

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **TOWNSHIP OF WARWICK**

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*Management and Planning Consultants*  
March 2003

Version 1.2

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Township of Warwick is one of eleven municipalities within the County of Lambton. Approximately five years ago, the Township was formed through the amalgamation of the Village of Watford and the Township of Warwick. The community has a population of approximately 4,000 individuals, with 1,700 residents in the urban settlement area of Watford and the other residents living throughout the rural and agricultural areas.

The Township is divided by the Highway 402 corridor connecting with Highway 401 at London and the United States Interstate highway system via the Bluewater Bridge connecting Sarnia and Port Huron. The area is also traversed by a C.N.R. mainline that has some limited passenger transportation and extensive freight usage. The area has significant transportation assets.

For the last number of years, the municipality has been working diligently to attract industry and commercial activity in order to diversify the local economic base, to create jobs, to stabilize the residential levels of the community and to create new opportunities and growth perspectives. The municipal Council also in 2002, undertook an Organizational Review and other initiatives to examine the operations and directions of the municipality. One of the recommendations that emerged from these planning and review initiatives, was the need to develop a Strategic Plan for the Township of Warwick. The intent of such a Plan was to identify the key priorities and strategic directions that the municipality should be focusing on in order to meet its goals and objectives.

In the winter of 2003, the municipal Council authorized the undertaking of a Strategic Plan for the Township. Fred Galloway of F. J. Galloway Associates Inc. of London, Ontario was retained to facilitate the development of the Township's Strategic Plan. In this light, the following work program was completed:

- The hosting of four community focus groups, involving the agricultural; the business / industry and commercial; the community and social services sectors; and town staff
- The holding of a one day strategic planning workshop with five members of municipal Council and the Chief Administrative Officer, along with the Consultant
- The preparation of a draft Strategic Plan that was reviewed by Council
- The hosting of a review session for the draft Strategic Plan, involving an invitation to all those who participated in the focus groups, scheduled for noon hour on Tuesday, March 11, 2003.

- The hosting of an advertised Town Hall meeting inviting all residents to participate in a further review of the Strategic Plan. A date is yet to be determined.
- A final review and development of the Strategic Plan and its approval by Council

This document represents the Strategic Plan that emerged from the strategic planning session held with all members of Council and the Chief Administrative Officer on February 14, 2003. It was further development during a subsequent Council review and a session of focus group participants held March 11, 2003, at the Watford Arena.

## 2.0 VISION

A Vision is a forward-looking statement that is designed to establish a horizon. A horizon on which the eyes and energies of all stakeholders can galvanize so that everybody is moving in the same direction. It is a statement that can be utilized to guide decision making, to support promotional and marketing activities and to give a sense of direction to the overall community.

The following Vision was developed for the Township of Warwick.

**From strong roots, building a progressive community.**

The following points further define and describe the key components of the Vision.

- **From Strong Roots** - This phrase focuses on building on the successes of the past in order to realize future growth and opportunities. The notion of strong roots responds directly to the sense of heritage and history that permeates the area, the fact that many of the residents and businesses have been long time members of the community and the strong community value system that exists in terms of volunteerism, respect for people, the evident practice of caring for one another and the collective sense of home. Strong roots also relates to the strength, presence and importance of the agricultural industry in the area, its long standing and significant contributions to the community's development, economic well being and future.
- **Building** - Represents a belief that the community is constantly growing and needs to continue to build its future, based on the strengths of its roots and heritage. The future is a work in progress involving everyone working together.
- **Progressive Community** - Indicates the importance and the capability of the community to look ahead, to grow, to improve and to enhance its quality of life and economic opportunities. The community needs to be, is and can be progressive in all that it undertakes in order to meet the current and long-term needs of its residents, businesses and families.

### 3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

An organization's Mission Statement outlines the essence of who and what the organization is, along with its primary focus. It needs to tell the reader what the organization focuses on. In application terms, the Mission Statement needs to connect with every strategic and operational decision of the municipality. If a strategic or operational decision is not connected to the Mission, than the decision is not supportive to the Mission. In such a case, either the decision should not be made, as it is not supportive to the Mission, or the Mission needs to be reviewed.

The following Mission Statement has been prepared for the Township of Warwick.

**The Township of Warwick, building on its strong roots and leadership, is committed to expanded economic viability that supports a prosperous, healthy and growing community.**

The following material provides some further description of the key elements of the Mission Statement.

