



SARNIA
ONTARIO

City of Sarnia Council Strategic Plan

July 2024

Deloitte.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Vision and Mission	10
Guiding Principles	11
Strategic Priorities	13
Implementation	15
Performance Measurement and Reporting	17
Disclaimer	18

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Executive Summary

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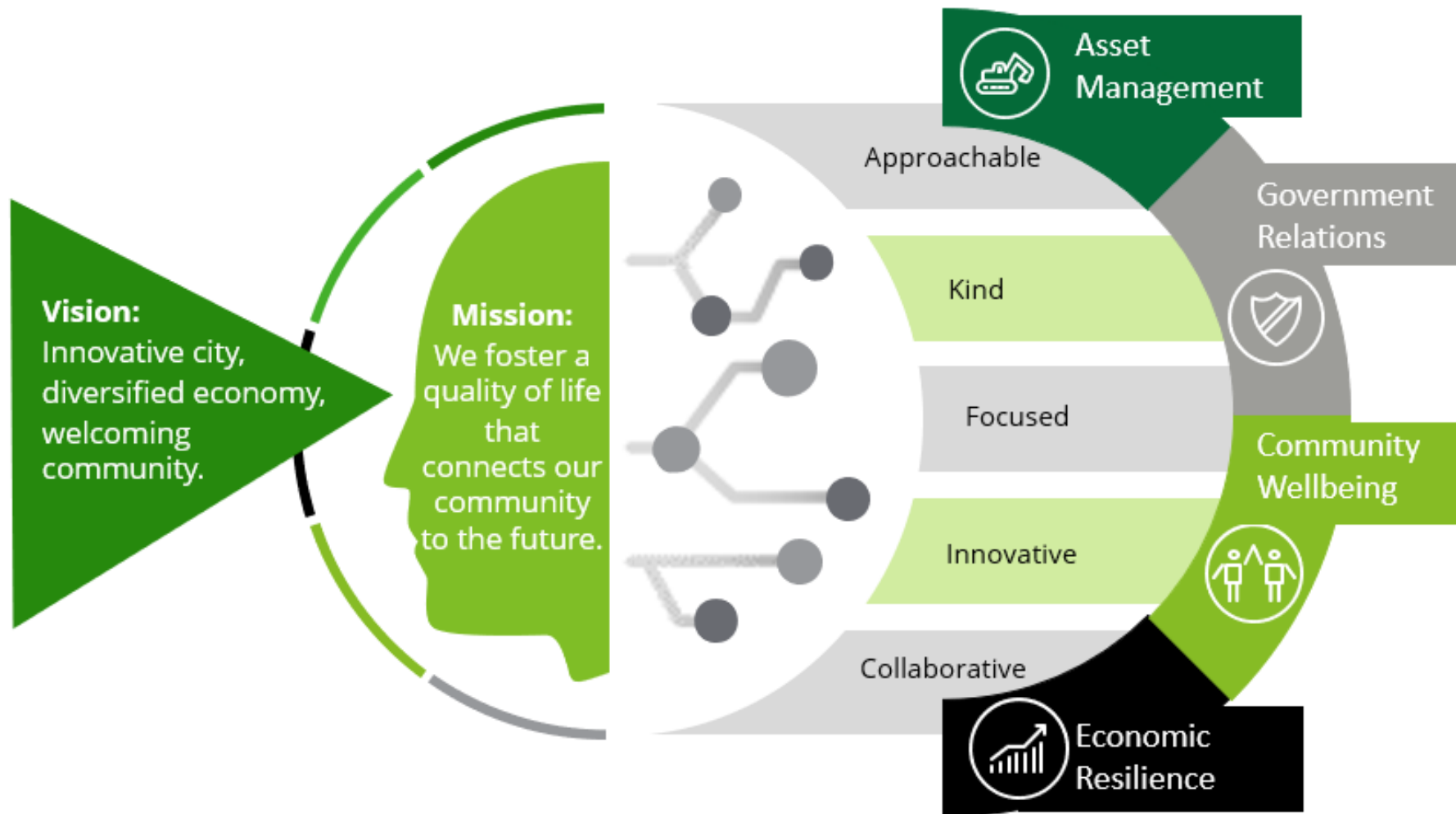
Sarnia is a vibrant city known for its community pride, bustling harbour and picturesque outdoor spaces that provide residents an excellent quality of life. Its strengths in the petrochemical sector are known throughout Canada. As various forces of transformation affect the municipality, City Council chose this time to update its strategic plan for the coming years.

