

Town of Sackville

Draft Strategic Plan

*Consultation Document by
Mayor & Council*

November 2, 2009

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Dear Residents of Sackville,

Since May 2009, the Mayor and the members of Town Council have met for several strategic planning sessions and have worked with Dr. Michael Fox, Mount Allison University, in creating a draft set of core principles and a series of strategic goals and directions for the next several years. This draft strategic plan is based on the feedback that we have received through the work completed by Professor Fox and his team this past spring and summer. In total, they were able to interview close to 200 residents of Sackville. We are now looking for your input into our draft strategic plan.

Once we have your help in improving the plan we can then develop a final Strategic Plan and an associated Action Plan to focus our work for the next few years. We want to know what you think of the direction of the plan so far and we want your ideas to assist us in taking the plan to the next level – official passage and actions commencing early in 2010.

We hope discussions this evening will assist us in receiving further community input on what strategic directions you feel the Town Council should pursue in making Sackville a great place to live, learn and play. We hope that you will take the time to review the attached draft and provide Council with your suggestions and comments.

Written submissions can be sent by email to [<mfox@mta.ca>](mailto:mfox@mta.ca) or dropped off at Town Hall. All submissions received before the end of November will be distributed to Council for consideration during the next strategic planning working session. A public hearing on the Draft Strategic Plan will be held at the regular meeting of Town Council on Monday, November 9, 2009 in Council Chambers, 110 Main Street, Sackville at 7:00 p.m. We hope to accept a final strategic plan at the regular Town Council meeting of December 14, 2009.

We look forward to hearing your comments on our strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Patricia Estabrooks
Mayor, Town of Sackville

Councillor Robert Berry
Councillor Merrill Fullerton
Councillor Virgil Hammock
Councillor John Higham
Councillor Joyce O'Neil
Councillor Bruce Phinney
Councillor Michael Tower
Councillor Margaret Tusz-King

Community Vision for the Next 5 years:

Sackville will be:

- **A vibrant, strong and progressive university town;**
- **A town that offers an open, accessible and transparent municipal government;**
- **A place with enhanced arts, cultural, heritage and recreational opportunities,**
- **A livable, healthy and environmentally sustainable community,**
- **Strong in economic development by building and maintaining a sustainable and diversified economic base,**
- **A place where all citizens, businesses and institutions are proud to live, work, learn and play.**

A) Strategic Priority: Open, Accessible and Transparent Local Government

1. Open, Accessible and Participatory Municipal Government.

Goal 1.1: To provide accessible and open municipal government through enhanced communication practices with residents, businesses, Mount Allison University students and staff, and other community partners through engagement of the community in the community planning, development and governance processes.

- The Mayor, Council and staff commit to supporting this strategic plan by ensuring that there is increased public input and engagement in the planning and policy process and that all Council decisions will be made in accordance with this strategic plan.
- Mayor, Council and staff are committed to increased reporting to taxpayers on critical financial documents and plans, including a more inclusive budgeting process.

2. Excellence in Program and Service Delivery.

Goal 2.1: To provide high quality, efficient and effective programs and services to the community according to the need and approved service levels and budget by developing a municipal government that ensures accountability to citizens and effective town management.

- Mayor, Council and staff are committed to building a management structure that embraces Town and community partnerships, communications, excellence, and continuous improvement. In accordance with the Strategic Plan, we will facilitate

the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services through these core partnerships and nurture the related economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the community, now and in the future.

3. Prudent Financial Management and Services.

Goal 3.1: To ensure financial stability, affordability and fiscal health of programs and services through sound financial planning, management and innovation. We will respect the size of the Town and its tax base while using the Strategic Plan as the filter through which all financial management decisions are made.

Goal 3.2: Development of a multi-year financial plan and budgeting process and effectively communicating the fiscal reality of a small municipality with other levels of government and Sackville citizens to ensure that we are living within our means.

- Council and staff are committed to a financial management model that is managed responsibly, incorporating a triple bottom line filter (economic, social and environmental sustainability) and the full life cycle cost perspective in spending and investment decisions, reflecting the strategic directions and priorities of the community, as listed in the Strategic Plan and the related departmental business plans.
- Council and staff are committed to a process where revenue (tax income) supports municipal services that meet current priorities and investment for the future while ensuring stable, equitable and affordable property taxes to residents and businesses.

