



# CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

For the **Village of Westport**



**McSWEENEY**  
inspiring economic sustainability®

May 2020



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# ***Village of Westport*** ***Corporate Strategic Plan***

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# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## INTRODUCTION

### What the Village of Westport is About

The Village of Westport is uniquely situated on the Rideau Canal – a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site – Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. Steeped in heritage, the Village of Westport became an incorporated independent municipality in 1904. With a walkable downtown boasting a diverse selection of businesses and services, a bustling harbour, and surrounded by natural beauty, Westport is a destination for thousands of visitors and cottagers over the summer months. Only 35 kilometres north of Kingston and 100 kilometres southwest of Ottawa, Westport is a municipality nestled in Eastern Ontario, in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

### What the Corporation of the Village of Westport is About

Although a small geographic area (1.68 km<sup>2</sup>) the Corporation of the Village of Westport is a lower-tier municipality responsible for a full spectrum of services to support Westport residents, businesses and visitors including infrastructure; water and wastewater services; managing solid waste; arena and community centre; municipal offices; parks; library; museum; public works; marina and harbour; planning; economic development; and, the financial well-being of the community. With a population of only 600 its demands on the ratepayers of the Village are significant.

As a result, in 2019, the Mayor, Council and senior staff decided it was time to review and update the Corporate Strategic Plan. Recognizing the importance to think strategically about their priorities, the Corporation realized the need to establish where to put their energies and limited finances to have a positive impact on the residents and businesses.

### What this Corporate Strategic Plan is About

Through collaboration between full-time staff, the Mayor and Council, and input from the Westport residents and businesses, this Corporate Strategic Plan has been developed through an open and transparent process.

The Corporation of the Village of Westport has been incrementally undertaking initiatives to ensure that the community is current and functioning to the highest municipal standards.

This Corporate Strategic Plan builds on the key strategic initiatives that the Corporation has been undertaking over the past few years to ensure that they are current and up to date on their provincial requirements.



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## VILLAGE OF WESTPORT 'VISIONS AND VALUES'

### Westport's Vision

**A progressive people-centred community that is strongly committed to enhancing the quality of life for its residents, business owners and visitors.**

### Westport's Values

These values help in defining "who" the Corporation is and also represents "what" is guiding the Corporation.

The Village of Westport above all values:

- 1. Integrity**
- 2. Transparency**
- 3. Professionalism**
- 4. Community Engagement**

## VILLAGE OF WESTPORT 'ASPIRATIONS'

These aspirations illustrate what the Village wants to continue to be in the future.

Westport will embrace its values as it aspires to...

Work collaboratively to ensure the Corporation continues to...

- be committed to providing the best customer service;
- be committed to learning;
- be respectful, inclusive, having integrity and public trust, leadership, communication and empowerment;
- be collaborative and to creatively challenge the status quo - being innovative;
- ensure that community, council and staff work together with one common goal of making Westport an affordable, pleasant place to live, work and play;
- be structured, well organized with all resources in place to support services;
- have good cooperation with neighbouring communities and other integral organizations that support Westport;
- build staff resiliency and support succession planning; and
- be a community that respects and protects its natural environment.



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## VILLAGE OF WESTPORT 'GOALS AND ACTIONS'

STRATEGIC ACTIONS PROVIDE THE "HOW" FOR THE VILLAGE TO REALIZE ITS ASPIRATIONS

The following pages outline the strategic actions broken down into the following five priority areas that emerged strongly through the consultation process. These areas are integrated and of equal importance.





# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### Why Is This Important?

Actions taken by the Village of Westport will continue to set the right processes in place to successfully deliver programs and service delivery with excellent customer service in a professional manner.

### What We Heard

The Village of Westport has a progressive Mayor and Council, supported by a small but very effective staff complement that all provide excellent leadership. This group is strategic, and proactive, and is continuously working towards providing the best services possible for residents, businesses and visitors. Communication both internally and externally is important to be successful.

### Strategic Actions Ranked in Order of Importance

1. Approve this long-term corporate strategic plan that extends beyond the next election.
2. Develop a succession plan for staff that are retiring, as well as any unplanned short or long-term absences.
3. Develop a platform within the municipal structure that allows for open communication and information sharing between staff (i.e. weekly staff meetings, etc.).
4. Continue to improve communication between Council and the public through a variety of consistent communication methods to all residents and business owners, including those that don't have access to the internet.
5. Continue to be strategic and aggressive in pursuing government and private sector grants that make sense to the long-term financial viability of the Corporation and are in line with the Asset Management Plan and the Strategic Plan.
6. Work with staff to build their knowledge base in order to undertake projects that aren't necessarily inline with their core skills and knowledge base. Further determine opportunities to develop and expand staff skillsets. Develop an action plan to address those issues and opportunities.
7. Establish a comprehensive policy and set of procedures to ensure corporate files are stored and retained properly. Begin moving corporate documents from individual email inboxes to the shared corporate files and electronic folders.





# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## PRACTICING SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### Why Is This Important?

