

Strategic Plan – Review Document

DRAFT



January, 2020

1.0 Background

The Town of Fort Frances Strategic Plan “Incredible Community – Boundless Opportunity” was approved in June 2015 after a lengthy consultation process. Over the subsequent years, many of the objectives identified in the plan have been achieved. However, many of the challenges faced by the community which were identified during that planning process are still in place, and new challenges have arisen. The Town of Fort Frances is experiencing a period of change that makes it important to carefully plan for the future to best position the community for future success, and long term sustainability.

In preparing this review document, a number of consultation sessions were undertaken. To date, these sessions have included:

- Preliminary planning session with the senior management team.
- Retreat with Senior Managers and Council at Sunny Cove.
- Planning session with Superintendents and Supervisors.
- Planning session with community partners.
- Planning session with First Nations community partners.
- Planning session with Economic Development Advisory Committee.

During this process we have received excellent feedback, and a number of well thought out ideas from everyone who participated. We would also like to thank the following organizations for their feedback, and participation in the process:

- Fort Frances Power Corporation
- Rainy River Future Development Corporation
- Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board
- Riverside Healthcare Facilities Inc.
- Rainy River District School Board
- Confederation College
- Seven Generations Education Institute
- Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation

This report presents the results of the consultation processes and presents the preliminary document is presented to the Council, Economic Development Advisory Committee, and the general public for their input.

Once the input has been gathered a final draft will be presented to Council for their approval.

2.0 Purpose of this Plan

Strategic Planning is essential to the success of any organization. This planning exercise is intended to develop a strategic plan that accomplishes the following:

1. **Provide Clarity** – Having a strategic plan in place assures focused, proactive decision making. This plan will guide decisions by both Council and management going forward.
2. **Ensure Coordination** – By defining objectives, it assures that everyone is working towards the same goals.
3. **Improve Efficiency** – Daily decision making is guided by the Strategy.
4. **Assist with adjustment to change** – A strategic plan with a clear vision, and clear objectives helps to support change management.
5. **Direct capacity building** – When the organization knows where it intends to go, it is much easier to direct capacity building and talent management. It allows the organization to better align the competencies of its workforce with the strategic direction of the organization.
6. **Ensure greater transparency and accountability.** A strategic plan provides a roadmap for decision making. A wide variety of stakeholders and the general public will have had an opportunity to participate in the development of the plan. Once completed, the plan is made public, and will be available on the Town's website.

3.0 Mission, Vision, Values

A critical step in the strategic planning process is defining the mission, vision and values for the organization, and in the case it also means considering the community as a whole. During the retreat with Council and senior management, a significant amount of time was put forward developing an updated vision statement, mission statement, and values.

3.1 Vision

A vision statement should define the organization's long term goals for itself, and in this context, the community as a whole. The statement should provide an answer to the question: Where are we going?

Working in groups, participants came up with the following potential options for a vision statement (please note that order listed does not indicate order of preference):

1. A welcoming community with Boundless opportunities.
2. A community of Boundless potential.
3. Planning today for a better tomorrow.

During this phase of the process, we are looking for input into what participants see as an appropriate Vision Statement. There are some common themes to build upon.

3.2 Mission

A Mission Statement is a statement identifying the purpose of the organization and the value it creates for customers / stakeholders. The statement should provide an answer to the following questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Why are we here?

Working in groups, participants came up with the following potential options for a mission statement (please note that order listed does not indicate order of preference):

1. Through partnerships we will create a safe, inclusive, sustainable and attractive community that enhances quality of life and promotes growth and prosperity.
2. Planning together through partnerships to be a safe, attractive and growing regional hub that improves the quality of life for all.
3. Building a home that engages citizens, encourages smart investment, and living wonder.

During this phase of the process, we are looking for input into what participants see as an appropriate Mission Statement.

3.3 Values

Values are the fundamental beliefs that govern individual and group behaviour in the organization. Values help to define how those in the organization should behave.

