



Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (MODY)

Municipal Strategic Priorities 2019-2020

Strategic Action Item Register

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1. INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW

The Municipality and District of Yarmouth is party to eight strategies/documents intended to provide direction and guide its work going forward, some extending 20 years into the future and some involving the engagement of other industry, community and government partners – both in decision-making and funding commitment. The Municipality has, and continues to, work with the Town of Yarmouth and the Municipality of Argyle on three key joint priorities; Yarmouth International Airport, Mariner’s Center and Yarmouth Ferry Terminal. In addition, Council continues to make regional economic development a priority through its investment in, and participation with, the Western Regional Enterprise Network.

In order to make the process of implementing these strategies manageable, Council wished to develop a Strategic Action Item Register which identifies what actions will be undertaken, when, and by whom (Administration Lead or Council), consistent with Council priorities.

These eight strategies/guiding documents are grouped thematically as follows:

Strategic Priorities (MODY)

- MODY Strategic Priorities, Jan 2017
- MODY Capital Project Priorities 5-year Plan and Cash Flow Summary
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)

Tourism

- Yarmouth Acadian Shores Tourism Association (YASTA) Tourism Destination Management Plan

Economic Development

- Western Regional Enterprise Network (WREN) Implementation Plan
- Yarmouth International Airport Corporation - Annual Report, Strategic Plan – Vision, Mission, Objectives and Action plan/status reporting

Physical Activity and Active Transportation

- Physical Activity Strategic Plan
- Yarmouth Active Transportation Master Plan

Summary of Strategies

A document summarizing the date, purpose, and key recommendations of each strategy and/or implications for MODY involvement was prepared.

2. COUNCIL RETREAT

A 1.5 day session was held with Municipal Council and Senior Staff for the District of Yarmouth, NS, October 12-13, 2018. The purpose was to review the various strategies in which Council is engaged, either on its own or in partnership with others, and to identify key priorities for the next two years. The intent was to develop a Strategic Action Item Register – basically a set of key actions – to implement Council’s priorities. This document briefly describes the context and process leading to the Action Plan.

An external facilitator was engaged to assist with the process and an agenda and preparatory material were developed in advance, in discussion with the Municipality’s CAO and Senior Management Team. This included: an agenda, an Action Plan template, and a Summary of Strategies relevant to Council. The Consultant reviewed the relevant strategies/guiding documents and prepared a Summary of Strategies outlining the date of development of each strategy, its purpose, key contents (mission, vision, goals, objectives, action plan), partners involved, and impact/role for Council. This Summary was provided to Council in advance.

Purpose

The purpose of the session was

- To support Council to succeed/accomplish its goals in the last half of its mandate
- To identify an “Action Plan” – a common set of strategic actions – which Council wishes to achieve in the next 2 years

Objectives

- To review the key strategies to which Council is a partner, identify actions Council wishes undertake to aligning the strategies, and identify/affirm priorities
- To develop a Strategic Action Item Register (identifying what will be done, why/rationale, by whom (Council/Lead or Admin), when, and resources needed if needed (human, financial, other)
- To clarify expectations for Council members, staff, and the public
- To ensure decision-making is guided by and consistent with a clear understanding of appropriate governance and administration roles

Process

The session was attended by Councillors, the CAO and the Senior Management Team. Following introductions of participants and review of the agenda and purpose of the session, the first hour focused on a description of municipal governance and the role of Council to set strategic direction. This component was delivered by the Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs Advisor.

The remainder of the day, facilitated by the Consultant, was focused on: the review of each strategy, beginning with Council's own internal strategy and priorities as set in January of 2017; documents to which Council was a partner; the current status or state of progress on each strategy; Council's role in moving the strategy forward; and actions/next steps required. A total of 16 Strategic items were identified from eight strategies.

The Consultant then prepared a Strategic Action Item Register or Action Plan based on the day's work for review by Council the following day. This included: a rationale for Council's involvement and support of the strategy action item, the current status/state of progress, and actions required.

Priority Selection

Council then identified its priorities from among the 16 Strategic areas/items. Council first identified the following criteria to help guide its selection of priorities.

Criteria

1. Probability of achievement
2. Financial impact
3. Level of direct control
4. Health and safety of residents/public good (impact on the # of people)

Considering the criteria, Councillors collectively identified their priorities. The process afforded opportunity for roundtable discussion, enabling Councillors to see what was important to their fellow Councillors and to understand why. An item had to have the support of colleagues to succeed in being identified as a priority – that is, be an issue of common concern, of importance to the municipality as a whole, or large segments of the area.

