering the drivers. This allows the Town to get a true sense of the prevailing speeds of traffic to assess if traffic calming measures are needed
- Grimsby participated with the Niagara Region and 11 other municipalities in Vision Zero, which is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. This program will include:
 - Automated speed enforcement (ASE) to help encourage driver speed compliance through automated speed monitoring and ticketing
 - Red Light Cameras (RLC) to help encourage driver compliance at signalized intersections through automated compliance monitoring and ticketing

Heritage and Culture

Protecting, preserving and enhancing Grimsby's distinct heritage and culture.

- The first full-time dedicated Heritage Planner was hired
- Supported Heritage Property Owners, including:
 - The introduction of bi-annual Visual Inspections (completed by Heritage Staff) to over 560 protected heritage properties
 - The introduction of a support program for heritage property owners, where Staff conduct on-site consultations
 - The introduction of educational materials for heritage property owners, including: "What is Designation?" and "What is the Municipal Heritage Register?"
 - Protection provided for the first time to an ice house within the Town of Grimsby, which was protected for its scientific achievement
- The introduction of a formal Notice of Intention to Demolish process
- The introduction of a Heritage-focused conservation approach to retain and protect our heritage building stock. (This provided protection to over 320 properties under the Ontario Heritage Act within a 14-month timeframe)
- The introduction of the first ever heritage planning partnership with Willowbank, Canada's Premier Heritage Conservation School
- The Town's first ever Heritage Conservation District Study is currently underway on Main Street East
- Completion of the Land Use Planning Study in Grimsby Beach
- Reinvigoration to the Town's plaque programs:
 - Creation of a new design for the custom bronze designation plaques
 - A Designation Plaque event was held on July 21, 2022 to honour the Town's dedicated heritage property owners
 - Installation of Grimsby Remembers plaques, located at Centennial Park and Casablanca Waterfront

- Pursuit of six (6) Designations under the Ontario Heritage Act. (An additional 10 designation assessments are currently underway)
- Established a stronger relationship with Indigenous communities via:
 - The encouragement of truth and reconciliation within the community and the integration and acknowledgement of Indigenous history
 - In partnership with the Grimsby Public Library and Art Gallery, a memorial was created to honour the children who died in Residential Schools. Each colourful ribbon was a physical representation of one child who passed away. The memorial was decommissioned at a special Truth and Reconciliation ceremony on September 30, 2021
 - Establishment of a healing garden with educational interruptive signage within Centennial Park, which is currently under significant consultation with indigenous communities
 - A Truth and Reconciliation focused strategy is currently underway with the Ontario Heritage Trust to implement a bronze Provincial plaque within centennial park
- Grimsby Public Library celebrated 20 years of bringing literary and cultural experiences to the Grimsby community and beyond via the Grimsby Author Series

Environment

Protecting and preserving Grimsby's unique natural setting and becoming a municipal leader in sustainability.

- Improved greenspace in the Town, including:
 - Planting over 2,100 trees in partnership with the public sector agencies (NPCA), the Green Committee, and private sector
 - Creating a legacy garden in front of Town Hall tree through the support of the Grimsby Garden Club
 - Installing a sensory garden beside Carnegie Hall
 - Developing an interactive map highlighting residential and public planting efforts providing insight into the potential canopy growth in Grimsby

- Joined Vineland Research “Greening the Landscape Research Consortium” to employ a science-based approach to landscape improvements to promote biodiversity and create green spaces
- Completed shoreline protection works in the Grimsby Beach area at 10th Street and 12th Street, as well as 6th Street and 9th Street. Storm outlet structures were also completed near 7th Street
- Completion of the Baker Road Wastewater Treatment Plant Pollution Prevention and Control Plan (PCCP) study, which aims to reduce the amount of combined sewage overflows occurring in Lake Ontario by reducing infiltration and inflow storm water into the wastewater services
- Coronation Park erosion and landscape enhancement works design completed. (Construction is scheduled to begin in Q4 of 2022)
- LED lighting upgrades were implemented at Peach King Centre, which derived \$43,000 CAD in annual savings
- Approved Grimsby's first Town-wide Recreation and Trails Master Plan initiative
- Implemented environmentally-focused development practices including:
 - Grimsby's first geothermal building at Century Condos
 - Bird-friendly development
 - Electronic vehicle charging stations
- Purchased the Town's first electronic vehicle SUV
- Implemented the Town's first-ever local transit service, which will reduce the carbon emissions generated from cars
- Investigating potential land options for Grimsby Secondary School site and the surrounding area with a focus on the protection of the existing greenspace
- Council passed a resolution to join the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and ICLIE Canada Partners for Climate Protection Program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the corporate and community level

Community Amenities

Providing adequate and quality amenities for Grimsby's growing population.

