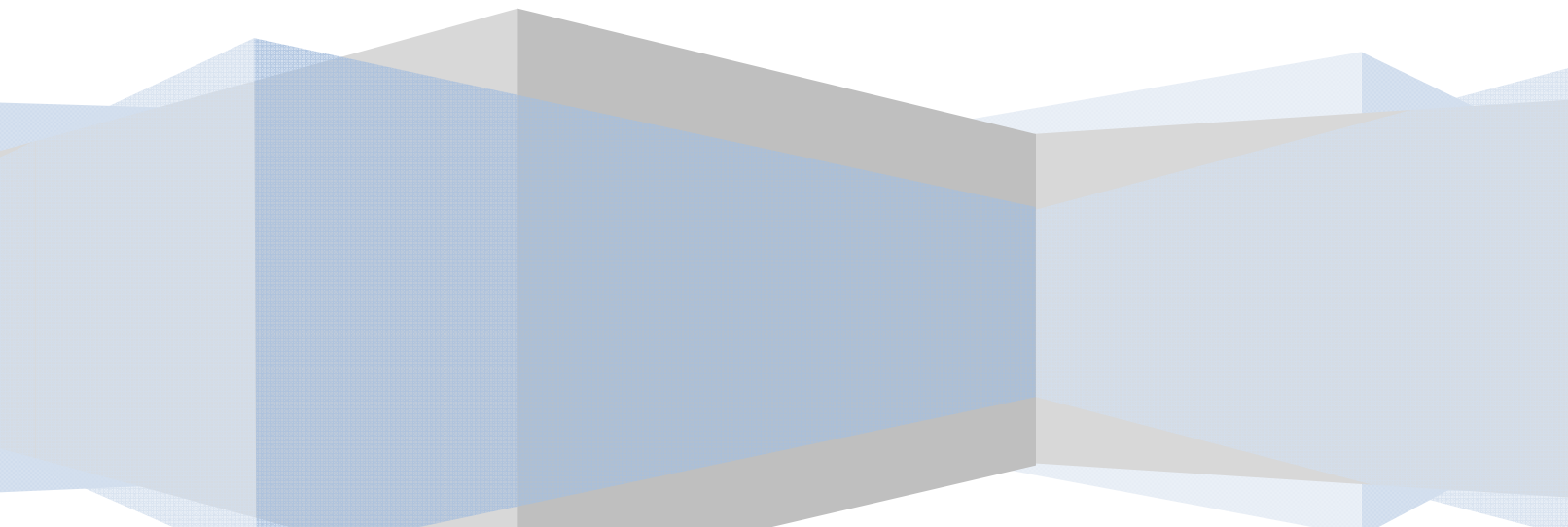




**Town of
PARADISE**

Strategic Plan

**Planning Cycle
January 2009 to December 2013**



Message from Mayor

It's not a surprise to anyone who is familiar with the level of growth and development that is currently taking place in this region of the province to know that the Town of Paradise is leading all municipalities in the region in the rate of building and development that we are currently enjoying as a municipality.

While we are extremely proud of the interest that builders and developers have taken in our town, we are even more pleased to say that more families are choosing to make Paradise their home than any other location in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is something that any community would be proud to boast about. We have quickly become the location of choice in the region, and while this is a tremendous asset, this unprecedented level of growth has placed enormous demands on our professional staff as well as on your council.

We are a proud community of people, and we are cognizant of the fact that there is much more to growing a municipality than building houses, business parks, and expanding infrastructure. Communities are about people. Our greatest priority is insuring that we build a community of people who feel a sense of pride and identity, and who share a common commitment to making Paradise a place where all families will feel welcome in coming forward and getting involved in the many good things that this community has to offer.

We cannot build this community without your help. We move forward with pride, and we promise to provide residents with opportunities to have their say and to get involved – especially as it relates to the development of our many community based programs and recreational facilities.

We have great plans for the future. This strategic plan lays out the priorities of your council in a number of critical areas of importance for the next five years. We have many needs and modest means, so each decision that we make and every priority that we establish has to be in the overall best interest of our residents, and that means somehow improving the quality of life of our residents.

We have much to be thankful for as a municipality, and we understand the importance of being in touch with the needs and priorities of our residents. Residents continue to seek new and improved recreational facilities and other amenities that communities like ours need to support our growing families. We need programs for youth, and we need to make sure that our seniors are also engaged in programs and activities that promote an active and healthy lifestyle. All these things and more will come with time and through good planning.

In recent months we have undertaken a widespread review and restructuring of our staff and organizational structure, all designed to find ways to serve you better and to improve the programs and services we offer residents. We recognize the need to expand and refocus our staff to better meet your needs. We are continuing to implement these changes over time, and we are confident that, once completed, residents will be pleased with the results.

Your council is hopeful that we can forge new and exciting funding partnerships to find better ways to expand our services and build roads, facilities, and infrastructure that will enable us to keep pace with our level of growth.

