

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

2009-2012



The City of Saint John

City of Saint John

Council Priority Areas 2012

In September of 2009 Saint John Common Council met to review the progress that had been made with regards to the priorities they had set in 2008 and to focus on priorities for the remaining three years of their term. As a result of this discussion Council identified 11 priority areas and a number of desirable outcomes associated with each.

Council's priorities help guide City Staff in day-to-day operations and future planning.

- Water/Wastewater
- Roads/Sidewalks/Active Transportation
- Recreation/Green Space
- Municipal Planning
- Flooding
- Municipal Growth
- Revenue Generation
- Pension Funding Solution
- Tax Rate
- Service Delivery/Accountability
- Rebuilding Neighbourhoods/Priority Neighbourhood Focus



Water/Wastewater

- By 2012 a complete comprehensive wastewater treatment system will be fully operational.
- By 2012 all six clean water projects will be completed and we will be at least 50% complete on the upgrading of the potable water system.
- By no later than 2012, agreements will be reached with other levels of government for the funding required to complete construction of one water treatment plant for the system.
- Affordability of water rates will be carefully considered as construction plans evolve with a goal of keeping rates at National average levels.
- Work will continue on separation of wastewater and stormwater collection systems
- Continue/increase the lining program being used to upgrade existing potable water lines

Roads/Sidewalks/Active Transportation

- Implement recommendations for improvements to the City's roads using PCI measures and increase funding to enable a more aggressive maintenance program.
- Incorporate bike lanes on main arterials roads where possible.
- Complete multi-year renewal program for all identified sub-standard sidewalks using concrete sidewalks wherever possible. Priority should be given to sidewalks in heavy traffic areas used by disabled people, children and seniors.
- Increase the number of secure pedestrian friendly crosswalks. Problem areas noted include: Metcalfe/Landsdowne; Union/St. Patrick St; Viaduct
- Stronger enforcement of designated truck traffic routes
- Consider chip-sealing as an alternative road surface in rural parts of the City
- Continue phased upgrades of Westfield Road and Lorneville Road
- Where possible narrow streets to increase pedestrian safety and promote active transportation and incorporate traffic calming measures as needed.



Recreation/Green Space

- Increased opportunities for participation in all age groups.
- Restore/replace existing recreation infrastructure (Parks & Playgrounds).
- Benchmark programming (Level of Service/Program Standards).
- Complete current projects.
- Analyze current green space/add to & enhance current green space in line with what children want.
- Annually celebrate recreation volunteers in the City.
- Coordinate development/maintenance of a database of all recreation programs in the City.
- Improve accessibility for the disabled at all City facilities.
- Continue efforts to develop a new multi-purpose recreation facility to be constructed by 2012.

Flooding

- To have action being taken to control and minimize flooding issues in areas where flooding has not occurred regularly in the past. Financial investment will be focused in areas that are identified as flooding “hot spots”.
- To develop a longer-term solution for on-going flooding issues in east Saint John

Municipal Growth

- Aggressively pursue development opportunities that will grow the City's tax base, generate wealth and/or increase population within our community.
- Development of vacant lots/infilling, especially in existing serviced areas and priority neighbourhoods, to be the focus of City's Development and Incentive Plans.



Municipal Planning

- Allocate resources necessary to continue to enhance/build upon development of a comprehensive Municipal Plan that will be adopted by 2012. Process to develop the Plan should include:
 - o significant opportunity for public consultation throughout the process. Opportunities for all stakeholder groups (residents, business owners, employees, neighbourhood associations, non-profit groups, housing, etc.) to have input.
 - o incorporation of proven best practices for urban policy in Plan. eg. Jane Jacobs school of urban, healthy neighbourhoods and cities.
 - o incorporation of climate change and peak oil considerations.
 - o consideration of appropriate policies to control development in designated floodplain areas.
 - o taking bold, necessary steps in policy formulation. Be a leader not a follower.
 - o consideration of policies related to a broad range of community issues including but not limited to: Affordable housing, high density development, green space allocations in high density areas, higher standards for green space allocations in subdivisions, cultural components, inclusion of individuals with special needs.

- Develop an Action Plan to move forward with implementing recommendations arising from the review of processes involved in planning/development approval (Ircha Report).



Pension Funding Solution

- By the end of 2010 make fundamental changes to the Employee Pension Plan that will reduce the liabilities of the Plan.
- Get City employees more involved with developing changes to the Pension Plan
- Be open minded to all possible suggestions/alternatives for dealing with the Pension Plan funding issue. Consult/Cooperate/Consent



Revenue Generation

- Investigate and implement revenue generating strategies separate from assessment generated funds to increase our general revenues by \$1.5 million per year by 2012.
- Work with Provincial Officials to ensure consistent application of assessment practices resulting in all properties being properly assessed by 2011.
- To conclusively determine the ownership relationship between the City and Saint John Energy in order to assess viable opportunities to leverage assets.
- Aggressively pursue all possible internal and external revenue generation/ cost cutting opportunities including fee increases and exemption from paying provincial property taxes on municipally owned buildings.

Tax Rate

- No increase in the tax rate for next three years (2010, 2011, 2012).
- Seek to achieve sustainable reduction in the tax rate based on assessment base increases and expenditure control.

Service Delivery/Accountability

- Implement a Customer Service Model with appropriate resources that will result in responses to public enquiries within 24 hours and follow-up action within two weeks of initial call.
- Continue focus of delivering services based on best value for money practices. This should include consideration of alternate service delivery options (public/private sector).
- Continue utilization of value engineering reviews for major capital projects.



Rebuilding Neighbourhoods/Priority Neighbourhood Focus

- Allocate monies in the City's Capital budget for acquiring vacant, derelict, dilapidated properties and cleaning up the properties to allow for future development. Particular emphasis to be placed on Priority Neighbourhoods.
- Work with the Province to have new legislation approved to restrict the amount of time a property can remain vacant/boarded up and/or in derelict condition and assign resources to enforce legislation once enacted.
- Give Saint John Non-Profit Housing power to develop vacant city owned lots for the City.
- Develop a "mixed income" housing strategy in conjunction with the review of the Municipal Plan.
- Advocate for "SCAN"¹ Task Force in City.
- Develop a program to enable a uniform waste collection program for all areas of the City.
- Maintain commitment to community grant program.
- Encourage increased visibility of law enforcement function through such things as community policing and increased use of "Beat Cops."
- Improve access to and investment in recreational opportunities at Community Centres and Parks.

