



MUNICIPALITY OF THAMES CENTRE

REPORT NO. CAO-014-23

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE: November 27, 2023
SUBJECT: 2024-2027 Thames Centre Strategic Plan – Amended Final Draft

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. CAO-014-23 be received for information;

AND THAT the 2024-2027 Thames Centre Strategic Plan – Amended Final Draft be approved as presented.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present the Council amended final draft of the 2024-2027 Thames Centre Strategic Plan for Council's consideration and adoption.

BACKGROUND:

A Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for a municipality to reach immediate, medium range and long term goals. The existing Thames Centre Strategic Plan was established in 2020 and extends to 2024.

In June 2023 Council, with a lens of renewed community priorities from its election and knowledge that the current Strategic Plan is expiring, directed staff to initiate a new strategic planning process to formalize its Term of Council priorities.

In July, after a competitive selection process, Ken Hewitt Consulting was engaged as the successful consultant to perform the Municipal Service Inventory work and Council's Strategic Plan process.

There has been significant documentation review, online surveys, interviews, Open Houses, a Council Workshop session and two Council Meetings leading into this Amended Final Draft which contains five (5) strategic pillars and thirty-six (36) recommendations.

COMMENTS:



Primary themes emerged from the community consultation which formed the Strategic Pillars and Goals of the draft plan: Smart Planning, Community Communications and Engagement, Active Living and Economic Development. Council subsequently added an additional Pillar/Goal of Sustainability.

Specific revisions to the Draft Strategic Plan as directed by Municipal Council on November 14, 2023 are:

1. A foundational “pillar” entitled “Sustainability” was added to the Strategic Plan.
 - This pillar applied to all the others pillars in terms of financial responsibility.
2. A “Statement” from the Mayor and Council was added to the Strategic Plan.
3. The “Vision” and “Mission” statements were added to the Strategic Plan.
4. The following recommendations were revised:

No.	Previous	Revised
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.	Staff and Council of the Municipality should work together to reduce wait times for applications for consent, minor variances, official plan amendments, and zoning amendments.
3F	(None)	The Municipality should conduct an Integrated Service Delivery Review.
4D	The municipality could create a playroom and youth centre in the urban centres of Dorchester and Thorndale.	The Municipality should work with existing partners to support the Playroom and Youth centre in the urban centres of Dorchester and Thorndale.
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.	The Municipality should develop an updated Water and Wastewater Master Plan to address future needs and planning initiatives. The Municipality should explore cost saving measures without compromising the service, safety or water quality.
6F	(None)	The Municipality should form an Ad Hoc Doctor Recruitment Committee.



7A	(None)	The Municipality establish a Reserve Fund Policy and review the policy annually.
7B	(None)	The Municipality should ensure that it acts with fiscal prudence, maintaining affordable and sustainable taxation levels.
7C	(None)	The Municipality should prioritize green initiatives and work closely with the Thames Centre Environmental Advisory Committee.
7D	(None)	The Municipality should develop a Tree Planting program and ensure that funding is made available for this initiative.

Although this has been a Council driven and community consultative process, should Council approve the Plan (or any variation thereof) staff will incorporate it into Draft Budgets to align the allocations of financial resources with Council’s priorities.

Staff will further incorporate the new Strategic Plan when reviewing, updating or developing new policies and incorporate strategic priorities into the “purpose” of the specific policy and will continue with identifying how staff reports relate to a Strategic Community Priority.

Staff will further communicate and promote the strategic priorities on the Municipality’s web site, publications, and future marketing campaigns.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Any financial implications associated with the adoption of this this draft Plan will be brought forward during the annual budget approval process.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

Pillar: Responsive Leadership

Goal: Thames Centre encourages an environment of innovation, resilience and community through responsive leadership.

ATTACHMENTS:

- CAO-006-23 – Municipal Service Inventory and New Strategic Plan (June 26, 2023)
- 2024-2027 Thames Centre Strategic Plan – Amended Final Draft