

Thames Centre

Strategic Plan Presentation 2

Developing Strategic Priorities for Municipal Council
October 30, 2023

Strategic Plan Presentation - Update

- Methodology
- Survey Security Features
- Confidence Level
- Observations
- Findings
- Recommendations



Methodology

- Documentation Review
- Survey Design Development
- Three Surveys: Community, Council and Staff
- Community Survey Marketing
 - Canada Post Invitation Post Card – Sent to Residents, Businesses and Farms
 - Facebook and Google Advertising
 - Thames Centre Social Media
- Feedback on Preliminary Findings
 - Council Workshop
 - Poster Open Houses
- Final Report

Survey Security Features

- Anonymous.
- If participant identified being a resident outside the municipality, then survey was automatically rejected (4).
- QR Code permitted survey being completed only once by a device.
- IP Codes were filtered. If any survey had an IP address outside the municipality, then survey was automatically rejected (3).
- Abusive comments filtering (0).

Confidence Level

- 85% Completion Rate
- Survey Completed on Average: 9 minutes and 15 seconds.
- 95% Confidence Level
- Margin of Error: +/- 4%

Score: 74%

Range: 70% to 78%

Observations

Category	%
Resident	86.10
Business Owner	0.98
Both Resident and Business Owner	11.22
Work in the Municipality	1.22
None of the Above*	0.48
Total	100.00

Location	%	Urban Rural %
Dorchester	50.26	84.36%
Thorndale	34.10	
Mossley	4.36	15.64%
Crampton	1.54	
Evelyn	1.54	
Nilestown	0.77	
Putnam	0.77	
Derwent	0.77	
Three Bridges	0.77	
Wellburn	0.51	
Cobble Hill	0.51	
Fanshawe Lake	0.51	
Gladstone	0.26	
Harrietsville	0.26	
Avon	0.26	
Cherry Grove	0.26	
Devizes	0.26	
Friendly Corners	0.26	
Kelly Station	0.26	
Other	1.54	

Observations

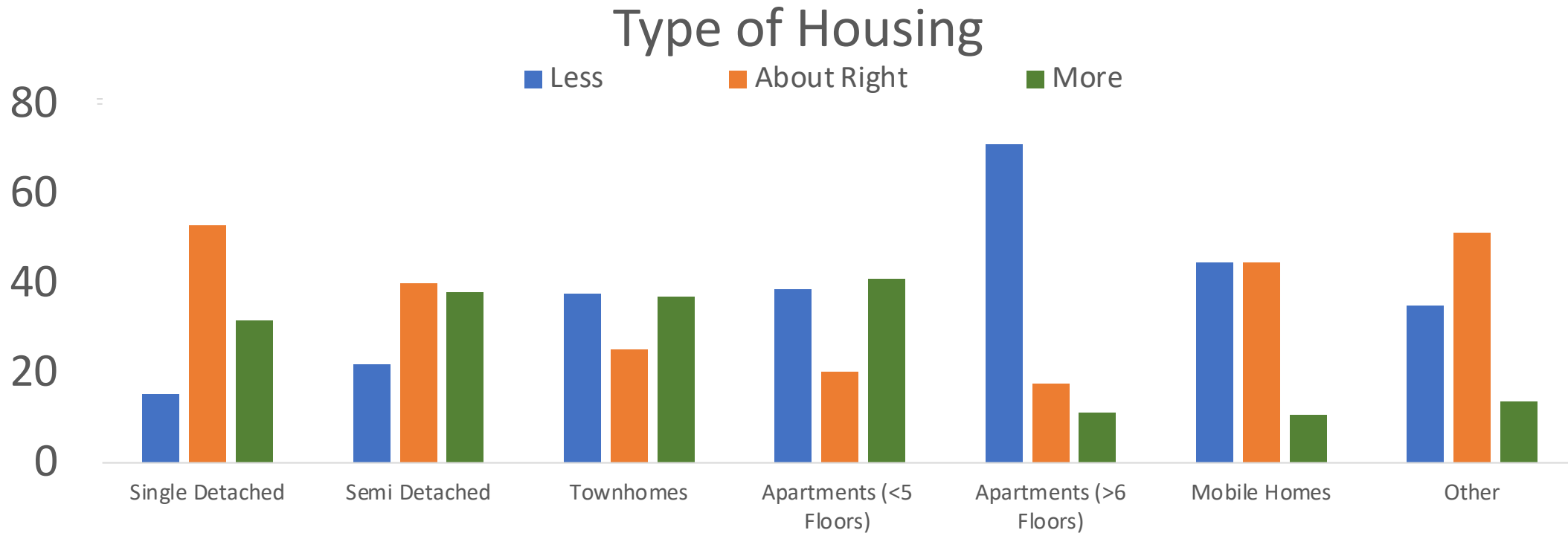
The survey provided the opportunity for participants to comment on the best features of living and doing business in Thames Centre. The top five common themes were:

- ✓ **Small Town Feel of the Community** 26.9 %
- ✓ A Sense of Community 12.3 %
- ✓ Quiet Nature 11.6 %
- ✓ The Proximity of Living Close to London 7.6 %
- ✓ The Green Space 5.0 %
- ✓ Not a City 4.0 %

Council **Cosmopolitan & Progressive**
Small Town
Living Close to City
Green Space
Not a City

Findings – Housing and Growth

- Community members were asked to respond to this growth rate and **52.76%** indicated the growth rate was too high, **34.12%** indicated they either liked the growth rate or that it should be higher, and **13.12%** did not offer an opinion.



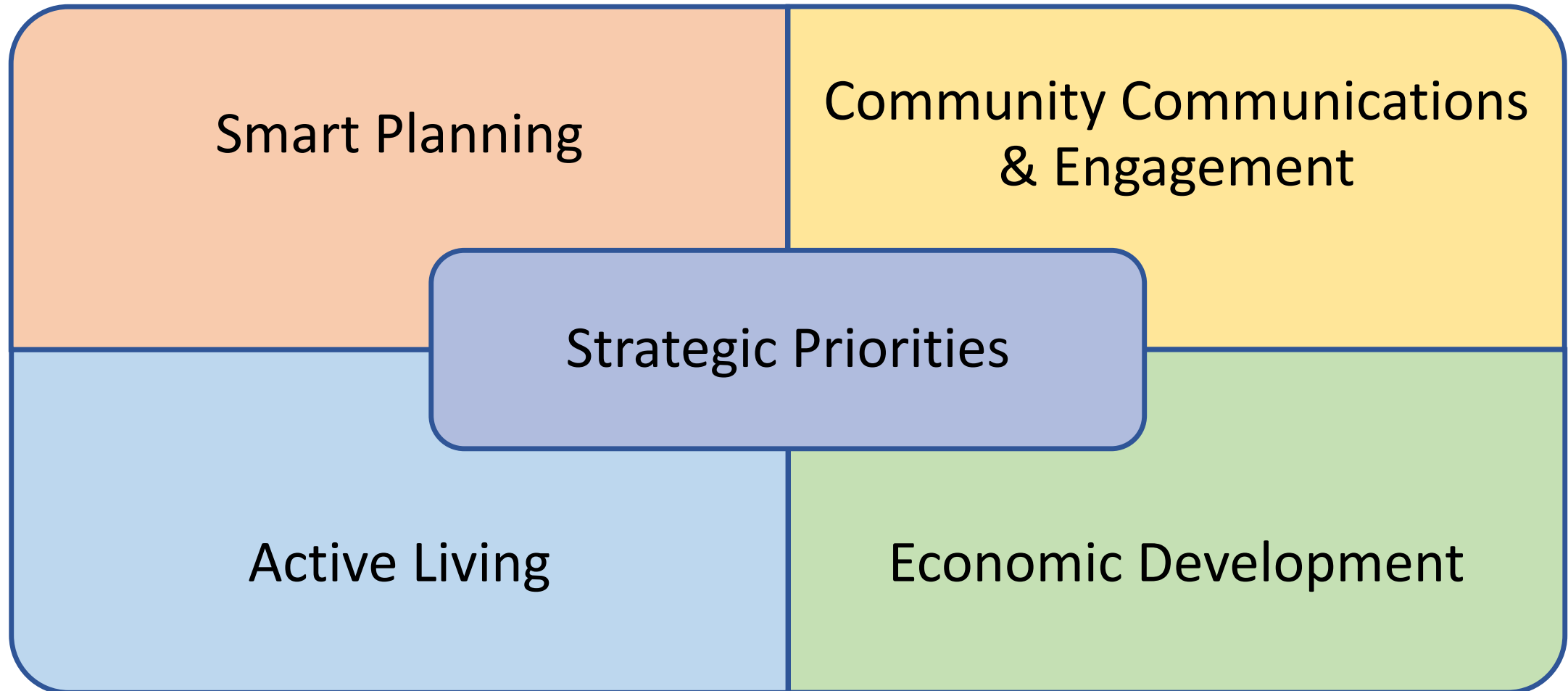
Findings – Municipal Services **Priority**