- **Building on its Strong Roots and Leadership** - This phrase connects with the municipalities Vision, and speaks directly to the fact that the strong roots and community leadership that exists in Warwick, is an outstanding and valued foundation in building Warwick's future. It is from these roots and from the community's leadership, that the growth, changes, investments and quality of life experiences will arise and build the Warwick of the future.
- **Committed to Expanded Economic Viability** - Identifies the fact that the municipality needs to actively and continually enhance the economic viability of the community. This is the key building block for the Warwick of the future. Expanding the economic base of Warwick related to commercial, industrial and agricultural activity is central to creating the economic environment, property tax revenues, employment opportunities, business supports and other resources necessary to sustain an ever improving quality of life and new opportunities for the residents.
- **Supports a Prosperous, Growing and Healthy Community** - This phrase identifies the three key outcomes the municipality is focusing on. These are to ensure the prosperity of the community, and the people; the availability of a healthy community that speaks to environmental, physical and community health and well being and quality of life; as well as to support a growing community. Growing in this context means growing physically to support future needs and opportunities, to hold and attract residents to the community and to be able to grow with the trends and opportunities that emerge from a society that continues to change and evolve.

## 4.0 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Principles and Values have three considerations within a Strategic Plan. First, they create an opportunity to further describe key elements of the Mission Statement. Second, they identify the way relationships need to be undertaken and developed by the organization. Third, they begin to identify key areas of accountability for the organization.

The following Principles and Values have been identified for the Township of Warwick.

### **We believe...**

- **That all members of the community need to be active stewards of our community's heritage, natural resources and way of life.**
- **In treating all people, residents, staff, partners and visitors, with respect, honesty and a sense of caring, as well as being co-operative and supportive with one another.**
- **In providing municipal government that is open and values oriented, operates with integrity and acts within all appropriate laws and regulations.**
- **In the need to support, facilitate and directly provide quality services that respond to community needs and evolving trends, and which support the community's social, health and human services providers.**
- **In striving to continually maintain and improve the municipality's infrastructure related to the availability and supply of safe, efficient, economical and reliable services that are needed by our residents.**
- **In working in active partnerships with upper-tier governments in order to continually improve the economic viability and quality of life opportunities within our community.**
- **In developing and organizational culture, that fosters an openness to ideas and people's dreams, is accountable to the community, recognizes achievement and contribution to the community and which ensures a continuing ability for community leaders, staff and others to learn and to enrich their community contributions.**

Warwick has strong roots, a great heritage and important natural resources, ranging from woodlots and waterways, to environmental areas, to some of the provinces richest agricultural lands. It is a belief that it is important for the municipality and all its residents to act as stewards of these resources during their time in the community, in order to ensure these vital assets are available and passed on to future generations.

One of the key values within the Warwick community is to continue to build a respect for one another and a sense of honesty that needs to exist between all of its people in all their dealings, as well as to continue to foster the evident sense of caring and support that people have for one another. These are hallmark traits of smaller communities that are proud of their heritage and their sense of community. Residents need to co-operate with one another, be supportive of each other and to work as a community to achieve their goals and aspirations.

The municipality believes that it needs to deliver open governments to its citizens that is oriented on creating value for its residents. Value in terms of a place to live and grow, to work and to recreate, as well as value for the property taxes that residents pay to achieve the services they need to support their day to day lives. Also, the municipality needs to act legally within all the legislation and regulations that exist. The need to comply is important to protect the interest and well being of all residents.

Municipal Council believes that it has various roles in supporting the establishment, operations and growth of vital community services on behalf of the residents. These roles involve facilitation, the provisions of supports or direct delivery. This approach is achieved through being responsive to community needs on an ongoing basis, assessing new trends and opportunities and other strategies. These services involve medical and human services, community and social services and other activities necessary to both sustain and enhance the quality of life within Warwick.

Another key value of the organization is to continually strive to maintain and improve the municipality's infrastructure in terms of roads, water and sewer, parks and recreation facilities and related assets. This belief involves the supply of safe and reliable services that continually meet the evolving needs of residents in terms of both the community's economic viability and its quality of life.

The municipality works in partnership with at least three other levels of government, federal, provincial and county. All these levels of government have a potential impact on the economic viability and quality of life of the Warwick community. It is the belief of Council that it needs to work via active partnerships with the upper-tier governments in order to maximize the resources and opportunities that they can bring to the community in supporting Warwick's growth, development and future.

Developing an organizational culture that supports openness to people's ideas and dreams / aspirations, as well as recognizing the achievements of community members and staff, along with ensuring the opportunities to build community leadership capacity and staff capability is a key success factor and value of the community.

