



# A Roadmap for Inclusive Growth

CITY OF STRATFORD | *Strategic Priorities 2024-2027*

# JENN & Larry's Ice Cream Shoppe

Larry's Milk Shakes circa 1967

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# Dear Future Resident

Welcome to Stratford, Ontario, a city where you'll find a vibrant, growing community primed for prosperity. It's no coincidence that you've chosen to be here. We've cultivated an environment that fosters inclusivity, happiness, and well-being. ***We want living here to mean thriving here.***

We understand that a true sense of place can only exist with a strong foundation. That's why we're committed to building a city where the foundation is strong and sustainable. This means investments in our economy, infrastructure and vibrancy that support our community to be its best.

In Stratford, our determination, resilience, and our ability to surpass expectations are evident in all corners of our community—in business, manufacturing, the arts, community organizations, neighbourhoods, sports, and tourism—we punch above our weight. We strive to support and uplift innovative partnerships that work to provide our people with the tools they need to achieve great things.

We hope you feel a sense of belonging and the belief that you've found your place in Stratford. Whether you're taking leisurely walks around the Avon River, taking in the downtown sights, enjoying the Farmers' Market, or chatting with your neighbours, we aim to cultivate a sense of wellbeing and happiness.

We are committed to intentional, inclusive growth, and we're thrilled for you to witness the flourishing results. Welcome to Stratford, **where thoughtful growth isn't just a possibility—it's our shared vision for the future.**

# A Message from the Mayor

Dear friends and neighbours,

It is with great enthusiasm and a profound sense of responsibility that I present to you our city's new strategic priority: "Thoughtfully Develop Our City."

As we embark on this journey together, it is essential to reflect on our collective vision and aspirations for the future. Our aim is clear: to cultivate a city that thrives on inclusive growth and innovation, where every individual is empowered to flourish.

In embracing this vision, we are guided by our core values: belonging and inclusion, collaboration, innovation and creativity, integrity, and environmental sustainability and stewardship. These principles serve as the bedrock of our efforts to build a community where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued.

The strategic priorities outlined in our plan underscore our commitment to creating a city that is resilient, sustainable, and vibrant. From enhancing our infrastructure to addressing housing stability, from fostering collaboration to embracing change, each priority reflects our unwavering dedication to the well-being and prosperity of our residents.

At the heart of our strategic plan lies the recognition that we stand at another pivotal moment in our city's history. As we navigate challenges and opportunities, it is imperative that we approach development thoughtfully, with an eye toward preserving the unique charm and character that define our city.

As your Mayor, I am committed to working tirelessly alongside our community and partners to realize our shared vision for Stratford. Together, we will build a future that is bright, inclusive, and sustainable—one that reflects the values and aspirations of each and every one of us.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to the development of these Strategic Priorities. Your input, insights, and passion have been invaluable in shaping our path forward. Let us embark on this journey with optimism, determination, and a shared sense of purpose.

With warmest regards,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Ritsma". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**MARTIN RITSMA**  
Mayor, City of Stratford

# How do I use these strategic priorities?

## We want this approach to be successful.

## We want you to feel *inspired* by it.

To build a set of strategic priorities we all have a stake in, we asked for input from the Council, City staff, partners, and the community. It was important to create a set of strategic priorities that people can see themselves in. What is reflected below is what we heard *directly from you*.

These are your ideas for making the City of Stratford prosperous for all. Our vision for 2027 focuses on **inclusive growth** and is further outlined in our key project areas.

The objectives focus on the work we need to do to achieve this vision. The everyday work and milestones will be detailed in a corporate business plan.

We want this document to live and breathe, and that means keeping it off the shelf and integrating it into our everyday behaviour and practices. As a corporation, it's the collective responsibility of our people to bring these goals and strategies to life. The City of Stratford is an organization of dedicated and passionate professionals and extraordinary partners. These strategic priorities will make us the most effective team we can be, a team that can help create a **flourishing city propelled by inclusive growth and innovation, that works together to ensure everyone thrives**.



# Who We Are

## OUR VISION | *Our hope for the future*

A flourishing city propelled by inclusive growth and innovation, a community that works together to ensure everyone thrives.

## OUR MISSION | *How we work toward our vision*

Empowering our community with services and opportunities to foster care, well-being, resilience and environmental sustainability.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that Stratford is positioned on the traditional territory of the **Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples**. As we gather, we are reminded that the City of Stratford is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on land that was shared between the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.

# Our Values

Behaviours and principles that guide our interactions with internal and external interest-holders.



## Belonging and Inclusion

We take action to make everyone feels welcome in our community. We celebrate and embrace diverse cultures including our local Indigenous Peoples. We create inclusive environments by continually asking who isn't at the table and how we can invite them to participate.



## Innovation and Creativity

We foster these things by creating inclusive environments where people feel safe to express their individuality and create social cohesion. We create a vibrant and economically strong community by empowering people to pursue their passions.



## Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship

We promote and practice environmental sustainability for the well-being of the community and the planet. We model this stewardship to our community, partners and peers.



## Collaboration

We provide ongoing opportunities for our community to engage with us. We build trustful and reciprocal relationships with our partners and communities. We respect them by seeking their input and working diligently to honour their trust in us.



## Integrity

We value transparency, fostering trust and accountability within our community. We recognize our responsibility as community leaders and hold ourselves to high ethical and moral standards.

