

VILLAGE OF DELBURNE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2025 Community Priorities





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DELBURNE TODAY

Gathering local insight on the current reality that shapes the Village on a day-to-day basis is a critical step to take before moving forward with identifying a vision for the future of the community. Discussing the current reality, from a variety of different perspectives, helps ground desired future outcomes through the lens of what can be reasonably achieved.

The following section outlines the key opportunities and challenges that have been thematically defined based on the input received through engagement with Council, staff, local businesses, targeted stakeholders, and the general public. While not a comprehensive list, this is a reasonable representation of what matters most to the community right now, outlining where the Village should be looking to invest available resources and capacities.

Key Opportunities

1. Leverage, nurture, and build relationships:

The Village has already established strong regional and inter-governmental relationships. As local governments continue to face uncertainties on funding municipal services and infrastructure replacement, new and ongoing partnerships are increasingly important to building a strong and healthy community.

2. Reimagining the role and function of Main Street:

A healthy Main Street is the beating heart of a strong and healthy community, which has the potential to create benefits across multiple sectors.

3. Establishing a supportive, diverse, and thriving local economy:

Retaining existing businesses and supporting their opportunities to grow and expand builds the economic ecosystem necessary to attract new businesses that provide local employment, contribute to a strong quality of life, and diversifies municipal revenue to strengthen sustainable service delivery.

4. Capitalizing on local strengths to establish the Village as a regional service centre:

Healthcare is a critical component of a sustainable community, and the Village has the building blocks that support the continued expansion of health and wellbeing services that collectively act as a magnet for additional services, businesses, and new citizens.

5. Leverage community assets to promote the Village as a multi-season destination:

Building on local successes, assets, and natural features, the Village can make Delburne a destination that attracts visitors throughout the year, providing continued opportunities to support the sustainability and growth of existing businesses and convert today's visitors into future citizens.

Key Challenges

1. Retaining and attracting non-residential development to diversify the municipal revenue stream:

Consistent sources of revenue are needed to fund the ongoing programming, operations, maintenance, and replacement of core services the municipality provides. Generating revenues from a variety of different types of development ensures that citizens are not required to continually pay more to meet the increasing costs of services.

2. Maintaining sustainable revenue sources to address short and long-term infrastructure maintenance and replacement:

Municipalities across the country, of all types and sizes, are continually dealing with infrastructure maintenance and replacement needs to support ongoing sustainable service delivery. This requires

ongoing fiscally responsible investments and decision-making to address both the short and long-term needs of the Village.

3. Filling the gaps on vacant lots and buildings on Main Street:

While strengthening the Main Street is a key opportunity to support the long-term health of the community, it requires incremental changes that work at filling in the gaps on vacant lots and working collaboratively to enhance or rebuild existing structures that are no longer viable for continued use.

4. Diversifying the types of housing available to meet all segments of the population:

The availability of housing types (i.e., individual houses, apartment-style units, places to buy and rent, etc.) are necessary to provide opportunities for households at different stages of their lives (i.e., young families, single professionals, senior citizens, etc.) and incomes to either stay in the community or confidently move in.

5. Empowering leadership throughout the community to create an intergenerational sense of citizenship:

While the “people” and the “sense of community” have been highlighted as local strengths, there has been a consistent presence of a small group of dedicated volunteers that have driven many initiatives and organizations. As the long-standing citizens continue to age and new citizens move into the community, seeking ways to empower welcoming and inclusive transitions among community leaders will be important.



VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

These represent essential elements of both the process and the outcome of preparing a strategic plan. Throughout the process, it is important to consider the core elements of the community that you want to preserve, while envisioning an emerging future that is built on incremental changes.

Upon completion of the plan, these elements are guideposts to help evaluate decisions, communicate trade-offs with the community, and guide the creation of any other related plan, policy, or strategy.

Vision

A strategic vision concerns the future path of the organization and questions how you want to see the community evolve, asking what do we want to be?