Our goals are focused and practical, but they are very much tempered with reality. We intend to further involve our people as we grow, and we invite you to volunteer your time and talent and to get involved in building this great community of ours.

On behalf of my colleagues on council and our dedicated professional staff, I want to thank you for your continued support. We look forward to serving you as we move forward with the implementation of our new strategic plan, and we hope that you will find a way to become involved in making our community a better place for all of us to live.

Sincerely,

Ralph Wiseman
Mayor, Town of Paradise

Table of Contents

1. Overview	5
2. Mandate.....	15
3. Values	17
4. Vision	21
5. Mission	26
6. Critical Areas	29
7. Establishing Our Goals.....	32
8. Formulating Goal Statements.....	35
9. Identifying Actions.....	40
10. The 2009-2013 Strategic Plan.....	42
Appendix SWOT ANALYSIS.....	58
Conclusion.....	60

1. Overview

After having completed an Organizational Review and restructuring of the town's staff, departmental structure, and allocation of human and other resources, the timing couldn't have been better to step back and take some time as a council and senior staff to undertake a Strategic Planning session.

Given the almost unprecedented level of growth that the Town of Paradise currently enjoys, it's not at all surprising that, at times, there appears to be an unreasonable number of demands and competing interests as the expectations among residents continue to rise. The more housing developments that are completed, the greater the clamour from some sectors of the population for improved facilities and programs. Clearly, residents of the Town of Paradise have every right to want and expect the same level of programs, services, facilities, and amenities as other larger municipalities in the region, and there is no doubt that, in due course, all of these (and more) will be realized. The challenge facing the town at the present time is more about containing expectations and establishing realistic plans and priorities that are in touch with the needs of the residents, and at the same time, which are affordable and in line with a much larger and more integrated plan for community development.

The success of strategic planning is that it affords the opportunity to step back from the day to day and to literally create the future. Before any town, business, or organization can proceed along a path of success, it must first identify exactly what "success" for them really means. Knowing and understanding your mandate, and creating a vision for the future are the first and most important steps in the development of a strategic plan.

Not surprisingly, council's goal is to provide the highest possible level of municipal services, programs, and facilities to meet the needs of residents of all ages, and to try to build a proud and inclusive community. Paradise is still a young and growing community, and while there is enormous

progress being made in almost every area of the town's development, there are obvious infrastructure deficits, and council fully intends to address these in a well planned and systematic way.

Council's approach has been realistic. They have resisted the urge to take on too much in favor of ensuring that whatever is done is done properly, professionally, and is seen to completion. There are enormous pressures from within all sectors of the town and its various interest groups, but no pressure has been greater than the pressure brought to bear by parents of young children who are demanding new recreational facilities to better meet the needs of the town's expanding family based population. Council is fully aware of these needs and they have been committed to establishing their priorities in keeping with the needs and priorities of residents to the extent that they can, and this should be obvious in the development of this strategic plan.

The Town of Paradise has an incredibly good and comprehensive recreation master plan that will see the completion of all these facilities over time. But there is still a need for considerable road work within the town, as well as for the continued expansion of the town's water and sewer and other services. In short, because of the rapid rate of growth and expansion of the town, all of these expectations are coming at once, and from a number of critical areas.

Council and staff were challenged to think about the kind of town they wanted Paradise to be. How would they set themselves apart from other towns in the region? How do they want others in the region to view the Town of Paradise? What will become the cornerstone or hallmark of this community called Paradise? Only when there is a clear understanding of what you are striving to achieve can you ever hope to put a plan in place to get you there. The famous lament of planning strategists is this, "If you don't know exactly where you are heading, it is almost impossible to know whether or not you have actually arrived." In short, knowing what you want to achieve as a community is the first (and arguably the most important) step in any strategic planning exercise, so allowing time for participants to reflect on that was an integral part of the first session.

While there are obvious challenges and demands from residents of the town, many municipalities would be happy to trade places with a municipality that has such incredible growth potential in so many vital sectors of expansion and development. The future has never been brighter for Paradise, and quite frankly, there are few (if any) municipalities in the region that have so much to build upon, not just in the longer term, but in the very immediate future.

The Future of Paradise:

The future has never been brighter, and quite frankly, there are few (if any) municipalities in the region that have so much to build upon, not just in the longer term, but in the very immediate future.

There is a strong, growing, and dedicated professional staff that is continuing to evolve and appears to be ready to tackle the issues in accordance with the direction and priorities of council. Council have been determined to establish (and follow) sound planning principles in the development of the town, and to consistently apply their regulatory standards throughout the community. These decisions are paying off and will continue to pay dividends in the long run.

