



County of Perth

Part I – Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-2017

FINAL REPORT

September 4, 2012



Message from the Warden

On behalf of County Council, I am pleased to present the Perth County Community Strategic Plan (2012-2017). The County and lower tier municipalities are proud to have partnered in the creation of a common vision, direction and goals.

Thank you to all of those who participated in the community engagement process and shared their knowledge of the County and their vision for the future. Your input has assisted Council in identifying corporate goals and actions necessary to achieve this common vision. It will guide decision making and investment in the future.

As Perth County continues to grow and change, this document will provide the foundation for decision making and investment in the future and will serve as a benchmark for evaluation and reflection.

In keeping with our corporate slogan, Perth County is truly "Cultivating Opportunity" and moving towards a successful future.

I look forward to the long-term growth and improvement to the County as a result of this document.

Warden Ian Forrest



*County
of
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2011-2012

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Part II: Key Findings Report – Background Analysis and Community Engagment

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1 Introduction

Strategic planning is one of the most important tools that a municipality can use to bring together the public, municipal staff and members of Council in the development of a common vision, direction and goals for a community. It can also function as an accounting mechanism, allowing management and the public to evaluate progress and ensure that the County is moving in the right direction.

Rather than simply reacting to change, municipalities can examine issues and concerns with the goal to create a community that is sustainable, providing opportunities for business and economic growth, encouraging a healthy lifestyle and protecting its social and cultural connections.

While community sustainability doesn't necessarily imply growth or expansion, it does imply change. The decisions made, or not made, will shape how a community develops and prospers. A Corporate Strategic Plan therefore, builds an overall vision for a community and guides municipal decision making that will move the community towards its desired state. The plan also assists with prioritizing the management and use of the local assets as well as human, financial, physical and environmental resources.

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The County of Perth, and its four member municipalities of North Perth, West Perth, Perth South and Perth East, have chosen this time to undertake the development of a corporate strategic plan. Recognizing that this work will result in five distinct plans that respect and reflect the unique qualities and services of each municipality and the County, this collective undertaking will result in a much stronger, cohesive, and complementary corporate strategic plan that will serve the municipalities well.

In 2010 the County developed an economic development strategy that served as a strong foundation for the corporate strategic plan. This plan demonstrates the County's commitment to being forward thinking and innovative, while the coordinated approach creates a strategy that is unique at the municipal level and strengthened at the County level. Today the health of local communities is directly tied to elements influencing social and environmental well-being, and economic positioning. Building on local strengths in agriculture, technology-based manufacturing and the valuable economic contribution driven by the small to medium-sized business community, the County will be well-positioned to capitalize on its collective social, cultural, environmental and economic strengths.



Specifically, the Plan will:

- **Provide structure for mutually accepted goals and a common agenda for moving forward as a community over the next five years;**
- **Define the purpose of the community at large and its role in achieving stated goals; and**
- **Balance the aspirations of the community with municipal and local resources.**

A detailed action plan targets the goals set out in this plan and contributes to the long term vision for the community. It also acts as a 'measuring stick' against which to evaluate decisions that will keep the County on course in the coming years.

1.2 Strategic Planning Process

In developing a corporate strategic plan consideration has been given to a range of information related to the County's future growth and development. Figure 1.1 outlines the complete strategic planning Process. Community assets were identified and a community economic profile was developed. This provided an understanding of the County's relative competitive position in the region and the Province as a whole. A detailed narrative is provided in **Part II: Key Findings Report**.