Working in groups, participants identified the following values as being important to the organization (note that some items are similar or closely follow a theme):

- Stewardship
- Collaboration
- Proactive Planning
- Security
- Fostering Growth
- Managing Change
- Creativity
- Accountability
- Inclusivity and Equity
- Service Oriented
- Customer Service
- Personal Growth
- Effective Communication
- Transparency
- Equality
- Responsible Leadership
- Community and youth engagement
- Partnerships
- Teamwork
- Recruitment and Retention
- Fiscal responsibility and sustainability
- Safety and security

During this phase, we are seeking your feedback regarding potential additional items, or items which may be a higher priority.

4.0 Objectives

The plan will include a number of objectives, some will be short term with a targeted completion date during the term of council, some will be completed over a longer period of time, while others may be ongoing (e.g. developing and maintain relationships). These objectives will align with what is identified in the Mission, Vision and Values.

Objectives are an expression in measurable terms of what an organization intends to achieve. They can be hard or soft. Hard goals are action oriented and specific (e.g. increasing revenue for a recreation program by 5% from one year to the next). Soft goals establish targets for the social conduct of the organization (e.g. creating a culture of respect within the workplace).

4.1 Key objectives remaining from the previous plan.

While many of the objectives in the 2015 were completed, participants in the consultation sessions were asked to review the objectives from the previous plan and identify which of these objectives were still relevant, and were of high importance to them. The following is a list of those objectives:

- Re-purposing mill property.
- Improving relationships with neighbouring First Nation communities.
- Promoting residential growth.
- Infrastructure renewal.
- Advocating to ensure a sufficient supply of assisted living and senior's housing.
- Undertaking succession planning.
- Ensuring staff training occurs as required.
- Promoting economic development.
- Investment attraction.
- Promotion of active transportation.
- Landfill expansion.
- Sports Tourism.
- Tourism promotion.
- Ensure healthcare services in place.
- Continue with Boundless brand implementation.

4.2 Objectives defined at Council / Management Retreat

During the planning session, participants worked in groups to develop a number of objectives related to their priorities for the future term of council and beyond. After completing this exercise, participants were given a limited number of votes, and asked to identify what they perceived as their top priorities. The following outlines the items which were identified during the session.

Name	Votes
Attracting new Industry / Investment Attraction	10
Promotion of Tourism / Destination Tourism	10
Develop a plan for the Shevlin Woodyard	10
Undertake Succession Planning / and Talent Management Planning for the staff	10
Point Park Development / Settle land claims with neighbouring communities	10
Establish First Nation Partnerships	9
Streamlining Governance to provide greater transparency and promote operational efficiency	9
Undertake Asset Management planning / Address Budgetary Gap for infrastructure	9
Create positive culture in workforce (respect, appreciation	9
Increase town revenue (CN Taxation, user fees, regional services)	7
Undertake Residential Development	7
Work towards making the Town a preferred employer	6
Develop Business Plans for community services facilities (e.g. Marina, MSC, Museum).	6
Maintain / Enhance existing levels of service	6
Work to secure the future of international bridge	6
Investment in medical recruitment / retention (Health Human Resources)	5
Review feasibility of Municipal boundary expansion	5
Improve tourism marketing - take advantage of marketing opportunities	5
Develop plan to mitigate risks related to climate change / severe weather events	4
Update by-laws including procedural by-law	4
Improve transportation (within town, between communities, active transportation)	4
Determine future location of seniors centre (current location vs. Daycare)	4
Develop software efficiencies, ensure licensing is in place, optimal use	4
IT system redundancy / Cybersecurity	3
Disaster Recovery Plan	3
Advocate regarding Forest Management & ESFL	3
Establish Communications Position	3
Incorporate local Indigenous language into signage in town building and the community	3
Encourage immigration to community	3
Attract, Develop, Build Small Business	2
Preserve and maintain Power Agreement	2