## **5.0 AREAS OF EFFORT**

Areas of Effort are the first operational level of a Strategic Plan. They identify the key actions and priorities that the municipality will focus on over the next three to five years.

In strategic planning, it is generally regarded that it is better to have three to six Areas of Effort rather than a long inventory of such actions that can overwhelm the organization's resources and capabilities resulting in less overall being achieved.

The following Areas of Effort have been developed for the Township of Warwick.

### **1. To develop and implement a three part Economic Development Initiative:**

#### **1.1 Implement an Industrial / Commercial Development Plan as follows:**

- **To investigate alternative approaches to acquire and enhance an industrial / commercial sales capacity for the municipality**
- **To determine the appropriate level of development for the industrial park in order to maximize its sales potential related to entrances, roadways, services, etc.**
- **To identify specific industrial sales targets and opportunities that best meet the needs of the community**
- **To inventory all the sites / facilities that exist within the Township that are available for industrial / commercial industry, integrating the inventory into both the direct sales activities and the promotional and marketing tools**
- **To facilitate the development of a Business Roundtable within Warwick that creates opportunities for the business community to interact, provide inputs and to act collectively to support business development and viability.**

**1.2 Undertake initiatives that support the growth of the agricultural / agribusiness sector within Warwick, especially in transitioning to value added production activities as follow:**

- **To identify and pursue the achievement of services and infrastructure that support increased value added agricultural investments in the community**
- **To track and pursue agribusiness / agri-support needs and opportunities that could be brought to the community**
- **To assist, where possible, the agricultural industry to respond to the changes and trends occurring within this important economic sector**

**1.3 Undertake steps to differentiate the residential lots available in Warwick from other communities by investigating market and supply opportunities for estate and semi-estate residential venues**

**2. To undertake a comprehensive Township Development Initiative as follows:**

**2.1 Investigate and implement key change initiatives, involving:**

- **To finalize the 2001 Re-organizational Report for the Township's operations**
- **To finalize and introduce the new branding strategy for Warwick, involving a logo, vision, etc.**
- **To finalize and implement the new Strategic Plan for the Township**
- **To host annual and/or semi-annual, sector and resident focus groups in order to facilitate better communications and to solicit the ideas, capacities and input of all members of the community.**

**2.2 Undertake key service integration strategies within the Township as follows:**

- **To provide supports for the identification of needs, recruitment and sustaining of key professional service facilities and individuals, particularly in the health care area**
- **To investigate with other member municipalities in the County, the best means for delivering road services**
- **To investigate and implement strategies to improve the operational efficiency and the effectiveness of emergency services inside and around Warwick**
- **To pursue opportunities to develop integrated recreational, drainage, engineering and water and sewer services with neighbouring municipalities**

**3. To undertake an Infrastructure Planning and Development Program for the Township as follows:**

**3.1 Continue to participate in the landfill development project, ensuring the following:**

- **To achieve effective assurances for the long-term well being of the community and its residents**
- **To ensure that needed regulatory compliance processes, equipment and procedures are in place and practiced**
- **To maximize the economic impact benefits to the community that may be achievable**

**3.2 Undertake key infrastructure plans and priorities development initiatives as follows:**

- **To develop a roads plan based on the real demand and needs, involving improvement strategies, quality standards, schedules, etc.**
- **To undertake a plan for the maintenance and expansion of the water and sewer system and treatment operations**
- **To undertake the appropriate building infrastructure expansions and improvement related to:**
  - **The Medical Centre and the Watford Arena**
  - **Feasibility assessments and business plans related to the community's parks and recreation facilities**

**4. To develop and implement a more active and multi-faceted communications plan with all sectors of the community, involving:**

- **To actively pursue strategies to secure high-speed internet services across the community, involving potential federal grants, negotiations with suppliers, etc.**
- **To increase the level of communications contact with residents through:**
  - **Increased use of the media for articles and stories**
  - **Potential development of a weekly Civic Corner column**
  - **Significant upgrades to the Township's website as both a marketing and information tool, including the provision of Council and Committee agendas, minutes, information pieces, etc.**
  - **The hosting of Public / Town Hall meetings on key initiatives and outcomes**
- **To actively inform and to work with all of the municipality's partners, community organizations, local municipal neighbours, the County and other levels of government, etc., to maximize the integration of information, opportunities and service improvements.**

The first Area of Effort is targeted at building a stronger foundation for the economic viability of the municipality. It recognizes that the municipality has a three component economic environment. These involve, industrial / commercial, agricultural / agribusiness and residential development.

