Our Focus, Our Future
Oshawa Strategic Plan 2015–2019
“We create our future each day, and our local actions affect the global community today, as well as for generations to come.”

– Dr. Roberta Bondar, OC
Purpose of the Plan

Our Focus, Our Future is Oshawa’s strategic plan for the next five years (2015-2019). It is based on a refresh of the 2012 strategic plan, which was the product of an extensive consultation process involving the public, stakeholders and City employees. It is also the result of comments received from a more recent six week public consultation process and the current City Council’s understanding of what is important to the community and the corporation.

Having a strategic plan is about envisioning our future through words and pictures, and identifying how we are going to get there. The journey is driven by innovation and commitment, the ability to think and act differently, and to change with the times. It requires us to recognize and balance the difference between “wants” and “needs” and to be visionary and long-term thinkers, making fully informed decisions with all facets of society and future generations in mind. It is about having regard for the past, but with a focus on the future.

This Plan identifies five goals that will guide decisions made by the City in accordance with the guiding principles of sustainability and financial stewardship.

Our Focus, Our Future is the City’s highest level policy document. It is tethered to the City's Financial Strategy. Each goal is supported by a number of strategies grouped by theme. Implementation of the Plan will require all of us to work together – City Council and employees, the public, stakeholders, City-funded and private agencies, businesses and other levels of government. Progress on this Plan will be reported on by the Departments to the appropriate Standing Committee of Council in the 3rd Quarter prior to the annual budget process.

This Plan speaks to our collective commitment to align resources with priorities and ensure our long-term viability, vitality and resilience as a world-class city.

On behalf of City Council, I commit our political leadership to achieve our strategic goals over the term of Council.

John Henry, Mayor

On behalf of City employees, I commit to support the achievement of Council’s strategic goals.

Jag Sharma, City Manager
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1. Oshawa Past and Present

Since its inception as a fur trading post near the mouth of the Oshawa Creek in the 1750’s, Oshawa has prospered. By the mid 1950’s, Oshawa’s transportation infrastructure began to take shape with the development of the Port of Oshawa and the arrival of the Grand Trunk Railway. These important transportation modes gave rise to the attraction of industry and with it, jobs and people. Oshawa continued to grow both in area and population and became a strong hub for trade and commerce. Today, Oshawa is a well-managed, prosperous and growing city.

World renowned for its automotive excellence, Oshawa is undergoing a profound transition and a technological renaissance that has not been experienced before. The transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a technology and science-based economy has in many ways been fuelled by the strong influence of four post-secondary institutions – Durham College, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Trent University Durham and Queen’s University.

The city has excellent road, rail, water and air transportation infrastructure. From the Port of Oshawa with its own rail spur, to the Oshawa Executive Airport to Highways 401 and 407, goods and people can move anywhere, anytime. Land is available for development and a skilled labour force meets the needs of the diverse business base.

A streamlined development approvals process supports investment in the community. Residential development is increasing, new business opportunities are being created and the downtown core is being revitalized where restaurants, cafes and entertainment venues have become a focal point and are bringing thousands of people to the downtown each week.

Residents benefit from urban and rural living options, best-in-class recreation facilities, a strong community volunteer base, a growing and vibrant arts and culture scene, rich heritage and natural open spaces.
2. Vision and Mission

As the City’s highest level policy document, Our Focus, Our Future provides a roadmap for the term of Council.

Community Vision
What a community aspires to be

Oshawa – a prosperous, collaborative, vibrant, inclusive and green city where people and businesses are proud to live, work, learn and play
Corporate Mission
A statement of purpose or direction
Dedicated to serving our community
3. Financial Stewardship

Oshawa is operating within the financial reality of global economies, increasing diversity, changing demographics, on-going infrastructure maintenance, the need for new infrastructure to keep up with growth pressures, and an increasing demand for services, transparency and accountability.

The City currently has high standards of fiscal responsibility and strives to remain affordable in the face of competing demands, requiring the City to be visionary, innovative and think long-term. To this end, a Financial Strategy has been prepared, which addresses infrastructure investment, reserve funds, debt management, revenue sources and operating costs. It will help to manage costs, save for the future, build partnerships and ensure responsible taxation. It has a four-year timeframe that provides sound, proactive and financial stewardship within a context of continuous improvement and ensures the long-term financial health of the City of Oshawa.

The Financial Strategy will allow available resources to be aligned with the City’s five strategic goals via the Department business plans, the annual budget process, as well as the four-year budget projection. This will ensure we are all moving in the same direction.

The guiding principle of financial stewardship requires the City to:

- Be proactive and innovative in providing cost effective core programs, services and facilities responsive to community needs while living within our means
- Focus attention on critical areas
- Make informed decisions that support sustainability
- Ensure responsible taxation
- Ensure a sound and sustainable financial future
4. Strategic Goals

The City is committed to five inter-related strategic goals with associated themes, which reflect the components of the guiding principle of sustainability. Using sustainability as our lens, the interdependence – the inseparability – of our economic, leadership, social, cultural and environmental goals become clearer and a more collaborative, integrated approach to problem-solving and decision-making results.