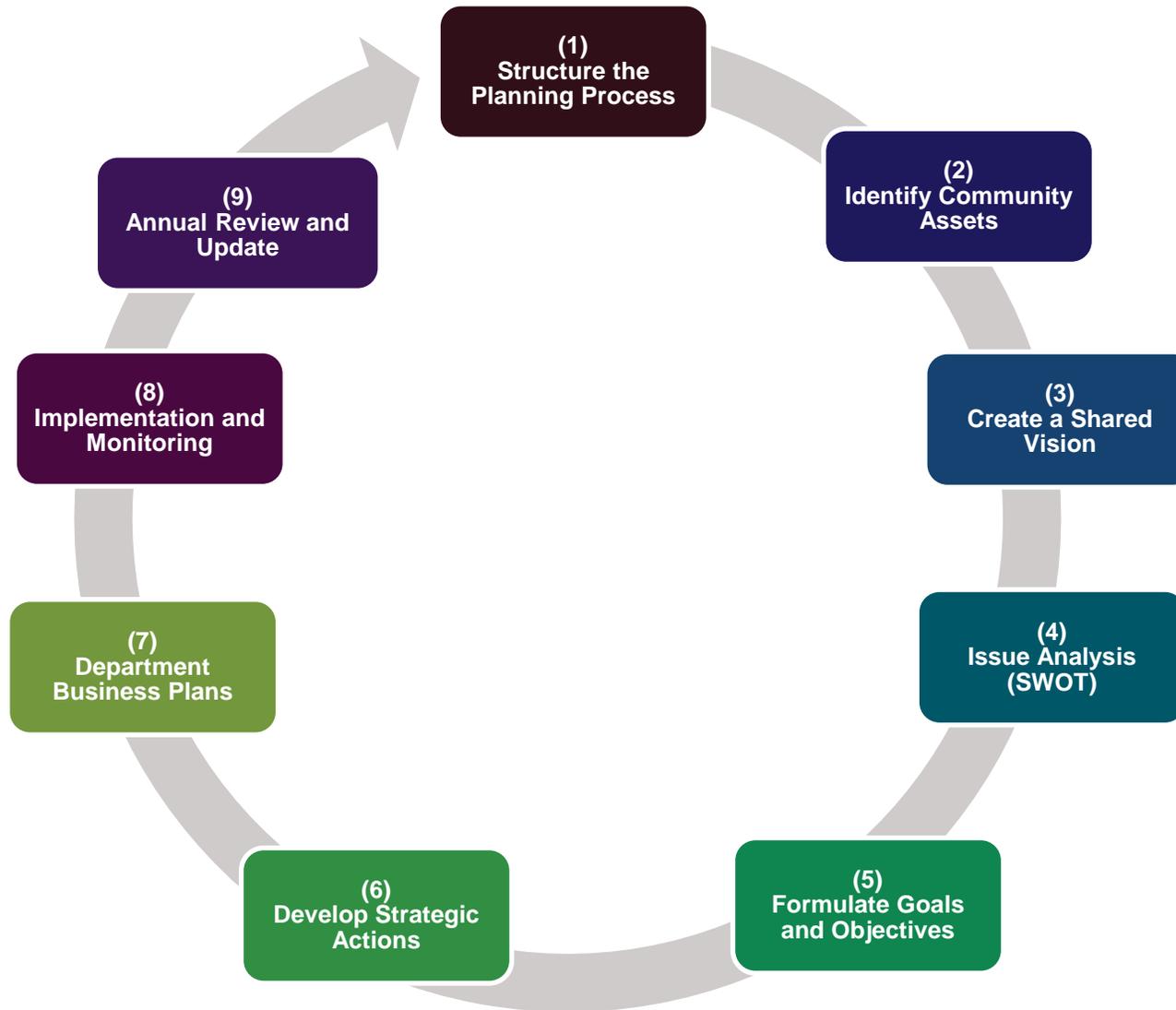
Consideration has also been given to the County's Official Plan and the changes in the policy framework that have resulted from its 5 year review. As well, the programming and services that exist within the County were also considered.

A broad based community engagement process was also undertaken. Beginning in February 2012, interviews were completed with community and business leaders, stakeholders, Council and Township staff. In addition, the County hosted two focus groups where approximately 30 people provided their input on the direction and focus for the County's Corporate Strategic Plan. An online survey that attracted a further 359 residents was also used to collect input from the community. At each point in the strategic planning process participants were asked to identify the assets, opportunities, priorities and vision for the community. A summary is provided in Part II.

Overall guidance and direction for the creation of the Corporate Strategic Plan was provided by the Chief Administrative Officer with input from the County's Senior Management Team and Council.



FIGURE 1.1: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS





2 Corporate Mission, Vision and Key Principles

Local government operates in a unique environment, in that it is a single organization providing a diverse range of services to both local residents and businesses. In the County of Perth, this environment is additionally complex because of the upper and lower governments and their separated responsibilities. Although this is done in the context of today's needs, planning and decision making must be collaborative, future oriented and forward thinking.

For rural regions such as the County of Perth, municipal services are delivered in the face of ever increasing demands for accountability, improved service delivery and cost management.

2.1 Mission Statement

A mission statement captures the reason that the County of Perth exists, and guides the actions of the County.

The County of Perth, in partnership with its lower tiers, provides efficient, effective quality services to its residents, businesses and visitors, fostering strong communities and development across the County.

2.2 Vision

A vision statement represents the desired future state that the municipality strives for. Based on input from residents, businesses, community organizations, municipal staff and members of Council, a comprehensive vision was created for the community.

Perth County is known for its small-town atmosphere, strong agricultural background, sustainable local businesses, diversified employment opportunities and efficient governance. The community has a vibrant population who are engaged and who support the local businesses.

When this vision is realized, Perth County will have achieved the following:

- Diversified employment with sustainable employment



- An efficient governance model with more services shared amongst governments, relatively low taxes, solid infrastructure, and adequate reserves
- Vibrant youth and multi-cultural communities
- Small businesses thriving in rural areas
- County agriculture & related businesses have achieved wide recognition as being technologically advanced and leading edge.
- Main streets are busy, vacancies are minimal
- Our citizens are engaged in their government and community

2.3 Key Principles

The County of Perth's 2012 Corporate Strategic Plan is premised on conducting municipal business based on key principles that reflect the goals, values and aspirations articulated by the community at large:

- **Honest and Accountable Operational Performance**
 - Council and Staff will conduct themselves with openness, integrity and accountability, being responsible to commitments made and responsive to community concerns.
- **Collaborative Approaches and Partnerships**
 - Council and Staff will seek out collaborative approaches based on common goals and a desire to engage community organizations and partner municipalities.
- **A Clear and Forward Looking Plan**
 - Decisions will be made with the understanding of the long-term implications of the choices and with long-term planning goals in mind.



3 Goals and Objectives

The goals and strategic objectives contained in the plan build on the mission, vision and principles established through the strategic planning process.

Each goal, which sets the direction of the County in its day to day operations, is supported by strategic objectives. These objectives are areas where the County will focus its efforts over the next five years. A number of specific actions will guide the County in achieving its goals and objectives over the long term and are outlined in detail in Section 7.0.

