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# COUNCIL PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

NORWICH ON THE MOVE

TOWNSHIP OF NORWICH

2023-2026



## **A Message from the Mayor**

It's an exciting time to be involved in Norwich's municipal affairs and an honour for me and my Council colleagues. These days, we're seeing growth like we haven't seen for decades, and new economic opportunities, both on farms and in villages, both in the Township and in nearby towns and cities.

Council intends to ensure that Norwich Township makes the most of these opportunities, by sustaining our residential growth and being ready for the new businesses that are sure to come our way. With advice from our excellent staff, previous Councils have left the Township in solid financial shape; so, we have the opportunity to build from a solid base.

We are acutely aware, though, that we're a small municipality and our resources are limited. The Township has committed to important initiatives, such as the Community Safety and Well-being Plan, which require resources. Most Township money and time go into our routine operations, delivering the services that you rightly expect. That won't change. Therefore, our room to maneuver is limited by some previous commitments and by Provincial obligations. Maintaining our roads and facilities in good repair alone is a costly and never-ending job, one made even more costly by factors such as extremely high inflation for the supplies and equipment needed.

Pretending we can do everything we'd all want would be a recipe for disappointment and disillusion. We must set some priorities. That's what Council has done in this Plan. Through this Plan, Council is being transparent about both what we want to do AND expect to be able to do!

In addition to carrying on our basic services, you'll see five Priorities – areas where we are determined to put in extra effort and make more progress. And for each of the five Priorities, we have set out several action steps that, resources permitting, would enable us to make that progress.

With help from community organizations, other Oxford municipalities, and our staff, Council will work together to seize opportunities and get things done!

*Jim Palmer*

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# Theme: **SUSTAINED AND WELL-MANAGED GROWTH**

*Our Priority will be to facilitate, and address potential impediments to, sustained growth.*

## How?

### 1. WE WILL...

Review our Building and Planning approval procedures to minimize any unnecessary delay for development projects.

### 2. WE WILL...

Work with the County to complete the growth forecast for the Township and the Environmental Assessment for the expansion of Norwich village sewage treatment capacity.



### 3. WE WILL...

Prepare a Secondary Plan to guide development in the Norwich urban area.

### 4. WE WILL...

Develop a 10-year plan for the evolution of municipal staffing and operations to serve our forecasted growth.

- *See the Appendix for more* -

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# Theme: A PROSPEROUS LOCAL ECONOMY

*Our Priority will be to ensure that adequate, timely, and appropriately serviced property is available for commercial and industrial development.*

## HOW?

### 1. WE WILL...

Work with the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation to inventory industrial and commercial land in the Township and plan for future designated commercial and industrial property.

### 2. WE WILL...

Investigate options for accelerating the development of commercial and industrial-designated Properties



- See the Appendix for more -

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# Theme: A SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

*Our Priority will be to Improve Pedestrian and Traffic Safety.*

## HOW?

### 1. WE WILL...

Maintain traffic police presence in the Township and enforce speed limits.

### 2. WE WILL...

Upgrade pedestrian safety infrastructure in Norwich Village

### 3. WE WILL...

Progressively create more trail linkages within and between settlements.



- See the Appendix for more -

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# Theme: **ADEQUATE AND RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Our Priority will be to continue updating our Asset Management Plan with new information and continue to base capital spending decisions on it.*

## **HOW?**

### **1. WE WILL...**

Continue the 1% increase (plus inflation) in each year's tax levy dedicated to our capital program.

### **2. WE WILL...**

Upgrade the accuracy of our information about the Townships assets, including road needs, facility conditions, and parks access.

### **3. WE WILL...**

Include gravel roads in our Roads Needs Study and develop criteria for hard-surfacing gravel roads.



