

**CITY OF ST. JOHN'S**  
**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2005-2009**

**Update as at September 30, 2008**

Date: September 18, 2008  
To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council  
From: Ronald G. Penney, LL.B.  
**Re: Update to the Corporate Strategic Plan**

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I am pleased to provide Council with an update to our Corporate Strategic Plan as at September 30, 2008. The document identifies our Governing Principles and the Strategic Initiatives that have been formulated in support of these Governing Principles. The current status of each of the initiatives has been included in the document and reflects staff's continuing long range emphasis on meeting the strategic challenges facing the City.

The Corporate Strategic Plan should not be viewed in isolation from the other long term plans that are currently being implemented. We have, over the past decade, prepared, or had prepared on our behalf, a number of strategic master plans and technical and business process plans. These plans include:

**Master Plans**

**Status**

(a)	Bowring Park Master Plan	Being implemented
(b)	Buckmaster Circle Master Plan	Funded from multi-year capital
(c)	Bannerman Park Master Plan	
(d)	George Street Master Plan	Public meeting scheduled
(e)	Martin's Meadow Master Plan	Funded from multi-year capital
(f)	Rotary Park Master Plan	Being implemented
(g)	Quidi Vidi Development Plan	Awaiting cost-sharing
(h)	Fort Amherst Development Plan	Being implemented
(i)	Bicycle Master Plan	In preparation
(j)	Ice Surface Study	
(k)	Recreation and Parks Master Plan	In preparation
(l)	Bidgood Park Master Plan	Being implemented

**Technical and Business Process Plans**

- |     |                                           |                   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| (a) | Information Technology Strategic Plan     | Being implemented |
| (b) | Access St. John's Strategic Business Plan | Being implemented |

**Municipal Plans**

- |     |                                           |                                   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) | St. John's Municipal Plan (2003 Revision) |                                   |
| (b) | St. John's Urban Regional Plan            | Awaiting appointing of consultant |

**Emergency Plan**

- |     |                                   |                       |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) | City of St. John's Emergency Plan | Revised January, 2008 |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|

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Ronald G. Penney, LL.B.  
Chief Commissioner and City Solicitor

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Enclosure

## **THE CITY'S MISSION**

We are a municipal corporation of employees, elected officials, appointed boards and community groups. Our commitment is

...to deliver public services responsive to the needs of the residents and business in the City and, where applicable, to the surrounding municipalities.

...to ensure the orderly and progressive physical, social and economic development of the City taking into consideration its distinctive climate, topography and cultural and architectural heritage.

## **AND OUR CORPORATE VALUES**

- We will be courteous and responsive in our interactions with our customers, the taxpayers.
- We will respect the individual rights of our employees and create and maintain a work environment which fosters teamwork and sense of pride and accomplishment.
- We will aggressively attract, develop, support and retain the best employees.
- We will deliver quality service in a fair and consistent manner.
- We will be prudent, efficient and accountable in the use of public funds.
- We will strive to continually improve the manner in which we perform.

## **OUR GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

Extensive review and discussion has resulted in the identification of seven key governing principles that will be the primary focus of our Corporate Strategic Plan. Each governing principle is supported by a goal/policy statement. The strategic initiatives specific to each of the governing principles and the current status of each are elaborated on in subsequent sections of this plan.

### **Financial Management**

The City of St. John's will ensure sound, prudent and responsible management of the City's financial resources within the means available and in recognition of our accountability to the citizens of the City.

### **Provision of Services**

The City of St. John's will provide services efficiently, effectively and economically to all residents, businesses and, where applicable, the surrounding municipalities in keeping with our financial resources.

### **Physical Environment and Infrastructure**

The City of St. John's will plan, provide, maintain and improve the environment and infrastructure necessary to ensure the progressive physical, economic and social growth of the City to the benefit of its citizens.

## **Human Resource Management**

The City of St. John's will ensure that its workforce has the skills, training, experience and technology necessary to deliver its programs and services to the citizens of the City and will implement management practices which foster positive working relationships among all employees and the efficient and effective utilization of its workforce.