- **GOAL 1: Ensure residents are being served by an efficient, cohesive, accessible and comprehensive service delivery model.**
 - Strategic Objective: Investment in and support of community infrastructure, including EMS, Fire, Health and other services that reflect our rate of growth and rural nature.
- **GOAL 2: Create an environment that supports and engages a diverse range of local businesses.**
 - Strategic Objective: A heightened level of business activity in the County, with increased diversity in the type of available positions.
- **GOAL 3: Support the continued strength and success of our agricultural businesses.**
 - Strategic Objective: Support opportunities for value-added production, processing and new market development, be it local or export-oriented.
- **GOAL 4: Support existing and new opportunities to engage the county's residents and visitors.**
 - Strategic Objective: Create attractive, interesting, energized and accessible programming for our youth, seniors and families to retain our current population and attract new residents.

Once the County Council has adopted the Corporate Strategic Plan, the County will move forward with its implementation in partnership with its partner municipalities. Departmental business plans, goals and initiatives will be in line with the corporate strategic plan. The 2013 budget will take into account the new strategic plan and will incorporate short term actions as appropriate, and progress and performance results will be monitored regularly and reported to Council.



4 The Context for Change

4.1 Our Community's Dynamics

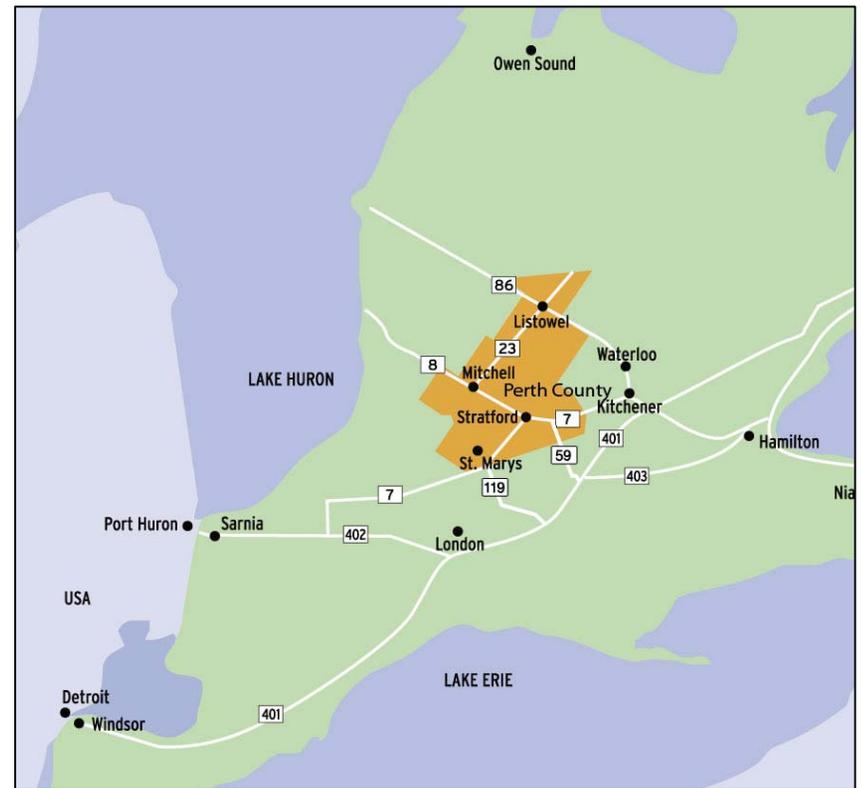
As shown in the following figure, Perth County is nestled in southwestern Ontario and is the surrounding rural area for the town of St. Marys and city of Stratford. The county is in proximity to several cities in southwestern Ontario such as London, Kitchener and Waterloo. While the county is predominantly rural, the community places a high value on its agricultural landscapes and small town atmospheres. This quality of place value has been a leading reason for staying or choosing to live in the area.

The County of Perth's 2011 population was 37,571, which was a small increase (+360 residents) from the 2006 population. It is estimated that the population in the county will increase to 41,214 by 2021, an increase of 9.7% over the 10-year period and an average annual rate of increase of 1.0%. Perth County's population growth is much lower than Toronto and surrounding regions over the course of the next ten year, which is estimated at 13.2% (2011 to 2021)¹.

The largest segment of the population in Perth County is the 20-44 years of age (11,657 in 2009) followed by the population under the age of 20 years of age (10,573 in 2009). Compared to 2006, the only proportion of the population that has grown is the population over the age of 65 (5,243 in 2009 from 5,120 in 2006). Moving forward, an important consideration for the County will be the provision of health and recreation services and amenities for this growing age group.

Average household income rates provide important information about the wealth generated or retained by the local population. High income rates suggest a high level of disposable income, which in turn could mean that there is a large affluent population. Based on 2006 Census data, Perth County has an average household

FIGURE 4.1: LOCATION OF PERTH COUNTY



Source: County of Perth, 2009

¹ Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2006, Schedule 3: Distribution of Population & Employment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2001-2031.



income of \$67,241, which indexed to Ontario, was considerably lower (over 10%). Assuming a modest 1.5% annual rate of increase in household income since the end of 2005, the average household income in the county could climb to \$73,524 by the end of 2011. This indicator directly impacts the services and amenities that the community demands for retail shopping, employment compensation, housing, and recreational activities. It is important to note that comparatively, average housing price in the county was \$219,650 compared to that of the Province \$318,666 (48% higher than that of the county). Similarly, taxes are much lower. This translates into lower overall cost of living for residents of Perth County that translates into higher disposable incomes.

