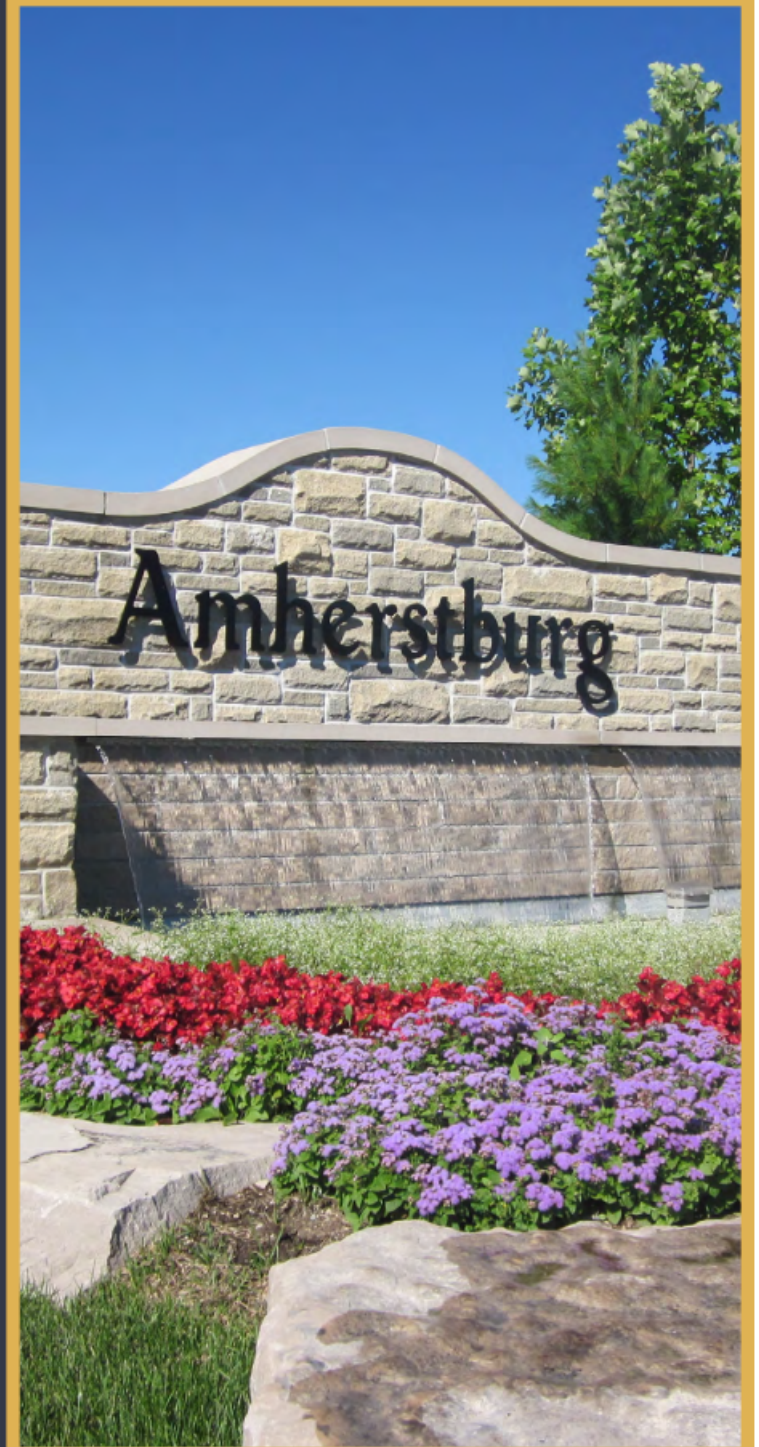




AMHERSTBURG
ONTARIO, CANADA
EST. 1796

2022-2026
STRATEGIC PLAN
**Amherstburg
Community**







Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Amherstburg acknowledges that the land on which we gather, live and raise our families is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, (comprising the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie Peoples), and of the Huron-Wendat and Wyandot Peoples. We recognize the land as an expression of gratitude to those whose traditional territory we reside on, and a way of honouring the Indigenous people who have been living and thriving on the land since time immemorial. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island.