## **Economic Development**

The City of St. John's will partner with a variety of interests including the business community and other interested parties to advance the economic development, tourism and cultural efforts of the City through the development of sector strategies, delivery of quality programs and services, and marketing the City to enhance economic and social development objectives.

## **Intergovernmental Relations**

The City of St. John's will foster good working relations with the neighboring municipalities, the NLFM, the FCM, and the provincial and federal governments.

## **Municipal Amalgamation**

The City of St. John's will encourage the amalgamation of the urban core of the Northeast Avalon into one city to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of services and to be more competitive with the major Atlantic Province centres for business relocation.

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

### **Financial Management**

#### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on the continuing process of rationalization of our taxing regime, implementing greater efficiencies within our operational structure both in terms of service delivery mechanisms and revenue producing opportunities, and on debt reduction.

#### *Strategic Issues*

FM 1. Payment-in-lieu of taxes from the Provincial Government.

Current Status - The City originally submitted its position on payment-in-lieu of taxes to the Provincial Government in 1999 and has raised the issue regularly with local MHAs. However, as an aspect of the “renewed fiscal relationship” with Province, we have made this an issue for other municipalities in the province as well. The Department of Municipal Affairs has not, as yet, prepared a Cabinet paper.

FM 2. Greater use of user fees for the programs and services delivered by the various City departments with this being an on going issue.

Current Status - Departments continue to review user fees for services provided. Revisions to the fee structures are presented to Council on an annual basis during the budget review process.

FM 3. Continue pay-as-you go capital financing with this being an on going issue until debt is eliminated.

Current Status - Pay-as-you-go capital financing has been officially adopted as Council policy with exceptions made for cost-sharing of capital projects with governments and community groups. The parameters for these exceptions have been further defined by Council approved policy. The short term objective is the minimization of the net debt service ratio. This ratio is limited to 17.5% by the City's Long Term Debt Policy but we are currently in the 10% to 11% range, which the City should attempt to maintain.

FM 4. Continue to develop performance indicators for all programs and activities to ensure accountability by managers for allocated funds with monitoring and updating to continue throughout the life of the Plan.

Current Status - Departments are now reporting comparative performance indicators to the respective Standing Committees of Council. The comparators used include data generated through ICMA/CPM. We are working towards a broader spectrum of performance indicators (rather than simple work volume numbers) to both include internal year to year comparisons as well as comparisons to larger municipalities in Atlantic Canada in conjunction with ICMA.

FM 5. Contracting out of programs and services where practicable and economical.

Current Status - In 2000, the City adopted a policy of contracting out all services which could be performed to appropriate standards by third parties, which did not violate our collective agreements and which could be performed more economically by third parties. This policy remains in effect with departments reviewing services on a regular basis to assess which could be contracted out and exploring the issues of cost and practicality before making recommendations to Council.

FM 6. Obtain HST rebates from the Provincial Government in co-operation with the NLFM.

Current Status - This remains an active issue and was recently presented to City based members of the Provincial Cabinet.

FM 7. Combining of the existing Business Realty and Business Occupancy taxes into a single Business Realty tax.

Current Status - Following discussions with representatives of commercial property owners, a consultant was retained to review the issue. The consultant's final report is expected to be delivered by end of 2008.

FM 8. Introduction of ERP software to replace existing legacy and data financial systems.

Current Status - Project Velocity is currently underway with target

date for completion set the for end of 2011. In addition to the introduction of new hardware and software, the project will also entail numerous changes to the processes and procedures used by staff to perform their duties (Business Process Reengineering) as well some organizational and technological changes necessary to obtain the full benefit of the new systems (Change Management).

## **Provision of Services**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on obtaining and evaluating key service level indicators which will allow us to improve the program and activity service standards currently provided to our citizens.

### *Strategic Issues*

PoS 1. Develop and implement a Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) strategy whose focus will be on the provision of responsive, consistent service delivery and overall improvement in the citizen relationship.