3. ACTION PLAN AND PRIORITIES

It is acknowledged that, while six items were identified as priorities, some of these are achievable only with the cooperation of others (e.g. rural internet) and therefore actions identified include lobbying and advocacy activities among other key steps.

Although not identified as priority itself, regional governance and collaboration was noted as a key component to achieve some of the strategic action items.

Other items are also important but do not require specific action or focused attention of Council over the next two years. For example, Web.com remains important to Council but as the required leasehold improvements were made to retain them as a tenant, specific actions are not required in the short term. Nevertheless, Council continues to recognize them as an important core economic driver for the Municipality, and will continue to maintain a positive working relationship with the business.

Work Completed

Examples of completed work include:

- Web.com – leasehold improvements made to retain tenant – a significant contributor to the local economy and large employer
- Solar Energy - panels installed on buildings to generate electricity; “Solar garden” planned
- Rural Internet - tower installed as part of infrastructure needed for rural internet
- Customer Service - MODY staff trained; user survey underway
- Capital Plan - asset management inventory in progress in one sector
- Cape Forchu – capital improvements made to restaurant and gift shop; other improvements are planned
- Arcadia Sidewalks – tender awarded, upgrades and extension work is now underway for completion in November

Priorities

Council identified the following six priorities. The remaining strategic items of importance are in no particular order.

1. Rural Internet
2. Business Park
3. Airport
4. Mariner's Center
5. Cape Forchu
6. Active Transportation

Strategic Action Item Register

Attached is the Strategic Action Item Register which outlines a plan for each Area of Action.

Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (MODY)

Municipal Strategic Priorities 2019-2020

Strategic Action Item Register

Strategic Action Item

1. Business Park

Rationale: provide serviced lots to attract new businesses, support future economic growth, increase employment

Status: Site development plan /engineering design completed

ACTION:

1. Review concept, costs, lot pricing
2. Determine position on infrastructure funding
3. Identify target sectors
4. Determine competitive advantage
5. Prepare strategy

Strategic Action Item

2. Solar Energy

Rationale: placement of solar panels on buildings and other strategies

- to reduce energy costs/produce cost savings, net positive value
- to promote energy sustainability
- to demonstrate municipal leadership in renewable energy

2.1. Solar Panels

Status:

- Have Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alternative Resource Energy Authority (AREA) who leads solar projects, 1 project approved
- In a position to make Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)
- Financing plan developed (100% municipal funding using gas tax funds identified in capital plan for 2019-2020)
- Plan is to submit a 2nd project for another building

ACTION:

1. **Execute Thermo Dynamics Ltd and PPA**
2. **Install 2019-2020**

2.2 Solar Gardens

Rationale: larger solar panel projects provide opportunity for greater energy and cost savings, for citizen engagement by enabling private citizens to buy a panel; and to take advantage of Provincial interested in supporting a pilot project of this type

ACTION:

1. **MODY to write letter to express interest to Western Regional Enterprise Network (WREN) to advocate with province to get project.**

Strategic Action Item

3. Internet

Rationale: to support business and economic development, drive population growth, meet citizen demand, provide an equitable level of service for citizens, and leverage the infrastructure installed to improve cell phone service for resident safety and convenience

Status:

- WREN submitting an application on behalf of multiple municipalities to “Internet Trust” with Development NS (in process) whereby municipalities fund build of infrastructure, private sector provides service (first application unsuccessful)
- CAO and Warden are representatives on WREN Liaison Committee which meets quarterly presenting opportunities for input and discussion.

ACTION:

1. **WREN: Request regular updates from WREN Liaison Subcommittee as to status on rural internet application.**
2. **Development NS: Send letter from Warden to Chair of Development NS inquiring about the timelines for application process, cc WREN and the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM)**
3. **NSFM: Inquire as to status of follow-up on NSFM Resolution #3 supporting rural broad band access. Councillors to seek additional opportunities to raise issue and leverage support of other municipal units to expedite internet access e.g. NSFM rural caucus, raise it at fall conference, etc.**
4. **Hold funds in capital budget to support infrastructure build once costs are known.**

4. Mariners Centre

Rationale: create a solid foundation to make decisions to meet the needs of residents for recreational programming and management of capital expansion; support a coordinated approach among three municipal units to maximize resources; ensure appropriate governance structure and Board membership is in place.

Status:

- Decision made to undertake a complete review of programming, operations, capital (by Group of 9 comprised of CAOs, Wardens, and Deputies from each of the 3 affected municipalities - Town and Municipality of Yarmouth, Argyle).