Themes

- Financial Strategy
- Build and Further Diversify Our Economy
- Wise Land Use
- Responsible Taxation
- Safe and Reliable Infrastructure
- Deliberate Community Engagement
- Our Corporate Culture Demands Excellence and Respect
- Develop and Leverage Relationships
- Enrich Our Community Through Diversity
- An Active, Healthy and Safe Community
- Enrich Our Community Through Culture
- Proactive Environmental Management
- Cleaner Air, Land and Water
- Resilient Local Food System
- Less Waste Generation

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1. Sustainability is defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland Commission, 1987)
Ensure economic growth and a sound financial future

Oshawa is proactive about economic growth and has a diversified economy in the manufacturing, knowledge, health and technology-based sectors. The expansion of post-secondary education continues to attract new investment. A highly skilled labour force supports the city’s on-going success. Transportation assets include a full-service airport, rail, deep water port and multiple, direct highway access. The city offers point of entry and customs service. A variety of housing options attract first-time homebuyers and established families. Higher density and well planned development protect our agricultural lands and green/open space. A growing cultural identity, the rebirth of the downtown and the waterfront are creating places of pride, people and prosperity. Proactive and responsible financial management and sound investments provide and maintain City facilities with effective and efficient core programs and services. The reality of a global economy, increasing costs and limited financial resources remind us of the need to live within our means, and recognize the difference between wants and needs.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by our success in attaining the following strategies grouped under five themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Strategy</td>
<td>1. Develop, implement and maintain a proactive and sustainable Council-endorsed Financial Strategy</td>
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</table>
| Build and Further Diversify Our Economy | 1. Enhance the potential for job growth by leveraging Oshawa’s key economic strengths and assets  
2. Ensure flexible and timely approvals to advance sound and sustainable development opportunities  
3. Support growth in the five key sectors identified in the Sector Analysis and Cluster Development Strategy (advanced manufacturing, health and bioscience, energy generation, multi-modal transportation and logistics, and information technology)  
4. Proactively pursue commercial and industrial growth to create investment and job development, and reduce reliance on residential assessment  
5. Actively support the growth of the city’s post-secondary educational institutions  
6. Continue downtown revitalization via the implementation of Plan20Twenty |
### Build and Further Diversify Our Economy (cont’d)

7. Implement the federal agreements for the harbour and recognize Oshawa’s deep water port as a key infrastructure asset
8. Implement the Oshawa Executive Airport Business Plan

### Wise Land Use

1. Create mixed-use, transit-supportive, attractive, safe and healthy neighbourhoods
2. Identify housing needs and facilitate proposals that satisfy gaps in the city’s housing market
3. Maintain viable rural and agricultural communities outside the urban area boundary
4. Ensure the City Official Plan is current and up-to-date

### Responsible Taxation

1. Ensure responsible and affordable taxation recognizing the connection between wants, needs, priorities and means
2. Ensure a transparent annual budget process
3. Ensure cost effective and fairly priced quality core programs and services that are responsive to community needs
4. Proactively apply for public sector funding and pursue private sector partnerships
5. Pursue sponsorships to maximize revenue opportunities and reduce costs

### Safe and Reliable Infrastructure

1. Proactively work with other levels of government to advocate for and address key infrastructure needs and renewal
2. Develop and implement an Integrated Transportation Master Plan
3. Strategically manage and sufficiently fund the City’s present and future assets (roads, buildings, parks, open space and equipment)
4. Proactively address the infrastructure fiscal deficit
5. Develop and implement a city-wide broadband strategy in partnership with community stakeholders that will capitalize on existing infrastructure, attract and grow the creative economy and support Oshawa’s selection as a “Smart21” community
4.2 Accountable Leadership

Ensure respect, responsiveness and transparency

The pursuit of excellence, in everything we do, is important to City Council and employees, the public and stakeholders. The City has a tradition of engagement, regularly sharing information and consulting with the community on projects. The leadership recognizes the importance of developing and leveraging relationships with all levels of government and community stakeholders, and continues to streamline operations, manage risks and maintain professionally trained employees within a culture of continuous improvement. The use of best practices, benchmarking and performance measurement informs decisions. Service Oshawa, the City’s consolidated customer service centre, provides a single point of contact for many City services. A City Council Code of Conduct and employee core values (ACT - Authenticity, Courage and Trust) contribute to collaborative, integrated and visionary decision-making to help ensure the city’s long-term viability, vitality and resilience.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by our success in attaining the following strategies grouped under three themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberate Community Engagement</td>
<td>1. Enable public involvement in decision-making, when appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Seek regular feedback from customers about City services and programs via surveys, online input, public meetings and/or social media</td>
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<td>3. Celebrate and communicate good news stories of Oshawa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Inform and communicate with the community regarding the purpose of City by-laws, which address life safety, protect homeowner and business investments, and contribute to an enviable quality of life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Take every opportunity to inform the public how Oshawa’s public service supports our community on a daily basis through a commitment to core values, good governance and outstanding service</td>
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### Our Corporate Culture Demands Excellence and Respect

