

2023-2026

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future



*Growing stronger together*

# The Strategic Planning Process

In April 2023, Oxford County Council initiated a strategic planning process to develop the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. This plan outlines a shared vision for the future of Oxford; reflects the priorities of the community, Council, and staff; and provides a road map for the County over the next several years.

To support this process and inform the creation of the Strategic Plan, an in-depth analysis of the County's internal and external environment was conducted, along with engagement with various County stakeholders to understand their perspectives and key priorities.

The County heard from over 450 stakeholders through our engagement process which included the following activities:

- Seventeen (17) interviews with the Warden, Council Members, Chief Administrative Officer, and Senior Management Team
- Three (3) workshops with County Council
- Three (3) workshops with the Senior Management Team
- One (1) digital staff survey (96 responses)
- Four (4) community engagement sessions
- One (1) digital community survey (293 responses)

# What We Heard: Key Themes and Insights



## **Towards a more sustainable future**

The County is focused on adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts and its leadership in sustainability. Oxford County was the first municipality in Ontario to commit to 100% renewable energy and the second in Canada. Its other bold goals include achieving zero waste, “100% Housed,” and community action on reducing poverty. The challenge for the future is the continued work of turning these ambitious and powerful goals into tangible actions that have meaningful impact on Oxford as a place, space, and community.



## **Housing for all**

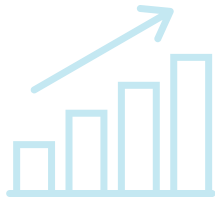
As in many other municipalities across Ontario, Oxford County residents are experiencing challenges in finding housing that meets their needs. The cost of housing – for both home ownership and rental units – is becoming less attainable for many, with many residents concerned about housing insecurity for vulnerable community members and the generation of the future.

Moving forward, to address these needs, the County will need to continue to focus on driving forward innovative solutions to addressing housing supply and affordability, including working with community partners and other levels of government, to ensure 100% housed.



## **Celebrating Oxford’s agricultural roots and natural landscape**

Residents of Oxford County are deeply proud of their agricultural and rural roots. As Oxford evolves in the years ahead, a celebration of this natural heritage and the continued thriving of the diverse agricultural industry is paramount. The County will need to balance the need to accommodate growth with the preservation of the rural landscapes that have defined it for over 200 years. With this, also comes the need to focus on the local environment, and in particular, building up long-term resiliency of the County’s natural features and infrastructure in response to the impacts of climate change and increasing extreme weather events.



## Managing our growing County

By 2046, Oxford is projected to grow by 47,000 new residents. As the County grows, it must proactively plan for and manage this growth to enable Oxford's continued success as a community to live, work in and visit. This means making sure that the County has the infrastructure, programs, and services to accommodate new residents and meet their evolving needs.

At the same time as it plans for new investments and enhancements, there is also a need to continue with the ongoing renewal of current assets, facilities, and other infrastructure. Taking an integrated approach to growth management and working closely with Oxford's area municipalities can help ensure that the County is ready for what is ahead and that it can set a vision for this growth in a way that is sustainable, balanced, and reflective of what makes Oxford, Oxford.



## A safe and well Oxford

Oxford is a community that cares. Against the broader context of economic uncertainty and rising affordability challenges, the County is committed to supporting the health, safety, and overall well-being of its community members. Addressing systemic challenges such as the housing crisis, income insecurity, and mental health and addictions issues will require sustained collaboration from all governments and community partners. The County and its area municipalities has already made important inroads to bring together these diverse stakeholders through the creation of its [Safe & Well Oxford: Community Safety & Well-Being Plan](#). This Plan is another commitment to fostering a vibrant and healthy community in which all can thrive.

# Survey Highlights

### More than 50% of respondents identified their favourite part of living in Oxford County as:

- The mix of urban and rural communities.
- Being close to family and friends.
- Being well connected to other urban areas like London and Kitchener-Waterloo.