ACTION:

1. **Scope terms of review.**
2. **Undertake review with periodic updates to MODY Council. Complete within 6 months – to identify new governance structure, programming to be offered, capital requirements/investment plan and timeframe.**

Strategic Action Item

5. WEB.COM – work has been completed

Rationale: to maximize MODY revenues from municipally owned assets to create jobs (~300)

Status: Upgrades made

ACTION:

1. **Sign lease (agreement expected).**
2. **Public Relations: media to be invited to tour upgraded facility with Warden and Councillors to inform public.**
3. **Continue to maintain positive working relationship with employer.**

6. Long Term Capital Plan

Rationale: to guide capital investment decisions and ensure funds are available for needed infrastructure; ensure adequate reserves to maintain capital assets; implement asset management plan to develop a facility lifecycle schedule for upgrades/replacement

Status:

- Capital investment plan to be driven by Council (including regional) priorities
- Municipalities are in early stages of implementing an asset management plan by beginning to inventory assets. Atlantic Infrastructure Management Network (AIM Network) helping to lead municipalities. Province wants this to become a standard best practice.

ACTION:

1. **Develop Council Policy on asset management (within 12 months)**
2. **Have 1 cycle exercise in one asset group (within 18 months). Complete the AIM Network Cohort project.**

Strategic Action Item

7. Cape Forchu

Rationale: to maintain a capital asset in good condition; to attract tourists and tourist revenue to area

Status:

- Capital improvements made to restaurant and gift shop.
- Items identified for further investment include: lighthouse refurbishment, ramp (re-exercise procurement process)
- Community under lease to operate facility.

ACTION:

1. **CAO under direction from Council to begin process of review of operations and community lease arrangement (within 30-60 days).**

8. Community Energy Strategy

Rationale: reduce energy costs, expand/ensure diversity of source, decrease energy consumption, promote environmental leadership

Status: No action yet.

ACTION:

1. **Find funds to measure current energy use/metrics to use as baseline in order to evaluate future progress.**
2. **Develop Long Term Energy Strategy Portfolio by:**
 - **Ask Leon DeVries, leader of Bridgewater initiative to present**
 - **Identify funding sources**
 - **Approve plan**
3. **Pursue Resale of Power back to NS Power**

Rationale: MODY has larger projects able to generate sufficient energy to support local energy self-sufficiency (with potential to redirect excess energy back to the “grid” supply other areas of the province)

ACTION:

1. **Advocate via WREN to the province/Utility Review Board (URB) to require NS Power to upgrade its infrastructure to install the enabling technology/equipment.**
2. **Explore interest in a municipally coordinated strategy via an NSFM Resolution advocating for this.**

Strategic Action Item

9. Regional Governance and Collaboration

Rationale: to improve efficiency and effectiveness in governing and delivering services; to address cross-jurisdictional issues in a more effective, coordinated way; to improve governance of high cost regional assets and potentially shared services; to improve inter-municipal collaboration

Status: 3 CAOs examining Alberta models

ACTION:

1. **Research Best Model for Yarmouth County to govern Regional Assets: Develop a discussion paper to explore the merits and disadvantages of various options/models of governance of regional assets.**
2. **Review all Yarmouth County Level agreements and seek simplification/stream-line**

10. Customer Service

Rationale: to ensure residents and businesses of Yarmouth County receive optimal customer service from MODY staff

Status:

- training in customer service and communications has been delivered to all staff
- survey underway of business opinion of MODY service

ACTION:

1. **Complete survey, analyze findings to inform next steps and any service improvements required.**
2. **Explore development of customer service survey (tapping opinions of service recipients in an anonymous way) to obtain feedback on public service.**

YARMOUTH AIRPORT

Rationale: to support regional economic development by supplementing the current ferry and road transportation network with faster air traffic option, attract new economic activity (business, tourists), and to protect the safety and lives of citizens by providing 24-7 access for medical and coast guard services

Status:

- A proposal with 3 options to maintain the viability and sustainability of the airport were prepared by the current CAO and presented to the Yarmouth International Airport Corporation (YIAC) Board. A decision was made to have a facilitated discussion about options.
- The current Interim Manager will be leaving the position at the end of November, 2018.

ACTION:

1. Address motion of Oct 3
2. Share the following Key Messages for next meeting Nov 1:
 - Postpone immediate decision on airport.
 - Proceed with hiring new interim manager/project coordinator.
 - Suggest YIAC consider inviting Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) at no cost to examine/discuss thoughts about the airport and development.
 - 3 Councils and YIAC meet together to discuss vision of airport, hear NSBI thoughts re development
 - Then determine decision/next steps.

Other ideas:

- Market the airport to charter airlines to increase tourism traffic.
- Contract a consultant to attract business to the airport.

