

# Strategic Plan

2015 • 2018

**We are  
here**



ST. JOHN'S

# Strategic Plan

**2015 • 2018**



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# St. John's Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018

The Strategic Plan is our overarching guiding plan for St. John's. It sets the focus for the City of St. John's in the next three years. The Plan is comprised of Council's vision and values. These set the stage for our key strategic directions, they guide our actions and are reflected in the City's policies, programs and services.

## St. John's is a Changing City.

Our Strategic Plan considers the need for growth, change and innovation within the context of a caring City that respects and embraces its history and natural environment. St. John's will be a city where next generations want to live, work and participate. There is a new-found optimism and commitment taking this place to new levels and the Strategic Plan is our guiding document on this journey.

PLAN



VISION

STRATEGY

VALUES

The plan is about the vision for the city. The vision aligns with our strategic directions. The strategic directions and the values define the intent, direction and behaviour of the city; they guide council's policies throughout its term.

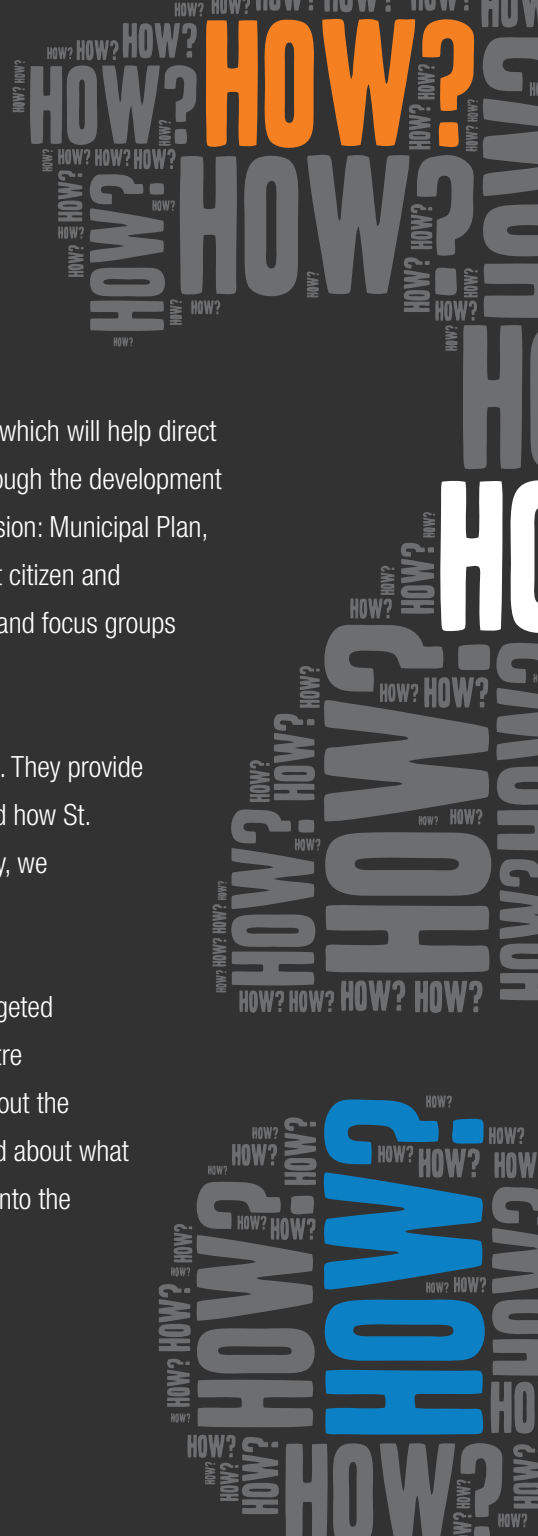


# How We Got Here

The City has adopted and is working through several plans which will help direct how we will deliver a variety of programs and services. Through the development of Roadmap 2021, Recreation and Parks Master Plan, Envision: Municipal Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan and others, we sought citizen and stakeholder input through a variety of means from surveys and focus groups to open houses and social media.

We reviewed data, information and reports about St. John's. They provide us with sound information and perspective about where and how St. John's "fits" in the regional and national sphere. Additionally, we considered important external and internal influences.

We have also received input and perspective on several targeted programs such as winter maintenance and community centre programming. Our individual and collective perspectives about the society in which we live, our environment and economy, and about what we see as the key priorities for the St. John's of today and into the future, have ultimately framed the Strategic Plan.





## EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INFLUENCES

- Increasing demands stemming from commercial and residential development
- Increasing vehicular traffic
- Climatic change and impacts on emergency and continuity preparedness
- Competition for personnel
- Increasing expectations for community events and activities
- Increasing demands to improve infrastructure for pedestrian traffic
- Increasing demands for more affordable and attainable housing
- Changing expectations for enhanced citizen engagement and needs for citizen inclusion
- Increasing concerns with crime and demands for improved safety
- Increasingly available and improved communication products and services



## Council as Stewards

As stewards of the City of St. John's, Mayor and Council are representatives of the citizenry, champions for a better, sustainable and healthier society and economy. We are also residents who have made a commitment to our community and province. Council's perspective about what St. John's is, and what we imagine for St. John's in the near future, informs how we prioritize and deliver the City's programs and services.

