

# Council Strategic Plan 2014-2017

April 2014



A cultivated experience for the mind, body, and soil.

**Contents**

A Message from the Mayor ..... 3

About the Plan ..... 4

Our Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles ..... 5

Strategic Direction #1: Well Maintained and Sustainable Public Infrastructure ..... 6

Strategic Direction #2: A Diverse, Prosperous, and Sustainable Local Economy ..... 8

Strategic Direction #3: A Growing Population Encompassing all Ages and Stages Who Live in Safe, Attractive, Cohesive, Neighbourhoods ..... 10

Strategic Direction #4: A Robust Active Living and Cultural Community ..... 12

Strategic Direction #5: Efficient and Effective Leadership from a Committed and Responsive Executive and Administrative Team ..... 14

Reporting on Our Progress..... 16

Implementing the Strategic Plan ..... 17

## A Message from the Mayor

Strategic Planning is a process of determining one's vision and goals and developing a plan of action to achieve those goals.

In 2012 this Council saw, as its vision, an inclusive, vibrant community with a sustainable and thriving economy. The 2014 Strategic Plan charts a course of actions which Council intends to move forward over the balance of its term. These actions are designed to strengthen Wolfville's economic future and continue to build upon our natural and built community amenities so as to enhance the Town's position as one of Nova Scotia's most desirable small towns in which to work and live.



I would like to acknowledge the commitment of Council and staff not only for the creation of the plan, but also for moving the plan into reality.

Jeff Cantwell  
Mayor, Town of Wolfville

## About the Plan

Strategic Plans help organizations to respond to significant change and potential threats. While the Town of Wolfville was the fastest growing municipality in Nova Scotia during the last census period, and we can be rightfully proud of the positive signs for growth and opportunity in our region, we are mindful that we live in a Province that has not performed well economically, or with respect to population growth. Many municipalities in Nova Scotia are experiencing significant decline. In other words we can't take our relative fortune for granted.

In **"Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians"**, the Ivany Commission noted there is potential for a better future if we are prepared to make the needed changes. Wolfville is well positioned to contribute to a number of the goals outlined in the Commission report. Population growth, attracting start-up businesses, increasing participation in the local labour market, addressing youth unemployment, increasing university research and development and partnerships with other sectors, and reviewing our local government structure; are goals that fit well with the Town of Wolfville.

To survive and prosper an organization must direct its finite resources to initiatives most likely to achieve its vision. A strategic plan establishes priorities, clearly articulates a desired future, and strategically responds to anticipated changes, threats and opportunities. As a decision-making process and tool it establishes the context and key directions for all other organizational plans, processes, and activities including budgets and service priorities.

***"Strategic planning has the potential to be a powerful process that catalyzes the municipal organization, bringing together the public, staff and management in the development of a common vision, direction and goals." - Strategic Planning for Municipalities: A Users' Guide (Plant, 2008)***

---

The 2014-2016 Strategic Plan is the framework that will guide the Town of Wolfville over the next three years. In 2013 we gathered input through a Citizen Satisfaction Study conducted with the assistance of the research firm of Ipsos Read. Through this and other means, we have listened to citizens and other stakeholders. We have identified those things the community values and wishes to retain, opportunities to be embraced, weaknesses to be addressed and threats to be avoided. With the benefit of this input we have articulated a vision of success for the Town that, in turn, has enabled us to determine our priorities for the next three years.

The Strategic Plan will guide Council in decisions it makes about Wolfville's future. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan influences and coincides with all other planning. The Strategic Plan contemplates the development of annual operating plans that set out specific initiatives and programs that align with the long-term vision and mission of the Town. Through the continued engagement of its citizens and the ongoing commitment and professionalism of our administration team, we are confident that we will achieve success.