- See the Appendix for more -

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# Theme: **EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT**

*Our Priority will be to enhance our communication to, and our engagement with, Township residents and businesses.*

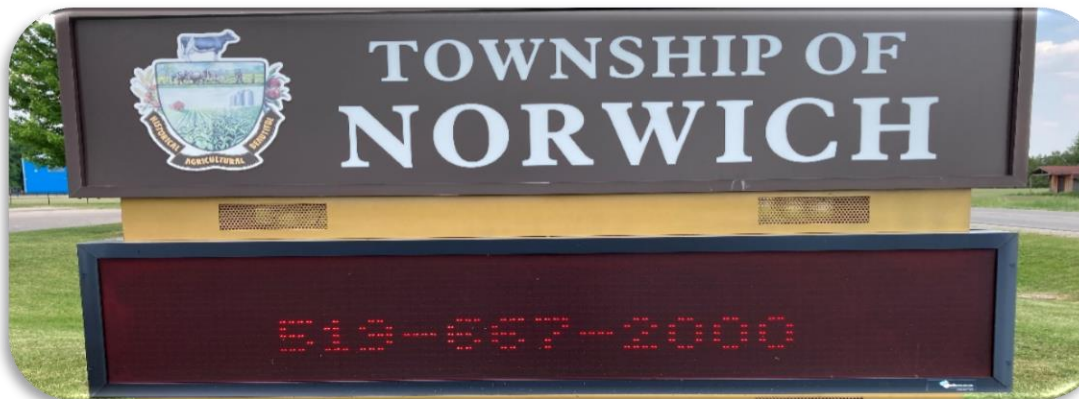
## How?

### **1. WE WILL...**

Create an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee to offer practical initiatives that may enhance the respect we show for the present and future diversity of Norwich Township's population.

### **2. WE WILL...**

With adequate staffing and safeguards in place, become active in informing and interacting with residents via social media



### **3. WE WILL...**

Increase (as initiated with the 2023 budget) the explanatory information provided with the annual budgets

### **4. WE WILL...**

Consistently use these Strategic Plan Priorities in our budgets and decision-making, and will report regularly to the public on our progress.

- See the Appendix for more -

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# WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

People expect municipalities to provide basic services efficiently and responsively. That is fundamental. At the same time, people expect their local government to provide leadership on local issues and opportunities – to anticipate and be part of the solution. Often this means partnerships with community organizations and other governments that can also be part of the answer. It means tweaks to budgets and to the work plans of staff, so that we not only do what we did yesterday but also do something more or do some things differently.

Leadership takes planning. What are the local issues and opportunities that most need to be addressed? What actions can we take – and encourage others to take – to address them? How can we get the best value (most progress) for the effort and money involved? Who can help us? How will we measure our progress?

**By defining what we want to achieve, we're likely to achieve it.**

## HOW WILL IT BE USED?

- Be referring to it when we make individual decisions throughout the term. Is it helping us to get where we said we wanted to get?
- By being accountable to the public. This is what we said you should expect from us. Are we making progress?
- By directing our staff. In addition to your routine (often legally-required) activities, can you help us achieve our other Priorities?
- By reflecting it in our budgets. Can we find the resources that leadership requires to tackle new challenges? How much progress can we afford?
- By appealing to community organizations and other governments. Knowing what we're trying to achieve, can we team up and get further faster together?

## NEXT STEPS

- Staff will refer to this Plan when making relevant recommendations to Council
- Every budget will itemize how it furthers the Priorities of this Plan
- Council will report each year on progress achieved toward our Priorities
- The Township website will post this Plan and our annual progress reports
- Copies will be provided to the community organizations in the Township, to the other Oxford municipalities and agencies, and to our employees
- Council members and management are prepared to explain the Plan and the progress we are making throughout the term



Appendix: Detailed Initiatives and Anticipated Timetable	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>PRIORITY: Facilitate, and address potential impediments to, sustained growth</b>				
➤ Continue to work with the County as it renews its growth forecast for the Township and updates its Development Charges study accordingly	✘	✘		
➤ Continue to work with the County as it completes the Environmental Assessment for the expansion of Norwich village sewage treatment capacity to accommodate forecasted growth	✘	✘		
➤ Review our Building and Planning approval procedures to minimize any unnecessary delay or difficulty for development projects, and including: ✓ Maximizing public information on growth policies and approval processes ✓ Reviewing and providing public information about federal and provincial regulatory changes which may affect local building and planning processes, including the Province's Bill 23. ✓ Improving the user experience with the cloud-based building permit system ✓ Adopting residential development standards for guidance to developers	✘	✘		
➤ Work with the County to do a Secondary Plan for Norwich urban area.		✘	✘	
➤ Ensure interaction with the community as we determine how to meet the Provincial mandate for more intensive forms of development		✘	✘	
➤ Develop a plan for the foreseeable evolution of municipal staffing, organization, and operations that will be required to meet the needs of the larger forecasted population and settlement areas over the future decade			✘	✘
<b>PRIORITY: Ensure that adequate, timely, and appropriately serviced property is available for commercial and industrial development</b>				
➤ Work with the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation and rural Oxford municipalities to establish an ROEDC priority on inventorying, planning for, and working with the owners of appropriately-located industrial and commercial land	✘			
➤ Receive regular reports from Township representatives of the ROEDC	✘	✘	✘	✘