In the next few years the population of St. John's will be 110,000 people and the St. John's region will be approaching a quarter of a million residents. These increases change the dimensions of the city in both a regional and Canadian context. As the population grows and changes, so do the characteristics of the city. More than a mid-tier capital city in Canada we are becoming a city of communities, and a city of neighbourhoods.



# The St. John's Context

Like many cities in Canada, St. John's is experiencing significant change. Economic growth and demographic shifts are creating changing needs from the range and types of city infrastructure and programs to concerns about environmental health and social well-being.

However, this is likely the first time in contemporary history that St. John's has, and is continuing to become a city sought out as a destination of choice – a good place to live, work and study and a great place to visit. Additionally, the growing presence of local, national and international businesses in St. John's and the metro region is changing the face of the business community. Capacity constraints, increasing demands, higher expectations and new opportunities are the results. The influence of international events also means that the City has to be more diversified.

St. John's boasts one of the highest household incomes and one of the lowest metro unemployment rates in Canada. Rising housing prices, office rental rates and continual growth in retail sales create a sense that the City's financial situation is strong. Despite positive economic activity, the City's ability to generate increasing revenue is limited. Indeed, there are concerns that many citizens are not active participants in the economy and this is creating additional demands on the City and governments generally to develop mechanisms to create a more inclusive community.

St. John's is "on the radar" and our attractiveness as a city for newcomers is being recognized nationally. A recent Conference Board of Canada Report has assessed cities across the country and "St. John's is on Canada's "A-list" urban economies, with the second-highest GDP per capita and third highest productivity level of all 50 cities." There are also many areas and opportunities for improvement. "To improve its overall attractiveness, St. John's needs to find ways to improve its outcomes in the Society category." (Conference Board of Canada's City Magnets III.) Additionally Statistics Canada's report on life satisfaction ranked St. John's as number three of 33 metro areas in the country.

## OUR HISTORY, LOCATION AND GENERAL CONTEXT MEAN THAT WE FACE SOME UNIQUE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES.

YET . . . St. John's is becoming "rediscovered" with the confluence of natural resource wealth, growing niche technology expertise and a burgeoning tourism industry.

AND . . . The character of the city is defined by natural landforms and iconic built landmarks creating a unique identity.



# Vision

The new vision is reflective and inclusive of the vision statements in many other city plans. Our vision is of a colourful, exciting, lively and busy city with a growing diversity. There is a growing optimism. It is a city where we want to live and work and a city of opportunities. We are cosmopolitan yet family-friendly with a range of amenities all contributing to an enviable quality of life.

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St. John's: A **Vibrant** city  
where we **Want** to **Live.**

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# Values

Values represent the core of the City's culture and define the intention, direction and behaviour of the organization. Values are more than words.

Values need to be embedded, reinforced and incorporated in normal and ongoing city operations. Strategic directions are aligned with the Values.

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Continue to Do Things Better

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Be Innovative

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Create a Positive Environment

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Be Respectful

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Take Ownership

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### **Continue to Do Things Better**

We will continue to find ways of doing things better with the aim to be the best we can be in the provision of programs and services.

Improvements can be made when there is an understanding of how things are currently working. There is a commitment to learning, and continuous quality service delivery.

### **Be Innovative**

We will be agile, introduce and adopt new ideas, operating methods and new ways of delivering services. We will find ways of maximizing resources by engaging with citizens and employees, taking informed and managed risks and harnessing technology. In being innovative, change must be positive, decrease time and effort, increase efficiency and/or increase simplicity.

### **Create a Positive Environment**

By establishing policies, practices and protocols that support a healthy, safe and secure workplace we will develop a service-focused climate where employees and the public feel supported and secure.

### **Be Respectful**

A respectful environment nurtures a culture grounded in the principles of respect and service and advances policies and initiatives in support of that culture.

### **Take Ownership**

Taking ownership means taking responsibility and following through on responsibilities. We are motivated and take pride in our work and the work of the organization.

# Strategic Directions

All City plans, strategies and program reviews link to, or connect with, the Strategic Plan through six strategic directions. Strategic directions identify the priorities that will help us achieve our vision.







# Neighbourhoods Build our City

As a caring city, St. John's is safe. It supports families of all types and embraces a newly evolving cultural diversity. St. John's is becoming a more livable city with a range of amenities, programs and services that support a healthy quality of life and an increasingly welcoming community. As the City becomes larger in scale and more diverse it is becoming like many other mid-sized cities, one of smaller communities with their own identities and characteristics. Indeed the "communities," local areas and neighbourhoods, are becoming the core building blocks for city programs, services and policies. We think about our city in this context. City documents and plans speak to the importance of neighbourhoods in how we see ourselves and our interactions.