## Our Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

### Vision

Wolfville is a Town with a thriving, diverse and adaptive economy built on the strengths of Acadia University, the beauty and productivity of our region, and the entrepreneurship of our citizens. We embrace and preserve the best of our past while seeking a modern future. Residents from all walks and stages of life live in safe and attractive neighbourhoods, in harmony with each other, in accommodation that is affordable for their unique needs. Residents and businesses are engaged in the Town's development and future and are confident in the leadership provided by the Municipality's Council and staff.

### Mission

To provide leadership and good governance in direction of public resources to: support safe and sustainable neighbourhoods; well-maintained public infrastructure; vibrant community and cultural experiences, and encourage innovative and sustainable economic growth.

### Guiding Principles

In support of our Vision and accomplishment of our Mission, and mindful of the need for effective governance, the Town Council and Administration will be guided by the following operating principles:

- Accountability to the citizens and businesses of Wolfville
- Openness and transparency in decision making
- Prompt and respectful communication to all
- Honesty and integrity
- A culture of continuous improvement in service delivery
- Balance among environmental, social, cultural and economic factors in our decision-making
- Broad community engagement with partners, businesses, citizens and other stakeholder groups

### Strategic Directions

1. Well Maintained and Sustainable Public Infrastructure
2. A Diverse, Prosperous, and Sustainable Local Economy
3. A Growing Population Encompassing all Ages and Stages who Live in Safe, Attractive, Cohesive, Neighbourhoods
4. A Robust Active Living and Cultural Community
5. Efficient and Effective Leadership from a Committed and Responsive Executive and Administrative Team

## Strategic Direction #1: Well Maintained and Sustainable Public Infrastructure

Infrastructure - roads, off-road paths and trails, public parks, sidewalks, administrative and recreation buildings, sport and play spaces, cultural and heritage sites, are the places where community and business happens. Infrastructure encompasses the physical elements that support place making, active healthy living, resident, business and tourism attraction. As a town we are committed to ensuring our public infrastructure is safe, sustainable, and responsive to the needs and interests of those who live and do business in Wolfville.

What the Future Will Look Like	How We Will Measure Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The movement of traffic flow in the downtown is effective and efficient</li> <li>● Parking in the downtown will be sufficient, and convenient while not detracting from the flow of traffic and pedestrian experience</li> <li>● Wolfville has a comprehensive, well promoted community-wide active transportation corridor of walking and biking trails that connect neighbourhoods to major public places and to the beautiful natural areas of our Town and region</li> <li>● A way-finding system for Wolfville is established</li> <li>● A comprehensive, preventative, fully funded maintenance program for roads, sidewalks and off-road trails</li> <li>● Indoor public facility requirements are determined with a long-term plan for implementation</li> <li>● Policies and processes guide funding and operating partnerships for significant recreation and cultural infrastructure</li> <li>● The commercial core is an attractive and active place for business, culture, social events and pedestrian experience</li> <li>● There is an ongoing, fully funded infrastructure renewal &amp; maintenance plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responses on community satisfaction survey</li> <li>● Complaint tracking process in place</li> <li>● Reduced complaints related to incompatible modes of transportation on sidewalks</li> <li>● Reduced number of pothole complaints</li> <li>● Number of successful community funding partnerships for appropriate infrastructure</li> </ul>

## **Strategic Direction #1: Action Steps**

1. Create and implement a (vehicular) transportation master plan including parking for vehicles and bicycles and on-road bike lanes on major arterials, and with consideration to population growth.
2. Identify aging underground infrastructure and create a plan for systematic renewal
3. Develop a long-term pavement renewal and management system
4. Create a renewal plan for Town-owned facilities
5. Develop a map of in-town trails and paths with connections to regional trails
6. Develop policies to support community funding partnerships for recreation and cultural infrastructure
7. Complete the downtown development plan and implementation process and timetable
8. Complete the implementation of the Town's Way Finding system
9. Complete the Recreation Master Plan

## Strategic Direction #2: A Diverse, Prosperous, and Sustainable Local Economy

The Town’s role in development of a strong local economy includes three elements. (1) Marketing of business and lifestyle opportunities in Wolfville. (2) Pursuit of partnerships and incentives to attract businesses, and (3) Processes and resources to expedite new business location. Through the work of the Town and its partner organizations, including the WBDC, Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce, and other tourism partners, Wolfville will be a leader in business attraction in the region and the Province.