One of the first orders of business was to determine a feasible timeframe or “planning cycle” that would address the needs of the town at this particular point in time. While three (3) year planning cycles appear to be the norm for many municipalities when putting together their strategic plans, there is no magic to the length of the planning cycle, as long as it meets the needs and addresses the priorities of the municipality in question. Too long a planning cycle sometimes allows a greater number of variables to come into play which may well affect or impede the progress of the priorities established. Conversely, it is important to allow enough time to establish realistic goals which will enable sufficient time, energy, and resources to address the priorities identified and to enable council to meet its goals.

Participants quickly decided that a five (5) year cycle will enable them enough time to address their more pressing needs, while still affording them an opportunity to address priorities that council felt needed to be acted upon rather quickly.

In almost all cases, participants come to a planning session with a number of issues or priorities in mind that they

would really like to see addressed as part of the planning exercise. This is as true of staff as it is of members of council. Providing each participant with an opportunity to reflect on these priorities and having them share them with the larger group is an integral part of the planning exercise, and far more importantly, gets every individual directly involved in articulating his or her issues and concerns very early in the process. Apart from the obvious benefits of sharing one another's priorities, it is always important to acknowledge that one person's views and opinions are every bit as important as another's, and once this is acknowledged and practiced, the process becomes that much more open and productive for the remainder of the sessions.

Most politicians live and breathe politics. That's what they do best. A general discussion about the political and economic environment in the province at the present time, and how this might impact the town (positively or negatively) over the next number of years is always an important part of any planning sessions – especially in the political realm. Such discussions “set the table” for longer term planning and usually address issues of political power, partnership, and the level of support that municipalities might expect during the course of the planning cycle. The outcome of such discussions rarely enter into the details of the final report, but they do provide a valuable backdrop for participants to speculate or theorize about what the longer term political implications might mean for them and for their community.

While a number of critical factors were considered that could have an impact on how the town's agenda might unfold over the next several years, there was overwhelming confidence expressed for the potential of the town and how the politics of the future might benefit more than hinder the town's future growth and development.

The current economic state of the province was considered to be a comforting benchmark, and while there was cautious optimism for the future, there was widespread acknowledgment that the global economic recession might well play its part in moderately slowing the province's growth over the next couple of years.

Following this discussion, participants were immediately asked to turn their attention to the development of the all important *statements and beliefs* referenced above.

Statements and Beliefs – reflect the principles, beliefs, and commitment of an organization, and establish the fundamental values that guide and direct the decision-making process.

When reduced to its lowest denominator, every organization has a mandate or core set of functions which it must perform to meet its most basic obligations. An organization's expression of its statements and beliefs runs the gamut from addressing its basic mandate to articulating the hopes and dreams it has for itself for the future. Each statement is carefully crafted to reflect how the group perceives itself as a community, and ultimately how they would like to be perceived by others in the future.

In this case, a great deal of time and attention was given to develop a set of statements and beliefs that the group felt was an honest and straightforward representation of its core obligations and beliefs. There was a desire to develop a vision and establish a commitment that was truly reflective of the unique place that Paradise holds in the region, and the details of these will be shared later in the report.

SWOT Analysis
An important part of the planning exercise where groups review the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing their organization at a particular point in time.

In keeping with sound principles and practices of strategic planning, an attempt was made to honestly review and assess the overall position of the town at this point in time, and to reflect upon the town's relative strengths and weaknesses. While there are a number of effective means to have a group consider its relative position, there are few more reliable or effective means than through a *SWOT* analysis. The group was challenged to consider things that they felt set them apart and made them unique as a community. At the same time, participants were encouraged to consider opportunities that they felt might be presented to the town that would help advance their growth and development as a community, or which might help improve the programs and services they offer to their residents. A detailed discussion was undertaken in both these areas, and a considerable number of strengths and opportunities were identified by the group that would assist greatly not only in implementing the plan, but which would be practical and beneficial for the town in the immediate future.

Strengths vs. Shortcomings

It is very important that towns recognize (and retain) their strengths and assets as a community. Otherwise, there may be a tendency to ignore or underutilize the things which have served them so well for so many years.

Another part of the *SWOT* analysis focused on identifying possible areas of weakness that participants felt might need to be addressed for the future, or weaknesses which are part of the cultural, organizational, or operational structure of the town at this point in its development. A discussion took place surrounding not only the weaknesses that were identified, but which also focused on issues or concerns that the group felt could threaten the town in the future, or which might inhibit the town's growth and development in critical areas of importance in the foreseeable future. In the case of Paradise, in particular, as much as there are incredible opportunities for the future that will likely be realized sooner rather than later, the level of expectation and public pressure among certain sectors of the town's population is also considerable. One of the greatest challenges is trying to stick to the agenda and timelines that council has established for itself, and avoid the "quick fixes" which might alleviate the pressure in the short term, but which may compromise the integrity and overall benefits of a sustained and systematic community development plan.

Just being aware of possible challenges or threats is half the battle, and is why such an exercise needs to be undertaken as part of the backdrop of a strategic planning exercise. These challenges or threats are different from one municipality to another, because the circumstances of each town in terms of its level of growth, the profile of the community, the expectations of the public, and the overall commitment to community based programming etc., are uniquely different from place to place.