The direction for this updated Strategic Plan was supported by reviewing actions and priorities from the City's existing reports and plans. An extensive engagement process was conducted, providing opportunities for Council, City staff, and the wider community to contribute to strategic planning. Feedback from the community was both broad and meaningful. Many ideas and aspirations were suggested by community members to shape the future of Sarnia. The City's senior management and employees provided valuable insights into day-to-day municipal operations, while highlighting areas of opportunity for enhancement, improvement or change to strengthen the City.

After considering all these inputs and seeking additional feedback from Council, the Strategic Plan was prepared. It is summarized in the following paragraphs, and illustrated in the graphic on the next page.

- The **Vision** offers a clear view of what the City strives to be in the longer term. Simply put, stakeholders desired innovation, leadership and adaptability. The Vision for the City of Sarnia is: *Innovative city, diversified economy, welcoming community.*
- The **Mission** articulates the purpose of the City for its leaders, employees, and constituents. The Mission for the City of Sarnia is: *We foster a quality of life that connects our community to the future.*
- **Guiding Principles** reflect the values of Sarnia, serving as a lens through which choices are made. These guiding principles support Council and staff in their daily performance and extend beyond the life of this Strategic Plan. The Guiding Principles of the municipality and the community are: *Approachable, Kind, Focused, Collaborative, Innovative.*
- To frame next steps over the life of the strategy, **Strategic Directions** were developed: *Asset Management, Government Relations, Community Wellbeing, Economic Resilience.* These over-arching themes set the foundation from which the City's goals, objectives and operational plans can be developed in the implementation phase that follows the development of the Strategic Plan.

The City should monitor progress on the Strategic Plan more frequently. This process should include using relevant measurements to analyze the outcomes and impacts of the plan. Regular reporting of outcomes strengthens accountability between the City and the community, by considering the plan as a living document.





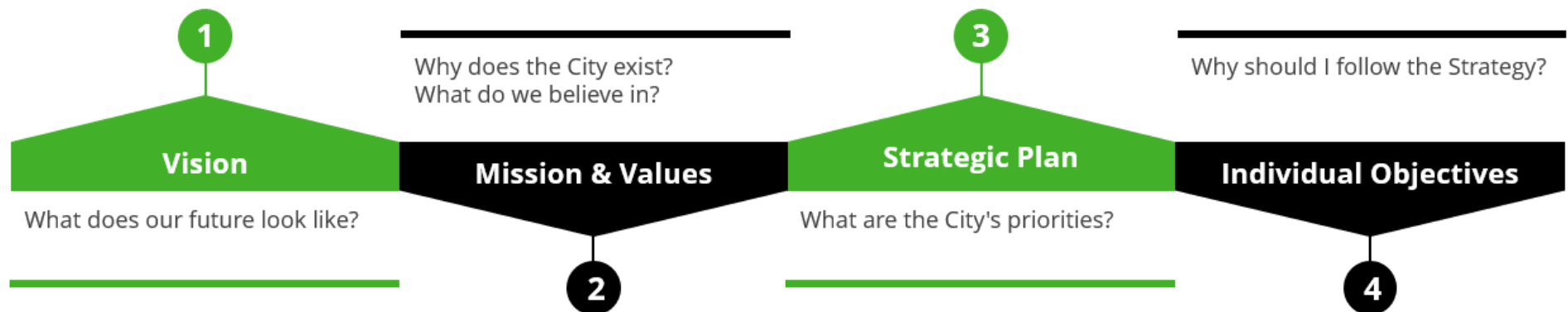
Background

Background

The City of Sarnia's Council Strategic Plan serves as a reflection of the City's history, leveraging its strengths and opportunities to propel the community towards a bright and desirable future.

