



Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula Council Report

Report Number: CAO- 22-52

Subject: Council Prioritization Report

From: Peggy Van Mierlo-West

Date: December 19, 2022

Recommendation:

That Council receives the report related for information, and;

That staff provide Council with a quarterly update regarding these approved priorities, and;

That this report be placed on Bang the Table for review.

Background:

Strategic priority setting helps determine an organization's future directions and guides policy decisions, resource allocations, and organizational efforts. In local government, not only does it entail aligning organizational aims with actions, tactics with responsibilities, and resources to timelines.

The Strategic Process is the road map to achieving the organization's purpose and implementing Council's priorities for the community. Council's process began with establishing a shared understanding of the organization's mandate and a Scan of community conditions and emerging strategic topics through the Council Orientation process.

This process cumulated with a prioritization process facilitated by Evergreen Strategies. The attached is the final report.

Comments:

During the workshop several trends were brought forward. These included;

- Tourism – including upgrades/acquisition for parking and boat ramp in Tobermory
- Water and Wastewater infrastructure
- Recreational Facilities – including the completion of the Lion’s Head Arena
- Medical needs within the Municipality
- Housing

Staff will be providing quarterly updates regarding initiatives that are currently underway and will be providing further reports to Council to discuss potential opportunities to implement new priorities.

It is being recommended that the attachment be uploaded to letstalknbp.ca for public review.

Attachments:**Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula - Priority Plan 2022****Budget Implications:**

Two priorities have been allocated to the 2023 Municipal Budget. These are the water and wastewater masterplan and the Lion’s Head Community Centre project. Currently tourism initiatives are being allocated from park revenues and the Municipal Accommodation Tax.

Municipal Strategic Commitment:

- Well managed and fiscally responsible municipal government is enhanced

Respectfully submitted:

Peggy Van Mierlo-West
Chief Administrative Officer

December 12, 2022

Peggy Van Mierlo-West
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula,
56 Lindsay Road 5,
Lion's Head, Ontario
N0H-1W0

Project: Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula - Priority Plan 2022
Reference No: 301120221

Re: Priority Workshop Summary and Report

Mrs. Van Meirlo-West;

As per the project assignment directive (attached), this report will complete the exercise and serve as a summary of the workshop results.

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Methodology:

Survey

The survey was intended to provide the newly elected council of Northern Bruce Peninsula an opportunity to introduce input and identify personal priorities, while providing the operation a list of council term priorities.

It was designed to seek what is most desired by council, contrasted with what is not desired, allowing for a better understanding of the meaningful priorities to focus on, while establishing expectations that would serve to focus workshop efforts.

These two contrasting desires were followed by a question of innovation which will help the municipality maximize potential by generating bigger, exploratory thinking. It can also help craft strategies that go beyond conventional thinking / practices, giving the organization an evolutionary purpose.

By sharing the survey in advance with the group at large, a tertiary intention of the survey was to provide the attendees of the workshop with a bit of stimulus for preparing their thinking for the workshop itself.

Workshop

The council chambers was used for the exercise and the municipality maintained an open forum allowing the public to attend or view through live streaming. While the gallery was open to the public, there were no observers.

The regional media was invited and attended the entire workshop. There was a component alter in the day where the media was also invited to participate in the exercise.

A facilitative approach was taken engaging the group in energetic idea generation and the mining out of deeply rooted thoughts and thinking.

Throughout the workshop the priority was to generate ideas and capture the essence of the ideas, while building an understanding of the participants expectations and intentions. Several techniques were used to promote this and to promote maximum output from the group:

- Brainstorming, which relies on quantity over quality, was used to get the thinking and energy going.
- Cross pollination of ideas generated in the brainstorming phase was used to refine ideas and dove tail into new ideas.
- Direct debating between opposing ideological thinking and expertise, while engaging the group in the same debate was used to help flesh out any suppressed or passive thinking.
 - This also provided the group valuable insight into the “real” thinking of their cohorts, while also ensuring appropriate thinking was being generated.

- Both internal strengths and weakness evaluation as well as external opportunities and threats evaluation we sourced.
 - This provided focus on real needs while providing a tool to prioritize the volume of ideas and desires generated through the process.

Role in Overall Process

The survey, workshop, and attached reference material form the foundation for the priority plan. They will provide the insight and understandings that can be used to generate the goals, tactical strategies, and action plans, along with important guidance for the development of an overall roadmap for the council term.