Among council and senior staff of the Town of Paradise, there appears to be a shared understanding of the issues which immediately challenge or threaten the town, and an even greater commitment for the need to address them in a systematic way. It appears that in all areas where the concerns of residents are greatest, there is a reasonable and practical plan to address the issues within the timeframe of this planning cycle. This is as true in the area of recreational programming and facilities development as it is in addressing the needs relating to expanding infrastructure, improving the town's roads and transportation networks, or in ensuring that there is a manageable and focused plan to

deal with the town's overall building and development scheme.

One thing is certain. There is an overwhelming confidence that all these things can be addressed. There is an equally strong commitment to ensuring that all these are addressed properly and for the overall benefit of all residents of the town. It was felt that young families, in particular, need to be more engaged and involved in the life of the community, and part of the challenge of addressing issues of community involvement and capacity building is in developing a structure that enables and promotes widespread participation and engagement. This will be addressed in this strategic plan. Council is particularly committed to working hard to secure a future for young families within the town, and to consider programs, facilities, and future development that would attract this profile of residents. But there are a number of unique segments of the town's population that also need attention, and council are fully aware of them, as well. Paradise seems to be a town with three very different and equally appealing residential neighborhood development areas, and each adds to the overall development scheme of the town in a unique and identifiable way.

A major focus will continue to be the widespread expansion and development of the town's business park, and ensuring that the business attraction initiatives already begun are continued (and expanded). This will provide a much needed diversification and expansion of the town's commercial property and business tax base, and this will be an invaluable asset in all segments of the town's continued growth and development for the future.

Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can actually change the world.

Margaret Mead

In short, the *SWOT* analysis was beneficial in articulating the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Paradise at the present time, and set a realistic and sometimes sobering tone for the remainder of the planning session. And this is exactly what it is designed to do.

The next step in the process was to identify the broad *Critical Areas* that the group felt needed to be addressed in the five year planning cycle outlined. The challenge is to identify as

many different areas, issues, and challenges as possible, and from among them, to concentrate on a limited number (which the group identifies as their priorities) for the planning period identified. While it's not usually difficult to identify one or two of the major areas of focus that have widespread support, for other issues there are often varying degrees of consensus and support.

The challenge is trying to reduce the critical areas to a manageable number that will allow sufficient human, financial, and other resources to enable the town to adequately address the needs identified in a relatively short timeframe. With most groups, the inclination is to take on too much, and this is not advantageous in the long run. A far better and more effective approach is to deal with the issues that are most pressing or urgent, but to achieve what you set out to achieve, and be confident that what has been done will meet the highest standards of scrutiny. Trying to do too much, especially in too short a timeframe, often results in falling short of your goals, compromising the results, or otherwise being counterproductive. In this instance, the group seemed to be extremely well focused, and quickly came to agreement on what they considered the critical issues to be.

Prioritizing Your Efforts

This is by far the biggest challenge for most groups. Being able to prioritize (and agree) upon the things that are most urgent against so many important (and competing) demands is always a challenge.

“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”

Beverly Sills

Being able to set aside your differences, limit your ambitions, and quickly come to agreement on what the critical areas of priority should be is never an easy task, especially when there are so many pressing needs and limited resources. In Paradise, there are a number of key areas of interest and priority for the town which almost all participants (members of council and staff) felt needed a concentrated effort in this planning cycle, and this made prioritizing the list much easier than usual. These priorities are identified in greater detail later in the report, and clear goals will be developed around each. It's fair to assume that part of the reason for such quick consensus among the group is because the planning period is a little longer (five years), and this allows for more issues to be dealt with effectively in the time period identified.

After having determined the broad areas of priority (critical areas), the next step was to develop specific goals for each of

these critical areas. To be effective, goals must be established in accordance with the highest principles of effective planning. At the very least, each goal must be expressed in a behaviorally based statement and each must be quantifiable. When properly expressed, and when appropriate “measures” and “timelines” are incorporated into each goal there is far greater assurance that the goals will be achieved. Strategic planning is as much about ensuring accountability as anything else, and the only way to be accountable is to insure that goals are properly stated, they are measurable, there are clear timelines, and someone is specifically assigned to ensure their implementation. While the actual “wording” or “phrasing” of the goal is always open to discussion and debate, the first and most essential step is for all participants to have the same clear understanding of the goal, and to be very clear on what is being attempted to be achieved, and why it is important in advancing the town’s agenda for the future.

Effective strategic planning is designed to integrate the many different parts of municipal government programs and services, and to establish a community of people who share one vision and who are actively committed to doing their part to see this vision fulfilled.

Once the goals have been identified, very specific objectives or strategic actions are developed for each that incrementally move the goal a little further towards completion. These strategic actions are specifically designed to help fulfill or achieve the goal, and to move one step closer to fulfillment.