In the industrial / commercial area, the key question evolves around the ability to sell the assets and abilities of Warwick. This involves achieving a capacity to increase sales either through contracts, Council or staff, as well as to produce the marketing materials necessary to support these initiatives. Also, it involves a need to determine whether the industrial park needs to be developed to a higher level of readiness and to facilitate the current business community to become more active partners.

In the agricultural / agribusiness component, the shift to value-added agriculture is an important economic viability initiative. Identifying opportunities where the municipality can support these investments, track supports and to facilitate changes and trends in the industry have been identified.

Relative to the residential sector, differentiating Warwick from all the neighbouring communities in terms of lot sizes and services is seen as a key to attracting new residents. Competing on the same level as all the other neighbouring communities does not provide the level of market differentiation necessary to attract meaningful growth.

The second Area of Effort involves undertaking initiatives that support the ongoing development of the Township. These include the implementation of current change initiatives around the Re-organization Report, the branding strategy, this Strategic Plan and other initiatives. It also involves developing key input strategies from all economic sectors and residents through annualized focus groups and other processes.

Further within this Area of Effort, is the need to achieve services integration that results in more effective and efficient services and their availability. Some of these initiatives will involve municipal supports and facilitation, others will involve direct delivery by the municipality, while still others will involve the need to seek out opportunities and advantages to develop and deliver services with neighbouring municipalities, the County and others.

Infrastructure planning and development is seen as a key to developing economic viability and an enhanced quality of life. The landfill development project is currently a key consideration within the community. The community is not the final decider of this initiative but needs to ensure that the citizens and community are protected in the long run in terms of their health and well being and that regulatory requirements are adequate and fully operationalized. Also, Council needs to ensure that the maximum economic benefits are realized.

The second component of this initiative involves infrastructure development. A roads plan is needed to guide investments in transportation services related to quality standards, improvements, etc. A more

formal approach is felt to be necessary in this area. Similarly, a more planned approach to the development of water and sewer distribution and treatment services needs to be implemented in order to facilitate investment choices, capital financing, etc. In the building infrastructure area, improvements to the Medical Centre and the Arena are identified as key initiatives. In the parks and recreation facilities area, feasibility assessments and business plans will be needed over the next three years to determine the long term investments required and a repositioning strategy for Centennial Hall and other facilities based on their revenue generating capabilities.

Communications is also identified as a key Area of Effort. Under the new Municipal Act, as well as under the practice of effective open government, improved communications is a vital strategy. Key tasks in this area involve pursuing strategies to increase the availability of the high-speed internet, possibly using government grants. It also involves increased resident contact through the media, web page, public meetings and the potential use of a weekly Civic Corner column.

Further within this initiative, is the need to increase communication levels and quality with all partners, community organizations and others. In this way, everyone will be better informed, better opportunities to improve services in terms of quality and cost could be achieved and the ideas and resources of the whole community will be more effectively merged for the betterment of the whole community.

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **6.1 Implementation Approach**

The following implementation charts have been developed to support Council moving from developing the Strategic Plan to the Plan's implementation. They identify the individual tasks, the accountabilities, schedules and related considerations. Once the Strategic Plan, in terms of its four key components, are approved, Council will move to assign key accountabilities to an individual and/or task forces to further develop each of the actions identified within the individual Areas of Effort.

In support of this work, it may be important for Council to identify priorities, considering this work would be achieved over a period of three to five years, as not everything can be completed simultaneously in terms of both financial and human resources availability. In this light, the following system would be utilized by council to allocate each task's priority:

- **'A'** top level priority that needs to be pursued actively in the immediate term
- **'B'** an important priority that should be activated in the first year or two, but may be dependent on an 'A' priority being completed first or can wait six months to a year at the most
- **'C'** priorities that are either longer term in their development, and therefore their outcomes will not emerge as quickly, or can be deferred to a later date, three or four years before they need to be actively invested in

### **6.2 Review Process**

The following framework is put forward for consideration by Council relative to the ongoing review of the Strategic Plan:

- A minimum quarterly update by senior staff and others, on the progress being made on the individual initiatives scheduled for that year, barriers that need to be overcome, new information that has come forward, change strategies that are being implemented in response to any challenges, etc.
- Annually, Council should undertake a two to four hour session to review the Strategic Plan in light of new information that may have come forward, the need for redirection on some strategies, establishing the targets for the next operating year and related tasks.

- Every three years, Council and senior staff should undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Plan to determine what has been achieved, whether changes within the operating environment and other impacts require an update to the current Strategic Plan or whether a new Strategic Plan is required.