While providing the priorities, the municipality would be best served using this report and assignment as the foundation of a more complete set of strategies and tactical plans associated to each priority.

Executive Summary:

Participation levels for both the workshop and the survey were relatively high. The survey reached out to the five council members and returned a 60% participation rate. The workshop invited thirteen participants with a 100% participation rate.

The mix of both political and operational input not only added depth to the ideas generated, it also lent credibility to the final outcomes. This collaborative approach between both key layers of the public service developed a sense of co-ownership and internal will for implementation.

Several ideas and goals were identified through the process. The prevailing themes seem to be:

- A need for modernizing the water / wastewater infrastructure and managing the challenge of the regional logistics associated to this.
- Elevating the Exposure and Status of the unique challenges Northern Bruce has as a transient playground for the larger southern population of the province.
- Modernizing recreational facilities and opportunities that service the local population living year round in the municipality.
- Addressing vulnerable medical needs and doctor shortage.
- Planning housing development that meet the diverse needs of the entire local demographic, including seniors, while not losing sight of the transient/seasonal housing needs as well.

- Modernizing communications technology (Internet, cell phone, emergency measures) to meet the current needs while being in a position to satisfy the future needs as well.

These themes came through in the survey group, the workshop group, and in many other instances during the dialogue, including the daily energizer (ice breakers). This type of consistent pattern only reinforces the value of each line of thinking and the need to keep these in focus as the plan is developed.

The values are explained in further detail throughout the report.

Survey:

In accordance with the assignment requirements, a survey was developed to engage the council and the operational staff in the development of the priorities. In keeping with best practices associated with using surveys as a tool for information gathering, the survey was kept brief and user friendly.

The survey was sent by email to the entire council by the Facilitator on November 22, 2022, with a request to have all results returned by November 28, 2022.

Of the five (5) surveys forwarded, three (3) responses were received, representing about a 60% success rate. A general rule of thumb is to expect about a 20% success rate.

Participants

The survey was forwarded to five councilors represented by the following:

- Milt McIver – Mayor
- Rod Anderson – Deputy Mayor
- Laurie Golden – Councillor
- Todd Dowd – Councillor
- Aman Sohrab – Councillor

Survey Questionnaire

The Questionnaire was comprised of the following questions (The actual questionnaire and completed surveys are attached for reference):

- If you were to close your eyes and visualize the results of the council term after the next four years, what would be the top five outcomes you would see?
- If different, what would be the top three outcomes you hope to achieve this term?
- What would be the top three outcomes you would hope not to see, and why?
- What is the most innovative / intriguing approach to municipal innovations you have seen, or are aware of, that in your view would be worth exploring during this term?

- If different, what would be an innovative approach, service, or policy you would like to see explored by this council?

Workshop

The workshop was held in the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula at the Municipal Administrative Building in Lion's Head. A small presentation on strategic planning was made to help prepare and focus the audience.

Flip charts were used as visual referencing tools and the workshop was facilitated to maximize output.

The agenda (attached) was prepared in a manner that would foster idea generation first and foremost, while allowing time for the group to accomplish as much as it could in the following four focus compartments:

- Idea and Priority Needs Generation.
- Brainstorming.
- S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis
- Focus and Priority Setting.

The day was started with an energizer designed to:

- loosen the group up and generate energy.
- frame the thinking and mindset to the exercise ahead.
- Help the Facilitator learn more about the participants and to help the participants learn more about each other.
- Flesh out anomalies and focal points.

The workshop undertook a holistic approach to the generation and vetting of ideas, while also establishing priorities. The Council focussed on identifying the majority of the priorities while the staff were engaged in a cross pollination of the idea vetting and debating merits, while adding additional ideas to be considered.

Participants

- Council Members:
 - Milt McIver,
 - Rod Anderson,
 - Laurie Golden,
 - Todd Dowd,
 - Aman Sohrab.
- Town Staff:
 - Peggy Mierlo-West – CAO
 - Carol Hopkins – By Law Officer
 - Cathy Addison – Clerk
 - Kara Smith – IT/GIS Manager

- Teresa Shearer – Treasurer
- Tony Houad – Interim Treasurer
- Troy Cameron – Public Works Manager
- Wendy Elliot – Chief Building Inspector

S.W.O.T. Analysis

A SWOT analysis summarizes the existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting the municipality. *Strengths* and *Weaknesses* are internal factors that are largely within the municipality's control. *Opportunities* and *Threats* are external factors over which the municipality has little control. Opportunities may be capitalized upon, to turn them into strengths, and threats may be mitigated by developing plans to reduce their risk, or by exploring whether the threat can be turned into an opportunity.