Why do we need a Strategic Plan?

This Strategic Plan creates a roadmap for the coming years, which will be reviewed during each Council term. It aims to guide the responsible use of resources and to improve efficiency, performance, and accountability in delivering municipal services. The Strategic Plan helps answer important questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to go? How do we reach our goals? How do we measure our success? A Strategic Plan is based on a clear vision of the future and a mission for the organization. By setting clear objectives, actions, and desired outcomes, it creates motivation and a sense of purpose among everyone in the organization.

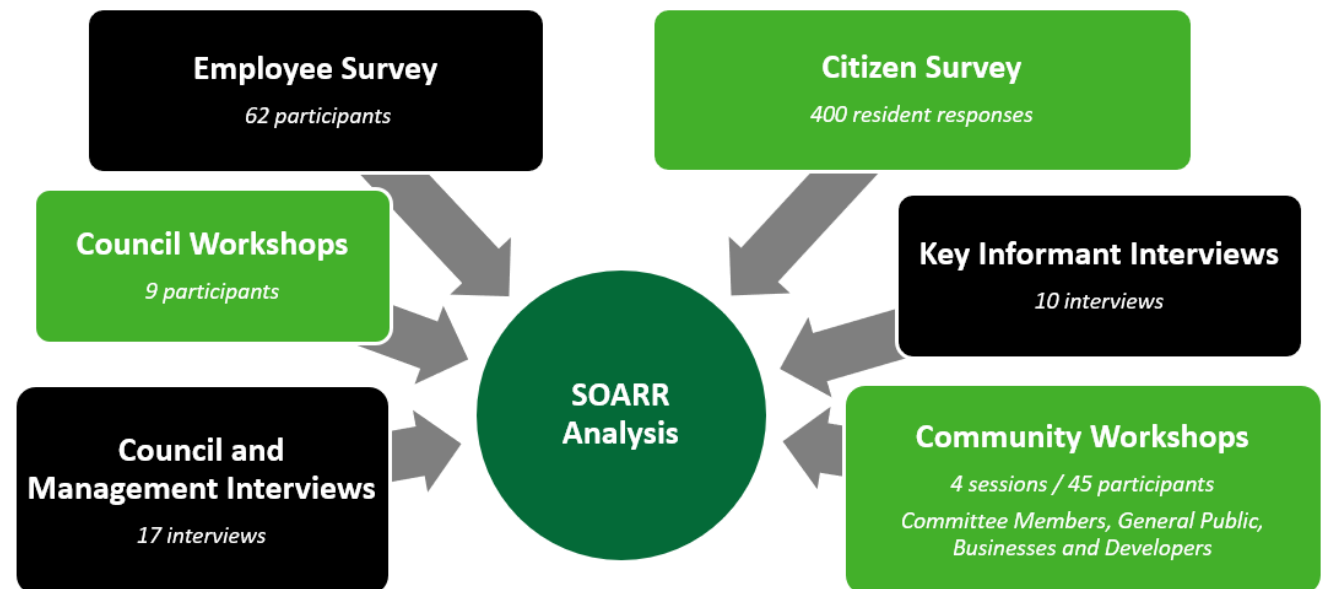


How was the Strategic Plan developed?

The development of this Strategic Plan was driven by the goal of creating a final product that is inclusive, transparent, realistic, visionary, and responsive. Throughout the strategic development process, valuable insights were obtained through extensive research and active engagement with both internal and external stakeholders. The engagement process involved the participation of over 500 individuals, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives was considered.

The strategic planning process went beyond examining the current context and delved into the community's aspirations for the future, aiming to transform those dreams into reality. The process was driven by respectful and candid conversations that fueled meaningful discussions. To ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement, one-on-one interviews, group meetings, and surveys were conducted with Council, staff, residents, businesses and key informants, including community partners. The insights gathered from these consultations, combined with thorough research, formed the basis for analyzing the city's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks, and desired results (SOARR).