Service	Not Necessary	Low Importance	Moderately Important	High Importance	Essential
Recreation	1.61%	7.51 %	18.50 %	42.63 %	29.76 %
Parks & Trails	0.80	4.55	20.59	40.91	33.16
Cemeteries	11.89	27.30	33.78	15.68	11.35
Planning	4.59	13.24	33.78	28.92	20.54
Fire Services	0.53	1.07	8.53	19.20	70.67
Police Services	0.27	2.43	8.92	24.86	63.51
Bylaw Services	5.88	15.78	35.83	22.26	19.25
Roads	0.00	0.80	8.82	32.62	57.91
Waste Collection	0.27	0.54	10.99	30.29	58.41
Water Services	3.22	5.36	14.48	22.79	54.16
Council Info	1.34	7.22	31.55	33.42	26.47
Business Licences	9.97	25.07	38.27	18.60	8.09

Findings – Municipal Services Performance

Service	Failing	Below Expectations	Average	Above Expectations	Excellent
Recreation	4.38 %	9.59 %	46.58 %	27.67 %	11.78 %
Parks & Trails	4.10	15.30	51.09	22.95	6.56
Cemeteries	1.94	3.60	71.47	15.79	7.20
Planning	9.59	18.63	64.11	6.03	1.64
Fire Services	0.82	2.99	40.76	31.79	23.64
Police Services	9.54	17.98	50.41	12.26	9.81
Bylaw Services	10.28	15.83	64.72	6.94	2.22
Roads	5.46	9.84	51.09	23.77	9.84
Waste Collection	3.27	8.17	44.96	25.07	18.53
Water Services	4.78	9.83	63.48	13.76	8.15
Council Info	8.77	22.74	58.36	8.77	1.37
Business Licences	2.24	4.76	82.63	8.40	1.96

Recommendations – Strategic Priorities



Recommendations – Smart Planning

- 2A** The Municipality should reassess the administration of certain planning functions by the upper-tier municipality. Although this may create a “two-step” process for planning applications (such as amendment to the Official Plans), the community can have confidence that local planning decisions are being made by local elected officials.
- 2B** Thames Centre Council should consider creating a standing committee of Council entitled “Planning and Development Committee”, where all planning matters are discussed in a dedicated meeting, and thereafter, planning recommendations are forwarded to Council for adoption with the associated bylaw.
- 2C** When approving new residential sub-divisions, Council should adopt policies (and zoning bylaws) that promote greater diversity in housing stock, such as increased number of apartments, townhouses, and semi-detached homes for young families and seniors.
- 2D** When approving site plans, Council should adopt policies that promote “small town” features, such as themed street light poles and lighting, sidewalks, signage, building facades, parks and trails.
- 2E** The Municipality should partner with the County of Middlesex to develop a Transportation Master Plan specific to the Thames Centre community.
- 2F** The Municipality could implement a “Community Improvement Plan” as recommended in the recent Stantec report completed in October 2023.

Recommendations – Community Communications & Engagement

- 3A** The three Ward Councillors could conduct annual “town hall” meetings in their respective wards to update their constituents on Council decisions, budgets, policies, and in turn, receive citizen feedback on ward and municipal issues.
- 3B** The Mayor and Deputy Mayor could attend the ward annual Town Hall meetings (as recommended in 3A) to update the community on decisions and issues that impact Thames Centre from the County level. This could include “guests” from the County (such as public health, land ambulance, community services) who can provide updates, in addition to, updates from police service management.
- 3C** The Mayor can conduct an annual “State of the Municipality” address, focused on the business community, but welcoming the general public.
- 3D** Live streaming of Council meetings can be improved by implementing additional camera views to showcase delegations, and Council members, when speaking.

Recommendations – Community Communications & Engagement

- Council Feedback
- Recommendation 3A (Revised)
 - Town Hall meetings (add “green” agenda items)
- Recommendation 3C (Revised)
 - Mayor’s Annual Business Breakfast Event
 - Business Awards – 5 to 6 Categories (such as Best Small Business, Best Produce, Best Store Front, etc.)
 - Best Winery
- Recommendation 3E (New)
 - Municipal sponsorship (grants and in-kind support) to community groups
 - Funding to celebrate arts and culture
 - Provide initial funding to develop Thames Centre Chamber of Commerce

Recommendations – Active Living

- 4A** As recommended within the Community Services and Facilities Master Plan, the plan should be reviewed annually as part of the Municipality's budget cycle.
- 4B** Based on the community feedback received in the Strategic Plan process, the recommendations received in the Community Services and Facilities Master Plan should be prioritized towards youth and seniors.
- 4C** The Municipality could consider developing and implementing a Parks and Trails Master Plan based on growing community needs and expectations.