1. Ensure strong leadership by investing in the necessary elements to create an environment of excellence and become an employer of choice that attracts and retains the best employees
2. Understand and support our most important resource – our employees
3. Clarify, be conscious of and respect City Council and employees’ roles and responsibilities, maximizing performance
4. Embrace innovation in the provision of programs and services
5. Assess risks and learn from our mistakes within a context of continuous improvement

### Develop and Leverage Relationships

1. Identify and advocate for issues important to Oshawa, improving inter-governmental relations, and liaising and working with community stakeholders, public sector partners and municipal associations
4.3 Social Equity

Ensure an inclusive, healthy and safe community

Oshawa is a growing community. It is home to a diverse, active and educated population that benefits from best-in-class recreation, cultural and sport facilities, over 1,000 hectares of parkland and open space, a network of trails, and bike lanes and routes. These services provide safe, accessible, no or low-cost health and wellness opportunities, and an enviable quality of life for Oshawa residents. A strong sense of community encourages and supports an active volunteer base of all ages. The City is committed to working with service providers that are responsible for responding to homelessness and poverty-related issues, including the provision of safe and affordable housing.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by our success in attaining the following strategies grouped under two themes.
## Enrich Our Community Through Diversity

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop corporate and community plans that embrace diversity and strengthen our corporation and community</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Evolve inclusive City programs, services and facilities to further respond to the growing needs of a diverse population</td>
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<td>3. Continue to strive to be a barrier-free community</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Continue to engage citizens of all ages</td>
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<td>5. Strengthen, expand and recognize the volunteer sector</td>
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## An Active, Healthy and Safe Community

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<tr>
<td>1. Advance quality and affordable recreation opportunities to ensure significant and active use of public spaces, both indoor and outdoor</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Provide a safe, reliable and connected active transportation network, which supports transit, cycling and walking via the implementation of the Active Transportation Master Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Identify and develop Oshawa’s sport tourism opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ensure emergency plans are up-to-date and tested on a regular basis</td>
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“How we live together”
4.4 Cultural Vitality

Support arts, culture and heritage that engage and inspire

Oshawa is home to museums, theatres, libraries, heritage sites, a renowned art gallery, and award-winning annual community events, festivals and cultural celebrations. As our city grows so does our appreciation of arts, culture and heritage, which enriches our community and brings beauty, depth and meaning to our daily lives. Arts and culture nurture individual identity, improve community image, attract visitors and investors, promote social equity and cohesion, engage all age groups and encourage involvement in the community. Creative and vibrant places attract and retain talent, contribute to job creation and a safer community, and expand the tax base.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by our success in attaining the following strategies grouped under one theme.
### Theme: Enrich Our Community Through Culture

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Work with the community to implement Culture Counts, the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Broaden and evolve the City’s role in arts, culture and heritage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Grow culture-led economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase and strengthen communication within and about the arts, culture and heritage sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build a strong, vital and connected arts, culture and heritage sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create vibrant places and spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide access and promote inclusion in Oshawa’s cultural life</td>
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4.5 Environmental Responsibility

Protect, conserve and promote the environment

Oshawa is fortunate to have a rich natural environment including portions of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Ontario shoreline, as well as wildlife corridors, attractive ravines, woodlots, creeks and significant wetlands. The City is a leader in environmental management. Residents have a strong environmental ethic and have a right to clean air, clean water and safe food. We understand the direct relationship between the actions we take, the impact that they have on the environment, and the importance of working with others for the success and health of current and future generations. Through hard work and dedication, the city has gained provincial and international recognition as a green and beautiful community.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by our success in attaining the following strategies grouped under four themes.
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<tr>
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| **Proactive Environmental Management** | 1. Identify, connect and protect natural heritage features, areas and habitats  
2. Identify, evaluate and implement adaptation measures to strengthen the city’s resilience to a changing climate, invasive species and other stressors  
3. Develop and implement corporate and community plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use  
4. Ensure City policies and practices, including stormwater management, respect and enhance the natural environment  
5. Educate the public about the value and importance of all aspects of environmental responsibility |
| **Cleaner Air, Land and Water** | 1. Encourage and implement actions to continue to improve water quality  
2. Promote the remediation of contaminated land and brownfield developments                                                                 |
| **Resilient Local Food System** | 1. Promote and encourage local and urban agriculture, including backyard and community gardening                                                                                                                |
| **Less Waste Generation**    | 1. Develop and implement waste management strategies to reduce or avoid waste generation and increase waste diversion rates                                                                                   |