The culmination of this process resulted in the development of strategic priorities. These were subjected to validation by Council, staff, and residents at various stages of the project, ensuring that the final plan accurately reflected the collective vision and aspirations of the community.





Corporate Vision and Mission

Vision and Mission

Vision

The vision for the City of Sarnia is:

**Innovative city,
diversified economy,
welcoming community.**

Mission

The mission of the City of Sarnia is:

**We foster a quality of life
that connects our community to the future.**

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles provide a broad philosophy that encompasses the values of the City of Sarnia and community. They extend beyond the life of the Strategic Plan and inform implementation and behaviors. Through this strategic planning process, Sarnia’s previously identified values were incorporated and aligned to the newly identified principles.

These principles provide guidance to evaluate all decisions. They support the development of a corporate culture where everyone understands what is important. The Guiding Principles of the City of Sarnia are:



Approachable

- We are always ready to receive questions, ideas, and feedback.
- We encourage participation in municipal decision-making.



Kind

- We care about our people and our community.
- We treat everyone fairly.



Focused

- We are focused on managing our resources and decisions responsibly.
- We practice reasonable financial restraint.



Collaborative

- We work with others, so everyone feels safe, included, respected, and valued.
- Our residents feel empowered to help each other and our community.



Innovative

- We find solutions by being forward-thinking and progressive.
- We have the tools and capabilities to make good decisions and deliver excellent services.



Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priorities

Throughout the engagement process, members of the community actively shared their ideas and preferences regarding the future of the City of Sarnia. To align the collective aspirations of the Council, staff, and residents, it is important to establish Strategic Directions. These directions serve as a road map to harmonize the specific actions and performance metrics outlined in departmental or subject-specific plans. **The bullet points under each Strategic Priority are not official goals and objectives. They help to explain the priorities.** The Strategic Priorities for the City of Sarnia are:



Asset Management

- Secure funding for City's overall asset renewal and waterfront plans.
- Reinvest in parks, recreation and active transportation.
- Maintain transportation hub (air, rail, water, roads).



Government Relations

- Build dialogue and rapport across neighbouring municipalities, First Nations and other levels of government.
- Advocate for funding, resources and policy change from senior levels of government.



Community Wellbeing

- Diversify and grow housing supply through flexible policies and proactive communication.
- Improve community safety and wellbeing.



Economic Resilience

- Attract and develop skilled talent, new investment and visitor spending.
- Support transition to clean energy economy.
- Support local petrochemical industry.