Generally, this is the process that has been followed in the development of the town’s strategic plan. The full details of the plan are appended to this report, and these have been amended and ratified for final approval by council.

This plan will become the template for decision making and action in a wide variety of critical areas of operations, programming, and capital works for the Town of Paradise over the next five years. To a very large extent, this is a clear articulation of council’s priorities and plan of action for the immediate future. While it is not intended to be all inclusive, it should, nevertheless, reflect the major priorities

This plan will become the template for decision making and action in a wide variety of critical areas of operations, programming, and capital expenditures over the next number of years.

of council, and give both residents and staff clear direction for the future, and provide a better understanding of the context and importance that each of the many parts plays in uniting a community of people.

At every stage of the planning process, the group was repeatedly asked about how each goal or each action will contribute to improving the quality of life of the residents of the Town of Paradise. Ultimately, this is the litmus test for any municipal planning initiative. The greater the likelihood of any goal or action improving the quality of life of residents, the greater the likelihood that this initiative will receive the widespread support of the majority of council.

The degree of consensus and the measure of support for the initiatives agreed upon in this plan are an indication of the strength of the plan, and in the longer term, this will likely raise the level of success for implementation. Plans can (and should) be amended as necessary. As circumstances warrant, making the necessary revisions or adjustments to a strategic plan often become necessary as part of the ongoing strategic plan review process. The plan is merely a “means to an end” – not the end itself. Such revisions are usually minor, for the most part, and often result in a slight re-alignment of timelines or of some of the specific actions, duties, or responsibilities. But whatever changes are necessary to keep the plan current and practical need to be made. The important thing is to insure successful implementation, and this will require an ongoing commitment of time, energy, and dedication on the part of staff and council.

After having established an understanding of the process and the different components of the plan, it was time to get to work in the development of the plan.

2. Mandate

Mandate

Simply put, your mandate is what you **MUST** do to fulfill your most basic obligations to taxpayers – nothing more and nothing less.

Understanding Your Mandate

Quite often local governments, in their eagerness to move forward, lose sight of their basic statutory obligations as local governments. Above all else, governments must first understand (and uphold) their basic commitments before assuming responsibility for broader community based programs and initiatives.

MANDATE:

The Town of Paradise has been exploding with development in recent years, and is quickly maturing as a well respected full service community with all the facilities, programs, services, infrastructure, and expectations that go along with that. As communities expand and develop, the expectations of taxpayers seem to grow accordingly. Municipalities like the Town of Paradise go well beyond their basic mandate as a local government, and provide an abundance of opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in programs and activities to keep them active and involved in their community, and to help forge a unique sense of community identity. But the core responsibilities of any local government are not appreciably different from another, regardless of their size or circumstance, and most growing municipalities go well beyond what they are expected to do in order to fulfill their mandate to taxpayers. Simply put, a municipalities' mandate is its basic obligations to the people it serves – nothing more and nothing less. In the municipal sector, a council's mandate goes right to the core of the conditions and obligations outlined at the time of its incorporation as a municipality.

All democratically elected councils are established to protect and serve the interests of the taxpayers they represent, and in doing so, there are core responsibilities they are obliged to uphold. As with most municipal or local governments, the level of programs and services provided goes beyond these basic requirements, and the expectations seem to grow in proportion to the size and rate of growth of communities.

Larger communities have more sophisticated structures and considerably higher expectations to deliver programs and to provide infrastructure and facilities well beyond that of smaller communities. Taxpayers generally accept the fact that these amenities and conveniences do not come without a price, and readily accept the higher tax rates associated with living in such communities. But there are certain duties and commitments that must be adhered to and respected by

all municipalities, and these obligations form the basis of its mandate.

In striving to meet the rising demands and expectations of residents, there is sometimes a tendency to lose sight of why we exist in the first place. The faster we grow and the larger we become, the more detached we sometimes seem to be from our mandate.

As part of every strategic planning session with municipalities it is important to take the time to reflect upon why we exist, and to consider the obligations we have as an incorporated municipality. While doing so may not remove or diminish the expectations of taxpayers, it is a healthy reminder of our responsibilities as elected officials, and does provide a necessary pause in our deliberations to reflect upon our obligations to the people.

Mandate Statement

We are obliged to collect taxes, provide services, and represent the people we serve in accordance with the terms and conditions of our incorporation and the provisions of the Municipalities Act.

The binding authority of a local government is enshrined in its terms of incorporation and protected by the *Municipalities Act*.

The mandate that was developed and agreed upon by the Town of Paradise is as follows:

We are obliged to collect taxes, provide services, and represent the people we serve in accordance with the terms of our incorporation and the provisions of the *Municipalities Act*.

Not a great deal more can be added or taken away. In the Town of Paradise, this is council's commitment to the people they serve in its most basic form. This is what they understand to be their basic obligations before the law.