**48% of respondents are satisfied with the quality of delivery of services provided by the County.**

### In five years, the community wants to see Oxford County achieve:

- More agricultural preservation.
- Safer communities.
- Increase in housing affordability and accessibility options for all.
- Better and more infrastructure to accommodate growth.



## Building a community where everyone belongs

Inherently, growth is also diversifying Oxford County's community, bringing not only new perspectives but also different needs. As the County plans for the future, it must strive for a diverse, equitable and inclusive community where everyone can be safe, healthy, and prosper.

While building new infrastructures and delivering and/or modifying services, the County must consider and anticipate its future residents' evolving needs. The County is starting from within and is dedicated to leading by example, which is why Oxford County has committed to developing an internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework and Action Plan as well as adopted diversity, equity, and inclusion as a value. This will ensure that the County is reflective of its evolving community and is considering diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its decision-making and service delivery.



## Oxford County is on the right track

County Council and staff care deeply about the future of the community and are committed to acting with transparency, accountability, respect, and integrity in everything they do. To ensure the County can continue to deliver the programs and services residents rely on today and in the future, the administration must continue to invest in its people, tools, and technologies. This means looking at new ways to transform service delivery to ensure quality, efficiency, responsiveness, and value for money. It also means building capacity within the organization and fostering a positive corporate culture that turns jobs into long-term careers in the service of Oxford County residents.

### More than 80% of respondents identified the following as the most important/important areas for the County:

- Protecting and respecting the environment and Oxford's natural assets.
- Managing growth effectively and ensuring the infrastructure is in place to support growth.
- Enhancing community safety and well-being in neighbourhoods.
- Working to provide better access to local healthcare services across the healthcare spectrum (e.g., urgent care, paramedic and ambulance services, preventive care, long-term care, etc.).

# Strategic Plan at a Glance



## VISION

Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.



## MISSION

Deliver responsible and responsive services that improve the community's social, environmental, and economic well-being.



## VALUES

- ➔ Excellence
- ➔ Accountability
- ➔ Innovation
- ➔ Integrity
- ➔ Teamwork
- ➔ Sustainability
- ➔ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



## PROMOTING community vitality

- 100% Housed
- Sustainable infrastructure and development
- Community health, safety and well-being
- Connected people and places



## ENHANCING environmental sustainability

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Preserve and enhance our natural environment



## FOSTERING progressive government

- Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions
- Collaborate with our partners and communities
- Attract, retain and engage staff
- Financial sustainability
- Advocate for Oxford County

# Vision, Mission, and Values

## VISION

Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.

## MISSION

Deliver responsible and responsive services that improve the community's social, environmental, and economic well-being.

## VALUES

**Excellence** - Demonstrated organizational and individual leadership, responsive, cooperative, and professional service.

**Accountability** - Willing acceptance of responsibility, demonstrated commitment to issue resolution, the courage to persevere, and the confidence to embrace change.

**Innovation** - Solutions oriented, forward-thinking and committed to continuous improvement.

**Integrity** - Beyond reproach and operating to the highest ethical standard – open, honest, and fair.

**Teamwork** - Respectful relationships characterized by valuing diversity and the views and contributions of others – a demonstrated commitment to coordination, open communication, and knowledge transfer.

**Sustainability** - Conscious and proactive effort to ensure the long-term viability of the County, its environment and everything that makes it a great place to live.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** - Fostering a culture where everyone is welcomed, valued, and celebrated.





# Pillar #1 Promoting Community Vitality

## Goal 1.1

### 100% Housed

#### INITIATIVES

1. Support the creation of diverse housing types and options through policy updates and completion of an Official Plan review
2. Invest capital funds and leverage provincial, federal, and partner funding in support of the Master Housing Strategy and Housing for All Plan
3. Lead and support partners in implementing effective integrated solutions for vulnerable and unhoused populations
4. Continue to advocate for and support increased long-term care capacity and supports for community members