Add an overpass in West End (McIrvine crossing)	2
Youth Advisory Committee / Consultation with young professionals	1
Review Corporation Policies	1
Develop a plan to deal with the upcoming vacancy for OPP space	1
Dealing with social issues in the community (e.g. substance abuse, homelessness)	1
Improve communications (website / social media)	1
Conduct a feasibility study regarding use of mill property	1
Add industrial lots - ready for development	1
Post Secondary Hub (7 Gens, Con College, Trade School Concept)	0
Community Safety Well Being Plan	0
Retain P/T (volunteer) firefighters	0
Advocate for Assisted Living facility in the Community	0
Align annual tax increases with rate of inflation	0
Improved relationships with Area Municipalities	0
Review needs for rail crossing at Williams Avenue	0
New official plan / rezoning of key areas for 2022.	0

4.3 Objectives defined during other planning sessions:

Objectives suggested during management brainstorming sessions (October 1 and October 17):

- Update compensation system for CUPE Local 65.00 and Management Non-union groups.
- Develop business plans for sunny cove, Memorial Sports Centre (MSC), marina, museum.
- Move to a proactive operational model – develop capital plan based upon Asset Management Plan (AMP). Develop talent management plan that aligns with strategic plan.
- Create by-law review process.
- Review feasibility of expanding municipal boundaries.
- Ensure sufficient storage is available for municipal records.
- Develop appropriate tourism signage.
- Review website and social media presence.
- Improve social media communication.
- Establish IT policy and procedures.
- Improve Information and Communications Technology network infrastructure.
- Upgrade video surveillance at key facilities.
- Undertake component replacement and upgrades to the MSC.

- Complete community safety and wellbeing plan.
- Plan for climate change.
- Improve corporate communications.
- Increase revenue from user fees.
- Review feasibility of offering regional services.
- Improve facility maintenance.
- Develop disaster recovery plan.
- Support economic and community development.
- Study user fees in other communities.
- Build redundant systems to support operational resiliency.
- Promote tourism.
- Promote airport.
- Work with community partners to ensure adequate supply of health human resources and support recruitment and retention.
- Develop residential lots.
- Streamline governance.
- Undertake succession planning.
- Continue with boundless brand implementation.
- Prepare a plan for the Shevlin yard.
- Better utilize sunny cove.
- Ensure the enhanced sustainable forest license works for the town.
- Ensure that the north end of the community is accessible (consider an extra CN crossing or overpass).
- Secure redundant electrical service (diverse path) to the community.
- Ensure that water / sewer / roads / facilities maintained as per the Asset Management Plan.
- Look into offering specialized healthcare services.
- Advocate to ensure sustainable funding from senior levels of government.
- Build first nation partnerships.
- Improve parking in downtown core.
- Expand wi-fi offerings.
- Expand and promote active transportation offerings.
- Develop destination tourism attraction.
- Work with community partners to expand trade school
- Review internal staffing efficiencies
- Develop fleet management schedule
- Develop a preventative maintenance plan by department

- Support recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters
- Develop a lifecycle strategy for core facilities
- Replace industrial assessment lost by mill
- Attract investment to mill property
- Support retention and expansion of small businesses
- Communicate with NewGold regarding residential opportunities

Objectives identified during the Community Partners planning session:

- Continue to build relationships with First Nation communities.
- Expand partnership with neighbouring municipalities.
- Work with community partners to advocate for required health care services.
- Expand number of assisted living residences.
- Consider reviewing the possibility of amalgamating fire and emt services.
- Cut red tape and reduce deterrents to rapid development.
- Improve transportation within and in between communities.
- Improve marketing of boundless brand, communicate it more effectively.
- Ensure that affordable residential properties remain available.
- Support community partners in finding alternative site for long term care facility in Fort Frances.
- Develop a centralized health campus.
- More programming and supports for youth after school hours.
- Run buses after 4PM and out to Walmart.
- Plan to deal with aging population and more single parent families.

4.5 Your input

We are looking for your top 10 objectives for the Town as an organization and as a community. Feel free to include any items which are not listed in your list.