This exercise contributes two important components to the development of priorities:

- Looking both internally and externally at what is good for the municipality and what is challenging. It's a focussed look into the barriers and opportunities as well as the things we do well and the things we need to improve upon.
 - It's an important self evaluation.
- A tool to vet the ideas generated and place them into perspective of actual need, helping to separate "want to haves" from "must haves". In this exercise it was interesting to see how different the priorities were when the group was asked to place a sticker beside what they saw as top five priorities, and how this changed once compared against the S.W.O.T analysis. As mentioned earlier, the SWOT serves as a bit of a reality check.

S.W.O.T. Analysis Table:

Strengths		Weaknesses	
← INTERNAL →		← INTERNAL →	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experienced and Skilled Staff 2. Low Taxation 3. Open Government – Responsible 4. Efficient 5. Diverse Representation 6. Flexible to Change 7. Healthy Financial Status 8. High Service Standard 9. Skilled / Ability 10. Healthy Relationship – Operations / Governance 11. Flat Operation 12. Good Equipment 13. Level of Credibility – Engaged government 14. Flexible Staff Structure. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Enough Cross Training – Need more redundancy in Intellectual Resources 2. Lack of Infrastructure 3. Lack of Financial Resources 4. Lack of Political Attention (Value) 5. Don't Fit Typical Size Classification – not small to be..., not big enough to be ... 6. Dependent on Contract Services 7. Lack of Recreation Facilities 8. Lack of Effective Succession Planning 9. Attraction and Retention of Workforce 10. Facilities Under Realize Modern Staffing Needs 		
Opportunities		Threats	
← EXTERNAL →		← EXTERNAL →	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer Workforce 2. Natural Environment – Outdoor Experience 3. Unknown – Discovery Explore Archetype 4. Relationship with Federal Government – Parks 5. Relationship with Provincial Government – Parks 6. Regional Playground – for other parts of the province 7. Geographic Logistical Link to Northern Ontario 8. Mystery and Link to Tourism 9. Designated Biosphere – Biodiversity – Lakes, different forest types 10. Dark Sky Community 11. Quality Agricultural Opportunity 12. Tourism 13. Bruce Trail – Cycle Trail – Potential – link to Niagra Falls 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of Awareness for the region (Area) 2. Lack of Highway Services – Tim Hortons, etc... 3. Lack of Workforce 4. Lack of Affordable Housing 5. Insufficient Knowledge of Geographic Proximity to Southern Population and it's Impacts 6. Climate Impacts 7. Under Utilized Communication Technology (IT) 8. Cyber Crime 9. Water Locked Geography 10. Under realized benefit from Parks Usage and Fees (Financial) 11. Lack of Sufficient Local Attention (Exposure) 12. Seasonal Economy 13. Single Economy Dependent – Lack Diversity in Economy 		

Idea Generation Flip Chart Notes

Ideas were generated through a series of exercises:

- Reviewing surveys and elaborating with the entire team.
- A structured brainstorming exercise that encourage quantity over quality. Participants were asked to suspend the urge to evaluate during the session, and just freewheel.

Once the brainstorming was completed, we circled back and had each participant, including the staff, then evaluate and place a sticker beside each idea to prioritize in accordance with what they saw as a top five priority, and what they saw as not a priority.

There is a unique dynamic associated with this initial prioritization that needs to be kept into perspective. The green stickers represent council choices while the blue stickers represent staff choices. The proportion of this was not equal. There were five (5) Council members applying priorities, versus thirteen (13) staff members. So, the initial visual comparison can seem skewed as there will naturally be more blue stickers than green stickers. For an accurate rationalization a quick division of the number of stickers by the appropriate divisor (staff 13 and council 5) will provide a more accurate perspective.

This exercise produces another important perspective which is that of the staff (operational thinking) versus council (political thinking). In developing final priorities, it's valuable to see how each may think a little differently in how they choose their priorities.