Table of Contents

05 Message from
the Mayor

06 Message from
the CAO

07 Introducing
Amherstburg's
Strategic Plan

08 The Process

09 Amherstburg
Today

13 Our Strategic
Plan on a Page

14 Mission & Vision

15 Values

16 Strategic Goals,
Initiatives &
Performance
Measures

Message from the Mayor



On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present Amherstburg's Community Strategic Plan for the 2023-2026 term.

Over the past six months, Council, staff and the community have collaborated to craft a new Community Strategic Plan for Amherstburg. The plan will guide our work for the remainder of this term of Council.

The Vision is the key guiding principal of the document.

Our Vision is "Preserving our past while forging our future." This is a uniquely appropriate aspiration for Amherstburg where our rich history, character and charm are the bedrock of our community. Our future needs to build on this heritage that makes Amherstburg a place people want to visit, stay and grow with us.

So much is happening in our region and in our Town. This Plan will guide our community and position us to seize opportunities, while preserving what is special about our Town. Unified by this plan, we will grow in a way that reflects our vision and our values.

The Plan is built around four key strategic pillars:

- delivering trusted and accountable local government,
- investing in community amenities and infrastructure,
- encouraging local economic prosperity, and
- shaping growth aligned with local identity.

To effectively deliver on these goals, a priority for this Council is the public trust. We must prove through our daily actions how we are working differently to ensure we are delivering trusted and accountable government to the community we serve.

I want to give a special thanks to my fellow Councillors and the Senior Management Team for all their hard work in developing this Plan, all the staff, community groups, and residents who participated in consultations to provide their input and feedback, and the Caldwell First Nation for their engagement in this process.

The path we have laid out for Amherstburg is exciting and full of opportunity. This document is the first step. It will be our duty and privilege, Council and staff, to live up to it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Prue". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'M' and a trailing 'P'.

Mayor Michael Prue

Message from the CAO



I am excited to share Amherstburg's Community Strategic Plan for 2023-2026.

The Community Strategic Plan reflects the priorities we heard from the community and will guide the Administration in supporting Council to address the biggest decisions facing the Town. It will inform all our budgets, policies, operational plans and recommendations to Council.

The Plan considers how we want to grow and develop the community and local economy, protect historic and natural heritage, ensure access to recreation and leisure amenities, and move along key development projects including the extension of the King's Navy Yard Park, while continuing to recognize the increasing affordability pressures faced by both the Town and its residents.

This Plan should be considered a "living document." The only real constant in today's world is change. It is understood that we will need to adjust and respond to new or changing circumstances in the community.

This Plan is a tool for management. We will track and report on progress to ensure that we are progressing towards our goals. The reporting cycle will help deliver on the commitment to trusted and accountable government that is core to the success of this Plan. The Plan's horizon is the term of this Council, but it also includes getting a start on longer term projects which will extend into the future.

The Plan also includes the values which inform our community and our organization. Town staff are committed to serving this community. Our work will be grounded in the values set out in this Plan, ensuring we are accountable, service-oriented, results-oriented, innovative and collaborative.

I want to add a special thanks to staff for the work they do every day, and for their contribution to creating this plan. We look forward to working with Council and the community in implementing this Plan in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Valerie Critchley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Valerie" and last name "Critchley" clearly distinguishable.

Valerie Critchley, Chief Administrative Officer



Introduction to Amherstburg's Strategic Plan

Amherstburg's Community Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 has been developed through the extensive consultation and collaboration of Council, staff and the community to ensure that the priorities and goals included are not only aspirational and authentic to Amherstburg, but also achievable.



■ Amherstburg's Community Strategic Plan includes:

Vision and Mission Statements that describe the day-to-day purpose of the organization and define the Town's aspiration for the future.

Five **Value Statements** that support the Town's Vision and act as guiding principles in the day-to-day operations and decision-making.

Four **Strategic Pillars** that delineate the Town's highest priorities and areas of focus for advancing the Mission and Vision.

Twenty **Goals** that give effect to each Strategic Pillar.

Each Goal includes a clear implementation roadmap that describes specific **Initiatives** the Town will undertake to achieve its Goals and **Performance Measures** the Town will use to monitor and report on progress towards its Goals.

The Process



Amherstburg's Strategic Planning process launched in Spring 2023. The process involved conducting a review of the Town's operating environment, including understanding community sentiments and priorities, and then working with Council and the senior leadership team to update and validate the Town's Mission, Vision and Values, and to identify realistic and attainable goals, as well as supporting action plans and performance measures to track and monitor progress.