4. Support for Quality Community Initiatives.

Goal 4.1: Recognizing the enormous volunteer base and potential for community involvement that exists in Sackville, Council and staff will provide active support to community-based initiatives and volunteer organizations by facilitating and assisting a coordinated and quality service base for all members of the community.

5. Recruitment and Retention of a Chief Administrative Officer and the Development of a Good Governance Model for Council-CAO Relations.

Goal 5.1: Mayor and Council, in consultation with the larger community, will develop and pass a Chief Administrative Officer By-Law for the Town of Sackville, in accordance with the *Municipalities Act*. This By-Law will provide a clear position description and good governance model that identifies the specific roles of Mayor, Council and the Chief Administrative Officer. Such a by-law will act as an open, transparent document that will facilitate the recruitment, retention and productive Council-CAO relationship over the duration of this strategic plan, subject to renewal.

Goal 5.2: Council and the Chief Administrative Officer will develop a comprehensive human resource management plan for the Town of Sackville, including a review of the management structure, a review of existing staff positions, and succession planning that will be designed in alignment with Council's Strategic Plan and annual updates to that plan.

Goal 5.3: The CAO will work with Directors and staff to develop annual departmental business plans and goals, which will be aligned with Council's Strategic Plan. These departmental business plans will be core planning elements in the development of annual corporate budgets, to be delivered to Town Council for approval. Council will ensure that all budget planning and business plans to receive resources are in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

Goal 5.4: Commencing with the 2010 budget year, under the Direction of the CAO, all departmental business plans, as well as corporate goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, will be measured according to established key performance indicators and reported to Council and the community. Council will work with the CAO to establish a business plan template for effective and timely reporting.

6. Mayor, Council and Town Administration will develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy that will increase efficiency, transparency and environmental responsibility.

Goal 6.1: Mayor and Council will move away from the traditional "Liaison Councillor" model to one of "Communication/Strategic Direction Committees of Council", based on the strategic priorities of this plan to ensure public accountability and responsiveness. In the first year of the strategic plan, Mayor and Council will constitute Council Committees that are designed to work with the CAO, the Directors of the various Town Departments, as well as community-based groups and representatives that allow town staff to report to Council and the public in an open, accountable and respectful meeting environment. Rather than a day-to-day administrative role, Communications Committees of Council will be designed to ensure accountability to citizens and effective town management on achieving the various strategic directions of this plan. Various Council members will be assigned a communications role in ensuring that specific strategic initiatives and goals of the Strategic Plan are realized.

Goal 6.2: Mayor, Council and the CAO will immediately implement a revised Monthly Town Council Meeting format that will be based on a communications-information model, including the use of Internet-based reports, information and agendas. In general, Mayor and Council will strive to limit monthly meetings to no longer than 90 minutes and, whenever possible, all relevant documentation will be provided to the public in electronic format and in key public venues, prior to the monthly meeting.

Goal 6.3: The Town of Sackville will develop a clear communications policy and designated Communications Officer, with specific requirements to maintain and enhance communications within and outside of the Town Council and administrative offices. Working with all elected and staff members of the Town government, the Communications Office will provide overall coordination of the flow of information within and outside of the Town offices and committees, including the overall communications and reporting on the Strategic Plan and related departmental communications needs. The Communications Officer will act as the chief media contact for the Town of Sackville, in coordination with the Mayor and the CAO.

7. Foster positive engagement with our citizens.

Goal 7.1: Council is committed to an open and engaged citizen consultation process and we will develop a fully articulated policy on the public information and consultation process during the 2010 year – in addition to monthly meetings of the Town Council and the recent bylaw change to allow public attendance at Council's information and presentation meetings.

B) Strategic Priority: Strengthen Sackville's economic development by building a sustainable and diversified economic base.

1. Economic and Human Capital Strategy.

Goal 1.1: In cooperation with regional, provincial and national economic development strategies, Sackville will endeavor to attract significant financial and human resources by developing an economic and human capital strategy through the Economic Development and Tourism Department. Beginning immediately, Council will focus on this Department by providing a strengthened mandate to support private industry and entrepreneurs and maintaining existing employers and businesses and attracting new business and industry to Sackville.

Goal 1.2: Council will update and endorse the Municipal Development Plan (2009) and associated Zoning By-Law to ensure that infrastructure and core services keep pace with our growth strategy.

Goal 1.3 Council recognizes that the key to our future is to develop Sackville as a growing and diverse community, where we provide an outstanding quality of life for families, youth and seniors. Council is committed to the continued development of Sackville as a small, high-quality community with a wide range of resources and services for all ages, rather than a suburb or niche community with a narrow population base. To this end, Council will establish a population growth model and related targets for the Town prior to the next census period (population of 6,000 by 2015).