WREN – Western Regional Enterprise Network

Rationale: to support regional economic development and new business development, undertake projects that are in the common interest of all municipalities in the Western Region of NS

Status:

ACTION:

1. Request more communication, specifically:
 - Annual presentation – with a focus on an update on Strategy progress/milestones achieved/targets met
 - Quarterly reports
Methods: Council write letter to Liaison and Oversight Committee (L&O) and Board? Discuss with CEO next meeting?
2. Request WREN develop regional lead handling protocol.
3. Conversation with CEO regarding investment readiness, in particular in regard to the MODY Business Park.

YASTA

Rationale: to support regional tourism development

Status: 3-5 year **Tourism Destination Management Plan** identifies future directions, priorities, and recommendations; 2018-19 recommendations soon to be discussed with Council

ACTION:

1. **Support goals and recommendations as reported in the Tourism Destination Management Plan. Respond to YASTA requests as they arise.**

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Rationale: to increase the number of people enjoying the benefits of physical activity by enabling and encouraging active lifestyles

Status:

- 5 year (2014-2019) joint strategic plan developed with accompanying action plan; plan to be evaluated
- Recreation Departments and Active Living Coordinator tasked with activities – a number of programs have been implemented which support the five primary goals
- Trend: Capital upgrades/investments have been deferred in favour of programming

ACTION:

1. **Work with Town of Yarmouth and Director of Recreation on a solution to capital project planning and approval processes for recreation assets.**
2. **Develop a protocol and or agreement on capital priority setting in Recreation Department (MODY priorities/Town priorities). Discuss separation of maintenance from larger capital expenditures.**

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Rationale: to support the vision of a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community; to provide residents and visitors with active transportation routes and activities; investing in design upgrades and development that will create a connected network of multi-use trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

Status:

- 20 year joint plan (with Town of Yarmouth) identifies future directions, priorities, and recommendations and a blueprint for active transportation development.
- Top 3 priority areas identified in plan related to MODY were Lake Milo, Airport stretch, route to Cape Forchu.

ACTION:

1. **Include Active Transportation plan in capital budget planning process.**
2. **Seize opportunities as they arise.**

ICSP – Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

Rationale: to sustain viable and vibrant communities supported by a strong local economy, a versatile cultural and heritage scene, strong social networks, and a healthy environment with clean air, pure water, and uncontaminated soil for community economic wellbeing and citizen health and quality of life.

Status:

- A November 2009 plan and 2012 progress report outlines 7 long term planning goals and a number of actions taken or planned to meet those goals.
- A number of actions have been taken since to meet the goals.

ACTION:

1. Identify potential locations of boat launches.
2. Medical clinics – Follow-up on meeting with Zach Churchill where MODY asked for Province to take over operation of the two medical clinics. (ICSP, p 31)
3. Explore possibility of a ride hailing service in rural areas (a “rural Uber”). (ICSP, p. 33)
4. Engage Dept of Agriculture re: how we are positioned to leverage the agriculture sector. (ICSP, p. 35)
5. Update the ICSP – summer or co-op student?

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Rationale: to support implementation of Council’s plan and priorities, ensure accountability, monitor progress, and clarify expectations for Council, staff, and the public

Status:

- Builds on current processes and provides a clear accountability framework
- Refines/clarifies roles and progress reporting procedures and expectations that Council members have of one another and of staff
- The Strategic Action Item Register provides a structured tool to support tracking and achievement of success

ACTION:

1. Councillors will report back verbally to Council on significant issues or requests for money (vs routine written/verbal reports every meeting).
2. Make current and past minutes available on-line for Council perusal for greater detail.
Action: Create hyperlink to minutes. Forward an email to Councillors identifying when new minutes or reports have been added.
3. Develop Terms of Reference for ALL Councillors and Volunteers as representatives on other Boards in order to clarify expectations, keep Council informed, and allow Council input into decision-making of external Boards.
Criteria: Bring to Council funding requests or significant or strategic issues for discussion.
4. Develop schedule of presenters (major funding recipients) expected to provide an annual in-person update on how funds provided from MODY were used, what outcomes were achieved, and so forth. Presenters to include but not be limited to:
 - WREN, Mariners Centre, YASTA, airport, Industrial Commission, ferry terminal, Yarmouth Fire Department, RCMP, Senior Safety Coordinator, Waste Check, School Board.
5. Reporting on Status of Action Items
 - CAO will provide a quarterly update to Council. Should new issues or opportunities arise to change priorities or time lines, this will be raised with Council. An update will be included in the CAO report.
 - Annual General Meeting - include a presentation.