The process included significant consultations to ensure the Plan was informed by an inclusive range of perspectives from within the Administration and the community.

THE INPUT COLLECTED FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN INCLUDED:



One-on-one interviews with **Council and Senior Leadership**



A survey of **Town Staff**



Survey of **Resident Committee Members**



Pop-up community events and online survey for **members of the community**



Interviews and written submissions from **local community groups & organizations**



Discussions with the **Caldwell First Nation**

Amherstburg today



■ A Unique Community with a Strong Local Identity

The Town of Amherstburg boasts a strong sense of community, small-town charm and long history that is evident in the beautiful heritage sites and buildings nestled throughout the community. From the picturesque landscapes of King's Navy Yard Park along the Detroit River, the farmlands and beaches, to the historic beauty and architecture of Fort Malden, Belle Vue Manor, the Gordon House, and countless other heritage sites, Amherstburg stands apart.

The Town is an attractive place for people to set down roots and includes families who are just starting out in Amherstburg and those who's families have been in Amherstburg for generations. Amherstburg maintains a charm, and sense of community and safety that comes from its "small-town" feel, while offering residents the convenience of the urban amenities in neighbouring Windsor only 25 minutes away. In Amherstburg, it is clear that the Town has its own local identity that residents are both proud and protective of.



■ An Exciting Tourism Industry

Amherstburg's extensive historical sites, heritage buildings, quaint downtown, hospitality, and beautiful landscapes offer plenty of tourism opportunities for visitors. Amherstburg also hosts various events and festivals throughout the year, celebrating art, music, and local traditions. The Town has placed a strong focus in recent years on promoting these cultural opportunities that attract not only the locals, but also visitors from all over the country and beyond. The tourism industry has grown significantly in Amherstburg in recent years, as the Town looks to diversify opportunities for economic development beyond its historic reliance on local manufacturing.

The Town recently approved a comprehensive Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Town including the designation of the Economic Development Community Improvement Project Area around the downtown core with the goal of supporting the local economy and to attract new investment through policy and local grant opportunities.

As Amherstburg looks to expand industry to include additional eco- and agro-tourism opportunities that compliment the many experiences already available, the Town continues to look for specific opportunities to expand what the community has to offer. The Town currently does not have any local hotels to promote overnight stays. There are also a number of Town-owned properties, including the Belle Vue Manor and the site of the former Duffy's Tavern, that require significant investment and refurbishment but would add significantly to the Town's allure.

■ New Leadership Focused on Re-Building Community Trust

Over the last few years, Amherstburg's Council and leadership have taken significant strides to improve public trust in the organization and between Council and staff. These efforts have begun to deliver a positive improvement and marked impact on the Town's financial situation, including the rebuilding of reserves and paying down of debt. Organizational morale and workplace culture are also improving. However, participants in the process stressed the need for continued effort to overcome legacy issues, and improve the relationship between Council, staff and the public.

■ Upgrading Infrastructure & Amenities

Many residents feel there is a gap in local opportunities for passive, all-ages recreation, or for options geared toward older youth, teens and young adults. The Town had made a number of investments in recreation amenities, including the Libro Centre and surrounding amenities. However, other projects resulted in a loss of recreation amenities previously enjoyed by residents, such as parkland at the North Star High School site and the Town's public boat launch.

In addition to resident-focused amenities, the Town is behind on the maintenance and replacement of critical municipal facilities that support the delivery of core services. Several Town facilities including Townhall, firehalls, water treatment plants, and other support buildings are at – or are nearing – their end of life and will require significant capital investment for replacement over the coming years.



■ Navigating a Challenging Municipal Landscape

Many of Amherstburg's other challenges are not unique to Amherstburg. Municipal administrations across Ontario are facing many of the same challenges as their residents and neighbours.

