

*Town of Petrolia*

# Strategic Plan

*Celebrating our Heritage. Investing in Our Future*

*[www.town.petrolia.on.ca](http://www.town.petrolia.on.ca)*

## *Mayor and Council*



*Front Row:* Councillor John Phair, Mayor John McCharles  
*Back Row:* Councillor Don Seymour, Councillor Liz Welsh, Councillor/Deputy Mayor Mary-Pat Gleeson, Councillor Manny Baron  
*Centre:* Councillor Helen Haylik

The role of Municipal Government is to advocate on behalf of its citizens; to identify challenges and opportunities; to develop strategic partnerships and to consider future generations as well as those who currently live in our community. Municipal Government can only be effective if it establishes clear goals and benchmarks, and if it engages the community in the process.

Strategic Planning offers guidelines for reaching goals set down, not only by Council and staff, but also by residents, business owners, stakeholders and community leaders. It articulates the shared vision of the community. It reminds Council and staff of its goals and it clears the road ahead.

We believe that considered and deliberate planning will assist us and future Councils to deliver the services and amenities that have made Petrolia unique. It will prepare our community to meet challenges and find answers to perplexing problems. It will help us identify and exploit possibilities. It will help us nurture our community's quality of life.

Your participation is a critical element in Strategic Planning. Please take time to share your vision for the future with us.

*John McCharles, Mayor  
and Petrolia Town Council*



## *Celebrating our Heritage*

Petrolia's commitment to the preservation of its unique history while looking to the future has laid a foundation on which the town can build and foster a vigorous and sustainable community.



## *Investing in our Future*

As our forefathers shaped the oil industry almost 140 years ago, we now have the opportunity to shape the future of Petrolia. Council, the citizens and all of the stakeholders of the Town can and will drive the future of Petrolia to build a heritage for future generations.



## *Executive Summary*

*Our Mission is to sustain the Town of Petrolia's outstanding quality of life for current and future generations. To accomplish this we will serve the public interest through leadership, innovation and a focus on community strengths and priorities.*

The challenge facing small urban municipalities in Ontario is the need to provide a reasonable range and level of quality services while maintaining acceptable property tax rates. By themselves, many small municipalities are having a difficult time achieving any substantial economies of scale when it comes to service provision. This situation, combined with changes in provincial municipal transfers, is posing significant challenges to many municipalities.

A Strategic Plan is a roadmap to achieving our goals. A Strategic Plan is a readily accessible guide to which we can all refer.

In August of 2008 Council began a strategic planning process that will guide the community through 2020. The process was facilitated through Council and senior staff and began with feedback through surveys completed by staff and the citizens of Petrolia. Focus sessions were held with Council, staff and key stakeholders in the community in order to identify the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Town.

Our vision for the Town builds on our strong heritage and an investment for future prosperity.

Our Strategic Plan establishes Five Goals encompassing a number of strategic directions that support the Vision for the Town:

- *Sustainable Community*
- *Economic Development*
- *Continuous Improvement*
- *Accountability and Transparency*
- *Customer Service Excellence*

These strategic directions will be further articulated through the development of departmental business plans brought forward for Council approval prior to future budgets being approved.

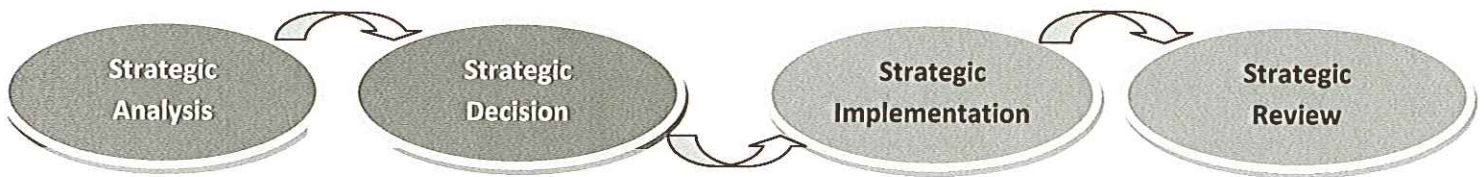


## *The Process*

**Phase One** of the Strategic Planning exercise consisted of the strategic analysis, and decisions related to that analysis.

