

## The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Strategic Plan

### *Mission, Vision, Principles, and Priorities*

**Mission:** *To create better communities*

**Vision:** *To be a progressive regional government*

#### ***Guiding Principles***

Over the coming four-year term, Council will consider the following guiding principles to shape and inform decision-making and the implementation of its strategic priorities.

**1. Our residents are our first priority**

We are driven to provide quality services and to enhance the lives of our residents. The County is committed to finding efficiencies, enhancing communication, and developing our infrastructure to enrich the lives of those who reside within our borders.

**2. No municipality gets left behind**

The County embraces a 'community benefit model'. This model promotes the idea that as a regional government, the County has the unique ability to overcome local disparities based on geography and/or tax base/tax assessment in order to provide equitable services across the entire region. We are committed to improving services and finding solutions that serve the broader needs of the entire County. We creatively explore new ways to develop regional strategies that will sustain and build a more cohesive region – always ensuring that 'no municipality gets left behind'.

**3. Partnerships as essential for our success**

The County will continue to strengthen its longstanding relationships with municipal partners, other levels of government, and community organizations through open communication and the sharing of ideas and assets. We aim to collaborate appropriately in order to achieve the best results for our 65,000 residents.

**4. Our environmental legacy is important**

We are aware that many of our operations and lines of business have a significant environmental footprint. When considering the implementation of any strategic priorities, we will subscribe to the principles of long-term sustainability, mitigating the impact of climate change, and environmental stewardship.

## ***Strategic Priorities***

### ***1. Service Delivery – A Smarter Approach***

The County relies on a variety of municipal, quasi-municipal, and non-municipal partners to deliver an array of essential services to its 65,000 residents. These services range from land ambulance and policing to the management of County forests. At this time, opportunities exist for the County, its local municipalities, and the City of Cornwall to explore delivering services on a truly regional basis. Council is cognizant of the fact that many stakeholders are involved in service delivery, requiring commitment and support beyond the County to affect meaningful change.

For those services delivered to County residents by the City of Cornwall, Council is committed to working with the City to develop a new shared services framework, one that reflects the spirit of true partnership. Council will also work with local SDG municipalities on several initiatives to bring efficiencies to operations, including waste management, information technology, radio communications, tourism/economic development, as well as shared land use planning and engineering services. These efforts will result in better, more accessible, and more equitable services that enhance the quality of life of our communities.

### ***2. Rural Schools – Educating Children in Their Communities***

While education is not within the purview of municipal government in Ontario, Council believes that the County and its constituent local municipalities have a significant and vital role to play in ensuring that our children are educated as close to home as possible. School closures not only have devastating impacts on children, but entire communities. Further, schools are the backbone of many of our communities. Smaller, rural schools provide a safe, welcoming place in which to educate children.

The County is committed to working with the province, local school boards, parents, and other stakeholders to develop strategies that maintain the vibrancy of our rural schools. Council believes that all school boards must work together and collaborate with other stakeholder groups including municipalities, to develop local solutions and best practices that maximize local educational opportunities for our children.

### ***3. Leveraging Partnerships to Improve Healthcare – Supporting Equitable Access***

While health care is generally not the responsibility of local government, the County recognizes that it has a distinct role to play in enhancing the delivery and funding of long-term care, land ambulance services, and public health. Inequalities related to access to health care currently exist in our County, due in part to a shortage of physicians in rural areas. Further, due to the growing number of seniors in our region, we need to ensure affordable, quality local long-term care spaces are available to those in need. These challenges are not unique to our County but exist throughout most of rural Ontario.

The County will advocate for and support provincial initiatives that create better patient outcomes, such as implementing measures that reduce emergency room wait times or paramedic offload times. At the local level, Council will explore physician recruitment options with other regional partners, with the goal of providing greater access to local health care services. Additionally, Council will examine partnership opportunities that increase the quality and/or quantity of long-term care beds within our County.

#### **4. Community Sustainability – A Place Where You Want to Be**

Rural communities across Ontario and Canada continue to struggle to maintain the vibrancy of their communities in the face of an aging and sometimes declining population. Council will take direct action to create the conditions necessary to support vibrant and sustainable communities. Council will also advocate for a livable and thriving community and partner strategically with others to ensure accessible, high quality services for residents.

In areas such as access to high speed broadband (fixed and mobile) and natural gas, the County will continue its longstanding efforts to bring and maintain these crucial services to and for our residents. Further, the County will continue to work with and through the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus on these files as well as others which are important to the rural residents of Eastern Ontario including affordable housing, youth retention, and building a skilled labour force.

#### **5. Communication – The Foundation of Success**

It is vital that the County effectively communicate with its residents and stakeholders. The ever-evolving nature of communication demands that the County explore new and innovative ways to ensure that it is communicating in a clear and timely manner while providing the public with appropriate platforms to engage with and provide feedback to the County.

To enhance its external and internal communication capabilities, Council will explore various options, including the expanded use of social media and digital platforms and human resources.

## Appendix A: Deliverables for Strategic Priorities

| <b>Deliverables for Strategic Priorities</b> |   |
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| <b>STRATEGY</b>                              | <b>ACTIONS</b>  |
| <b>Service Delivery</b>                      | Seek a new, fairer shared services agreement with the City of Cornwall  |
|  | Work towards developing a regional waste management strategy including the County, its local municipalities, and the City of Cornwall |
|  | Provide high quality land use planning services to SDG local municipalities   |
|  | Explore the possibility of a common radio communications platform   |
| <b>Rural Schools</b>                         | Seek to build better relationships with local school boards and with parents of students  |
|  | Advocate for the development of a rural education strategy  |
|  | Participate in a provincial feasibility study to enhance rural education  |
| <b>Healthcare Partnerships</b>               | Support EOWC initiatives around health such as reducing EMS offload times   |
|  | Explore options to better support long term care for SDG residents  |
|  | Explore partnerships with other municipalities and organizations concerning physician recruitment                                     |
| <b>Community Sustainability</b>              | Support EOWC and others on improving fixed and wireless broadband throughout SDG  |
|  | Advocate for natural gas expansion throughout SDG with Enbridge and other private and public entities                                 |
|  | Continued emphasis on active transportation (cycling, trails, etc.) and the development of quality infrastructure                     |
| <b>Communications</b>                        | Revamp SDG website - possibly in concert with local municipalities  |
|  | Enhance staffing resources to more effectively communicate externally and internally  |
|  | Expand social media presence and reach  |