Perth County's working age population is more inclined to have a college diploma or an apprenticeship or trade certificate. The county also benefits from being located within 75 kilometres from at least one of following postsecondary institutions: Conestoga College (Kitchener main campus, Stratford Campus); Fanshawe College (London main campus); the University of Waterloo (Waterloo and Stratford); Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo); and Western University (London). Healthkick in Huron County offers part time accreditation in Practical Nursing through George Brown College. The proximity to these schools helps make post-secondary education more accessible for the population and enables the attraction of a workforce within higher educational attainment levels.

The **County of Perth, Town of St. Marys and City of Stratford Labour Market Analysis Study** examines the commuting patterns of county residents by using 2006 Statistics Canada Census data. The report states that in Perth County, 10,950 people are employed in jobs in the county with an additional 3,635 people employed in Stratford and 750 people employed in St. Mary. Stratford is a clear employment centre for county residents. The patterns indicate low levels of out-commuting in the county and a strong connection with the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

The study also examines labour force trends for the County and identifies that there are much higher percentages among Perth County municipalities for the working class and agricultural class compared to St. Marys, Stratford and the Province. These results are due to the county's heavy concentrations in trades, processing and primary industry occupations.

A location quotient (LQ) analysis was used in the **Perth, St. Marys and Stratford Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan** to determine the level and degree of industry specialization. LQs are a commonly used tool in local and regional economic analysis. They assess the concentration of economic activities within a smaller area relative to the overarching region in which it resides. LQs were calculated relative to the province of Ontario. An LQ greater than 1.0 for a given sector indicates a local concentration of economic activity as compared to the overarching region and may be an indication of competitive advantage with respect to the attraction of that industry sector.

In theory, an industrial or business concentration that is greater than the overarching regional average may also represent the export base of the county. Businesses that make up this export base may have chosen to locate in the community due



to certain local or regional competitive advantages. These competitive advantages can be used to attract additional investment, in the same or complementary industries.

The very high LQ in the agriculture industry in each of the member municipalities is a clear indication of the strength and importance of this industry in the county. Two other industries that were consistently in the high range were manufacturing and construction.

The **Perth, St. Marys and Stratford Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan** provide recommended directions for economic growth for:

- **Lone Eagles** - described as knowledge workers with highly transportable skills such as writers, analysts, accountants, trades people, sales professionals and other advisors. This sector requires minimal dependence on local infrastructure and the size of their business can potentially grow into larger operations.
- **Value added agriculture sector** – there are opportunities to embark on producing specialty foods, pork processing and producing bio-materials for the renewable energy markets.
- **Green and technology based manufacturing sector** – although this sector of the economy has experienced stagnating growth, there are business opportunities in alternative energy manufacturing products.
- **Arts, culture and tourism sector** – there is a continued need to add tourism product offerings and better integrate these offerings with Stratford's Shakespearean Festival and larger regional sector.
- **Main Street commercial development** – These main streets represent the heart of each rural community and require municipal investment in making them attractive and accessible places for private sector business investment.

4.2 Planning for the Future is Underway

In developing the Corporate Strategic Plan consideration has been given to the County's existing policy framework and the broad based planning efforts that are underway that have a direct bearing on the overall development and management of the county in the next five years. A focused review of County documents was conducted to ensure effective alignment between the County's existing framework for growth and the direction provided in the Corporate Strategic Plan. A detailed narrative of this review can be found in **Part II: Key Findings Report**.

More specifically, the County's Official Plan establishes a number of priorities, which include:

- Focusing on urban and non-farm growth in the designated settlement areas (e.g. Listowel, Milverton, Mitchell). All of these areas are currently serviced with full water and sewer and accommodate most of the non-farm growth and activity within the County.



- Protecting the agricultural land resource base, as most of the land in the county has a 1, 2 or 3 soil capability rating for agriculture, and continuing the agriculture industry and farming operations – balancing “secondary” farm occupations and on-farm value-added opportunities
- Protecting natural resources by the use of a specific Natural Resources/ Environment designation. The lack of natural areas in the county is due to the early settlement activities such as land clearing, and as a result, areas such as wetlands, wooded areas, valley lands and watercourses are to be protected under the auspices of the new Official Plan.
- Developing and maintaining a complete and comprehensive planning strategy that will serve the entire county as well as the various development needs and interests.

A primary challenge for the County is the lack of detailed implementation plans associated with these strategic planning documents and the lack of understanding for how to manage the competing priorities with limited financial and human resources.

The County would benefit from a better understanding of the short, medium and long term priorities of each department. While the existing policy framework for Perth County provides a foundation on which to initiate the strategic planning process, additional planning is still required to ensure the effective implementation of these plans and the rationalization of resources are required for this effort. The latter half of this report will assist with this effort.





5 The Community's Voice

The opinions and perspectives of local residents, business leaders, community stakeholders, politicians and municipal staff have been taken into consideration in the development of the County's Corporate Strategic Plan. Community engagement is considered a vital component of the planning process. It enables a relevant and current assessment of the county's strengths and weaknesses and gathers a broader understanding of the needs, values and aspirations.

The community was engaged in a variety of ways including community conversation sessions, stakeholder interviews, an on-line survey, staff sessions and Council sessions. Summaries for these community engagement techniques are found in **Part II: Key Findings Report**. Well over 500 individuals participated in this process across the county. Throughout the extensive process the community was asked to provide input to a series of questions, such as

- What makes Perth County a unique place to live or work?
- What is your vision for Perth County?
- What are the top three priorities for Perth County to achieve this vision?
- What are the barriers to achieving these three priorities?
- What is the County's role in addressing these priorities?