Recommendations – Active Living

- Council Feedback
- Recommendation 4C (Revised)
 - Focus on walking trails (not just capital) – Thorndale priority (Rec. 4C)
 - Trail Maintenance – Volunteerism and Municipal Support (Rec. 4C)
 - Annual Report on Trails
 - Citizen engagement = community support and promotion
- Recommendations (New)
 - Playroom and Youth Centre in Dorchester and Thorndale

Recommendations – Economic Development

- 5A** The Municipality could consider financial incentives to retain and attract local businesses into the local community, for greater accessibility of stores to seniors, employment for youth, and general amenities (groceries, restaurants, household goods) for the general population.
- 5B** Partner with the County of Middlesex to create an Economic Development Strategy focused on Thames Centre, supporting the retention and attraction of local businesses. This could involve leveraging Middlesex County in allocating dedicating resources for Thames Centre.
- 5C** Work with local farmers on bringing their harvest to local residents with “food to table” programs, such as sponsored farmer’s markets, fall fair, and “buy local” campaigns. This could be facilitated by creating a “Agricultural Advisory Committee” reporting and advising to Council, and/or, partnering with the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture.
- 5E** The Municipality could consider funding grants for eligible farmers to establish road-side fruit and vegetable stands, as an enhancement of “food to table” marketing and programming.
- 5F** The Municipality could consider a welcoming display greeting drivers along Highway 401 to visit and enjoy Thames Centre’s agriculturally based tourism.
- 5G** The Municipality should develop an Economic Development Committee of Council to organize, structure and prioritize their strategy. This could involve operating a Community Grant working group to manage funding requests from local community groups.
- 5H** The Municipality could develop and implement a Tourism Plan focused on two specialized sectors (agriculture and sport).

Recommendations – Economic Development

- Council Feedback
 - Establishment of a Thames Centre Agriculture Advisory Committee.
 - Promotion of Middlesex-London Food Policy Council (MLFPC) on municipality social media platforms.
 - Regular updates/presentations (quarterly) from County's Economic Development to Thames Centre Municipal Council.
 - “Together we Grow” signage/display logo (seek any available provincial funding).



Recommendations – Municipal Services

- 6A** The Municipality should develop a Community Risk Profile and a Master Fire Plan as required in provincial legislation. This will provide the Fire Chief and Council with information when determining the level of effort in regards to fire and emergency services.
- 6B** The Municipality should develop an updated Water and Wastewater Master Plan to address future needs and planning initiatives. The Municipality could also explore uploading water and waste water services to the upper-tier municipality, such as the delivery model operating in neighbouring Oxford County.
- 6C** The Municipality could address constraints and opportunities involving bylaw enforcement services. This could involve a divisional review of all bylaws, policies, and standard operating procedures.
- 6D** The Municipality should initiate a Performance Measurement project, which would establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for all municipal services to determine baseline performance levels. The KPIs could then be publicly reported and utilized in annual budget planning.

Other Recommendations

- Advisory and Ad-Hoc Committees to send Annual Reports to Council with priority projects/program/services to keep everyone “in the loop”
- Highlight sporting events (such as hockey and baseball tournaments) – Tourism Master Plan
- Highlight Arts and Culture (such as fiddle and dance), Music festival – Tourism Master Plan
- Dorchester Fair – Successes and Opportunities (tractor pull, race derby, a tourism destination) – Tourism Master Plan
- Promotion of Farm Stands – Recommendation 5E
- Promotion of Local Businesses – CIP – Recommendation 2F
- Partner with London Health Sciences Centre on promoting greater medical services in Thames Centre (such as Family Health Teams, family doctor recruitment, etc.)

Other Recommendations

- Consider Mayor's or Council's Youth Committee
- Partner with London Transit Commission (Routes 35, 36 and 37) on investigating on demand public transit programs.

Next Steps

- Council Presentation – October 30, 2023
- Open Houses – October 26 (Dorchester) and November 1 (Thorndale)
 - Analyze and Review Feedback
- Integrate Council Feedback into Recommendations
- Final Report – November 14th Council Meeting

Thank You !