- Construction of new and/or improved amenities:
 - \$200 plus million West Lincoln Memorial Hospital
 - Site plans are being finalized
 - \$20 plus million expansion approved for the Peach King Community Centre
 - Project Manager has been assigned
 - Gibson Street Bridge Replacement, which is an important link in the Bruce Trail network crossing the Forty Mile Creek
 - Six (6) playground replacements
 - Implementation of four (4) pickle ball courts at Mayfair Park
 - Casablanca Waterfront Park has been designed, with construction set to begin in Q4 of 2022
 - New HVAC, building automation, and humidifier upgrades were implemented at the Grimsby Public Library and Art Gallery
 - Significant upgrades to Southward Park for the 2022 Niagara Canada Summer Games
- Special events and programming:
 - Hometown Hockey, 2021 Santa Claus Parade, and Happening in Grimsby drew over 40,000 people
 - Grimsby 100 and Canada Summer Games will bring a record number of special events to the Town in 2022
 - Staff provided summer camps, fitness programs, and recreation programs in innovative fashions during the pandemic
 - Camp and aquatic registrations in 2022 have increased by 20% from pre-pandemic numbers:
 - 1,500 campers are registered, with an additional 175 on the waiting list
 - 800 swimmers are registered, with an additional 120 on the waiting list

- Movies in the Park attendance increased by 100%
- Grimsby Fire Department and Staff [in partnership with the Grimsby Benevolent Fund (GBF)] went door-to-door to collect 41,970 lbs of food and over \$30,000 of financial support to support residents in need for Feed Hope
- Grimsby continues one of its largest standing traditions with a modified 63rd annual Santa Claus parade. The 'reverse parade' had over 1,500 vehicles and received a record number of donations

Responsible Financial Planning

The strategic priorities accomplished during this Council's term were completed through sound financial management best practices. The calculated and targeted financial investments in key areas made significant value-based positive impacts for the community.

The base operating budget (i.e. the budget needed to support the day-to-day operations of the Town) were well below inflation for the last three (3) years. Moreover, the targeted value based investments in 2020 were directed towards:

- Creating a funding model for the \$9.3 million municipal contribution to the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital (WLMH)
- Implementation of the first-ever local transit service, which has led to over 53,000 rides
- Investing in an Economic Development Officer
- Resources for community programming, open spaces, parks, and tree planting
- Responsible development initiatives (e.g. Grimsby Beach, Main Street East, and increased Legal Services, etc.)

During Council's term, the Corporation moved from a 2018 deficit position to a surplus position in the following years, improving operating reserves by \$5.5 million. This was managed in spite of some substantial revenue losses and cost escalations related to the pandemic. There were also surpluses realized of \$2.4 million on the rate program reserve.

In addition, the Town's financial plan also considered 'affordability' (as supplied by the most recent BMA Affordability Study):

- Local Residential Property taxes (per \$100,000 of assessment) is 20% below the average in the Niagara Region
- The Town of Grimsby has the lowest rates in the Region when considering Water, Sewer, and Taxes as a percentage of household income

\$33 million in grants has been received by the Town during the 2019-2022 Council term. These grants were hugely impactful in allowing Council to approve and implement the strategic priorities.

Overall, the financial health of the Corporation is much improved since the beginning of Council's term.

Our Most Important Human Capital: Our People

Although Council set bold and ambitious initiatives to guide the Corporation, none of these accomplishments would have been possible without our Staff, who make up the high-performance team at the Town of Grimsby. This includes our full-time, seasonal, and part-time employees, as well as our volunteer Fire Fighters who have enabled the Town to execute Council's strategic priorities.