### *Phase One*

### *Phase Two*



During **Phase One**, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis was completed. Input was sought from all stakeholders within the Town by means of focus group meetings with Council members, staff and key stakeholders, and through resident questionnaires.

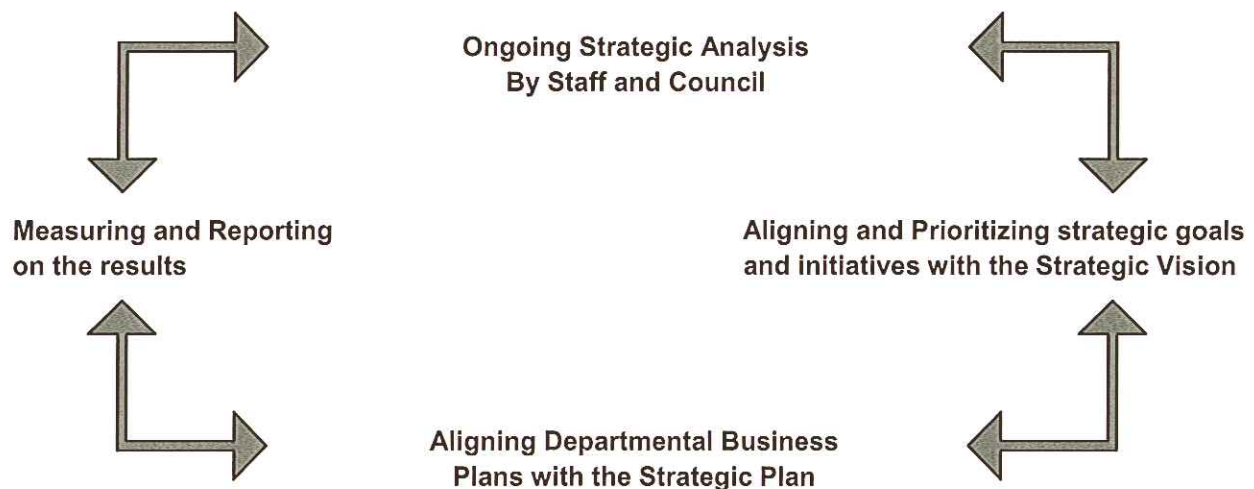
Once the analysis was completed, Council identified Strategic Goals (decisions) and Directions for the Town.

**Phase Two** will consist of the implementation of the strategic directions or objectives. The stage will see the development of business plans for each department (e.g. finance, operations, community services etc.) which will be reviewed and approved by Council prior to implementation. During the business plan development process, key performance indicators will be put into place that will be utilized as part of the operational performance management.

### **Strategic Plan/Business Plan Cycle**



The Town's goal to move toward Strategic Leadership requires the continuous and concurrent completion of all four steps (see diagram below). That is, continually refreshing the SWOT Analysis, generating options and making choices, continually implementing decisions that support the vision, and reviewing the effectiveness of these decisions. There must be a commitment to making a strategic decision every time an issue requiring action is identified. The frequency of the changes to the plan will vary depending on the shifting priorities of the citizens and Council.



## ***Petrolia 2020***

### ***Our Vision***

*Celebrating our Heritage. Investing in our Future*

Achieving this vision will result in:

- The preservation of the Town's history which supports a quality of life that energizes its residents and inspires its visitors;
- A sustainable economy capitalizing on Petrolia's heritage;
- The effective use and development of all community resources;
- Ensuring the Town's infrastructure will support future growth and development;
- Opportunities for residents of all ages to be active participants in the Town;
- Residents of all ages having access to physical, recreational, leisure and cultural activities;
- Supporting our existing businesses to ensure their retention and growth;
- Continuous progress within our Council and Administration;
- Accountability and transparency in decisions that affect the Town through a strong communication strategy and citizen engagement.

### ***Our Mission***



*To sustain the Town of Petrolia's outstanding quality of life for current and future generations.*

## *Our Values*

The values of the Town are articulated through the Five Strategic Goals and achieved through corresponding Strategic Directions.