- Ongoing supply chain issues, high inflation, and rising costs are having direct impacts on both residents and the Administration. Increased costs for services and capital development result in ever growing pressure to increase municipal revenue when residents are feeling most pinched themselves.
- A tight labour market has resulted in long vacancies in key administration roles, but also limits the ability of local businesses to retain the levels of staffing necessary to remain open and continue to contribute to the local economy and vibrancy of the community.
- Amherstburg also lacks housing options to meet the diverse needs of the community. This lack of housing options is a concern for residents.
- Provincial legislation continues to have direct implications for municipal service delivery, including land use planning and finances, as well as how the Town's ability to protect certain non-designated historic sites at risk of redevelopment which are core to the community's unique charm and character.
- Finally, Amherstburg is exposed to the long-term impacts of climate change and extreme weather events resulting in costly clean-up and re-construction, and rising insurance costs.



■ Planning for a growing Amherstburg

Amherstburg, and many other municipalities in the Windsor-Essex region, are on the brink of massive population and economic growth. The region is anticipating a number of major capital and economic development projects that will result in numerous spin-off impacts for Amherstburg, including the NextStar Battery Plan, Gordie Howe International Bridge, and the new acute care hospital. In many ways, Amherstburg is well positioned to capitalize on these opportunities and drive local prosperity. The Town has hundreds of acres of reclaimed and serviced employment lands designated for industrial and light-industrial development, including the Howard and Smith Industrial Park as well as several planned, ready-to-build housing projects that will support and attract further growth in the community.

However, many development projects in the Town continue to face some challenges due to the high development costs and NIMBYism within the community. There is a clear divide among the community in Amherstburg over its future and identity – especially as it relates to managing growth. While the majority is not opposed to growth in the abstract, tensions remain as to the “type” of town Amherstburg is becoming or should become. This is also further complicated by recent Provincial changes to promote housing development. Amherstburg needs to align on a clear vision for what growth in the community will look like over the next decade.

Plan on a Page



Vision

“Preserving our past while forging our future”

Mission

“As stewards of the Town of Amherstburg, we strive to improve the quality of life of all residents through the delivery of effective, efficient, and affordable services.”

Values

Collaborative, Service-oriented,
Results-oriented, Accountable, Innovative.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

PILLAR 1

**Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local
Government**

PILLAR 2

**Invest in Community Amenities &
Infrastructure**

PILLAR 3

Encourage Local Economic Prosperity

PILLAR 4

Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

Vision



"Preserving our past while forging our future"

Mission

"As stewards of the Town of Amherstburg, we strive to improve the quality of life of all residents through the delivery of effective, efficient, and affordable services."

Values



COLLABORATIVE

We work together effectively within the organization and in collaboration with other governments, private entities and community partners.



SERVICE-ORIENTED

We listen and respond to our customers in a culturally responsive way and prioritize their satisfaction as we do our work.



RESULTS-ORIENTED

We establish community driven goals, measure our performance, and report to the public on our success in meeting those goals.



ACCOUNTABLE

We are responsive and transparent to the public in our roles, functions and actions as individuals and as a government.



INNOVATIVE

We are creative, learn from experience and results, and seek out new and efficient ways to solve problems and serve the public.

Strategic Pillars and Goals



PILLAR 1

Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government

1. Improve trust between council and staff, and residents, by strengthening governance and internal accountability structures
2. Deliver transparent and efficient financial management
3. Increase effective communication and engagement with residents
4. Develop our staff team, resources, and workplace culture
5. Continue to deliver strong core municipal services
6. Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive, accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation

PILLAR 3

Encourage Local Economic Prosperity

1. Encourage development of commercial and industrial lands
2. Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation
3. Continue to facilitate downtown development for residents and visitors
4. Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal, and local governments, agencies, and organizations

PILLAR 2

Invest in Community Amenities & Infrastructure

1. Maintain safe, reliable, and accessible municipal infrastructure and facilities
2. Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages
3. Finalize and execute plans for town-owned lands (e.g. Duffy's site, Belle Vue)
4. Create public access to the water and waterfront
5. Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change

PILLAR 4

Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

1. Define and communicate a vision for the Town's future and identity
2. Promote and plan for green and "climate change ready" development
3. Review and implement policies that promote greater access to diverse housing
4. Protect the Town's historic sites and heritage
5. Preserve the Town's greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.



Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government

■ GOAL #1

Improve trust between council and staff, and residents, by strengthening governance and internal accountability structures

● INITIATIVES

1. Revise, implement and adhere to procedural by-law and code of conduct
2. Investigate and procure Council-Staff relations training
3. Establish Annual Report to Council on Meeting Productivity (number and duration of meetings, time spent in open and in camera meetings and number of times Procedural By-law waived)

● MEASURES

- o No. of times procedural bylaw waived annually
- o No. of integrity commissioner or Ombudsman complaints annually
- o Improved staff/Council trust indicators in annual staff survey

■ GOAL #2

Deliver transparent and efficient financial management

● INITIATIVES

1. Continue to responsibly pay down debt and replenish municipal reserves
2. Develop and implement a new financial accountability model and asset management plans
3. Update and implement Financial Policies and Procedures with the goal of increasing efficient financial management (e.g., Purchasing By-law, Delegation of Authority By-law)

● MEASURES

- o No. of annual variance between budgeted and actual values
- o Reserves as a percentage of operating expenditures to >20%
- o Debt servicing cost as a percentage of operating revenue to <10%

Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures



Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government

■ GOAL #3

Increase effective communication and engagement with residents

● INITIATIVES

1. Conduct regular resident and staff facing updates on the business of Council and the Town including "Council Highlights" and "Mayor's Minutes"
2. Conduct annual budget open house & survey for residents
3. Develop an annual reporting structure for Council and residents on accomplishments and progress measured against the Community Strategic Plan

● MEASURES

- o Direct engagement on Town website and Talk the Burg site
- o No. of followers/ subscribers for Town social media platforms or pushed media
- o No. of resident-facing communications and consultations

■ GOAL #4

Develop our staff team, resources, and workplace culture

● INITIATIVES

1. Continue the work of the Staff Appreciation & Recognition Committee (STAR), supported by Council
2. Conduct a Salary Market Review every three years vis a vis comparator municipalities
3. Expand the Education & Training Opportunities available to all Staff

● MEASURES

- o Staff satisfaction and culture indicators in annual staff survey
- o Rate of staff turnover
- o Annual percentage of staff participating in education or training initiatives

Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures

Deliver Trusted & Accountable Local Government



■ GOAL #5

Continue to deliver strong core municipal services

● INITIATIVES

1. Deliver Capital Projects as approved in the Capital Budget
2. Monitor the needs and wants of residents annually to ensure “core” services are being provided and to identify gaps
3. Develop and implement Customer Service Standards
4. Develop level of service expectations for municipal capital assets, including roads, as part of the Provincial Asset Management Planning regulatory requirements

● MEASURES

- No. of deferred planned capital projects
- Ratio of resolved to unresolved resident service requests
- Adherence to future customer service standards
- Adherence to future service level expectations

■ GOAL #6

Ensure Amherstburg is an inclusive, accessible and welcoming community committed to reconciliation

● INITIATIVES

1. Improve the inclusion and accessibility of existing and planned events and festivals
2. Identify and implement projects that align with Municipality’s existing Inclusive Community Plan
3. Identify, map and communicate inclusive and accessible amenities in the Community
4. Engage regularly with our First Nation partners on shared concerns and issues

● MEASURES

- No. of implemented initiatives from the Town’s Inclusive Community Plan
- Community satisfaction and IDEA indicators in resident survey
- No. of community and First Nations consultations

Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures



Invest in Community Amenities & Infrastructure

■ GOAL #1

Maintain safe, reliable, and accessible municipal infrastructure and facilities

● INITIATIVES

1. Rationalize all Town lands and facilities, including a new Town hall
2. Implement, update and adhere to the Asset Management Plan approved by Council
3. Deliver the Transportation Master Plan for Community and Council consideration

● MEASURES

- o Status of AODA Compliance
- o State-of-Good-Repair backlog as percent of total asset value (replacement value)
- o No. of reported accidents and claims

■ GOAL #2

Increase access to recreation opportunities for all ages

● INITIATIVES

1. Update and implement the Town's Parks Master Plan
2. Lead the allocation of third-party funding to enable the increased delivery of recreation programs
3. Deliver increased and diversified programming and instruction with identified funding

● MEASURES

- o Registration percentages for municipal programs
- o Community satisfaction indicators from resident survey



Invest in Community Amenities & Infrastructure

■ GOAL #3

Finalize and execute plans for town-owned lands (e.g. Duffy's site, Belle Vue)

● INITIATIVES

1. Advocate to upper levels of government regarding the opportunities and funding for these projects
2. Review responses to the Belle Vue EOI and take the next steps in the process
3. Invest the funding required to complete both projects to the level determined by Council