## Goal 1.2

### Sustainable infrastructure and development

#### INITIATIVES

1. Optimize asset management and preventative maintenance for aging and expanding infrastructure
2. Continue integrated growth management to support long-term sustainable growth
3. Support the long-term sustainability of agricultural land and industry through a balanced approach to growth and development
4. Pursue opportunities to improve and streamline the development review process
5. Facilitate the supply of service-ready land to enable residential and business growth and attraction
6. Continue to support economic development initiatives in the County's local municipalities to foster a diverse and prosperous economy



# Pillar #1 Promoting Community Vitality

## Goal 1.3

### Community health, safety and well-being

#### INITIATIVES

1. Support and facilitate the goals and objectives within the Safe & Well Oxford: Community Safety & Well-Being Plan and the activities of its three Action Coalitions:
  - a. Mental Health and Substance Abuse
  - b. Housing
  - c. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
2. Develop and improve capacity to measure community health, safety and well-being
3. Advocate and collaborate with the provincial and federal governments for enhanced human and healthcare services
4. Strengthen partnerships with area municipalities, community organizations and local service providers to implement policies and optimize outcomes
5. Explore Oxford's role in the "Calls to Action" contained within the Truth and Reconciliation report





## Goal 1.4

### Connected people and places

#### INITIATIVES

1. Continue to develop and implement the multi-modal Transportation Master Plan that connects people, goods and services
2. Advocate for enhanced passenger and freight rail infrastructure and service
3. Continue to support the expansion of internet/broadband connectivity
4. Continue to implement initiatives to improve road safety (e.g., speed management, traffic calming and road safety program, etc.)



## Pillar #2 Enhancing Environmental Sustainability

### Goal 2.1

#### Climate change mitigation and adaptation

##### INITIATIVES

1. Develop a Climate Action Plan with targets, resource requirements and an implementation plan, leveraging existing plans:
  - a. Energy Management Plan
  - b. 100% Renewable Energy Plan
  - c. Green Fleet Plan
2. Implement initiatives to support community members and stakeholders in embracing sustainable options, including education and awareness initiatives
3. Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for policy amendments that enable sustainable development
4. Update Emergency Management Plans to address climate impacts





## Goal 2.2

### Preserve and enhance our natural environment

#### INITIATIVES

1. Protect the County's water resources through Source Water Protection and Water Efficiency Programs in collaboration with Conservation Authorities
2. Reduce waste generation/disposal, maximize resource recovery and promote Circular Economy (Zero Waste Plan)
3. Support the review and update of environmental policies and programs, including
  - Sewer infiltration and Inflow Control and Reduction Program
  - Natural heritage and water resource system framework



## Pillar #3 Fostering Progressive Government

### Goal 3.1

#### Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions

##### INITIATIVES

1. Assess and continually explore opportunities to establish effective and efficient service delivery levels and models, considering expected growth and community needs
2. Monitor and publicly report on service level performance and community satisfaction
3. Implement data analytics to inform evidence-based policy and service delivery decision-making





## Goal 3.2

### Collaborate with our partners and communities

#### INITIATIVES

1. Improve two-way communication with Area Municipalities to promote partnerships and collaboration
2. Update the County's Communication & Engagement Strategy to support continuous civic engagement and ongoing communication
3. Develop a Customer Relationship Management Plan to enhance communication, satisfaction with services, and the resident experience



## Pillar #3 Fostering Progressive Government

### Goal 3.3

#### Attract, retain and engage staff

##### INITIATIVES

1. Strategically build internal capacity to support current and forecasted service delivery demands
2. Innovative policies and practices that support employee attraction, retention, and succession planning
3. Develop and implement an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework and Action Plan for the County
4. Empower staff and build a culture of innovation







## Goal 3.4

### Financial sustainability

#### INITIATIVES

1. Prioritize long-term financial planning and risk management, including evaluation of the full lifecycle costs of projects and assets
2. Continue to explore revenue diversification (e.g., cost recovery provisions, government funding opportunities, etc.)

## Goal 3.5

### Advocate for Oxford County

#### INITIATIVES

1. Develop an intergovernmental advocacy strategy to champion evolving service priorities for the County



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