Goal 1.4 Given Sackville's strategic location between the three Maritime provinces, Council recognizes the importance of cross-border trade and employment opportunities, especially with the Town of Amherst, Nova Scotia. Early in 2010, Council will work with the Economic and Tourism Department to forge a cross-border trade and tourism strategy with the Town of Amherst, including a Cross-Border Economic and Tourism Think-Tank, consisting of Mayors, Council members, local and provincial government representatives, entrepreneurs and citizens. Together, this group will have a mandate to explore ways in which the two communities can cooperate on the wide range of mutually important interests we have in economic development and tourism.

2. Sackville will become a thriving, Year-Round Tourism Destination.

Goal 2.1: To broaden the economic base of the community by cooperatively promoting Sackville as a year-round destination, in terms of attractions, arts, culture, recreation and heritage venues.

Goal 2.2: Working with community partners, Council will facilitate a long-term tourism and economic development plan, based upon a year-round destination model. Sackville's rich history, cultural heritage and expansive historical context and infrastructure will be a central theme in the development of this plan.

Goal 2.3: Retain and expand the Town's employment base – including cooperation with Mount Allison University and the other major employers in the Town, though the development of a regional jobs strategy.

Goal 2.4: Promote Sackville as an ideal location that combines quality of life with employment capacity for research, innovation, creative and design-based employment, as well as a highly developed infrastructure for development of interactive technology and light-industry employment. In particular, Council will direct the Economic Development Department to develop a business plan for the development of a green business park concept, in relation to newly zoned industrial lands within the Town.

3. A revitalized and vibrant commercial sector that recognizes the diversity of commercial and business zones of the Town.

Goal 3.1: To promote a vibrant Business Improvement Area that will be the focal point for commercial activity, employment opportunities, cultural, civic, recreational, tourism and integrated residential/commercial development in the key areas recognized in the Municipal Plan.

Goal 3.2: Council, in cooperation with the Tantramar Planning District Commission, Renaissance Sackville and the business community will develop a Business Improvement Area architectural and signage design policy, in order to develop this zone as a unique, aesthetically appealing and attractive destination for residents and tourists alike.

Goal 3.3: Continue to work closely with local business owners, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, the Sackville Downtown Revitalization Committee and other partners to develop and implement a retail sector strategy for economic development and a vibrant commercial area for the Town. In 2010, Council will review the existing Business Improvement Area and implement appropriate changes to this zone, ensuring that all commercial areas are tied together into a coherent commercial/retail zone.

Goal 3.4: Council and staff, working in cooperation with the Sackville Downtown Revitalization Committee, Renaissance Sackville and the Chamber of Commerce, will actively promote a business retention and building enhancement program, including financial incentives and other commercial enhancement programs. In 2010, Council will coordinate a review of multiple individuals and groups that are working toward business/retail programs with a goal of reducing the duplication and overlap between the various actors.

Goal 3.5: Council will work towards the implementation of a complete wireless (WiFi) level of connectivity in the downtown core.

Goal 3.6 Council will work with Moncton and Dieppe municipal governments to explore the feasibility of a transportation link between our communities. In particular, Council will consult with the transportation planning committee currently reviewing public transit in the Greater Moncton area.

4. Increase tourism employment and economic spin-offs.

Goal 4.1: Nurture, identify and promote a range of Sackville attractions so that increased tourism will add to the economic spin-offs of visitors to our region.

Goal 4.2: Capitalize on the eco-tourism trend – including natural heritage and environmentally-friendly initiatives such as the Waterfowl Park, the Trans-Canada Trail system and the wealth of museums as economic drivers for the Town. Council will re-evaluate the proposal for a pedestrian walkway that would cross the Trans-Canada Highway, thus enhancing public safety, adding a significant tourist attraction and connecting the Sackville Waterfowl Park trail system and the Trans-Canada Trail network.

Goal 4.3: Recognizing the enormous potential of “first impressions” and a unified appearance in attracting tourists into a town, we will work with Renaissance Sackville and the Department of Transportation in developing the three main entry areas to Sackville (from the Trans-Canada Highway and Dorchester) into beautiful, inviting, well maintained gardens and landscaped entrance-ways that are significantly different from the average highway exit. Council will invite local landscaping companies to participate in this project.