3. Values

Values

Values are the fundamental beliefs and principles of a community; they are the principles which guide all decisions and actions of a local government, and to some extent at least, are the things that differentiate you from other communities and groups because of what you stand for, what you believe in, and what sets you apart.

On the surface, it would appear that the values of most municipalities would be similar. All towns want to provide good services, strong local government, and develop a sense of pride in their communities. Who could argue that this isn't true? And while this may be an oversimplified and somewhat unfair assessment of the importance of values statements within the municipal framework, the truth is that there are always very unique and telling characteristics in every municipality's values statements that separate them from one another.

While communities often share common core values, other values seem to represent what is different, unique, or distinguishing from one community to another. It shouldn't be surprising that as communities mature and grow, the values of a maturing or aging municipality differ appreciably from the values that may have been expressed much earlier in its life cycle as a community. In other words, just as occurs with individuals as we mature and grow, the values of a community tend to be different over time.

Paradise is a young, vibrant, and growing community. The median age of its residents is a full 6.8 years younger than the median age of the province, and its residents are younger in median age than any community group within the province that we could find in our research. There are many new homes, developing neighborhoods, and young families. While there are a number of third and fourth generations of families living in some of the older parts of the community, for the most part, Paradise is a community of young families and expanding residential neighborhoods in a very urban municipal setting. One would expect the values of the people of the town to somehow reflect this reality.

Values are an integral part of any group or organization. But a community's values are an expression of more than just its principles. A community's values are an expression of how they see themselves and how they would like to be viewed by others. If an elected council is truly in tune with the values and principles of the people it serves, then these values will be incorporated into the ongoing decision-making and deliberations of council. When difficult decisions need to be made, council will need to remind itself of its guiding principles. Whatever other purpose values statements may serve in the planning process, these values articulate what it means to be a resident in the Town of Paradise. They are the principles that people cherish and respect, and these should be represented in their community leaders in their day to day decisions on behalf of the people.

If the values expressed by the group are understood and appreciated, and if they are truly reflective of what the group believes the values of their residents to be, then it is only fair to expect that these same values will be incorporated into the day to day decision-making and work ethic of the town council and its community groups and staff. What is being sought is what council considers the values of the community at large to be. The values and principles of council should be a reflection of the principles of the people they serve. The values identified by participants, and which form an integral part of this Strategic Plan for the Town of Paradise, are as follows:

VALUES:

Community

We are first and foremost an inclusive community that respects and appreciates our differences, but who share a common vision to help our

neighbors and see our community prosper and grow.

Family

We are a family-oriented community – committed to providing opportunities for young children and their families to be nurtured and grow in a safe and healthy community environment.

Independence

We believe in the importance of creating a distinct and independent municipality, proud of what sets us apart, but ready and willing to do our part in the spirit of regional cooperation.

Balance

We believe in well planned and balanced development of our town, where there is equal opportunity and respect for every individual to make a contribution towards building our community.

Prosperity

We are committed to building a viable, business friendly, and diversified business tax base that will help build the necessary infrastructure and supports for the enjoyment of all residents.

Pride

We take pride in our properties, neighborhoods, trails and open spaces, and in the overall attractiveness of our community.

Service

We place a high value on our service levels and our response to residents' concerns.

Consistency We believe in fair and consistent application of our regulations and policies, and we hold ourselves and our staff accountable to one and the same high standard.

Environment We value the importance of environmental stewardship and practice, and commit to doing our part to protect and preserve the environment for future generations to enjoy.

4. Vision

Vision

A short statement describing the ideal state the town is striving to achieve for its residents. For municipalities, your vision is a statement of what you would ultimately like to achieve as a community.

Although a town's Mission Statement is the one statement that will most often be repeated and shared with the public because of its obvious commitment(s) to action, it is really the *vision* statement that is the most telling in describing a community's place for the future. A vision statement should leave no doubt as to how a community wishes to be viewed by others, and what it aspires to be in the future. When considering the vision statement, participants are forced to look ahead and try to conceptualize the kind of community they would like to be, and to a very large extent, this establishes the groundwork for the priorities and decisions that need to be made later in the planning process.

Vision statements strive for the ideal, but to be truly effective, a town's vision must also capture the essence of what a community is trying to become. This is where many communities have fundamental differences with one another. Vision statements represent the different places municipalities tend to be in their development as a community.

A town's strategic plan is completely deficient if it does not articulate a clear vision for itself for the future.

As previously referenced, it is sometimes suggested that the Town of Paradise is made up of three distinctly different segments, all contributing in different ways to the overall development and unique profile it enjoys as a community. But what is the town's vision for the future? Is there a continuing place for each of these development areas? Is there an attempt to change or urbanize the town at the expense of some of the town's more traditional rural areas? What about the town's commercial tax base? Will this become a priority in the near future at the expense of the current rate of residential development?

Having a clear and focused vision for the future is not intended to be an elusive concept. It is an integral

expression of a town's desire for the future. With an appropriate measure of planning, support, hard work, and the proper dedication of financial and human resources, a community must be working towards achieving more for itself, and this should be reflected in its vision statement.