The following figure illustrates the opinions that emerged as to the perceived needs, values and aspirations of the community. These comments are the perspectives and opinions of those who participated and have not been validated as reflecting fact.

FIGURE 5.1: NEEDS, VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS MATRIX

Needs	Values	Aspirations
<i>Efficient Government</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More intergovernmental collaboration. ■ Investments in physical infrastructure and managed community growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health care centres and services. ■ Libraries and arts community. ■ Fiscally responsible given limited resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Efficient delivery of municipal services. ■ Better coordination of services between County and local municipalities. ■ Infrastructure is well constructed and maintained.



Needs	Values	Aspirations
<i>Employment and Business Opportunities</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diverse employment opportunities. ■ Pursue business attraction and investment. ■ More development ready land. ■ More welcoming to newcomers and new Canadians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proximity to urban areas, but with a ‘small town feeling’. ■ Strong physical infrastructure to support residential and business development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New business investments across economic sectors. ■ A diversity of new jobs is created in the County’s communities. ■ Busy main streets with minimal vacancies.
<i>Vibrant Youth and Multi-Cultural Communities</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Youth and young people to stay in the area. ■ Well educated youth remaining in the communities. ■ Community recognition that the Canadian culture is changing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The rural, small town lifestyle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sufficient opportunities for youth to remain in the communities. ■ Youth and ethnic groups are actively engaged in the community.
<i>Protection for Farmland and Other Resources</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ More flexibility with farmhouse severances. ■ Protect, conserve and manage natural and cultural heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The farmland and agricultural growing conditions. ■ Agricultural assets and heritage. ■ The family farm and small or medium sized farms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognized as having technologically advanced and leading edge agricultural practices. ■ Protected farmland resources for future generations.
<i>Civic Engagement and Community Pride</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continued civic engagement from community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe, friendly community ■ Quiet, rural and charming atmosphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Citizens are actively engaged in community projects.



There are three priorities for the County over the next five years. These issues are listed below according to the frequency they were repeated during the community engagement process.

Provide an Efficient Governance Structure

The County and local municipalities will need to work together to define shared goals and achieve the common vision. A service delivery and governance review could be completed in an attempt to improve efficiencies and reduce duplications. There were a variety of opinions for whether the municipalities within Perth County should amalgamate into a regional government; however, seeking partnerships in particular service areas may be of common interest.

Support Business Development

There is strong support in the communities to increase industrial, processing and manufacturing businesses. The community benefits with increased employment and spin-off business opportunities. There is also strong support to revitalize downtowns and sustain agribusiness industries.

Preserve Farmland and the Rural Community's Character

Many community members want to preserve the farmland and maintain the rural character. Municipal planning was often brought up as a means to preserving farmland and maintaining the rural character.





6 SWOT Assessment

An assessment of Perth County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is intended to inform the corporate strategic plan. Strengths are the unique factors or assets that the community can build off and capitalize on for the unique elements. Weaknesses are current areas of disadvantage which may require strengthening or repositioning. Opportunities are the external factors that can play a significant role in determining the community's possibilities. They can directly influence the types of strategies, whereas threats are external factors that present challenges to a community.

This SWOT assessment has been compiled based on background research, socio-economic profile and the results of the community engagement process.

6.1 Strengths

It is essential that the corporate strategic plan leverage the unique assets and characteristics of the community in a way that will lead to long term community sustainability.

Proximity to Urban Areas

Many residents stated that they enjoyed the proximity to urban amenities with the benefits of being a safe, friendly and charming rural, small town

High Level of Community Engagement

There was an overwhelming supportive and engaged community during this project's process. This level of engagement indicates that the community is concerned about its future directions and priorities.

Strong Agriculture Community

Agriculture is a very important industry for Perth County. The economic data and community engagement process confirmed the importance of the industry and the need to protect the farmland for agricultural production.

Strong Live-Work Balance

Many residents live and work in the community or work in the nearby communities of St. Marys and Stratford. This balance helps keep residents contributing to volunteer organizations and committees.



Good Health Care Services

Many residents appreciate the level of health care services that they receive, including accessible hospital services, clinics, family physicians, emergency medical services (EMS), dental services and other health care specialists.

Presence of Arts & Culture

The proximity to Stratford including the Stratford Festival, as well as the strong community of artists and cultural existing in the county are important.

6.2 Weaknesses

This sub-section discusses the weaknesses that constrain the county. It is vital that action is taken to address these barriers.

Slow Population Growth

The county has experienced slow population growth over the previous years. Slow population growth is expected to continue through to 2021. Based on population estimates, the proportion of the county's population that is expected to grow is among those 65 years and older. There are an insufficient number of youth and young people who stay in the area. There are also an insufficient number of immigrants who locate to the area.

Lower Level of Disposable Income

There is a lower level (i.e. 10% less) of disposable income among residents compared to the Province of Ontario. This weakness makes the community less attractive for population-supporting businesses.

No 400 Series Highway

There is no direct Highway 400 series access in the region. In addition, there are no four lane roads. Highway 401 is located to the south of the region and the closest four lane access point is to the east, close to New Hamburg.



6.3 Opportunities

The following opportunities will influence the direction of the corporate strategic plan.

Partnerships and Collaborations in Service Delivery and Governance

There is a mindset that the County and local municipalities need to partner and collaborate with each other for the longer term sustainability of the area. The communities want to reduce duplications and inefficiencies. Enhancing outside partnerships with other delivery agencies will continue to be important.