## GOALS

- Promote a safe and secure city
- Improve neighbourhood-level services
- Increase access to range/type of housing
- Develop parks and places for people
- Create neighbour-focused plans and information
- Deliver satellite and alternative methods for City services and information
- Maintain and position downtown as a distinct neighbourhood

# A Culture of Cooperation

St. John's as both the capital city and the largest community in the province plays a prominent role in the commercial, societal and educational life of the province and as such is a municipal leader. As the provincial capital, St. John's benefits from being part of a national and increasingly international network of cities. St. John's takes on additional ownership and responsibility to represent not only itself but also other municipalities in the province on matters of provincial and national importance. As a city, St. John's does not operate in isolation. Increasingly cooperative and collaborative interrelationships amongst municipalities and the need to develop mutually beneficial relationships with the private, education, community and not-for-profit sectors, will become crucial to supporting our dynamically sustainable capital city.

## GOALS

- Improve multi-level government relations
- Develop improved inter-regional municipal relations
- Create effective City-education collaborations
- Create effective City-community collaborations
- Explore regional emergency and continuity management strategy



# A City for All Seasons

Our geographic location on the eastern edge of the continent, built on rugged terrain and subject to sometimes harsh climatic conditions can make living in St. John's challenging. However, with recent economic activity and cultural ingenuity, St. John's is an active city that is embracing a new level of confidence. The inspiration of "place" expressed through events and activities and choices of amenities and services is being reinforced by the range and kind of investments being made in the City. There are opportunities to make St. John's a year-round, livable and active city. Like many other Canadian and northern cities, we need to develop innovative approaches to the problems of the seasons while creating opportunities and bolstering the City's ability to attract and retain residents and businesses.

## GOALS

- Develop a Winter City strategy
- Support year-round active transportation
- Explore options for year-round active, leisure and recreation facilities and programs
- Promote active and healthy living
- Support a weather resilient city
- Incorporate *all weather* planning in City building and open space development
- Support year-round tourism and industry activity



# Fiscally Responsible

Council recognizes the changing expectations of citizens. Ongoing public and private sector investments are creating pressures in the labour market and driving up the City's infrastructure and servicing costs. There are increasing calls to invest in lifestyle amenities that enhance the livability of St. John's. City investments must be made based on sound review and analysis. However, the existing fiscal policy framework by which St. John's and other municipalities operate puts limits on our ability to access tax revenues. Alternative financial considerations and models will be explored.

## GOALS

- Develop appropriate user fee policies
- Explore complementary public/private partnerships
- Explore cost-sharing programs/foundations/models
- Advance new city-NL government fiscal framework
- Explore sponsorship strategies
- Deliver effective grant programs and services
- Develop multi-year budgeting framework/alignment with strategic directions



# Responsive and Progressive

In addressing the challenges facing the City in the coming years, Council and the City will be responsive in developing processes for continuous improvement. Cities with effective public engagement frameworks that create a forum for two-way dialogue with citizens and stakeholders are more responsive in developing effective plans and programs. Being responsive and progressive means the City is supportive of being flexible and solutions-focused with new approaches. The refocused organizational city administrative structure is designed to provide the foundation for a more responsive and innovative St. John's.

## GOALS

- Create a culture of engagement
- Become a welcoming and inclusive city
- Build social, environmental and demographic factors into policy-making
- Deliver comprehensive and responsive communications products and services
- Identify and deliver on projects, strategies and programs





# Effective Organization

As an efficient and effective organization we have, and will continue to build, robust systems, structures and frameworks to help respond to and deliver services within a constantly changing environment. Guided by our values, we will support a positive, productive, knowledgeable and engaged workforce that understands the importance of what it means to be citizen-focused.

## GOALS

- Cultivate a safe, healthy and respectful environment
- Develop a knowledgeable and engaged workforce
- Advance business continuity and material management plans
- Support corporate-wide information and knowledge sharing
- Support a learning culture



# Implementation

The Strategic Plan is an important part of the holistic approach to resource allocation, designed to ensure that over time, public funds, in the trust of the City, are invested in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the Strategic Plan and its directions.

The City's reorganization has been implemented to better position the city in addressing growing challenges, to meet and improve service delivery to the citizenry and increase the City's ability to increase and focus on the delivery of the Strategic Plan. Program and service activity have been, and will continue to be, aligned with a focus on the end-user, the resident, business or visitor.

A series of processes will be developed, delivered and fine-tuned to support the delivery of the plan including tools to support implementation, monitoring, review and feedback.

Annually, the City will provide an update on what's been achieved and the progress made.



STRATEGY

ACTION

ACTION

STRATEGY

“ STRATEGY REQUIRES FEW;  
ACTIONS REQUIRE EVERYONE.

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