What the Future Will Look Like	How We Will Measure Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wolfville will be seen as <i>the</i> place in eastern Canada for small businesses who are free to locate anywhere in the Country</li> <li>● Wolfville’s home work opportunities will be expanded while consciously preserving the neighbourhoods in which they locate</li> <li>● The Town and the WBDC have a strong, productive and clearly articulated partnership to achieve this strategic direction</li> <li>● Wolfville is the urban centre of the premier food and wine destination in Atlantic Canada</li> <li>● The Town and the University work together to welcome visitors to our community</li> <li>● The Town formally supports the annual Acadia job fair and with the WBDC exposes Acadia students to local business opportunities</li> <li>● Wolfville is established as the “four season” destination for cultural activities</li> <li>● Wolfville is a mecca for outdoor enthusiasts who want to hike, bike and walk through the region and rest at the end of their enjoyable day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responses on community satisfaction survey</li> <li>● The commercial core and central public spaces are well used and programmed</li> <li>● Number of tourists to local events annually</li> <li>● Number of room nights in the Town’s B&amp;Bs and boutique hotels</li> <li>● Increase in number of activities in the Town during the winter and shoulder season</li> <li>● Number of new businesses</li> <li>● Retention of businesses</li> <li>● Business assessment and commercial taxes increase</li> </ul>



## Strategic Direction #2: Action Steps

1. Develop and implement a targeted business attraction initiative
2. Leverage opportunities with Acadia University to create economic growth
3. Ensure that Town policy and by-laws support economic growth
4. Review the LUB and MPS to ensure that the Town's land use patterns provide opportunities for innovative business development
5. Complete the formal partnership agreement with the WBDC
6. With the WBDC investigate the viability and opportunity for a "Hub" facility in Wolfville to support the needs of small and start-up businesses
7. Work with the University to explore increased opportunities for initiatives that promote and develop the local economy
8. Investigate Wolfville's qualification for Econo-museum designation for vineyards and wine
9. Work with local B & B's, outfitters and other businesses to attract and direct tourists who wish to enjoy nature on bikes, and hikes
10. Actively pursue areas for economic development

### Strategic Direction #3: A Growing Population Encompassing all Ages and Stages Who Live in Safe, Attractive, Cohesive, Neighbourhoods

Attractive, safe, interesting, and affordable neighbourhoods, can contribute significantly to the attractiveness of Wolfville and the need for population growth. Along with a strong economy that residents will need, viable and sustainable neighbourhoods are imperative to our success. Ensuring that neighbourhoods are safe and attractive however goes beyond housing stock. It includes safety and security for persons and their homes, appropriate and accessible community, education, social and recreational services. As a small and walkable community Wolfville already provides the basic elements for this type of community. We will work to maintain those elements of our neighbourhoods that residents and visitors enjoy, and mitigate the problems that currently detract from the well-being of our neighbourhoods.

What the Future Will Look Like	How We Will Measure Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Housing options exist for all who wish to live here</li> <li>● Wolfville school redevelopment is integrated with the Town’s community services</li> <li>● Acadia students are well integrated into the fabric of our core neighbourhoods</li> <li>● Landlords respect the values of the Town and work with the Town and its agents to preserve the attractiveness and well-being of neighbourhoods</li> <li>● Town bylaws are enforced</li> <li>● Wolfville is a Town of unique neighbourhoods where small neighbourhood groups know each other and watch out for the needs of those who live near by</li> <li>● Our community and neighbourhoods reflect diverse cultures and ages of residents</li> <li>● Community services are easily accessed by those who choose or must walk to those services</li> <li>● Wolfville is connected through communities of interest to ensure that all residents enjoy and participate in the benefits of the Town</li> <li>● Active transportation is fully integrated in community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responses on community satisfaction survey</li> <li>● New residents are attracted to Wolfville</li> <li>● Build out of greenfield space on the Town’s periphery</li> <li>● Infill as appropriate in the central core</li> <li>● Number of bylaw infractions related to community living</li> <li>● Reduction in conflict due to lifestyle differences between permanent residents and students</li> <li>● Conflict resolution measures in place</li> <li>● Cost of maintaining safety and security of the Town is reduced</li> </ul>