# Our Vision for 2027

Our vision for 2027 came about through collective visioning. This plan is about helping us to prioritize and focus our efforts because we believe we will make the most progress toward our future that way.

WE ARE FOCUSED ON  
INITIATIVES THAT:

Thoughtfully

Develop

Our

City

In crafting the vision for the City of Stratford's new 2024-2027 Strategic Priorities, the overarching theme is clear: **“Thoughtfully Develop Our City.”** Stratford is at an inflection point—population growth, environmental considerations and the Grand Trunk Renewal project present opportunities to reimagine how we see our city. Prioritizing the intensification of our residential buildings, embracing active transportation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are key to supporting the growth of our community and its vitality in the future.

At its core, the strategic priorities emphasize the importance of embracing sustainable development practices. Prioritizing the intensification of residential buildings aligns with the goal of creating a more compact, efficient urban footprint while preserving green spaces and promoting a sense of community. By encouraging intensification in specific areas, Stratford can foster a vibrant urban environment that supports economic growth and social connectivity.

The City of Stratford stands poised at the threshold of transformative change, guided by a set of strategic priorities that reflect both planning for the future and a commitment to meeting current needs, there is so much to look forward to.



# 2027 Aligned Priorities

The pathway to achieving our vision lies in a disciplined focus on key initiatives. These key initiatives are complimentary—creating social well-being, transforming the city core, and creating the conditions for future investment.

<i>Official Plan Review</i>	<i>Grand Trunk Renewal</i>	<i>Asset Management Plan</i>
<i>Corporate Energy &amp; Emissions Plan</i>	<i>Sport Tourism Strategy</i>	<i>Service Delivery Review Implementation</i>
<i>Stratford Cultural Pathways Municipal Cultural Plan</i>	<i>Housing &amp; Homelessness Plan</i>	<i>Community Climate Action Plan</i>
<i>Community Safety &amp; Wellbeing Plan</i>	<i>Transportation Master Plan</i>	

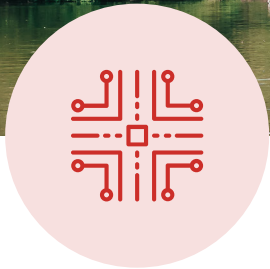
# Strategic Priorities & Objectives

Emerging from the process are four complimentary strategic priorities that will guide the City of Stratford in decision-making and focus its efforts in the coming years. The strategic priorities are rooted in what we heard from the community, staff, senior leadership and councillors through our engagement and development process.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

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-  Enhance Our Infrastructure
-  Build Housing Stability
-  Work Together for Greater Impact
-  Intentionally Change to Support the Future



# Enhance Our Infrastructure

To invest in our infrastructure is to support the community’s overall well-being. We will address key aspects such as transportation, utilities, energy transition and emissions. By making targeted investments, our focus is to create a resilient foundation that fosters sustainable growth, ensuring a high quality of life for residents and promoting economic stability for years to come.

## OBJECTIVES

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Enhance energy efficiency by implementing the short-term initiatives from the Corporate Energy & Emissions Plan to help us achieve our climate action goals.

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Improve the pedestrian, cycling, and transportation experience by implementing the short-term initiatives from the Transportation Master Plan.

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Advance key infrastructure maintenance and new growth-related projects in the 10-year capital forecast.



## Build Housing Stability

Housing affordability remains a challenge in our community. Tackling this complex problem requires support from other levels of government. Yet, we have the ability to act—by reducing barriers to building, advancing our supportive housing projects, prioritizing housing in the Official Plan Review and partnering with our community. Together we help provide safe, attainable, affordable, and supportive places to live.

### OBJECTIVE

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Streamlining the approvals process, and enhance opportunities for new forms of residential development through the Official Plan Review, including provisions for inclusionary zoning and suitable intensification.

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Partner with a nonprofit agency to use municipal land for the development of affordable homeownership or affordable rentals.

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Provide safety and stability for unhoused community members by constructing new supportive/supported housing, taking an evidenced-based approach to addressing homelessness.



# Work Together for Greater Impact

Stratford is full of creative, innovative, solution-focused people and organizations—the City must support them to respond to the needs of the community. Strengthening the City’s relationships with the community will allow us all to share resources, knowledge, and expertise. By working together, we can make a bigger impact. The City will need to foster a creative and proactive culture to embrace this role.

## OBJECTIVES

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Initiate the Grand Trunk Renewal development through a formal partnership model.

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Build meaningful partnerships to address community needs.

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Implement the Sports Tourism strategy in partnership with both Destination Stratford and local sports development groups and industry partners.



# Intentionally Change to Support The Future

Change is a consistent presence in our community, presenting both challenges and opportunities. As we look ahead to the future, it is crucial to base our decisions on this evolving context. We need to genuinely explore what these changes mean for the well-being and economic foundation of our community. We have an opportunity to reconsider who we are as a community, what's important to us, and what makes our community special. This will require a lot of us as we aspire to lead through this transformation. We must be people-centered in our decision-making, lead from our values and align our internal narrative with the identity of the Stratford community.

## OBJECTIVES

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Support economic growth and diversification by bringing new industrial lands to market.

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Improve efficiency and service standards by implementing the findings of the Corporate Service Delivery Review.

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Implement recommendations from the Municipal Cultural Plan to create programs that celebrate diversity and promote inclusion for everyone.



To learn more visit [stratford.ca](http://stratford.ca)