Identified Target Sectors for Business Investments

The County's economic development strategy targets strategic investment for 'Lone Eagles', value-added agriculture, green, agriculture and technology-based manufacturing, arts, culture & tourism sectors and Main Street commercial. There are opportunities to drive investment in these sectors, especially in value added-agriculture as recommended in the strategy.

International Plowing Match

There is a unique opportunity to attract visitors to the county as it hosts the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo in 2013.

6.4 Threats

The County will need to address or manage the following internal and external threats that are preventing the county from achieving their vision and missions. The following discussion lays out the key threats facing the County in effectively implementing the corporate strategic plan.

Limited and/or Inadequate Funding

A challenge for Perth County is to manage the limited funds for future investment while being fiscally responsible given budget constraints. Perth County will need to secure external funding from sources such as the provincial and federal governments.



Stringent Planning Policies and Building Regulations

Many regulations for planning and buildings are set by the Province of Ontario. Planning policies and building regulations set by the County and local municipalities can also prevent development from happening (e.g. farmhouse severances and farm building projects). There was a strong desire to reduce the amount of 'red tape' and bureaucracy currently surrounding the permits and approvals process both at a local and county level. Simplifying the development process would encourage residential and non-residential development and create a more welcoming atmosphere for developers.





7 Corporate Actions for 2012- 2017

The development and implementation of a corporate strategic plan will pay significant dividends for Perth County. It identifies the steps to follow that build on the input and insight received during the community engagement process. The plan helps to improve coordination and collaboration with stakeholders and staff involved in the implementation effort. In addition, the plan contributes to consensus building within the community and within County departments over the next five years.

Informing the implementation of select actions will require consideration of relevant provincial policy and regulations. As an example, actions related to agriculture land use will require consideration of the provincial planning statement (PPS) that serves as the framework for all communities across Ontario. Farmland use and preservation must be determined within the guidelines and restrictions in place by the province.

By 2017, Perth County will have made significant and visible progress for a number of issues that impact the long term sustainability of the county. This will include:

Goal 1: Ensure residents are being served by an efficient, cohesive, accessible and comprehensive service delivery model.

Strategic Objective: Investment in and support of community infrastructure, including EMS, Fire, Health and other services that reflect our rate of growth and rural nature.

- **Action 1** - Initiate County and local Municipalities services delivery review that examines where improvements and efficiencies in governance structure can be realized.
- **Action 2** – Develop a capital asset plan that examines the County infrastructure priorities and spending requirements to enhance or maintain the infrastructure.
- **Action 3** – Develop a long range facilities plan that addresses the County administrative offices and archives and any additional accessibility or space requirements for the delivery of County services.
- **Action 4** – Engage with senior levels of government, MPPs and MPs to identify partnerships that will result in more financial support and funding opportunities to county and local municipalities for infrastructure projects and delivery of services.



- **Action 5** – Ensure that the County’s management is accountable and can measure their outcomes. Develop business plans for the corporate services, public works, planning & development, emergency medical services departments that state:
 - Department mandate and core values
 - Key department priorities
 - Major initiatives
 - The progress or completion of particular actions
 - The use of allocated resources for major initiatives in that year or resource requirements.
- **Action 6** – Pursue the completion and approval of the County’s Official Plan Review. Leverage the policy framework as a means to attract new employment and residential growth in the County.
- **Action 7** – Explore the need to complete a forest management plan to address issues of soil erosion.
- **Action 8** – Explore the demand for affordable and accessible housing stock in the settlement areas of Listowel, Mitchell and Milverton.
- **Action 9** – Explore the demand for additional, appropriate and accessible seniors housing in the settlement areas of Listowel, Mitchell and Milverton.

Goal 2: Create an environment that supports and engages a diverse range of local businesses.

Strategic Objective: A heightened level of business activity in the County, with increased diversity in the type of available positions.

- **Action 1** – Provide community information from a single point of contact for investors and entrepreneurs regarding property availability, zoning provisions, county or local planning processes and approvals.
- **Action 2** – Leverage the downtown revitalization work completed and promote the Main Street commercial areas and the financial incentives that are offered. Continue to develop programs locally to support further downtown revitalization.
- **Action 3** – Encourage businesses to invest in their storefronts and emphasize the benefit it creates to having an appealing, rural Main Street atmosphere that attracts and provides access to citizens and tourists.
- **Action 4** – In partnership with local stakeholder and regional partners, develop new community events, tourism products and themed day trips that can draw residents and visitors to Perth County’s communities.
- **Action 5** - Partner with local municipalities, industry and local planning board to undertake a workforce attraction and retention strategy for the region.



Goal 3: Support the continued strength and success of our agricultural businesses.

Strategic Objective: Support local or export-oriented opportunities for value-added production, processing and new market development.

- **Action 1** - Develop strategic priorities to address the challenges and opportunities arising out the Agricultural BR&E, identifying ways to support value added agriculture
- **Action 2** – Ensure water, municipal sanitary, broadband, natural gas and electricity infrastructure is in place to service value-added agriculture developments within settlement areas.
- **Action 3** – Attract nurture, and retain value-added agricultural and related industries. Identified targets should include food processing, milling, green energy bio-crops, bio-products, bio-mass and bio-gas, post-harvest handling facilities, specialized produce (organics, heirloom varieties), differentiated products (functional food, heritage breeds), agro-tourism, genetics facilities, and innovation in the agricultural sector. Continue to develop expanded market opportunities for local producers.
- **Action 4** – Develop site selector packages specific to the needs of the value added agricultural sector with a current inventory of available properties, buildings and infrastructure capacity.
- **Action 5** – Collaborate with industry and post-secondary institutions (i.e. University of Guelph) in agriculture and agri-food research, delivery of localized training to support this sector, in order to increase agriculture-innovation focused on leading edge agricultural practices in Perth County.
- **Action 6** - Continue to enhance partnerships with producers and local agencies focussed on improving access and viability for local food.