● MEASURES

- o Execution of agreements and development of town-owned lands
- o Approved funding arrangements for the Duffy's site and Belle Vue



Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures



Invest in Community Amenities & Infrastructure

■ GOAL #4

Create public access to the water and waterfront

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete the extension of the Kings Navy Yard Park onto the former Duffy's property
2. Identify and develop plans for access to water through town owned land
3. Investigate the feasibility of a boat launch at Ranta Park

● MEASURES

- o No. of public access points to the water
- o No. of meters of new or refurbished public waterfront

■ GOAL #5

Prioritize opportunities to reduce environmental impacts of Town operations and increase Town resilience to climate change

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete an Energy Audit of Town Facilities
2. Incorporate, where practical, solar panels and green building design into Municipal facilities
3. Explore and identify further opportunities for green initiatives including tree planting

● MEASURES

- o Annual energy consumption for municipal facilities
- o No. of green new builds and/or retrofits on municipal facilities
- o Offset electrical cost from solar on municipal facilities
- o Changes in tree canopy coverage annually (through Map and Grow Program)

Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures



Encourage Local Economic Prosperity

■ GOAL #1

Encourage development of commercial and industrial lands

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Reviews
2. Create and implement a Development Tool Kit for prospective investors
3. Advocate to the higher levels of government to ensure continued, reliable electrical capacity for industrial lands
4. Ensuring that the Town has reliable utilities for investors

● MEASURES

- o No. of OPAs and ZBAs
- o Area of serviced and non-services industrial or commercial lands available
- o No. of commercial and industrial sites leased/sold

■ GOAL #2

Continue to promote local tourism industry, especially overnight accommodation

● INITIATIVES

1. Encourage investors and private enterprise that fit town Tourism initiatives (e.g., new hotels)
2. Invest in the Town's signature events to ensure sustained programming and make them as inclusive as possible
3. Pursue and advocate for grant funding that complements Tourism initiatives
4. Position Amherstburg as a center for Sports Tourism and Eco Tourism
5. Promote and encourage local cultural and heritage endeavours

● MEASURES

- o Tourism impacts through TREIM Reporting (Provincial Tool)
- o No. of Town-led events and festivals
- o Dollars invested in partner-led culture, heritage, and tourism initiatives
- o No. of local events, festivals and/or local vendors promoted by the Town or through TWEPI
- o No. of commercial rooms for overnight accommodation

Strategic Goals, Initiatives, and Performance Measures

Encourage Local Economic Prosperity



■ GOAL #3

Continue to facilitate downtown development for residents and visitors

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete and implement Community Improvement Plans where needed and provide to local business
2. Support the promotional activities of local business groups where aligned with Council's strategic priorities

● MEASURES

- o No. of CIPs
- o No. of vendors registered for events in the downtown
- o No. and amount of investments initiatives within downtown CIP area

■ GOAL #4

Continue to leverage partnership opportunities with other provincial, federal and local governments, agencies and organizations

● INITIATIVES

1. Advocate to upper levels of government directly and through delegations at FCM, AMO and ROMA
2. Participate in policy initiatives developed by FCM, AMO and ROMA
3. Initiate regular meetings for Mayor/Deputy Mayor/ CAO with community agencies and organizations and the Caldwell First Nation

● MEASURES

- o No. of support resolutions to the Province
- o Council and staff member attendance and participation at conferences
- o No. of collaboration and/or partnership initiatives



Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

■ GOAL #1

Define and communicate a vision for the Town's future and identity

● INITIATIVES

1. Update the Town's Official Plan
2. Communicate the Town's Community Strategic Plan to Residents, Business Owners, and local groups and agencies
3. Develop a Town slogan
4. Promote heritage through site plan control to retain the historical character of the Town

● MEASURES

- o Completion of the Updated Official Plan
- o Percentage of lands zoned for non-industrial agriculture

■ GOAL #2

Promote and plan for green and "climate change ready" development

● INITIATIVES

1. Implement best practices regarding review of development charges to promote green development
2. Consider further investment in EV charging stations based on existing use and demand
3. Invest in active transportation initiatives
4. Investigate additional alternative opportunities to encourage green development (e.g., the Official Plan and Community Improvement Programs (CIP) policies)