5.0 Environmental Scan

In order to develop a strategic plan it is critical to examine both the internal and external environment as this has a significant impact determining how best to move forward.

5.1 SWOT Analysis

At the October 7, 2019 planning retreat, a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted. Strengths and Weaknesses focusses on the internal environment, and Opportunities and Threats focuses on the external environment. The participants broke into three working groups and came back with their findings which are listed below. Please note that where multiple groups identified the same item, it is marked with an x.

Strengths	Repeat	Repeat 2
Regulatory Compliance		
Low Debt	x	
Monitoring / reporting on operations / infrastructure		
Town facilities in good condition (public buildings)		
Household hydro rates / affordable power / power agreement	x	x
Border community largest point of entry west of SSM	x	
Access to waterfront		
Service Centre for District (we are one)		
Airport (we have one)		
Connectivity (fiber to the premise, mobile and internet)	x	
Gold Mine - brings younger population, immigration, investment		
Cost of living is affordable		
Rainy Lake Square	x	
Water		
Location	x	
Quality of Life		
Facilities and Services, Essential Services	x	
Cultural Opportunities / Assets	x	
Recreational Opportunities / Assets	x	
Talented people		
Caring, generous community		
Volunteers		
Snow Removal		
Small Business		
Transparency / responds to concerns.		
Diverse, functional Council		
Parks Cemeteries		
First Nation relationships		
On CN main line		
Sewer / water service		
Moving to a preventative maintenance approach		

No longer operating daycare		
MAT - revenue		
Full Time Fire Department		
Weaknesses	Repeat	Repeat 2
Maintenance of Assets / Under funding facility maintenance	x	
Staff turnover		
Aging Staff		
Silo Thinking		
External Communications		
Marketing		
Long term planning		
Engaging Youth / Young Adults		
Youth out migration	x	
Deteriorating infrastructure		
Information Technology Infrastructure in the organization		
Partnerships		
Limited land available for development / limited building lots	x	
Lack of Tourism Identity		
Location / Distance from major market	x	
Communication at every level		
Proximity to upper levels of government		
Lack of medical specialists / practitioners		
Lack of Transportation / Inter community transportation	x	
Increased rail traffic		
Poor alternate transportation routes		
Lack of low cost housing / available housing	x	
Lack of Succession Planning		
Senior Care		
Down town parking		
Infrastructure		
Some buildings in poor condition		
Boundary limits		
Labour market shortage		
Lean organization		
Parkway doesn't link to anything		
Service centre for district (we cover costs)		
Airport (we cover costs)		

Opportunities	Repeat	Repeat 2
Industry to replace mill		
Wood yard property / Re-development of wood yard		
First Nations partnerships / Economic Development w/ First Nations	x	
Point Park redevelopment	x	
Recruit skilled people		
Erin Crescent		
Expand Municipal Boundaries		
Expand Post Secondary offerings	x	
Location - proximity to USA		
Small Business		
Tourism		
Political Opportunities with sitting MP / MPP		
Youth retention		
Trade corridor		
Re-routing cross border traffic		
Cheap power (IT data centre)		
Cannabis		
Municipal Accommodation Tax		
New market entrants		
Tourism Market		
Alternative revenue sources		

Threats	Repeat	Repeat 2
Climate Change / Extreme weather	x	x
Socio economic challenges (e.g. housing costs, homelessness)	x	
Drug / Substance abuse (impact + impact to public image)		
Provincial / Federal cuts / downloading	x	x
Automation		
Online retail / outshopping	x	
Loss of tax base / MPAC reassessment	x	
Legislation / Senior government regulations	x	
Increased rail traffic		
Border traffic		
Premature closure of mine / limited life span	x	
Aging demographic		
Access to funding		
Lack of physicians		
Cost of asset management plan		
Lack of skilled workforce		
Mill Demolition		
Internal wage pressures		

5.2 SLEPT Analysis

A SLEPT analysis is a different type of environmental scan that is similar to a PEST analysis. The SLEPT measures a variety of factors (identified below) in the external environment.