While it may be true to say that a town's *vision* is sometimes the least understood concept in any planning exercise, it is often considered to be the most important. More than any other statement, it is the vision that articulates most clearly what the town is working towards achieving.

In the case of the Town of Paradise, there is an extraordinary interest in knowing how the town views its future and its place in it. This was a challenging but important part of development of the town's statements and beliefs. When participants were asked to develop a vision for their community that reflects the kind of community they would like to be in the future, this was not necessarily an easy thing to enunciate.

Vision statements are an expression of the pursuit of excellence, but how excellence is defined, articulated, or achieved by one group differs substantially from one place to another.

For the most part, a vision statement should be:

- ✓ Brief and memorable
- ✓ Express a clear focus that is widely subscribed to and supported by the community
- ✓ Transcend the "status quo"
- ✓ Address governance and/or operational needs
- ✓ Challenge people to strive for something better

There is no doubt that Paradise has a vision for the future. They have the means and the potential to be an incredibly strong and viable community. Some say that their prosperous future is close at hand. What matters most is that members of council and senior staff share a view for the future that is both attainable and representative of the views of their residents. Expectations run high, and this becomes a continuous challenge to trying to make decisions and establish priorities that will be supported by the majority of

the people.

VISION:

We are striving to become a prosperous, inclusive, and independent family oriented community that is respected for its planned and balanced approach to development, and which takes great pride in the active involvement of its residents and its outstanding community spirit.

This is a bold vision statement that very much seems to reflect the kind of community Paradise is striving to become. It is also reflective of its core values. It is obvious that Paradise relishes its independence and is committed to improving its business tax base to accelerate the rate of prosperity that this will accrue for the town.

VISION Statement

We are striving to become a prosperous, inclusive, and independent family oriented community that is respected for its planned and balanced approach to development, and which takes great pride in the active involvement of its residents and its outstanding community spirit.

But an overriding desire is to build a strong sense of “community” that shares a spirit and passion that is unmistakable and unmatched in the region. Council wants to build a place that people will be proud to call home – a place where people will want to become actively engaged in various aspects of community development.

This will take place in a number of different but equally important ways. Through involvement in schools and school councils, church groups, local service clubs and organizations, volunteer groups, recreational activities, sports and community groups, community policing, youth teams, seniors groups, special events committees, and so much more. But this has to be an integrated and focused effort that is aimed at “capacity building” and expanding community development. This will not happen by accident. This vision will only be realized if there is a sustained and focused effort of council in bringing people together, and finding ways for individuals and groups to become involved in meaningful community based activities. It must become an important consideration in every community based undertaking that council and staff initiate.

Most communities have a tremendous asset of volunteerism and generosity at their disposal. Many never utilize that asset to its full potential. The real challenge is in trying to tap into that volunteer base in an integrated way where

people are invited to come forward, and when they do, they are rewarded with a pleasant and rewarding experience that will encourage them to come back again. Such community success stories rarely happen by accident. They are designed, structured, and supported in such a way as to empower people to have a direct influence over a course of action, or to develop meaningful partnerships which are designed to enhance the quality of life of a segment of the town's population.

Some towns, in fact some towns in this every region, do not seek widespread interest in commercial development within their boundary. Others want only a very moderate or low density commercial or light industrial base.

Paradise is clearly "open for business". But they have a plan in place to both build and sustain light industrial and commercial development in a well planned and manageable business park environment which complements and supports the town's residential development. Revenues received from such development will also expand the town's capacity to assume greater capital spending, and help build the much needed roads, underground infrastructure, recreational facilities, and other amenities which will help promote community involvement and engender greater participation by people of all ages.

As has been repeatedly said, unless a community identifies what kind of a community it would like to be, it is virtually impossible to achieve it.

Once a vision is created, it is much easier to develop the necessary skills and resources required to incrementally move the town in the direction that has been identified and adopted. This may not make the work any easier, but the vision is very clear.

Vision provides a common focus for the future. In trying to determine priorities or make fundamentally difficult decisions, it is never unfair to ask, "How does this initiative help advance our vision for ourselves as a community?"

If a particular initiative advances council's vision it may well be something worth supporting and pursuing. If an initiative or decision does not appear to support the town's vision for the future, then in all likelihood, it is not something that should be pursued against other more important competing interests.

In the case of the Town of Paradise, the vision is clear, widely supported, and very well focused.

5. Mission Statement

Mission

An outcomes based statement which articulates the town's commitment to the people by answering the questions who, what and why. It should be realistic and achievable, and to some extent, should complement and support the basic principles outlined in the mandate, vision, and values statements.

It is fair to say that the Town of Paradise has had a generally good idea of the direction in which they wish to proceed for the future for quite some time. But building community requires an ongoing and integrated approach to community development, and this will continue to be the challenge for the people of Paradise going forward.