● MEASURES

- o No. of EV stations and usage
- o No. of new and/or refurbished km of active transportation
- o No. of new green developments in the Town



Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

■ GOAL #3

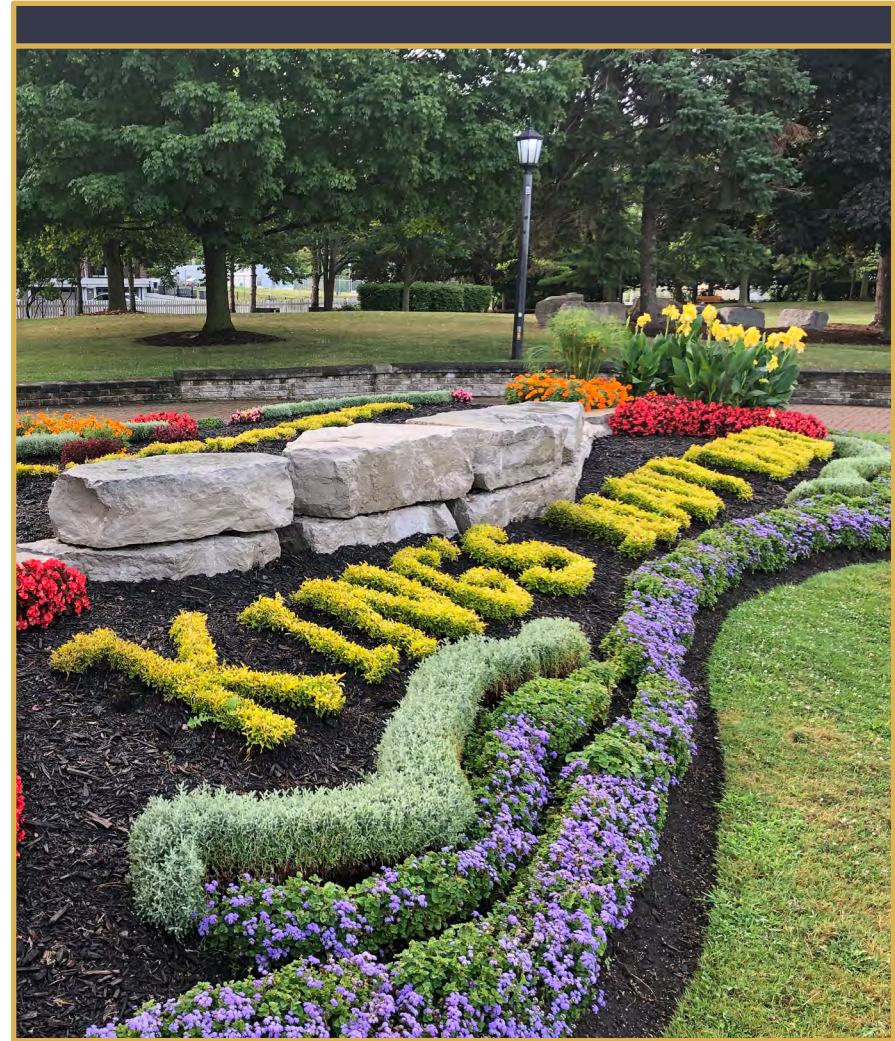
Review and implement policies that promote greater access to diverse housing.

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Reviews
2. Encourage development of in-fill lots in the Town
3. Encourage the development of attainable housing

● MEASURES

- o No. of new residential units by type approved by Council annually





Shape Growth Aligned with Local Identity

■ GOAL #4

Protect the Town's historic sites and heritage

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete the Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan
2. Develop a plan to review current "properties of interest" on the Heritage Register
3. Develop a CIP targeted to historic properties

● MEASURES

- o No. of properties of interest in the Heritage Register
- o No. of designated/protected heritage sites

■ GOAL #5

Preserve the Town's greenspaces, agricultural lands, and natural environment.

● INITIATIVES

1. Complete a Biodiversity Plan for the Municipality
2. Advocate to the Provincial Government for the protection of these lands through provincial planning policy.
3. Position Amherstburg as a center for Ecotourism.

● MEASURES

- o Area of naturalized or protected lands in the Town
- o Amount of external funding secured for planned initiatives



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