Below is a table summarizing the items identified during our planning sessions.

At the present time, we are looking for additional input into these areas prior to completing the plan.

Socio-Cultural Factors	Legal Factors	Environmental Factors	Political Factors	Technological Factors
Aging Population (3x)	Provincial downloading	Extreme weather events / Climate Change (3x)	OMPF, Court Security costs are unknown until last minute	Globalization impacts our economy
Youth migration (2x)	Controlling legal costs is difficult (2x)	Short construction / tourism season	Local MPP aligned with government helps	Remote sites not connected to network (e.g. airport)
Substance abuse (3x)	Legislative changes have huge impact	Brownfield sites in community / potential contamination (3x)	Protectionism in USA - "buy America"	Fibre to premise, good connectivity promotes remote work
Growing indigenous population increasing economic incomes (2x)	Unfunded responsibilities	Smell of mill	Restructuring impacts (e.g. provincial health teams, DSSAB LHIN) (2x)	Automation - impact on jobs
Not attracting immigrants (2x)	Uncontrollable costs (DSSAB, NWHU, OPP)	On a flood plain	Doug Ford	Growing dependency means we need to invest
Lack of diverse housing options	Increased court usage and costs (2x)	Potential hazard of boundary water mining	Federal election potential new gov't (2x)	Library is point of access for those who don't have access to tech.
Unattractive properties	Increasingly litigious society (greater insurance costs) (2x)	Proximity to vast natural beauty	Student grant reduction	Marketing tool - little expenditure

Presence of local media (promote issues and events)	Lack of sitting judge	Rail traffic / risk of train derailment (2x)	Adverse political legislation	Training / Capacity to use tech to full potential
Increased homelessness / transients (2x)	Lack of crown attorney	Road traffic / transportation of dangerous goods (2x)	Partnerships and agreements with neighbouring communities	Cyber security (loss of financial / personal information) (2x)
Racism	Point Park Litigation (2x)	Natural Gas corridor	Government downloading	Connectivity (broadband / fibre)
Lack of gender equality	Legal aid cuts	Aging railway infrastructure	Geographically isolated from senior levels of government	Need to replace legacy systems in the Corporation
Increased crime and antiquated jail	Issues with cybercrime	Landfill (2x)	Reduced funding from senior levels of government	Expansion of technology is costly
Change in industry	Internet and phone scams	Large Trees		Job loss due to automation (2x)
Change in types of calls for police services	JTJ litigation	Lagoon		Cashless society
	Upcoming fire collective bargaining			Aging society is left behind
	Sale of business at daycare			Social media / website presence (2x)
	Mill Committee ongoing legal costs			Green Technology
	Pay Equity			
	TSSA compliance			
	Minimum maintenance standards			
	Facility liability risk (rentals)			
	Community safety and well being			
	Asset Management			
	AODA compliance			

6.0 Review of competitive advantages and competitive position

During our planning sessions with staff and council, questions related to our competitive position and competitive advantages were posed to participants.

6.1 Competitive Advantages

From the strengths identified, the competitive advantage can be determined, i.e. characteristics that enable the organization to achieve success relative to its competition.

- For example:
 - Tangible Assets – (e.g. Land, inventory, buildings, location, cash, technology).
 - Intangible Assets – (e.g. Human Capital, reputation, goodwill, trust)
 - Capabilities – a combination of processes and capabilities that represent the organization's capacity to exploit resources to achieve a desired result.
 - Capabilities are valuable (they help generate value / reduce cost)
 - They are rare (competitors don't have them).
 - They inimitable (can't be easily copied by competitors).
 - They can't be replaced by other substitutions.

The following reflects some of the answers identified during our planning sessions.