Goal 4: Support existing and new opportunities to engage the County's residents and visitors.

Strategic Objective: Create attractive, interesting, energized and accessible programming for our youth, seniors and families to retain our current population and attract new residents.

- **Action 1** – Continually enhance the County's website to better reflect community information, policy frameworks and the range of services.
- **Action 2** – Develop a communications strategy that provides direction for effectively engaging and reporting to local residents, businesses and community organizations regarding community issues. This strategy would examine a wide variety of outreach tools including social media, e-newsletters and interactive web-based tools.
- **Action 3** – Fully promote the Perth County area and its location to live, work and play by continuing to promote and enhance tourism, and capitalize on opportunities that will be realized during the 2013 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo.



8 Implementation Plan

To ensure that the corporate strategic plan is a living document that guides the decision making efforts of the County of Perth, a detailed implementation plan is necessary. The intent of this implementation plan is to set out the timeline in which the actions will be initiated, the department lead and the potential partners who can contribute to the success of the goal. The implementation plan also considers the performance measures necessary to achieve the goal and the monitoring and reporting mechanisms required to demonstrate progress. The performance measures attached to each goal in this implementation plan are intended to gauge the progress of each action. The results of the performance measures will be reported to Council and the broader community demonstrating the County's commitment to achieving the goals of the Plan.



Goal 1: Ensure residents are being served by an efficient, cohesive, accessible and comprehensive service delivery model.

Strategic Objective: Investment in and support of community infrastructure and services that reflect our rate of growth and rural nature.

Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Initiate County and local Municipalities services delivery review that examines where improvements and efficiencies in governance structure can be realized.	Short-term	CAO	County and local municipalities
2. Develop a capital asset plan that examines the County infrastructure priorities and spending requirements to enhance or maintain the infrastructure.	Short-term	Public Works Department	Corporate Services Department
3. Develop long range facilities plan that addresses county administrative offices and archives and any additional accessibility & space requirements for the delivery of County services.	Short-term	Public Works Department	Corporate Services Department
4. Engage with senior levels of government, MPPs and MPs to identify partnerships that will result in more financial support and funding opportunities to county and local municipalities for infrastructure projects and delivery of services.	Ongoing	CAO	Local municipalities
5. Ensure that the County's management is accountable and can measure their outcomes. Develop business plans for the corporate services, public works, planning & development, emergency medical services departments that state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department mandate and core values • Key department priorities • Major initiatives • The progress or completion of particular actions • The use of allocated resources for major initiatives in that year or resource requirements. 	Ongoing	CAO	Department heads
6. Pursue the completion and approval of the County's Official Plan Review. Leverage the policy framework as a means to attract new employment and residential growth in the County.	Long-term	Planning & Development Department	Local municipalities



Goal 1: Ensure residents are being served by an efficient, cohesive, accessible and comprehensive service delivery model.

Strategic Objective: Investment in and support of community infrastructure and services that reflect our rate of growth and rural nature.

Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
7. Explore the need to complete a forest management plan to address issues of soil erosion.	Medium-term	Planning & Development Department	Conservation Authorities
8. Explore the demand for affordable and accessible housing stock in the settlement areas of Listowel, Mitchell and Milverton.	Medium-term	Planning & Development Department	Local municipalities
9. Explore the demand for additional, appropriate, and accessible seniors housing in the settlement areas of Listowel, Mitchell and Milverton	Medium-term	Planning & Development Department	Local municipalities

Goal 1 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Partnerships formed to support the financing of municipal infrastructure projects
- Partnerships formed to support the delivery of municipal services
- Level of grant money received from the provincial and federal governments to support infrastructure projects and services delivery
- Department business plans are developed and completed annually
- Report Cards are developed annually
- Five-year review of the Official Plan is completed
- Forest management plan is completed
- Number of affordable housing stock units needed in Perth County
- Number of seniors housing units needed in Perth County.



Goal 2: Create an environment that supports and engages a diverse range of local businesses.

Strategic Objective: A heightened level of business activity in the County, with increased diversity in the type of available positions.

Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Provide community information from a single point of contact for investors and entrepreneurs regarding property availability, zoning provisions, county or local planning processes and approvals.	Ongoing	County Economic Development	Local municipalities
2. Leverage completed downtown revitalization work and promotes Main Street commercial areas and the financial incentives that are offered.	Ongoing	County Economic Development	Local municipalities
3. Encourage businesses to invest in their storefronts and emphasize the benefit it creates to having an appealing, rural Main Street atmosphere that attracts and is accessible to citizens and tourists.	Ongoing	Local Municipalities	County Economic Development
4. In partnership with local stakeholders and regional partners, develop new community events and tourism products or attractions/themed day trips/tours that can draw residents and visitors to Perth County's communities.	Medium-term	Perth County visitor's Association	Chambers of Commerce, local Municipalities, other Counties, RTO, County Economic Development
5. Partner with local municipalities to undertake a workforce attraction and retention strategy for the region.	Medium term	County Economic Development	Perth CFDC, local municipalities, Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Partners in Employment, Local Industry



Goal 2: Create an environment that supports and engages a diverse range of local businesses.