C) Strategic Priority: Ensure that Sackville is a Livable, Healthy and Sustainable Community

- 1. Council and staff, working in cooperation with the Tantramar Planning District Commission, will implement the 2009 Municipal Plan which details our commitment to a well-planned and environmentally responsible community.**
- 2. Council, working with the Tantramar Planning District Commission and local and regional partners (other municipal governments, provincial and federal government agencies, Non-governmental agencies and groups, etc.), will develop and implement an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that recognizes the importance of a long range, natural systems approach to provide for a balance in our strategic priorities, recognizing that environmental, economic, social and cultural strategic priorities are interrelated and sustained through such an approach.**

Goal 2.1: To consider environmental impact and community sustainability in relation to all activities, purchases, plans and decisions (Triple Bottom Line) undertaken by the Town and to limit such impacts to reasonable and appropriate levels, as detailed in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

Goal 2.2: Recognize that, in a sustainable community, community groups, institutions, businesses, volunteers, governments and individuals must work together to set goals, form plans and implement solutions. Council embraces such a model and will provide leadership in bringing such an integrated plan together for our community.

3. A vibrant, safe and healthy community.

Goal 3.1: To plan and support a vibrant community that provides healthy living, safety and security for all ages.

Goal 3.2: Mayor and Council support the continued existence and fundamental need for a fully equipped and professionally staffed hospital, with a clearly developed strategy for attracting and retaining highly qualified medical practitioners and allied health professionals.

Goal 3.3: Fully develop Sackville's Active Transportation Plan, as part of the goal to implement the Recreation Master Plan.

Goal 3.4: Working with the CAO and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the newly established Community Committee on Policing, Council will develop an Annual Community Policing Priority Plan, with specific items of concern in the areas of public safety, crime prevention, police visibility and community liaison expectations identified and made available for public consultation. Likewise,

Council and CAO will work with the RCMP senior representative to update and identify key performance measures on a monthly basis, in terms of a report to the Town Council and the citizens of Sackville. Review of annual key performance indicators will be used in establishing community policing budgets and staffing negotiations.

4. Building Capacity in Non-Profit and Community Groups

Goal 4.1: Council, in cooperation with Renaissance Sackville, will fully endorse and provide all reasonable political, financial and moral support to enable the community to access a diverse range of activities and opportunities in our community, our region and province. In the next year (2010), Council will fully develop our Plan for Non-Profit (Volunteer) and Community Groups, with measurable results being tracked and reported through Renaissance Sackville.

5. Create a more complete, compact and accessible community.

Goal 5.1: Encourage and nurture a full array of available services and amenities for all citizens through an integrated information and funding process that will ensure local, regional, provincial and federal programs, opportunities and services are provided for all Sackville residents in an accessible and timely fashion. Towards this goal, Council and Town administrative staff will enhance their knowledge and awareness of the various programs, services and funding opportunities that may be available for the residents of Sackville.

Goal 5.2: Council will move to fully implement the “Strategy for Increasing Residential Homeownership Development in Sackville”, accepted by Council in 2008, thus growing the residential tax base and achieving higher densities and intensification requirements for new developments.

Goal 5.3: Council will work with the Tantrammar Planning District Commission to monitor and maintain an inventory of housing types and tenure options, with a goal of increasing the number of attainable housing units through the development of policies that encourage/require developers to provide more attainable, energy-efficient housing – that is, some component of a larger development being dedicated to lower-priced, affordable housing options.

Goal 5.4: Council will move to more effectively communicate the Town’s housing and social services needs to the provincial and federal governments responsible for such services – ensuring that responsibility for such housing and service needs are being assumed at the proper levels of government.

Goal 5.5: Council will undertake to improve the level of accessibility in the community – particularly the commercial area, including increasing the number of pedestrian crossings, audible services for sight-impaired pedestrians, curb cuts, accessible parking areas, public washroom facilities, and wider sidewalks.

D) Strategic Priority: Enhance Our Arts, Cultural, Heritage and Recreational Opportunities.

1. Council will implement, where financially feasible, the 2009 Recreation Master Plan.

Goal 1.1: Working with community partners, various levels of government and Mount Allison University, Council and Town staff will endeavour to implement the various phases of the Recreation Master Plan over the next three years (2010 – 2012). Recreation and Parks staff will report on progress on the plan's implementation as part of their annual key performance indicator report to Council and the Sackville community.

2. Council, working with community partners and staff, will develop a comprehensive Arts and Culture strategy for the Town of Sackville.