The following table highlights the results of this idea generation and direct individual prioritization:

SURVEY SUMMARY		
Ideas / Needs	Council Priority	Staff Priority
Modernize Water Wastewater Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate Regionally and Modernize Network 	2 40%	3 23%
Completion of Lion's Head Recreation Center	2 40%	8 62%
Extension of Municipal Accommodation Tax	1 20%	1 8%
Commitment to Climate Action Plan	2 40%	
Implementation of Housing Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs Decision Making - Action Need to Start it 	1 20%	5 38%
Diversity From Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading to Land Cost Being Out of Reach for Locals 	1 20%	
New Parking Lot in Tobermory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picnic, Washrooms, Converging, etc... 		4 31%
Traffic Light at Hay Bay and Ferndale		
Better Internet and Cell Service	2 40%	6 46%
New Long Term Care Home		
Another Boat Ramp in Tobermory	2 40%	3 23%
Provincial Recognition of Social / Recreational Significance of Area to Province at Large	1 20%	1 8%

BRAINSTORMING SUMMARY			
Ideas / Needs	Council Priority	Staff Priority	Not A Priority
Another Ambulance Station			
A Helicopter Pad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Fires • Ornge – Medical • Lion's Head location 	1 20%		7
Seniors Living Apartments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix to include low income 	1 20%		
Seniors Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails • Sidewalk Care • Abuse Support – Prevention – Response Network (#) 	2 40%		2
Another Road to Tobermory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Issues 			7
Underground Tunnel			
Home Care			
Snow Removal - Seniors			
Public Works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor Issues • Pandemic Staffing Issues 	1 20%		1
Streetlights			
Contract Out Services			3
Create More Jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Light Repair • Electricians • Municipal Trades 			
Full Time Fire Fighters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Staff • More Training • Schedule Staff / Volunteers 			3
Invest in Current Recreation Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf Course • Basketball Courts 	1 20%	1 8%	
Support Schools and Daycare			
Casino			

BRAINSTORMING SUMMARY			
Ideas / Needs	Council Priority	Staff Priority	Not A Priority
Attract Relocation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie Theater • Symphony Orchestra • Gym • Pool • Outdoor Skating - Lighted • Shooting Range 			
Extend Seasons After Seasonal Population Leaves			
Seek Special Status / Recognition from Province <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated • Tweeners Traveling Between North and south 			
Indigenous Cultural Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafts • Dancing • Firepit • Dancing • History 			
Upgraded / Modern / Innovative Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated • Drones • Plows • Costly Repairs 			
Small Scale Paving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heated Asphalt Application 			
New Town Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One in Tobermory • One in Lion's Head 		3 23%	
Winter Festival			
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors Housing • Affordable Apartments • Retirement Home • Granny Flats 	1 20%	1 8%	

INNOVATION SUMMARY			
Ideas / Needs	Council Priority	Staff Priority	Not A Priority
More Modern Water Waste / Water Infrastructure	1 20%	5 38%	
Mobile Ap Similar to 311			
Update Rural Areas to have 911 Identification and Service		3 23%	
Website Portal to Connect Community to Operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas • Dialogue • Complaints 		4 31%	
Transportation Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride Share • Transit 			6
Attract and Retain Health Care Services		1 8%	

DON'T WANT TO SEE SUMMARY	
Ideas / Needs	Combined Priority
Collapse of Number 1 Industry - Tourism	
Long Term Care Home to Have Status Remain the Same	
Decline in Middle Aged Population	
Rejection of Community Center Project	
Not Achieve Water / Wastewater Modernization in Tobermory	1
Staff Quality Reduced or Lost	3
More Studies / Research Until What is on the Table Now is Done	
0% Taxes	8
Cabot Head Road Left Hanging for Another 2 More Years	11
Resurrection of Access Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Opinion 	

Final Priorities and Tasks Development

With the ideas and tasks identified and the initial prioritization done, the final two steps were to benchmark the results against the actual S.W.O.T. analysis and then to finally run a practical evaluation (litmus test).

The S.W.O.T Analysis was used to find out how many of the actual needs were met by the identified tasks, which in turn could be used to refine the initial prioritization.