Current Status - Completed with the implementation of the Council approved Citizen Service Strategy in the form of the Access St. John's Service Centre.

PoS 2. Conduct a market survey to assess the public's level of satisfaction with current service delivery.

Current Status - Market surveys for 2007 and 2008 have been completed and results released to the general public. Recommendations coming out of the survey are currently being implemented.

## **Physical Environment and Infrastructure**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on the development and maintenance of our physical infrastructure and on the progressive development of both our new and mature neighbourhoods.

### *Strategic Issues*

PE&I 1. In conjunction with the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, develop and implement a strategy for the City's role in solid waste management throughout the regional.

Current Status - Completed. Robin Hood Bay will be the designated regional waste management facility. The regional waste management governance model has been defined and accepted by all affected partners. A redevelopment plan has been submitted to the Provincial Government and approved and the funding has been committed by the Department of Municipal Affairs for the retrofitting of Robin Hood Bay. Work has commenced to convert this facility into a Regional Waste Management Site.

PE&I 2. Conduct evaluation of areas for potential commercial and industrial development. Advance plans for commercial land development and monitor needs for new commercial and industrial lands.

Current Status - Airport land development is presently being pursued by a group representing the Airport Authority and the City of St. Johns. Southwest Development Area servicing has commenced which

has opened some lands for zoning and commercial development, i.e. expansion of the business lands in the O'Leary Park area. Robin Hood Bay Road has recently been serviced which will open up additional industrial land.

The City has agreed to upgrade Torbay Road and other infrastructure in order to facilitate the commercial development of the Torbay Road North area.

PE&I 3. Ensure that the built heritage is adequately identified, protected and maintained in a sustainable manner.

Current Status - The Downtown Strategy for Economic Development and Heritage Preservation was released in mid-June, 2001. This strategy delineated the principles and mechanisms whereby built heritage could be protected and maintained as an essential component in the economic development of the older parts of the City. A subsequent study by PHB Group Architects Inc. reviewed the present heritage boundaries and individual buildings designations and recommended changes and identified significant public views. The study has been adopted by Council and is in the process of being implemented. Council has increased the geographic boundaries of the heritage areas, adopted standards for development in the heritage areas and designated a number of additional buildings as heritage buildings.

Council also engaged the PHB Group Architects Inc. to undertake a study to identify appropriate development standards and measures to protect public and private views in the Battery Neighbourhood. This study has been adopted by Council and the major recommendations of the report are now in the process of being implemented.

PE&I 4. Prepare long term capital works plans, including the identification of sources of funding, for the provision of services with emphasis on those areas not currently services. Maintained and improve the City's building infrastructure responsive to the needs and expansion of City services and growth of departments.

Current Status - Capital works plans have been prepared and are updated on an annual basis as an integral part of the capital works budgeting process. The City has completed the the new Windsor Lake Treatment Plant, has funded improvements to the Bay Bulls Big Pond Treatment Plant and the new Petty Harbour/Long Pond Treatment Plant. The City has obtained funding for the waste water treatment plant and has commenced construction.

Under multi-year provincial cost sharing, the City has commenced the construction of the Public Works Depot and has completed a new Central Fire Station.

Council has agreed to allocate the gas tax rebate to streets rehabilitation.

## **Human Resource Management**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on the continued development of our human resources and the strengthening of a creative work environment.

### *Strategic Issues*

HRM 1. Maintain a comprehensive profile of employees including skill levels, training requirements and success planning on an ongoing basis.

Current Status - Profiles now exist for key positions and personnel. A comprehensive succession planning policy has been developed and endorsed by Council and is being implemented.

HRM 2. Develop and foster open communications between and among Council, management and staff with this being an on going issue.

Current Status - Various vehicles now exist for effective communications. These include an internal newsletter which is published monthly, an Intranet that will shortly become City wide with the installation of computer kiosks in the Depot, the Mews Centre, Wedgewood Park and other outlying areas.

HRM 3. Foster harmonious working relationships with the City's union locals with this being an on going issue.

