



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

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Subject: The Middlesex Initiative: Breaking New Ground – 2021-2024 Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND:

The Middlesex Initiative: Breaking New Ground represents a robust strategic plan to guide the development and operations of Middlesex County for the 2021-2024 period. Developed through a comprehensive process initiated by Middlesex County Council in early 2020, the strategic plan charts out a vision, guiding principles, goals and objectives focusing on legislated core service areas. By fostering collaboration, guiding resource allocation, and promoting long-term sustainability, the plan is designed to ensure that Middlesex County is optimally positioned to leverage future opportunities in line with the evolving needs and aspirations of its communities.

This forward-looking strategic plan encapsulates key focus areas like Innovation & Readiness, Modernization, Collaboration & Readiness, Responsiveness & Resilience, and Vision & Leadership, all of which align with the defined guiding principles. Through specific objectives within the strategic focus areas of Cultivating Community Vitality, Connecting Through Infrastructure, Strengthening Our Economy, and Promoting Service Excellence, the plan not only sets the County on a path towards sustainable development but also assures accountability and transparency. The plan's development and implementation journey involved a series of discussions, revisions, breakout sessions, and partnerships, which ultimately led to its approval on January 19, 2021. As Middlesex County progresses through this strategic plan, the focus remains on legislated core services, with planning for the next strategic plan set to begin in 2024.

What is a Strategic Plan?

A strategic plan is a tool for setting the direction and making informed decisions for the County's future. It is a critical resource that helps municipalities navigate changes, tackle

challenges, and seize opportunities. The Middlesex Initiative serves several important purposes in guiding the development and operations of the County including:

- The plan articulates a vision for the future of the County, based on a shared understanding of the County's values, aspirations, and priorities.
- The plan defines clear, actionable goals and objectives that align with the vision. These goals may relate to a wide variety of municipal issues, such as economic development, land use, infrastructure, public safety, environment, and social services.
- The plan guides the allocation of resources, assisting Council to prioritize investments and initiatives that will have the greatest positive impact on the County.
- The plan provides a framework for developing and implementing County policies and procedures.
- The plan can help foster collaboration and build partnerships among various stakeholders, including service areas, residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, and other government entities.
- The plan provides a basis for measuring performance and progress towards goals, fostering accountability among municipal leaders and transparency to the public.
- The plan encourages a long-term view, promoting sustainable decision-making that balances current needs with the future wellbeing of the County.

The Middlesex Initiative generally establishes a clear direction and focus on core legislated services and infrastructure for the County for the four year period of 2021 to 2024. As the community is constantly growing and changing, the strategic plan ensures that Middlesex County is well positioned to respond to challenges and capitalize on future opportunities that arise.

The Process:

In January 2020, Middlesex County Council began to consider the development of a strategic plan and the process in which to use to achieve the development of the strategic plan.

On February 18, 2020, County Council received a presentation from staff outlining the proposed goals to be achieved through the strategic planning process as well as a strategy to accomplish them. During this presentation Council took the opportunity to refine the goals and to provide direction as to how to undertake the strategic planning process.

Throughout the month of June 2020, County Council and staff participated in a number of breakout sessions and working group meetings. Following the breakout sessions, the strategic planning working group developed the first draft version of the strategic plan for Council's review and consideration. Staff presented County Council with the draft version of the strategic plan on July 14, 2020. During this time, Council had significant and

thoughtful discussion in regard to the strategic priorities, goals, objectives and guiding principles. Through this discussion, County Council's final draft strategic plan was developed.

On October 13, 2020, County Council approved the Strategic Focus, Goals, Objectives and Guiding Principles that were developed through the strategic planning process.

On January 19, 2021 County Council approved the Middlesex County 2021 - 2024 Strategic Plan, the Middlesex Initiative: Breaking New Ground.

The Middlesex Initiative Overview:

Historically, the County has always been very good at strategically navigating internal and external environments by aligning administrative actions and resources with Council priorities. The Middlesex Initiative enhances these efforts through guiding principles:

Guiding Principles:

- Balancing the rural-urban qualities of the County
- Building relationships and working in a collaborative and supportive way
- Leading through innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement
- Recognizing the uniqueness of our local municipal partners
- Maintaining financial sustainability
- Focusing on diversity and inclusion
- Being flexible and responsive

Monitoring the progress of the strategic plan plays a pivotal role in the overall success of the strategic plan. It establishes a rigorous and systematic approach to ascertain the effective implementation and accomplishment of the established goals and objectives.