### Strategic Direction #3: Action Steps

1. Develop a resident attraction initiative in partnership with local realtors and businesses
2. Work with local land developers to encourage innovative housing and neighbourhood development to address housing needs of a wider variety of residents
3. Work with developers and landowners to develop innovative medium density development in infill areas
4. Focus significant attention toward property infractions that detract from the safety and security of those living in and around properties that do not meet minimum property standards
5. Initiate discussion with Acadia University on future residences on university land
6. Develop cooperation and integration of policing and by-law enforcement with Acadia University
7. Be an active partner with the redevelopment of the Wolfville School to support its development and ensure that it can contribute to resident attraction
8. Work with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, the Wolfville School and the Wolfville Children's Centre (WCC) to develop the needed after school space for the WCC
9. Identify opportunities for place making within neighbourhoods and opportunities to develop neighbourhood gathering places through community partnerships
10. Investigate the viability and benefit of naming neighbourhoods and identifying significant points of the Town and/or neighbourhoods heritage through interpretive signage
11. Foster and support opportunities for healthy active lifestyles within and between neighbourhoods and communities
12. Review MPS/LUB with a view to encouraging diverse and innovative and alternative housing

## Strategic Direction #4: A Robust Active Living and Cultural Community

Wolfville is fortunate to be located geographically close to the Province’s major transportation routes, surrounded by vineyards and family farms, history, culture and beautiful natural areas. While visitors and residents enjoy this history and natural culture, residents in particular also want their town to provide the modern attributes of a vibrant community. Much of the recreation infrastructure is provided by Acadia. While this provides Wolfville with significant opportunities for recreation there are always downsides either to using services owned by other institutions or by assuming other institutions will always provide these. There is also room for expansion of the Town as an outdoor enthusiast’s playground.

What the Future Will Look Like	How We Will Measure Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Active living components are integrated into the infrastructure plan of Wolfville and neighbouring communities</li> <li>● A physical activity strategy for the Town is implemented</li> <li>● Wolfville has developed a vision for recreation and has a recreation master plan</li> <li>● Wolfville has developed partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community</li> <li>● The Town is known for its public art installations</li> <li>● There are significant festivals and community events through each season of the year</li> <li>● There are a number of cultural and recreation operations in Town that attract residents and visitors</li> <li>● Tourists from around the Country and the world come to Wolfville to enjoy the biking and walking opportunities of the surrounding area, the wineries and the ambience of the Town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Responses on community satisfaction survey</li> <li>● Wolfville trails and active living opportunities are well used</li> <li>● Number of annual festivals and events</li> <li>● Visitor attraction</li> </ul>

## **Strategic Direction #4: Action Steps**

1. Complete the Recreation Master Plan
2. Work with Acadia to ensure that recreation facilities are suitable for both the community and the University and identify where further investment might be required
3. Support and facilitate grass-roots activities that enhance social and cultural development
4. Expand opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community
5. Enhance active living and learning opportunities for citizens of all ages

## Strategic Direction #5: Efficient and Effective Leadership from a Committed and Responsive Executive and Administrative Team

Wolfville is gifted with great beauty, temperate climate, and an emerging ‘agri-cultural’ economy. To ensure long-term sustainability Wolfville’s population and commercial sector must grow. Growth must be carefully and conscientiously managed to provide the amenities, and preserve the quality of community life resident’s value. Strong, focused, efficient and effective leadership is central to the Town’s ongoing success. All residents and businesses contribute to the Town’s prosperity but it is the Town’s elected and administrative officials who are charged with guiding the Town toward the future.