## *Sustainable Community*

- ❖ *Comprehensive range of health care services and hospital facilities*
- ❖ *Family oriented, full service community rich in history*
- ❖ *Quality infrastructure*
- ❖ *Financial viability*
- ❖ *Increased participation of residents from all age groups in physical, recreational and leisure activities*
- ❖ *Environmentally friendly promotion or "green" industry*
- ❖ *Effective land use policies*
- ❖ *Partnerships with senior levels of government*
- ❖ *Encourage and support partnerships with volunteers and organizations*
- ❖ *Preservation and promotion of heritage and culture*

## *Economic Development*

- ❖ *Business Retention and Expansion*
- ❖ *Tourism – Heritage, Culture and Recreation*
- ❖ *Signature Event / Special Events*
- ❖ *Farmers' Market*
- ❖ *Theatre*
- ❖ *Community Centre*
- ❖ *Library*

## *Continuous Progress*

- ❖ *Benchmarking and Best Practices*
- ❖ *Professional Development*
- ❖ *Succession Planning*
- ❖ *Identifying and Developing Strategic Partnerships*

## *Accountability and Transparency*

- ❖ *Communication Strategy*
- ❖ *Citizen Engagement*
- ❖ *Business Planning*
- ❖ *Service Excellence*
- ❖ *Code of Conduct for Council and Staff*
- ❖ *Open and Accountable Municipal Government*

### *Customer Service*

- ❖ *Providing citizens with prompt, supportive assistance*
- ❖ *Fostering a positive and courteous environment*
- ❖ *Results Focused*

### *Building on Strengths*

Petrolia is recognized for its heritage and for its commitment to the preservation of its history. Those who took part in the focus groups and completed surveys identified the Victorian Heritage of the Town as a strength that should be preserved and built upon.

Petrolia can boast the fact that it provides most of the services of a larger urban centre while maintaining a small town atmosphere. The Town provides an exceptional quality of life and a safe community for all of its citizens.



### *Challenges*

Like many communities in Ontario, Petrolia will face a number of challenges over the next ten years.

- ❖ **Aging infrastructure**



Much of the infrastructure in Ontario was built during a time when a majority of the cost was covered by provincial grants. As that infrastructure ages, local governments will be challenged to balance the need for additional financial resources against the desire to keep taxes at a competitive level.

#### ❖ **Changing Demographics**

Like the rest of Ontario, Petrolia's population is aging and the services required to support this demographic are changing as well. It is important that Petrolia's services evolve to ensure that *all* segments of the community have equal access to recreational, social and cultural activities.

#### ❖ **Maintaining Full Service Community**

With the high cost of health care, centralization of health care facilities has become a concern across the province. Petrolia is facing pressure as senior levels of government contemplate the future of the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital.



#### ❖ **Attracting and Maintaining Intellectual Capital**

Municipalities are competing for limited resources as it relates to qualified applicants for careers in the public sector. It is critical that Petrolia not only attract qualified staff but also that it provide opportunities for training and advancement for its existing employees.

#### ❖ **Environmental stewardship**

Local governments are expected to take a leadership role in ensuring that future generations will inherit a strong and viable town. The necessity for reducing our impact on the environment is increasing and improved opportunities for “greening” the community is an expectation of our residents.

#### ❖ **Embracing our past**

Petrolia’s role in the development of today’s global oil industry is a surprising chapter in Canadian history. Celebrating our heritage will enhance the community for our residents and visitors, and will bring economic opportunities to Petrolia.

#### ❖ **Openness and Inclusiveness**

With a small town comes the expectation of knowing how and when decisions that affect the community are made. Development of a mechanism for engaging the public in the decision making process will strengthen the small town atmosphere.

During the consultation process, residents, business owners and staff identified a number of challenges:

- Improved long range planning;
- Need for vigorous promotion;
- Signature event to draw visitors/tourists;
- Lack of overnight accommodation;
- Shrinking economy.

...and opportunities to reshape the future of Petrolia:

- Accessing provincial and federal infrastructure funding;
- Residential development and growth;
- Cultural tourism;
- Farmers’ market;
- Promotion as a retirement community;
- Inter-municipal partnerships for enhanced program delivery;
- Private sector investment in hospitality industry;
- “Green” economic development.

Some of the tools that will help turn Petrolia 2020 into reality during the next decade include:



- Growth Management Program
- Parks and Facilities Master Plan
- Downtown Review
- Official Plan Review
- Heritage Resource Review
- Leisure, Recreation and Culture Master Plan
- Financial Strategies
- Departmental Business Plans / Performance Management

Working together with a shared vision, Petrolia will continue to be  
"The Best Town on Earth."



