

The United Townships of Head, Clara and Maria

Strategic Plan 2019-2022



September 2019

Introduction

Strategic planning is a process that is used to set priorities, allocate resources, strengthen operations and ensures Council, Staff and other stakeholders are working toward common goals.

The United Townships of Head, Clara and Maria's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is focused on determining Council's priorities and implementing a plan to reach its goals and objectives. This plan builds on the work of previous councils while realizing new priorities and ideas. The Strategic Plan will be a guide to achieving our priorities over the next four years and will allow us to focus on measurable goals according to available budgets and resources. Council and Staff will review the plan annually, and adjustments made according to new opportunities and/or changing circumstances.

The Strategic Planning process allowed Council, Staff, residents and stakeholders to identify 5 Desired Outcomes and corresponding Action Plans to achieve those outcomes. Input was sought through surveys emailed to the community contact list and mailed to each resident, a Strategic Planning Open House, suggestion box in the municipal office and through the most recent election campaign.

HCM Vision: Providing a healthy, connected, and sustainable community teeming with possibilities for our citizens now and into the future.

HCM Mission: At your service; working effectively to bring together people, partnerships and potential for a strong, connected community.

Core Principles/ Values

- Commitment to efficient and effective municipal services
- Strong sense of community with strong volunteer base
- Open, Transparent, Accountable
- Integrity
- Fiscal responsibility
- Respect and equality

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning technique used to identify an organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It helps develop a better understanding of all factors involved in decision making. In order to determine the direction of the organization, it is necessary to understand its current position and the possible avenues through which it can pursue a particular course of action.

Strengths and Weaknesses refer to internal factors, which are resources and experience available to the organization. Opportunities and Threats refer to external influences that affect the organization.

<u>Strengths</u> • Small population – good volunteer base • Strong staff – good working relationships • Sense of community • Simple lifestyle • Cooperation within community • Good roads, waste sites • Safe, clean community • Communications with ratepayers • Pipeline assessment • Natural environment • Availability of communication tools – internet, Newsletters, social media • Lower cost of housing/taxes • Few restrictive local by-laws (noise, property standards, animal) • Financial strength - Good reserves – no debt • Good quality of life • Recreational opportunities • Updated infrastructure	<u>Weaknesses</u> • Small population – decreasing? • Low tax base, fear of tax increases • Succession planning – few staff, absences are noticed immediately • Lack of citizen engagement - small pool of people for council, library board, etc. • Ability to quickly react to changes in legislation & regulations • Aging population • Transportation • Emergency response times • Geography/size • Lack of commercial assessment • Connectivity • Lack of services (fire) • Lack of local employment opportunities • Winter maintenance of Highway 17 (outside of our control) • Dated municipal policies • Succession planning
<u>Opportunities</u> • Potential for growth – space • Recreation • Graphite mine • Funding/grants • Tourism – river, snowmobiling • Retirees • Solar • Joint Council projects • County resources, assistance – Economic Development • Future use of rail line • Education on emergency management • Home-based business	<u>Threats</u> • Cuts in PILs • Increasing legislation and regulations, reporting requirements • Lifespan of landfill • Aging and declining population • Transportation requirements for residents • Access to reliable internet • Limited number of employers

Public Input Request Results (to date):

Vision for HCM:

- Low taxes
- Long term debt free
- Maintaining core services
- Continue senior's programming
- Encourage/ facilitate waterfront development (like Chokecherry Lane)
- Well informed group of taxpayers that enjoy low property taxes, well maintained roads, beaches and parks
- Comprehensive waste and recycling strategy to ensure decades of use without new landfill
- New boat launch in Bissett Creek
- Lights on all major municipal roads
- Fire protection and extrication agreement with local municipality
- Continued good tone within municipal government
- New marina and restaurant
- Restoration of canoe routes on Grants and Bissett Creek
- The same natural, friendly place it always has been
- Limitation on rail bed use
- Opportunities for businesses to come without risking our quiet life

What does HCM do well, and should continue:

- Has kept expenditures within reasonable limits
- Continue to work with snowmobile club and campgrounds
- Water access locations and parks are in good repair; confident it will remain that way. Good attraction for new residents.
- Easy access to river for boating and fishing
- Access to snowmobile and ATV trails
- Excellent job of communicating with taxpayers
- Library and boat ramps are well run and maintained
- Friendly municipal staff
- Well run recycling and landfill
- Reserves were always kept up
- People are friendly
- The atmosphere is clean, fresh and natural

Areas for improvement:

- Look for new recycling service
- Consider snow plowing for low income seniors
- Should promote Algonquin Trail. It needs work, funding available from County or Province if there is enough interest
- Street lights at major intersections – could be solar
- Small break wall at Stonecliffe Boat Launch
- Looking after what we have i.e. natural playground and garden at hall

Top Priorities:

- Federal and Provincial grants
- Graphite Mine
- Recycling and educational programs regarding proper recycling techniques
- Attracting business that promotes dining – no eatery in municipality

- Extrication situation
- Purchasing land in Bissett Creek area for future municipal boat launch
- Improve winter road conditions
- Emergency Management planning
- Better policing

Words to describe HCM to others:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| - Friendly | - Concerned |
| - Recreation year round | - Helpful |
| - Relaxed | - Beautiful |
| - Natural | - Quiet |
| - Peaceful | - Retirement living |
| - Supportive | |

Assets:

- Low taxes, freedom from long term debt
- Crown land trails
- Ottawa River
- Driftwood Park
- Rail to Trail
- Grants and Bissett Creek
- Local businesses
- The people

Liabilities:

- Recycle service, long term survival of disposal sites
- Rail to Trail
- Gas Pipelines

Best way to inform residents and landowners:

- Current newsletter and email updates
- mail outs
- Highway 17
- Combination of social media, posters, NRT What's Happening column; you will never get everyone

What would you like to see in HCM:

- Low income senior's plowing service.
- LED streetlights at major highway and municipal road intersections
- Acquisition of land at Bissett Creek for a boat launch
- OPP station

Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes are the goals and priorities identified during the Strategic Planning process. It is what Council and Staff will work on achieving over the next four years.

Desired Outcomes	Focus Areas	Action Plan
Fiscal Responsibility	• Cost saving • Shared services • Prudent Spending • Available grants • Organizational Review	• Review opportunities for cost saving • Seek shared/ borrowed/ rented services • Prudent Spending • Available grants • Update Asset Management Plan • Maintain service levels into the future • Align organization via recommendations from review creating cost effective organization
Quality, sustainable, reliable infrastructure	• Municipal Parks and Boat Launches • Municipal Roads • Landfill Sites	• Proceed with boat launch replacement/repair • Consider less than minimum required depth snow accumulation • Consider roads position to asset management • Research feasibility of solar vs electric streetlights • Acquire permanent solution to recycling services • Reconsider municipal composting
Community Engagement, Collaboration & Participation	• Volunteerism • Committees	• Create new committees • Request information from experienced residents • Promote repeated requests for public input • Active canvassing for volunteers • Continue with RAC and social programming
Safe and Healthy Community	• Emergency Management • Auto-extrication • Street lights • Policing • Snow plowing	• Maintain compliance with OFMEM • Encourage increased participation in Emergency Management Training • Find a solution with neighbouring municipalities/ province to provide auto-extrication and or fire services in HCM • Research streetlight pricing, options and feasibility • Research local low income seniors plowing services
Economic Growth and Prosperity	• Home Based Business • Industry	• Access to improved internet • Support industry growth

Review

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed, and updated if required, annually. Council and Staff will also review and track progress on the implementation of the action plan. As information and circumstances change with time, the Desired Outcomes, Focus Areas and Action Plans may be altered to reflect those changes.

Closing

Council and Staff of the United Townships of Head, Clara and Maria would like to thank everyone who submitted feedback and involved themselves in the Strategic Planning Process. We look forward to working together, and with our community, in realizing Council's priorities and action plan over the next four years.