Actions taken by the Village of Westport will help to manage its current finances while providing financial resiliency for the future.

### What We Heard

The Village of Westport has a very small tax base making it difficult to finance large municipal projects. Staff and elected officials are fiscally responsible and have been successful at obtaining grants to support projects but need to continue to find other revenue streams.

### Strategic Actions Ranked in Order of Importance

1. Establish a long-term Financial Plan to provide financial sustainability and resiliency for the future and link directly to the Asset Management Plan.
2. Continue to identify revenue-generating opportunities to supplement the tax base (i.e. user fees, corporate sponsorships, volunteer groups, etc.).
3. Continue to develop creative ways to better utilize the municipally-owned facilities to generate revenues.



Westport Harbour Source: Village of Westport





# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

### Why Is This Important?

Actions are consistently taken by the Village of Westport to improve the community's municipally owned and operated infrastructure which will enable the Village to provide the necessary infrastructure required to support future community growth.

### What We Heard

Old infrastructure is failing. The need to consistently build new, maintain and upgrade older infrastructure is demanding on both staff and financial resources. The capacity to undertake these projects is costly and the demand continues to rise but the budget doesn't and because of this it is difficult to complete projects when needed.

### Strategic Actions Ranked in Order of Importance

1. To facilitate sustainable growth to increase the tax base, there is a need to resolve inflow and infiltration abuse by monitoring and educating the residents and businesses on the issues around water conservation.
2. Continue to invest in upgrading infrastructure according to the 2017 Asset Management Plan.
3. Update the Village of Westport land use planning documents (official plan, land use zoning bylaw, etc.).
4. Update the 2017 Asset Management Plan.
5. Continue to develop a plan to improve the municipally-owned infrastructure and increase the capacity of the harbour to allow more boat docking.
6. Investigate and act on opportunities to increase parking solutions to support downtown in the high tourism season.
7. Continue to improve internet service within village boundaries by working with appropriate partners.



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## MAINTAINING SMALL TOWN FEEL AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

### Why Is This Important?

Actions taken by the Village of Westport will help achieve the agreed-upon community vision that supports the small-town feel and protects the natural beauty and the environment.

### What We Heard

Residents live in Westport and visitors are attracted to Westport because of its small-town feel but they believe that beyond this there is not a common visual identity for the Village. There is a lack of housing diversity that will allow seniors to stay in the community and new families to move into. There is pride in the natural beauty of the area and a desire to protect the environment.

### Strategic Actions Ranked in Order of Importance

1. Establish a common visual identity and roll-out plan for the Village.
2. Continue to build on municipal assets that support and attract young families.
3. Support seniors' population by working to attract a developer to build a seniors' style residence.
4. Increase the tree canopy by establishing a tree planting and tree preservation plan.
5. Create a plan to provide bike linkages to area biking trails/routes.



View from Foley Mountain  
Source: Village of Westport



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## CREATING A STRONGER AND RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY

### Why Is This Important?

Actions taken by the Village of Westport will help to provide a healthy and sustainable economy for its businesses and an increased standard of living for its residents.

### What We Heard

The Village of Westport is a self-sufficient community with shops and services available to support the residents and visitors but stakeholders feel that there could be stronger support from the local community to shop locally. There is a strong tourism industry in the summer months that brings thousands more people into the Village and supports the local businesses but decreases drastically in the shoulder seasons.

### Strategic Actions Ranked in Order of Importance

1. Work with local partner organizations for the Village of Westport to develop a 4-season tourism marketing plan.
2. Encourage the development of a business association to help support the local business community.
3. Undertake the development of a new brand to reflect Westport's vision.
4. Approve the business retention and expansion report and consider the implementation of those actions that can be completed within the scope of municipal government.
5. Investigate the Digital Main Street Program and work with interested businesses to direct them to the digital programs that are available through the program.
6. Develop a shop local program to encourage residents to support local businesses.





# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## APPENDIX

### SCOAR® Results from the Community Online Survey

The results of the SCOAR® is based on 39 online survey responses.

SCOAR® Results from the Community Online Survey	
<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly people</li> <li>• Small town charm</li> <li>• Walkable community</li> <li>• Heritage, culture and history</li> <li>• Location within the Rideau Lakes system and proximity to Ottawa, Perth and Kingston</li> <li>• Natural beauty of the area</li> <li>• Great citizen involvement</li> <li>• Civic pride</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• Self-sufficient community with shops and services available</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHALLENGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older and aging population</li> <li>• Inadequate supply of diverse housing options</li> <li>• Limited internet access</li> <li>• Extremely busy tourism in the summer months, not busy in winter</li> <li>• Support for local businesses by the local community</li> <li>• Community changing as a result of growth</li> <li>• Infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks) needs improving</li> <li>• Westport doesn't have a 'brand' or identity</li> <li>• Harbour underutilized</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving harbour amenities</li> <li>• Increased tourism in the shoulder seasons</li> <li>• Attracting new businesses</li> <li>• Retaining existing businesses</li> <li>• Increasing and diversifying housing options</li> <li>• Develop a brand/identity</li> <li>• Increasing tree canopy</li> <li>• Preserving the cultural and heritage components of the community</li> <li>• Improving infrastructure (internet options, roads, sidewalks, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>ASPIRATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of diverse housing opportunities providing incremental growth through attraction of families and supporting seniors</li> <li>• Continuing to improve the aesthetics of Westport</li> <li>• Continuing to build on the heritage and cultural assets</li> <li>• Retaining and attracting unique businesses</li> <li>• Increased tourism industry in the shoulder seasons to complement the summer season</li> <li>• A Westport 'brand/identity' that reflects the values of the community</li> </ul>