Delburne is:

- ***A thriving, prosperous, and inclusive community***
- ***A regional hub for health and wellbeing***
- ***A welcoming community for people of all ages***
- ***A hometown we are proud to invest in***

Mission

A mission statement focuses on the present and overall purpose, seeking to define who we are and asking what do we do and for whom?

Your success is our success! The Village nurtures a strong and healthy community, through:

- ***Balanced, strategic decisions***
- ***Stewardship of sustainable service delivery***
- ***Strengthening collaborative partnerships***
- ***Facilitating an environment for community investment and success***

Values

Values help to describe what is important, serving as the cornerstone for all activities, and are at the heart of the organizational and community culture, asking what is necessary to build on.

The values guiding our stewardship of the community are:

- We **COLLABORATE** through effective partnerships with all sectors of the community and other levels of government
- We are **TRANSPARENT** in how we make decisions and communicate with the public
- We **BALANCE** the trade-offs of decisions affecting the short-term and long-term priorities
- We are **ACCOUNTABLE** to all the community's assets and incorporate fiscal resilience into all of our decisions
- We are **INCLUSIVE** of all perspectives and maintain respect through all our communication
- We are **ADAPTABLE** to the inevitable change that we will encounter along the way

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Moving to action can be considered through the lens of “what needs to be addressed now?”. This starts with a high-level statement that establishes a critical priority, which stems logically from the key challenges and opportunities and aligns with the defined Vision, Mission, and Value statements. Each strategic priority statement must be designed to take a realistic and incremental approach to identify actions that will allow the Village to make meaningful progress now, with the resources that are available.

The following represent the “Big Ideas” to guide the direction of the community moving forward. The structure of each priority establishes an overall direction (i.e., the “Big Idea”) that includes a purpose statement indicating why this is a priority. Each of the priorities will also include a set of goals that will help evaluate how the Village is progressing and a set of incremental actions that will evolve over time. Note, the actions that have been articulated do not imply that checking each action off the list will ultimately achieve the overall goal. Rather, this is a list of what can be realistically initiated over the next three (3) years that would help the Village move forward on each of the priorities.

Priority 1: A strong and healthy local economy

Economic stability helps sustain Delburne’s quality of life now and for generations into the future. A strong and healthy local economy supports local job opportunities that retain and attract citizens, supports continued and expanded service delivery, and ensures core municipal infrastructure is well-maintained.

Goals

1. **Take more direct control over our economic destiny:** Take a more intentional approach to economic development to identify key assets and initiate targeted business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts.

Actions:

- Review the planning policy and direction within the Area Structure Plan of the “annexed lands” to assess their consistency with the direction of the strategic plan and establish core amendments and potential actions necessary to increase their contribution to the sustainability of the village.
 - Desired outcome: Updated Area Structure Plan that better reflects the current context and strategic priorities.
- Develop an asset map of the community (including organizations, facilities, amenities, events, etc.) that contribute to the tourism potential of the community. Leverage the local assets to build a strategy to attract people across all four (4) seasons.
 - Desired outcome: Stronger understanding of the local “ecosystem” that contributes assets necessary to support tourism in multiple seasons.
- Create a targeted investment attraction strategy that builds from the unique availability of high-speed internet to every home and business.
 - Desired outcome: Leverage the available asset to attract businesses and households that are looking for non-traditional ways to work and interested in living in smaller, rural communities to cultivate sustainable growth that contributes to multiple sectors of the community.

2. **Build on opportunities to create a regional health and wellness hub:** Continue to collaborate with the private sector and higher levels of government to strengthen the amenities that collectively contribute to building on the existing health and wellness infrastructure.