Appendix: Detailed Initiatives and Anticipated Timetable	2023	2024	2025	2026
➤ With ROEDC staff, approach individual owners of properties designated commercial or industrial in the Official Plan to offer encouragement for development		✘	✘	✘
➤ Establish and maintain an up-to date inventory and description of available commercial-and industrial-designated properties		✘	✘	✘
➤ Engage with the County and owners of commercial- and industrial-designated properties to investigate options for accelerating development readiness, potentially including pre-zoning, pre-servicing, or other options		✘	✘	✘
<b>PRIORITY: Improve Pedestrian and Traffic Safety</b>				
➤ Investigate a safety-oriented sidewalk design in specific locations.	✘	✘		
➤ Maintain and enhance the speed enforcement measures and traffic police presence in the Township	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Progressively upgrade pedestrian facilities within settlement areas, and work with the County on potential trail linkages between settlements	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Ensure subdividers plan for pedestrian connections to/from new subdivisions	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Work with Oxford County toward a lightened pedestrian crosswalk on Main Street in the village of Norwich		✘	✘	
➤ Make pedestrian safety a key objective in the Norwich village secondary plan		✘	✘	
➤ Work with the County on possibilities for re-routing some of the truck traffic passing through Norwich village				✘
<b>PRIORITY: Continue updating our Asset Management Plan with new information and continue to base capital spending decisions on it.</b>				
➤ Continue the 1% of each year's tax levy dedicated to reserve for state-of-good-repair capital funding	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Complete the traffic counts on all Township roads	✘			
➤ Update the Roads Needs Study, incorporating new information/condition reviews, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of funding requirements for state-of-good-repair for existing hard surface and gravel roads,</li> <li>- Development of criteria for prioritizing among gravel roads for potential hard surfacing program, including traffic counts, residences, on-farm businesses, etc., to develop a gravel roads hard surfacing program.</li> <li>- Analysis of funding required for a gravel roads hard surfacing program</li> <li>- Potential acceleration of the reduction in the Township's state-of-good-repair "infrastructure gap"</li> </ul>	✘			

Appendix: Detailed Initiatives and Anticipated Timetable	2023	2024	2025	2026
➤ Assess the impact of the Province's Bill 23 (More Homes Act) on the Township's Development Charges revenue	✘	✘		
➤ Undertake the mandatory 5-year review of Development Charges Study	✘	✘		
➤ Conduct a condition assessment of Township buildings and facilities.		✘		
➤ Identify state-of-good-repair capital projects most efficiently scheduled in conjunction with scheduling growth-related projects identified by DC study		✘		
➤ Include in the Parks Master Plan a prioritized long-term plan to improve access to our parks and to add accessibility features to our playgrounds			✘	
<b>PRIORITY: Enhance our communication to, and our engagement with, Township residents and businesses.</b>				
➤ Create an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee to offer practical initiatives that may enhance the respect we show for the present and future diversity of Norwich Township's population	✘			
➤ Share with the County and other Oxford municipalities our need for staff that would manage and monitor the Township's postings and interactions on social media, and investigating the possibility of a shared staff resource	✘			
➤ Fold the existing Fire Service and Community Services social media channels into a single Township-wide digital information source, assuming appropriate staff resources have previously been obtained	✘			
➤ Adopt a policy governing the management of the Township's website and social media, including posting and removals, management of mis/dis-information, etc.		✘		
➤ Regularly post material aimed at a variety of users, such as new residents, builders, young people, and arrivals from different cultures		✘	✘	✘
➤ Regularly post material showing Norwich Township to be a growing and welcoming community		✘	✘	✘
➤ Continue to broadcast Council meetings	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Consider an annual Council Open House	✘			
➤ Increase (as initiated with the 2023 budget) the explanatory information provided with the annual budgets	✘	✘	✘	✘
➤ Widely publicize our Strategic Action Plan	✘			
➤ Report publicly at each year-end on Action Plan progress	✘	✘	✘	✘