What the Future Will Look Like	How We Will Measure Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Citizen Satisfaction Study results validate the priorities and decisions of Council and reflect a well-engaged and satisfied community</li> <li>● There is open and respectful dialogue with residents and appropriate and frequent opportunities for public input in the Town’s processes</li> <li>● Our residents and business owners have confidence in the manner in which the Town is operated</li> <li>● Town employees are engaged and motivated</li> <li>● Town Councillors are respectful of each other and each Councillor is an active and equal contributor to the leadership of the Town</li> <li>● Regional service delivery partnerships have been established and have resulted in the delivery of cost effective shared programs</li> <li>● Council and administration work together effectively as a team, guided by by-laws and policies that reflect best practices in municipal governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Citizen Satisfaction Survey</li> <li>● Customer comment forms in Town Hall and Public Works Building</li> <li>● Employee Satisfaction survey</li> <li>● Annual reporting to the Community on the state of each strategic direction and action steps completed or started</li> <li>● Annual report on the Town’s financial health</li> </ul>

## **Strategic Direction #5: Action Steps**

1. Conduct a Citizen Satisfaction Study in 2015
2. Conduct an Employee Satisfaction Survey in 2014 and biannually thereafter
3. Conduct a governance review in 2014 (mandated by Province)
4. Review and update as appropriate the Town's Communications Plan and Protocol
5. Develop long-term financial planning strategies that ensure a strong financial position is maintained
6. Review the MPS and LUB and prepare a plan for its update
7. Strengthen relationships and partnerships with other municipalities and government at all levels to enhance our ability to meet the service needs of our citizens
8. Incorporate principles of good governance into Council policies and Town by-laws

## Reporting on Our Progress

Council is committed to demonstrating accountability in the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan. To that end, we will translate each of the strategic priorities into measurable targets and performance indicators. The performance indicators will include both statistical and descriptive information. Together, this data will allow us to periodically track our progress and evaluate our success in implementing the Plan.

Each year Council will reflect on the accomplishments of the prior year and the realities of the years to come as it conducts its annual review of the Strategic Plan.

Administration will provide quarterly progress updates to Council and Council will oversee the preparation of an annual report. This will be an opportunity to provide a summary of the accomplishments of the past year as well as any adjustments that are necessary to adapt the Strategic Plan to changing times. Council will share the report with the public, staff and community partners so as to ensure there is a shared understanding of Wolfville's strategic direction.



## Implementing the Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan action implementation is the responsibility of Town Administration with oversight and policy direction provided by Town Council. Implementation will be carried out and supported through the following initiatives:

1. **Department Operational Plans:** Annual Department Operational Plans will incorporate relevant actions, and identify resource requirements and timing for completion. Department Operational Plans will be brought forward with the annual budget beginning in budget cycle 2015-2016. For the 2014-2015 budget cycle Operational Plans reflecting the approved Council Strategic Plan will be outlined by staff at a future Policy and Strategy Planning Session.
2. **Staff Reports and Initiatives:** In the process of carrying out regular or new business staff reports will reflect and identify relevant strategic directions.
3. **Council Oversight:** Municipal Councillors/Mayor are responsible for full awareness of their Strategic Plan priorities and for ensuring these directions and actions are reflected in approved policies and municipal initiatives through the entire term of Council.
4. **Council Cycle Strategic Planning:** At the beginning of the 2016-2020 Council Term Council will engage in development of a new Strategic Plan. To support this effort the 2012-2016 Council will ensure that appropriate resources to enable the new Council to undertake this development in an appropriate and timely manner are provided in the final budget cycle of their term.