Actions:

- Work with exiting healthcare providers to advocate for additional investment from higher orders of government in support of expanding local services.
 - Desired outcome: Coordinated advocacy approach for the necessary support to expand local healthcare investment.
 - Work with existing healthcare providers to initiate an “investment readiness” analysis that would highlight any barriers to growth of the health and wellness industry in Delburne and define potential mitigation strategies that could be developed.
 - Desired outcome: Understanding the key opportunities and challenges that either support or inhibit growth and expansion of health and wellness businesses and service providers.
3. **Create a diverse mix of commercial, industrial, and residential development:** Design economic development efforts to support a diversification of the Village’s tax base, reducing the tax burden on any one segment of the community.

Actions:

- Establish an ongoing process for collecting relevant information from local businesses through “business walks” on at least a quarterly basis.
 - Desired outcome: Regularly updated local context in the business community maintaining open lines of communication with business owners.
 - Create an inventory of all industrial “investment ready” lands. Identify and mitigate any potential barriers to development (i.e., existing zoning or land ownership).
 - Desired outcome: Create a shared understanding of all available lands in the Village that have the preconditions necessary for industrial expansion or investment and highlight lands that have potential barriers.
 - Prepare a housing needs assessment to evaluate the current stock of housing and identify any potential gaps related to specific demographic groups (i.e., seniors, young professionals, etc.) and/or new economic development opportunities (i.e., bringing in new jobs without adequate and available housing).
 - Desired outcome: Create a shared understanding of the current reality of the housing stock and identify any specific gaps that can be addressed through incremental infill development, lands available for new subdivision activity, or opportunities for targeted types of housing (i.e., multi-family, senior-focused, etc.).
4. **Reimagine the Main Street corridor to maximize the productivity of commercially zoned lands:** A unified and coordinated vision for land use and development along Main Street is needed to guide incremental changes that will support its growth and evolution as the economic and social core of the Village.

Actions:

- Develop a Main Street inventory of all parcels along Main Street that identifies the current use, ownership, improvements and their condition, assessed value, and any other relevant factor that could be seen as an opportunity or challenge for Main Street development.
 - Desired outcome: A full picture of the current conditions of all parcels along Main Street and potential strategies to facilitate infill or redevelopment.
- Review the existing policy and regulatory framework, within the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw respectively, to assess any changes needed to facilitate Main Street development.
 - Desired outcome: Updated policy direction that ensures the Village administrative tools align with the strategic priorities and support positive growth and development.
- Create a redevelopment plan that focuses on immediate implementation items that could incrementally change the direction of Main Street and identify opportunities for the Village to facilitate any actions that could expedite change.
 - Desired outcome: This does not mean a full “Area Redevelopment Plan”, which is a statutory document, but rather an adaptive strategy that outlines a series of small actions that could immediately improve Main Street (i.e., murals or façade improvements on existing buildings, new street trees or temporary public spaces on vacant lands, etc.) and a series of more ambitious actions that could transform Main Street (i.e., redevelopment of an existing building, new development on a vacant parcel, etc.).

Priority 2: Local and regional partnerships

Recognize that the Village cannot implement the necessary actions to achieve the strategic priorities on its own. Individuals, organizations, and regional partners need to work in concert with the Village and each other to make meaningful progress on the plan’s implementation.

Goals

1. **Maximize the effective use of limited resources:** Establishing shared objectives among local and regional partners can help leverage the limited resources available as individual organizations and establish a stronger pool of accessible funds to invest in community priorities.

Actions:

- Convene local conversations with business owners to encourage the rejuvenation of the local Chamber of Commerce that could take a more direct role in establishing a stronger and interconnected business community that supports entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business development.
 - Desired outcome: Strengthen the interconnections among local businesses and minimize the Village’s role in driving business retention and broader economic development efforts.
- Establish a local stakeholder map that identifies all the different direct and indirect service providers and the nature of their organization (i.e., volunteer, non-profit, charitable organization, etc.) to establish a local inventory and identify potential opportunities to leverage multiple funding streams.
 - Desired outcome: Shared inventory of all organizations that support community development efforts to understand all available funding sources that could be jointly applied in support of the strategic priorities.