Strategic Objective: A heightened level of business activity in the County, with increased diversity in the type of available positions.

Goal 2 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Number of inquiries from investors and entrepreneurs
- Number of building permits issued and value of construction
- Number of businesses using financial incentives and dollar value of financial incentives
- Number of new community events
- Number of attendees at community events and estimated spending value
- Completed workforce attraction and retention strategy



Goal 3: Support the continued strength and success of our agricultural businesses.

Strategic Objective: Support opportunities for value-added production, processing and new market development, be it local or export-oriented.

Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Initiate an action plan to address issues and opportunities identified through the business retention and expansion (BR+E) program targeted to the County's agricultural sector and enhancing opportunities for value added agriculture.	Short-term	County Economic Development	Federation of Agriculture, Local Municipalities, OMAFRA
2. Ensure water, sanitary, broadband, natural gas and electricity infrastructure is in place to service value-added agriculture developments in settlement areas.	Medium to long term	Public Works Department	Planning & Development Department, local municipalities
3. Support, enhance and attract value-added agricultural and related industries. Identified targets include food processing, milling, green energy – bio bio-crops, bio-products, bio-mass and bio-gas, post-harvest handling facilities, specialized produce (organics, heirloom varieties), differentiated products (functional food, heritage breeds) agro-tourism, genetics facilities, and innovation in the agricultural sector. Continue to develop expanded market opportunities for local producers.	Medium to long term	County Economic Development	Local municipalities
4. Develop site selector packages specific to the needs of the value added agricultural sector with a current inventory of available properties, buildings and infrastructure capacity.	Short-term	County Economic Development	Local municipalities
5. Collaborate with industry and post-secondary institutions (i.e. University of Guelph) in agriculture and agri-food research in order to increase agriculture-skills training and innovation focused on leading edge agricultural practices in Perth County.	Long-term	County Economic Development	Local municipalities
6. Continue to enhance partnerships with producers and local agencies focussed on improving access and viability for local food.	Medium-term	County Economic Development	Local municipalities



Goal 3: Support the continued strength and success of our agricultural businesses.

Strategic Objective: Support opportunities for value-added production, processing and new market development, be it local or export-oriented.

Goal 3 - Measuring Our Performance:

- Number of businesses contacted for the BR+E program targeted to the value added agriculture sector
- Available infrastructure capacity
- Number of business leads from the value added agriculture sector
- Number and size of available properties and buildings
- Number of funding projects to support agriculture-related research in the County
- Completed County local food policy



Goal 4: Support existing and new opportunities to engage the County's residents and visitors.

Strategic Objective: Strategic Objective: Create attractive, interesting, energized and accessible programming for our youth, seniors and families to retain our current population and attract new residents.

Actions	Priority	Lead	Partners
1. Continually enhance the County website to better reflect community information, policy frameworks and the range of services.	Ongoing	Corporate Services Department	All other County departments
2. Develop a communications strategy that provides direction for effectively engaging and reporting to local residents, businesses and community organizations regarding community issues. This strategy would examine a wide variety of outreach tools including social media, e-newsletters and interactive web-based tools.	Medium-term	CAO	All other County departments
3. Fully promote the Perth County area and its location to live, work and play during the 2013 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo.	Short term	County Council and CAO	Municipality of West Perth
Goal 4 - Measuring Our Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of website visits ■ Website click through rates ■ Completed communications strategy ■ Daily attendance at the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo 			

Monitoring the progress of each action will be the responsibility of the lead department identified in this implementation plan and will be reported out through two mechanisms, (1) Departmental Business Plan Report Cards and (2) Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report.



8.1 Departmental Business Plan Report Cards

The development of the Departmental Business Plans will become a foundational task for each department within the County. Creating an annual report card will communicate the progress each department has made and will support the budgeting process.

The suggested content for each business plan annual report card consists of the following sections:

- Departmental mandate and core values
- Key department priorities/main service areas
- Alignment with the goals of the corporate strategic plan
- A list of major initiatives for the report timeframe (e.g. 2 years)
- A matrix outlining the progress or completion of particular initiatives/actions
- Use of allocated resources for major initiatives in that year or resource requirements

These annual report cards will support the creation of a Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report that outlines the achievements of the County throughout the year and will be broadly communicated to the community. This ensures that the County is open and transparent regarding its activities, achievements and use of resources.

8.2 Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report

Being accountable to community members is a key principle at the County of Perth. A Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer will ensure that the goals and actions outlined in this plan are measured and progress is communicated to the community. The Annual Report will also draw on the results from the report cards created by each department. The community can be engaged around this process through a Town Hall meeting where Council presents the Annual Report to the community. An online presence is also appropriate.

The suggested content for the Corporate Strategic Plan Annual Report consists of the following sections:

- Key areas of focus for the County.
- Major community initiatives and events in the report year.
- From vision to action: A matrix of accomplished actions based on the goals in the corporate strategic plan.
- Case studies of successful implementation (profiling major accomplishments based on actions set out in the corporate strategic plan).



- Maintaining momentum: Initiatives and actions for the coming year.

The reporting out process is an essential 'measuring-stick' created to inform future decision making and allocation of resources in the County. It is also a critical mechanism of demonstrating accountability, community engagement and can help inform the five-year Official Plan Review.