Significant investment has been made in our journey to create a 'high-performance' culture at the Town, including:

- Major transformation of the organization from a silo/hierarchal environment to a collaborative team-based environment
- Successfully renegotiated long-term employment agreements, including the Town's volunteer Fire Fighters
- Completed a corporate-wide compensation review of job positions, which now complies with internal, gender, and pay equity
- Modernized employee recognition practices to include:
 - Individual and team-based recognition(s)
 - Seasonal and part-time employees, as well as crossing guards
 - Annual team appreciation events

- Implemented leadership development to include:
 - Bi-annual People Leadership meetings that are held with 30+ Managers, Supervisors, and Directors in order to advance development
 - Mentorships and professional coaching
 - Modernization of the performance management process, which now incorporates a learning and development component
 - Offering over 16,000 LinkedIn Learning courses to our employees, residents, and businesses in partnership with the Grimsby Public Library
- Engaged with all employees to develop:
 - A shared purpose:

*Together, we take pride in serving a community where people want to **Be***
 - The Town's corporate values:
 - Our Work Matters – Caring for our community through meaningful work
 - Pride – A personal commitment to the work we do as well as who we do it for
 - Teamwork – By supporting each other, we can make extraordinary things happen
 - Results-Oriented – Making a positive difference within our community, for both now and in the future
 - Continuous Learning – We foster an environment of learning and development
- Partnering with universities and Willowbank on recruiting interns and co-op students
- Introduced and conducted 'stay' interviews with all newly hired employees once they reach their 6-month milestone to determine if the Corporation is meeting their expectations
- Conducted a 'pulse' employee survey with 90% participation during the pandemic to receive feedback on safety matters related to the employee's areas of work

- Developed an 'alternative work arrangements' directive
- Modernized the space planning in Town Hall, having them aligned to job requirements (not a person's title), and the creation of more collaborative work spaces
- Implemented the *Not Myself Today* program, which provided access to mental health supports
- Contributed to our community via the following team events:
 - Feed Hope
 - Tree planting
 - Helping families and children in need at Christmas (i.e. sponsoring gifts)
 - Food donations

The improvement in teamwork across the Corporation was the key contributor in achieving so many strategic priority accomplishments throughout the term. Despite minimal resources, the extraordinary efforts made by Town Staff and Council is truly an outstanding accomplishment we are all proud of.

Immediate Next Steps

Once Council approves the report, Staff will summarize the strategic priority accomplishments in a document. The document will be posted on the Town's website, and a press release will be issued by the end of September.

Next Steps with the 2023-2026 Council

Staff will work with Council to determine the Strategic Priorities for the next term (2023-2026).

The new Council may consider some of the following initiatives which are well underway:

- The Official Plan
- Implementation of the Transportation Master Plan
- Completion of 'Downtown Reimagined' (parking/traffic study, and watermain replacement)

- Implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (2022-2025)
- Implementation of the Recreation and Trails Master Plan
- Implementation of the Heritage Master Plan
- Implementation of the results of the Heritage District Study (Main Street East)
- Construction of the Casablanca Park
- Construction of the Coronation Park
- Construction of the Peach King Centre expansion
- Completion of the Health Hub (West Lincoln Memorial Hospital construction, and the McNally House Hospice expansion)
- Implementation of the approved land option for Grimsby Secondary School site and the surrounding area
- Construction of the Grimsby GO Station and implementation of the daily Go Service
- Successful launch of the consolidated Regional Transit Service
- Building on our Asset Management Plan to include non-core assets
- Implementation of the Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)
- Addressing the infrastructure gap
- Attraction and retention of top talent

Conclusion

Despite many financial and Town resources being redistributed to the COVID-19 pandemic response, day-to-day business operations were able to continue. At the same time, the high-performance efforts of the Town's Staff drove the advancement of Council's strategic priorities throughout the term.

Thank you to the Town of Grimsby's Council for your leadership and collaboration during this last term. Together, we have completed a collective set of priorities to guide the Town and put Grimsby in good standing for future generations.

Respectfully prepared by,



Nicole Divok
Executive Assistant to the Mayor & CAO

Approved by,



Harry Schlange
Chief Administrative Officer