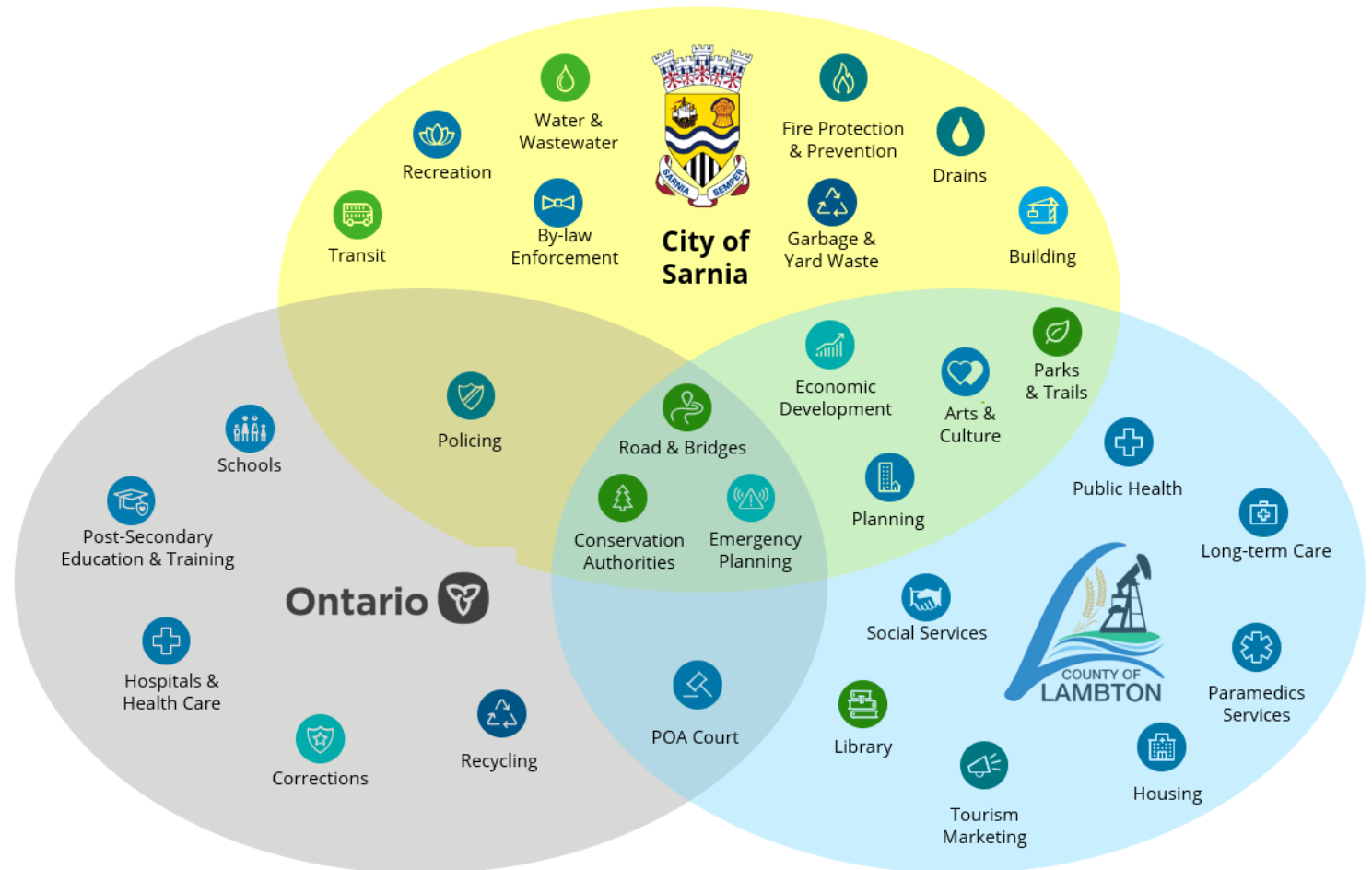
Implementation

Implementation

To successfully carry out the Strategic Plan for the City, both Council and staff need to be determined, courageous, and cooperative. They must fully commit, be aware of the chosen path, and be willing to make sacrifices and take risks to achieve meaningful results.

The Strategic Plan provides a foundation upon which Council and staff take action and consider new opportunities that align with the City's goals. Other plans, like the Official Plan and asset management plan, are also meant to align with this strategic plan.

The City and its stakeholders must also understand the mandates of other levels of government (see image, right), to ensure it is appropriate for local municipal government to be involved in specific programs and services.





Performance Measurement and Reporting

Performance Measurement and Reporting

The City of Sarnia should have a yearly process to monitor the Strategic Plan, preferably before reviewing the budget. This process should use relevant measurements to analyze the outcomes and impacts of the plan. By using a consistent set of metrics, the City can effectively evaluate the following:

- Is the Vision being achieved?
- Are efforts having the desired impact?
- Is progress towards our Strategic Priorities being made?

Using performance measurement is a reliable way to show the City's commitment to its Strategic Plan. It encourages decision-makers and managers to regularly discuss the resources and efforts put into specific programs and initiatives. The complexity of performance measurement can vary, from a simple report card shared with the Council to a more transparent system that shows department activities on a public platform. A regular, standing update at Council meetings may be another option to assist with implementation and performance measurement. Regardless of the approach, it is important to have a consistent way to measure day-to-day operational objectives in relation to the Strategic Plan.

Regular reporting of the Strategic Plan's outcomes will strengthen accountability between Council and staff, highlighting the importance of treating the plan as a living document. Integrating the Strategic Plan into future decision-making processes will increase relevance and effectiveness of the City's vision, mission, guiding principles and strategic priorities.

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