Further, by monitoring and tracking progress, Middlesex County can swiftly identify and address any issues that could impede the path towards the identified strategic goals. This proactive approach allows Middlesex County to recalibrate efforts in a timely manner and make necessary adjustments to strategies or resource allocations.

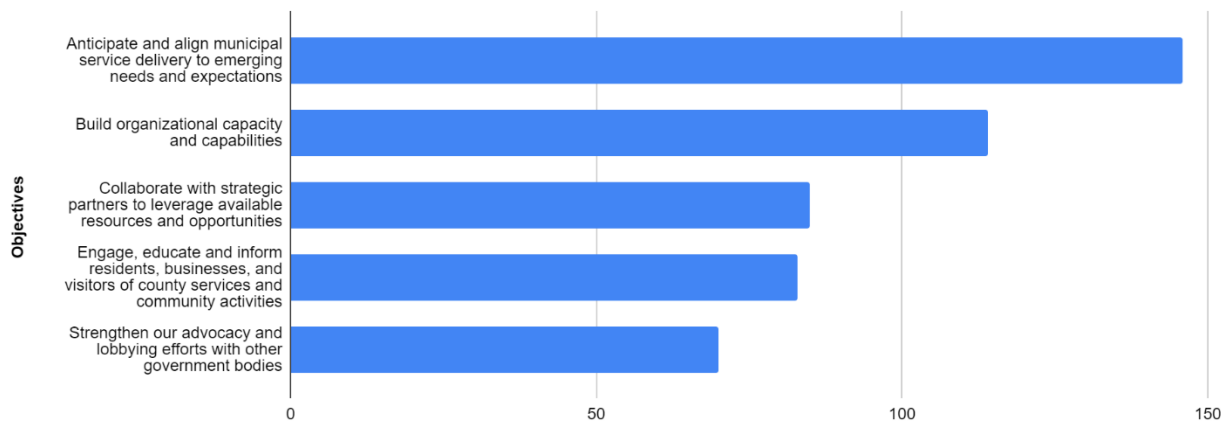
An analysis of the Middlesex Initiative through staff report strategic alignment assessment is as follows:

Strategic Focus	
Promoting Service Excellence	498
Cultivating Community Vitality	193
Strengthening Our Economy	188
Connecting Through Infrastructure	174
Total	1053

A direct assessment of each strategic focus area identifies the following actions:

Promoting Service Excellence:

Innovate and transform municipal service delivery

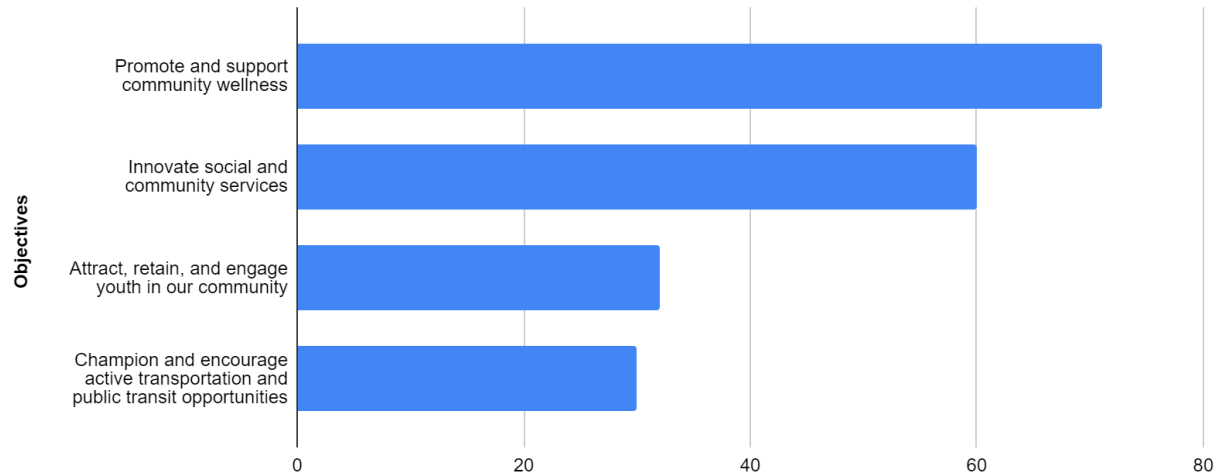


Strategic Focus Area Highlighted Initiatives:

- Agenda Management Software
- Responding to province's commitment to increase direct care time for long term care residents
- Planning Process Digitization
- Updated Planning Policy Documents
- Community Paramedicine
- Modernization Funding Allocations
- MLPS Master Plan
- Communications Strategy
- Electronic Patient Care Record Solution Contract MLPS
- ITS Service Delivery Review Strategic Plan
- New Websites
- Federal Electoral Boundaries - Proposed Redistribution
- Council Report Template
- Implementation of investment from the Ministry of Long-Term Care for COVID-19 Prevention and Containment Funding
- Strathmere Lodge Long-Term Care Home HVAC Upgrades

Cultivating Community Vitality:

Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County

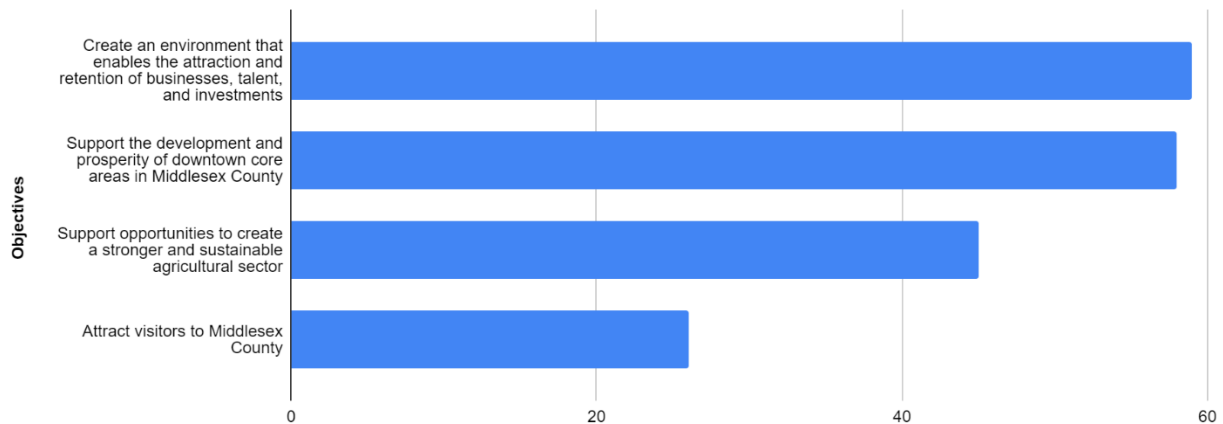


Strategic Focus Area Highlighted Initiatives:

- Strathroy and Ilderton Library, EarlyON Child and Family Centre Additions
- Accessibility Status Report - Middlesex Joint Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Women's Caucus Update
- "Road to Mental Health" youth transportation program with MINDS of London-Middlesex
- Community Paramedicine - LTC Funding
- Consulting Services Agreement with Oneida of the Thames
- Middlesex Supports Programs
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2021-2026
- Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2020 Update and Priorities
- Communications Strategy
- Partnership for Municipal Innovation - Women in Local Leadership
- Attainable Housing Review
- Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Implementation and Funding Agreements
- Social Services Relief Funds (SSRF) Phase 1-5
- Committee Appointment - Middlesex London Food Policy Council
- Access and Inclusion Childcare Framework – CWELCC
- Social Service responses during COVID including Emergency Child Care, Safe Restart Funding (Ontario and Federal Government), Provincial Re-Investment Funding, Emergency Discretionary Benefits, community resource publications and creation of Middlesex Social Services Community Partners Network
- Middlesex County Connect – Inter-Community Transit Service (Provincial Program and Funding)

Strengthening Our Economy:

Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the County

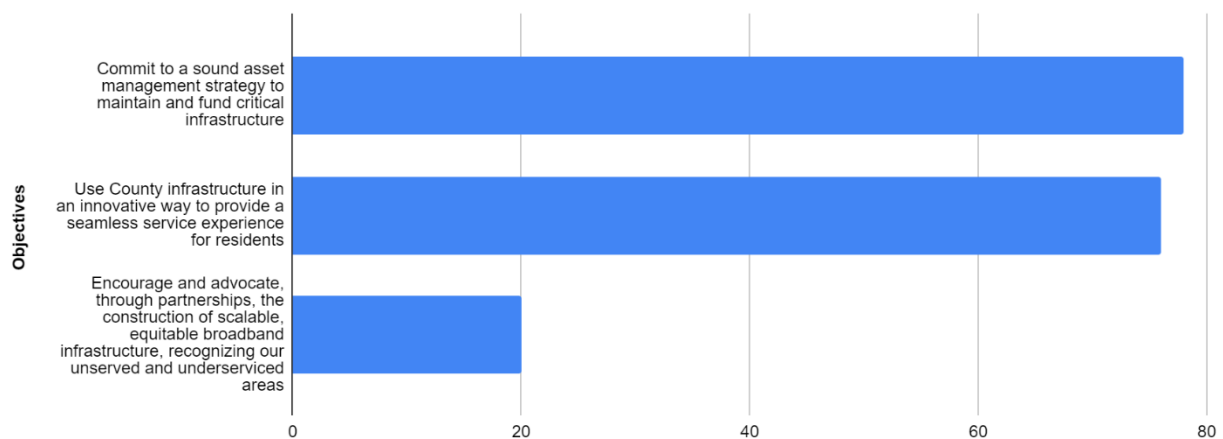


Strategic Focus Area Highlighted Initiatives:

- Middlesex County Housing Growth Forecast and Allocations
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2021-2026
- Communications Strategy
- Attainable Housing Review
- Economic Development 2021-2025 Strategic Plan
- Making it in Middlesex – Stories of Business Success
- Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership – OMAFRA Red Grants, Young Entrepreneur Business Plan Contest, Work Integrated Learning and Business Success Planning
- Tourism Relief Funding, Tourism Initiative Sponsorship and Spark Program

Connecting Through Infrastructure:

Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving



Strategic Focus Area Highlighted Initiatives:

- New Traffic Signals on Middlesex County Roads
- Asset Management Software
- Annual Infrastructure Renewal, hot mix, cold in place, curb cuts, glass beads, line painting, truck purchases, sub drains, weeds spray, guide rail
- Telus Communications MMA
- Quadro Telecom MMA
- NFTC Southwest - Telecom MMA
- FU Fibre Telecom MMA
- Explornet Telecom MMA
- Start.ca Telecom Access / Road Use Agreement
- Eh!Tel Telecom Access / Road Use Agreement
- Middlesex County Cycling Strategy

ANALYSIS:

As identified in the Middlesex Initiative, 2021-2024 is the time for Middlesex County to lead into the future. Growth and opportunity are at the heart of the County's future.

With over 1,053 strategic action items completed, Middlesex County, with vision and leadership, continues to innovate, modernize, collaborate, and be responsive and resilient toward investments in core legislated service areas.


Through staff reports, the budget and Council direction, continued alignment with The Middlesex Initiative Strategic Plan will propel Middlesex County into the future, respond to challenges and capitalize on future opportunities that arise.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
Cultivating Community Vitality 	Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support community wellness Innovate social and community services Attract, retain, and engage youth in our community Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities
Connecting Through Infrastructure 	Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and advocate, through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure, recognizing our unserved and underserved areas Commit to a sound asset management strategy to maintain and fund critical infrastructure Use County infrastructure in an innovative way to provide a seamless service experience for residents
Strengthening Our Economy 	Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments Attract visitors to Middlesex County Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County
Promoting Service Excellence 	Innovate and transform municipal service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities Strengthen our advocacy and lobbying efforts with other government bodies Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities Build organizational capacity and capabilities

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Middlesex Initiative: Breaking New Ground – 2021-2024 Strategic Plan Report be received for information.