Competitive Advantages
Good connectivity and infrastructure – fibre optic cable to the premise in Fort Frances
Mill has environmental approval
Affordable industrial land
Relatively low housing costs
Water system with available capacity
Low hydro rates relative to most of Province - Power Agreement
Full-service community high school, post secondary, hospital, library, arena, museum, clinic.
No / low wait at border crossing
Affordable purchase price for Small / Medium Enterprise vs. building new
Short commute times
Walkable community
Pro industry community
Low crime
Outdoor lifestyle - Beautiful geography
Variety of recreation services as a community
High skilled employees (excellent service at reasonable cost)

Library is an up to date technology centre
Affordable Water Rates
Affordable Taxes
Excellent location for transportation
Largest Municipality in District
Centre of Healthcare for the District
Stability of Organization
Airport
CN rail accessibility

6.2 Competitive Position

Typically, strategies can be defined into one of five generic competitive strategies:

Low cost provider strategy – Offer lower prices than competitors, compete for a broad range of customers. Example - Wal-Mart.

Broad differentiation strategy – Specialized products that are different from competitors, but appeal to a broad range of consumers. Example – McDonald’s.

Best cost provider strategy: Offering a low cost product or service but with upscale differentiation. Targets fewer customers, but higher loyalty, and higher prices. Example – Applebee’s, Chili’s.

Focused or market niche strategy based on lower cost – Offers a niche product for a low cost. Example – Red Lobster.

Focused or market niche strategy based on differentiation – Offers a differentiated niche product customized to the tastes and requirements of a narrow market segment. Many small businesses choose this strategy, as do high end luxury products. Example – Ferrari.

In reality, as a community, and an organization, using a combination of strategies for different products and services likely makes sense. For example, a market niche differentiation strategy for tourism may hold some possibilities, while council may wish to offer other services in the most efficient way possible to keep taxation relatively affordable.

The following outlines what was identified in planning sessions

The following should identify how relates to how we position our essential services

- Provide services as efficiently as possible.
- Cover operational costs and align capital expenditures with Asset Management Plan.

- Attempt to generate additional revenue and economies of scale by selling services to neighbouring communities.
- Ensure regulatory requirements are met.
- Ensure good quality product and service offerings.

Community Services

- Run efficiently at a high standard - work to improve quality of life.
- Analyze comparator communities to identify appropriate pricing for services + rate of return.
- Promote youth programming.
- Offer unique programming at MSC, Museum, Library.
- Look to operate with least loss.
- Conduct Business Planning to determine product offerings, and pricing.

Attracting Investment

- Work with the RRFDC
- Assistance for new businesses
- Low cost power (for Ontario)
- Low cost lots
- Discussion also took place around looking at a differentiation strategy as well.

As is apparent from the above list, we are looking for further input regarding how the Town should position itself.

7.0 Implementation of the Strategy and Measuring results

Once we receive input from the participants, we will quickly work to finalize the following:

- Upon completion of the plan, managers will develop an implementation framework that will form a starting point to begin to implement the strategy. As new strategy emerges from changes in the environment, and as a result of implementing this strategy, the document should be updated to reflect this. It will never be a static document; it should be updated as often as needed. Key stakeholders should be consulted on a regular basis regarding the plan.
- Implementation will be an ongoing component.

How Results will be measured

- Results will be measured by determining key performance indicators e.g.
 - Achievement of key objectives.
 - Evidence of job creation, economic growth in community.
 - Increase in assessment value within community.
 - Review of deliverables.
 - Training, development, talent management occurring within the Corporation.
 - Generation of revenue from programs.
 - Increased participation in community programming, continuing to add users.
 - Maintaining a strong financial position.
 - Ensure that all initiatives undertaken correspond with values.
 - Regular communication with key stakeholders.

8.0 Summary

We are looking forward to receiving any feedback you might have regarding any of the following:

- Mission, Vision, Values
- Objectives
- Environmental Scan
- Competitive Advantages
- Competitive Position

Please send feedback to Jordan Forbes, Human Resources Manager, Town of Fort Frances via e-mail at jforbes@fortfrances.ca no later than February 14, 2020 at 4:30 PM CST.