Goal 2.1: Council will implement, where possible, the Arts and Culture policy completed and passed by Council in 2008. By implementing this policy, Council will re-enforce their commitment to arts and culture as integral to the Sackville community. This policy will highlight Council's support for local artisans and creative cultural tourism.

Goal 2.2: In 2010, Council will enact the proposed Heritage By-Law and strengthen municipal support for local heritage sites and community heritage assets.

Goal 2.3: Council will actively demonstrate municipal support and undertake capacity-building initiatives for arts and culture.

- Council will assist individual and community groups in securing financial, administrative and logistical assistance for developing the arts and culture. This will include access to municipal resources and community support groups such as Renaissance Sackville.

E) Strategic Priority: Strengthen the existing working relationship between Mount Allison University and the Town of Sackville.

1. A shared mission for Sackville's distinct identity as a destination to live, work and study.

Goal 1.1: Mayor and Council recognize that, in each of the future strategic directions Sackville will move, Mount Allison University will play an important role. As Council, CAO and Town administration move forward to implement this strategic plan, we will work to engage and enhance relationships with the students, staff and administration of Mount Allison University. Whenever possible, the Town of Sackville will work in partnership with Mount Allison University students, staff and administration across the wide range of strategic priorities identified in this plan, including: culture and the arts, recreation and active living, economic development, education and research, sustainability planning and policies, heritage, volunteerism, government relations, community beautification, infrastructure and planning.

To that end, Mayor, Council and Town administrative staff will improve communications with Mount Allison University by maintaining a regular schedule of meetings between Council and the Board of Regents, the University Administration and the Students' Administrative Council (SAC) to discuss common issues and establishing opportunities for representation on various Town committees, information sessions and community outreach efforts. Such meetings may also include representatives of local schools, community groups, the RCMP and the Sackville Volunteer Fire Department.

Goal 1.2: The Town of Sackville will engage in mutually beneficial joint projects and partnerships, whenever possible, with all members of the Mount Allison University community. Further, the Town will work to enhance and lead efforts to ensure an integrated communications strategy between Mount Allison University and the Sackville community, as well as regional, provincial and federal governments and agencies.

Action List:

- **A multi-year financial plan and budgeting process**
- **Invest in an economic and human capital strategy**
- **Engage a new Chief Administrative Officer**
- **Chief Administrative Officer By-Law**
- **Human resource management plan including a review of management structure, existing staff positions and succession planning**
- **Annual departmental business plans and goals**
- **Comprehensive communication strategy**
- **Long-term tourism and economic development plan**
- **Development of a Regional Jobs Strategy and a trade and tourism partnership think tank with the Town of Amherst, N.S.**
- **Develop a business improvement zone architectural and signage design policy**
- **Develop and implement a retail sector strategy for economic development and a vibrant commercial core**
- **Promote a business retention and building enhancement program**
- **Study the feasibility of a transit link to Dieppe/Moncton**
- **Monthly Town Council meeting format & New Council mandate to develop each part of the Strategic Plan**
- **Designate a Communications Officer**
- **A fully articulated policy on public information and consultation process**
- **Implement the 2009 Recreation Master Plan**
- **Implement a comprehensive Arts and Culture strategy in 2010**
- **Complete and implement a Heritage By-Law**
- **Implement the 2009 Municipal Plan and related zoning initiatives**
- **Develop and implement an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan**
- **Develop a strategy for attracting and retaining highly qualified medical practitioners**
- **Fully develop the Active Transportation Plan and seek funding for the Pedestrian walkway over the Trans-Canada Highway**
- **Develop a Community Policing Committee and an Annual Policing Priority Plan**
- **Develop a Policy and Plan for Non-Profit and Community Groups**
- **Implement the Residential Homeownership Development Strategy to increase housing stock and energy efficiency**
- **Develop policies that encourage affordable housing**
- **Follow the Municipal Development Plan (2009) and associated Zoning By-Law to ensure infrastructure and core services keep pace with growth strategy**
- **Implement a wireless network for the downtown core**

Implementing the actions:

After the community consultation process is completed, Mayor and Council will go through each of the above actions and will either develop strategies for each member of Council to oversee, or delegate the actions to an individual or an organization that is capable of implementation of that strategy. When working with a large number of actions to be taken it is important to look at them individually and decide who will be responsible to assume responsibility for that strategy and implement it. In this way the actions are less overwhelming and they create an effective way to accomplish the desired outcomes.