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## RESULTS

- Four season tourism industry that supports the businesses year-round
- Strong heritage and cultural assets unique to the Village of Westport
- Strong environmental advocacy
- Character of the Village of Westport maintained
- Affordable with a mix of seniors and families
- Supporting the residents by continuing to provide a self-sufficient community by continuing to build on the existing services while providing financial security for the future
- A sustainable growth in population
- Balance the seasonal population with the permanent population
- **Good infrastructure in place that is well maintained**

## WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY VALUE ABOUT THE VILLAGE OF WESTPORT?

- Community (the people, the history, the spirit, friendly, welcoming);
- Respect (of the local culture);
- Village aesthetics (quaintness, charm, walkability);
- Location; and
- Natural environment surrounding Westport.



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

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## Overall SCOAR® Results

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The following SCOAR® analysis is gleaned through one-on-one interviews with Village of Westport elected officials, staff, the public; document review; Situational Analysis; and community tour.

### Strengths

- Cooperative cohesive council with a diverse background of experiences that operate without ego and looks at what's best for the community;
- Strong leadership through the current Mayor and Council;
- Great staff that are knowledgeable and go the extra mile;
- Strong leadership through the CAO with a background in planning and finance;
- Great volunteers that support and participate in Committees of Council and other committees;
- Good lines of communications both internally, within the corporation between staff and council, and externally with the community;
- Staff and Council have the trust of citizens;
- Aggressive and successful at pursuing and accessing grant money;
- Fiscally responsible;
- Proactive and not reactive;
- Positive work environment, outlook and reputation;
- Building greater structure within the corporation;
- Improved professionalism;
- Strategic thinking;
- Processes underway for transparency in hiring and procurement; and
- Bylaws being updated that have been neglected in the past.

### Challenges

- Staff challenges
  - No succession planning in place (short term or long term).
  - Lack of a common goal that the team moves towards.
  - Staff wearing multiple hats has created stressful working situations (not always well qualified for all components of the position).
  - Difficult finding employees to work seasonal positions.
  - Corporate email files not being added to common drive.
  - Limited platform for sharing ideas i.e. staff meetings, etc.





# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

- Attracting staff.
- Communications within staff.
- Lack of privacy for staff and the public when dealing with private issues.
- Financial challenges
  - Limited budget due to a low tax base.
  - Maintaining and strengthening the amenities and infrastructure with a limited budget.
  - Inability to do what needs to be done when it is needed to be done due to limited funds.
- Community challenges
  - Providing resources and housing for an aging population.
  - Attracting and retaining younger families to live in the community.
  - Building a stronger and more resilient business community.
  - Marketing Westport for tourism, retail and residential attraction.
  - Communicating and educating residents on municipal processes, etc.
  - Volunteer fatigue.
  - Fundraising fatigue.
  - Concentration of events and the influx of seasonal residents in the spring, summer and fall.
  - Ability to live and work in Westport and earn a sufficient wage to support a family.
  - Failing infrastructure (i.e. wastewater system, roads, sidewalks, etc.).
  - Relationship with Rideau Lakes Township is strained.
  - Adequate broadband.

## Opportunities

- Improved communications with the residents;
- Improved relationships with Rideau Lakes Township; and
- Ensure staff stability through retention, succession planning and attracting new staff.



# Village of Westport Corporate Strategic Plan

## Aspirations/Priorities

- Develop a long-term strategic plan beyond the next election;
- Market to attract tourism and small business;
- Identify alternative revenue-generating opportunities for the Corporation;
- Sustainable municipal infrastructure in place with the outcome contributing to a healthy environment;
- Strong and resilient business economy;
- Effective and efficient service delivery by the Corporation;
- Asset management plan with realistic projections;
- Continue to have upbeat staff and good customer service;
- Have a policy in place to move corporate files from individual email inboxes to common drive;
- Improved two-way communications between Mayor and Council and the residents so that there is a better understanding of what are the community's expectations and the services being delivered by Town Hall;
- Increased financial resiliency with a program in place that allows finances in place to provide for the future; and
- Ongoing opportunities for staff to share information with other staff.

## Results

- Will have sufficient resources (human and financial) in place to provide excellent service delivery and build and maintain infrastructure providing a quality of life that is second to none.



Westport Harbour Source: Village of Westport