2. **Build and sustain coalitions with provincial, regional, and community partners to address key challenges and capitalize on key opportunities:** Recognize that local leadership is not confined to a few individuals with formal titles, but rather successful communities mobilize the knowledge, talent, and perspectives from across all segments of the community.

Actions:

- Leverage existing regional and provincial relationships to establish new connections that could support advancing strategic priorities through targeted conversations.
 - Desired outcome: Expanded network of connections that increase opportunities to find resources needed to advance strategic priorities.
- Creating a “community cultivator cabinet”, which acts as a diverse collection of community members that convene regularly (i.e., quarterly) to share knowledge and information in the community and identify opportunities to support advancing the strategic priorities.
 - Desired outcome: Maintain community momentum and establish a “formal” process to welcome ideas, skills, and resources from the public to support implementing strategic priorities.
- Establish yearly community celebrations that outline progress on the strategic priorities, celebrate the “learnings” from things that didn’t work, and continue to invite new people to find ways to participate.
 - Desired outcome: Maintain the plan as a living document, updating it regularly as priorities evolve and actions are completed, providing a continuous cycle of engagement that invites the public to meaningfully share their perspectives.

Priority 3: Sustainable service delivery

Long-term reliability and affordability of operating, maintaining, and replacing key municipal infrastructure services requires forward-looking that is fiscally responsible. Delburne’s municipal infrastructure systems will require substantial capital investment in the years ahead and will need to continue to strike the right balance of efficiency, effectiveness, and affordability in all plans and programs.

Goals

1. **Focus on fiscal resilience that defines adequate funding for the ongoing maintenance of all Village-owned assets:** Considering both short-term priorities as well as the long-term needs for maintenance and replacement are critical to ensuring the ability of the Village to endure as a strong and healthy community.

Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive inventory for all municipally owned assets. Start small, defining a core municipal asset class (i.e., roads, trails, water lines, etc.) and establish a local pilot process to create the inventory, condition assessment, level of service, and risk assessment.
 - Desired outcome: Establish an asset management plan, including an asset replacement forecast, for a single asset that can be replicated on other asset categories.
- Strengthen the use of existing asset management tools (i.e., policy, strategy, team recommendations, etc.) in requests for decisions, community engagement, and budget deliberations.
 - Desired outcome: Greater consistency in how asset management is used in decision-making processes and how trade-offs are evaluated and communicated with Council, staff, and the public.

Priority 4: Citizen retention and attraction

As the context of the community continues to change, so does the need to adjust and find innovative ways to increase the number of residents to support sustainable community growth and development. Citizen attraction and retention is ultimately a process where the community comes together to take collective action and generate solutions and cannot be the sole responsibility of the Village, or any other individual organization.

Goals

1. **Establish a local team to support citizen retention and attraction initiatives:** Partnerships can build on locally available resources, capacities, and influence to accelerate opportunities for local development necessary for citizen retention and attraction.

Actions:

- Develop a local stakeholder map that outlines all the potential representatives from different sectors (i.e., public and government, non-government and civil society, and private business) that could contribute to a local team and inventory what they are already doing to support retention and attraction.
 - Desired outcome: Shared inventory of all the available resources and influences that contribute to citizen attraction and retention and a starting point to develop a community-based team to support the efforts.
 - Cultivate a local champion to guide the formation of the team and initiating the retention and attraction process.
 - Desired outcome: Engage with a strong, and influential local champion that can direct the early efforts, ensuring that the Village does not have to own all the responsibility for advancing the initiative.
2. **Analyze the local context to evaluate readiness to move retention and attraction initiatives forward:** Establishing a shared understanding of the local context creates connections across the community and anchors the strategy in the current reality, managing expectations around what can reasonably be accomplished.

Actions:

- Develop a community profile and trend analysis using available data from the Census bureau, regional economic development agencies, and other relevant statistical databases that provide cost-effective and locally relevant data.
 - Desired outcome: Establish an updated community profile that includes the data and information that is most relevant for considering the opportunities and challenges that support citizen retention and attraction.