While the development of priorities at this point has undergone a rigorous vetting process, which on its own can be a credible perspective, and in order to be sure the needs and priorities are sound, a final process of practical evaluation is was undertaken (there is no replacement for practical scrutiny). In this exercise we used the process of elimination to do this. The group was asked to pick just one priority from the list if they could only do one. They choose modernize water / wastewater infrastructure. Then they were asked to do this again with the remaining tasks on the list, and to repeat until working through the entire list. This process formed the final priority order identified below.

The following tables are the final priorities, in order of importance, as well as the innovations that should be explored throughout the term:

MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES for 2022 to 2026 Council Term					
Rank	Task	Leverages Strength	Leverages Weakness	Leverages Opportunity	Leverages Threat
1	Modernize Water / Wastewater Infrastructure	5,1,3,4,6,9,7,10	1,3,4,9	4,5,12	3,4,1,6,7,11
2	Implementation of Housing Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and Complete 	1,3,5,6,13,10	2,9,6	3,4,5,7,12,13	3,4,6,11,13
3	Completion of Lion's Head Recreation Center and Other Recreation Activities	8,10	2,7,9	5	3,11
4	Better Internet and Cell Service	4,8	9,10	7, 11, 12	2,3,7,8
5	New Parking Lot in Tobermory	2,1,9,7,13	3,4,2	4,5,12,13	3,4,6,7
6	Another Boat Ramp in Tobermory	1	2,3,7	2,4,5,12	1,6,5,11,12

POSSIBLE INNOVATIONS for 2022 to 2026 Council Term

Innovation

Modernized Water / Wastewater Infrastructure

Website to Connect Community

Update Rural Areas to Identify and Service 911

Attraction and Retention Program for Health Care Workers and Services

Follow-Up & Implementation Recommendations

A complete strategic plan is comprised of many individual tasks, projects, and tactical plans. For efficiency and organizational purposes, these are often organized by themes, sometimes called strategic pillars or directions. These categories are the major, high-level strategies upon which the organization will focus over the term of the plan.

Each strategic direction:

- Represents an area in which the organization must excel to achieve its medium to long term goals.
- Should closely align with the Vision Statement.
- Must address major issues or priorities identified during the situation analysis and input initiatives.

Developing strategic directions involves considering not only the opportunities and potential projects identified, but also the SWOT analysis, environmental scan, and best practices in organizational development.

These directions also reflect deliberate strategic decisions or choices.

A strategic plan should help organizational leadership understand not only “what’s in” but also “what’s out.” One of the challenges many organizations have is that resources become spread too thin as they feel obligated to pursue each new opportunity that emerges.

It’s essential to establish key priority areas so that staff, governance, and even external partners are focusing their efforts on complementary projects that build and support one another.

This exercise has produced a list of priorities (that can also be strategic directions), and their order of importance. This is a critical first step to strategic planning.

The next step would be to:

A Strategic Plan should help organizational leadership understand not only “what’s in” but also “what’s out.” This facilitates the best use of finite resources, prevents frustration, and limits distractions from the vision and goals.

- develop action plans on how the tasks will be achieved,
- identify who will do each step,
- develop the tactical approach strategically attain final achievement,
- establish a dedicated team to implement and conduct progress follow-up.

This can be done by hiring expertise to guide and do that for you (as you did with this exercise), or have your municipal staff do this some or all of the final steps. There are pros and cons to both that are important to consider. The following table summarizes these:

Third Party Expertise		Internal Administration	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Diversified Experience	Expensive	Cost Effective	Limited Experience
External Resources	Remote Service	Intimate with Dynamics	Limited Resources
Expedient	Not as Intimate with Dynamics	Services in House - Efficient	Can be time consuming
Fresh Thinking		Vested Interest in Results	Monolithic Experience
Fresh Eyes			

Ultimately, whatever the choice, achievement itself is directly linked to completing these next steps as they set a course of action that provides focus and allocated resources to each priority, while providing the organization with the tools to follow-up implementation.

Achievement is within grasp. The group has taken the first important step of focusing on priorities and goals. We strongly encourage you to see the merit in placing a high value on completing the exercise to keep this very good work from becoming another well intended, but underrealized initiative.

I trust this meets the requirements of this assignment and remain available to discuss the context, assumptions, and conclusions of this report at any time. I can be reached at 705-272-9527.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to serve you and the municipality on this and looking forward to watching all the successes Northern Bruce will be realizing in the future.

Sincerely | Merci | Mee'gwetch!

Peter Politis,
Senior Consultant