Current Status - The City has implemented and will maintain and

enhance management practices which foster positive working relationships among and with all employees and their representatives while maintaining the efficient and effective utilization of its workforce.

The City has successfully negotiated collective agreements with its Unions.

HRM 4. Maintain a safe working environment by ensuring that all potential hazards are identified and action taken to eliminate them or nullify them by training and the use of safe working practices.

Current Status - With the advent of the PRIME initiative of the Workplace Health Safety and Compensation Commission, hazard assessment reviews have been completed in the Department of Public Works and Parks, the St. John's Regional Fire Department, the Department of Recreation and the Department of Building and Property Management. These hazard assessments will continue for all Departments over the life of the Plan. Continuous regulatory safety training is ongoing and safe working procedures will be developed according to PRIME.

HRM 5. Given our aging workforce, the physical nature of our work and the prevalence of mental illness in the Canadian workplace, the City will continue to focus on education, prevention and the management of employee disabilities.

Current Status - The City has implemented a disability management program which is recognized as the very best in

Canada. The program is continually evolving to meet the needs of our employees, legislative requirements and best human resource practices.

We foresee a significant increase in demand for our Employee Assistance Program and disability management services respecting both physical and mental disabilities based on national and local trends. The City will continue to evaluate the needs and resources requirements and will maintain and support the programs and services to meet these needs. Another objective of the initiative is to improve employee work attendance and reduce sickness and disability.

## **Economic Development**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on the creation of strategic partnerships with both the public and private sectors.

### *Strategic Issues*

ED 1. Develop and implement partnership strategies with government, educational institutions, private sector and other relevant organizations to enhance economic activities and opportunities, particularly Destination St. John's, the DDC and the Board of Trade. Strategies relate to a range of sub-industry groupings including, but not limited to, ocean technologies and oil and gas industry development.

Current Status - Projects are ongoing to profile and enhance St. John's in these industries. Additional programming items will be developed and incorporated in the economic development action plan and implemented, as appropriate, with partners.

ED 2. Develop a revised Municipal Arts Plan in association with the arts community, community partners and government.

Current Status - Primary consultation held, meetings and research ongoing with objective of completing the Plan late 2008/early 2009.

ED 3. Develop and implement partnership strategies with government and the private sector to encourage the growth and diversification of the tourism industry in St. John's. Emphasis will be placed on group tours

(specifically the cruise industry), media marketplace, festival and events and cultural tourism development.

Current Status - Programming is ongoing and regular reviews provide direction for program redevelopment and enhancement.

The City has developed “St. John’s Time” as a summer festival incorporating the George Street Festival, the Regatta and the Folk Festival.

## **Intergovernmental Relations**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on enhancing our working relationship with our various stakeholders within the Region.

### *Strategic Issues*

IR 1. Develop and deliver a strategy aimed at lobbying the Provincial Government respecting outstanding issues with this being an on going issue.

Current Status - Meetings are continually held with Provincial Government officials, both at the political and bureaucratic levels, to discuss issues of importance to the City. As well, breakfast meetings with local MHAs are held on an on going basis.

IR 2. Continue work respecting housing issues affecting citizens of the city and work in conjunction with the FCM to lobby the Federal Government for an enhanced role with this being an on going issue.

Current Status - Council has raised the profile of housing as an issue on its strategic social agenda by incorporating it into a renamed Planning, Development and Housing Standing Committee and has commissioned a recently completed housing study.

## **Municipal Amalgamation**

### *Strategic Direction*

Our focus will be on continuing our efforts to ensure that City taxpayers and the provincial government are fully aware of the long term benefits of amalgamation in the St. John's Urban Region.

### *Strategic Issues*

MA 1. Continue to bring forward information contained in the St. John's Amalgamation Review report to the citizens of the St. John's Urban Region and the provincial government and to make the issue a topic for the next provincial election.

Current Status - Amalgamation continues to be a priority policy issue with the City. The most recent reinforcement of this position was put forward during the Mount Pearl Boundary Hearings.