This strategic plan represents the first time that the Town Council of the Town of Paradise have formally drafted a plan that establishes an unequivocal direction for the future based on a thoughtfully considered set of priorities, and these are supported with clear goals and objectives to ensure they can be achieved.

Another important component of this process takes the form of a mission statement.

Mission statements represent a firm commitment to the people. They must be equally responsive to the *realities* expressed in the town's mandate, and the *ideals* expressed in the vision statement. A town's mission statement should also be connected to the principles outlined in the town's values statements. To some extent at least, the mission statement must complement (and reflect) all of the other three statements – the mandate, the vision, and the values.

The Mission Statement is a fresh and realistic statement of commitment and action.

All of the statements and beliefs developed have an important place in establishing a framework for action. The mission statement is an integral pillar in establishing this framework. Mission statements represent more of a *commitment* than an *ideal*, and as such must be realistic and attainable. Reneging on your commitment is something that is never viewed favorably, and that's why a town's mission statement has to be developed with such care and honesty.

While all four "statements and beliefs" have a clear connection with each other in terms of being complementary, the challenge is to avoid being repetitive, because each of the four statements represents an entirely

different (yet equally important) part of the plan's foundation. Many important principles of value and ideal are enunciated in the vision statement, as well as in the expression of the town's values statements, and the temptation often exists to try to include everything in the mission statement, and to try to make it as complete and inclusive as possible. It is usually far more effective when this temptation is avoided, and the mission statement becomes a fresh and realistic statement of intent and action that complements (not duplicates) the others.

The basic principles of sound mission statement development were reviewed with the group.

Obviously, we took the time to review the three overriding questions that characterize an effective mission statement. That is, the statement should answer the questions WHO, WHAT, and WHY. Here is what was agreed upon as the Mission Statement for the Town of Paradise:

MISSION:

To support our efforts to build a proud, prosperous, and well balanced community, the Town Council of the Town of Paradise is committed to providing programs and facilities to encourage and enhance healthy living and active community involvement, to be accountable to our taxpayers, and to deliver the highest level of services possible to our residents within our means.

Mission Statement

To support our efforts to build a proud, prosperous and well balanced community, the Town Council of the Town of Paradise is committed to providing programs and facilities to encourage and enhance healthy living and active community involvement, to be accountable to our taxpayers, and to deliver the highest level of services possible to our residents within our means.

Does this statement pass the scrutiny of a well developed mission statement? Does it adequately address the three overriding questions of *who*, *what*, and *why*? Are there strong commitments in all the core areas where government accountability standards dictate they should? Is the rationale clearly articulated? Does it complement the three existing statements and beliefs that have already been established?

In all cases, it seems that the answer is "yes". All of the statements and beliefs appear to be well developed and reflect the unique characteristics and priorities of the town. They identify the traits, values, and direction that sets Paradise apart from other communities in the region.

Participants have done an incredibly good job in differentiating among the four, while ensuring that the required consistency is in place to ensure credibility and build widespread support.

This important part of the planning session is now complete. Once the group was satisfied that these statements address the characteristics and position of the town in these core areas, the group turned its attention to the discussion of what they felt were the critical areas of programs, services, community development, infrastructure, and support that participants felt needed to be addressed over the next several years.

6. Critical Areas

Critical Areas

Are the very broad areas of the town's programs, services, or operations that need to be addressed during the planning period. From among the various critical areas identified, priorities are established that deal with the issues or challenges which are widely felt to be most urgently in need of attention during the time period agreed upon.

The next phase of the plan's development usually requires a great deal of *give* and *take* among participants before any final decisions are concluded. This discussion centers around finding agreement about what the group feels are the most pressing critical areas or immediate challenges facing the town during the planning cycle that really must be addressed.

Sometimes this can be an agonizing process. The question is quite simple. What are the broad areas of priority facing the community over the next five years?

As one can imagine, the views or priorities of one councillor or staff person may be entirely different than those of another, and while all are usually quite legitimate, finding some degree of consensus becomes the real challenge. But critical areas are very broad areas of priority which can often be broken down into a number of legitimate goals and objectives as the details of the plan unfold.

This list can sometimes be pretty exhaustive unless participants really understand what we are trying to achieve in this stage of the process. The everyday operations and administration of the town's programs and services will continue as they always have. But the real question becomes, "What priorities or challenges will council need to address in the next five years in order to be able to advance its vision and uphold its commitments to residents of the town to build a "proud, prosperous, and well balanced" community as articulated in the town's mission statement?"

There are never enough resources to fulfil the "wish list" that most councils would like to achieve for its residents. The challenge is to identify the broad areas of priority that have widespread support among members of council, and to direct human and financial resources to address these priorities. These critical areas *do not* preclude or conflict with the many day to day services or programs that would still be carried out as part of the routine running of the municipality. In fact they complement them. In almost all

instances, the day to day administration and operation of the town will proceed as usual. None of this will change. The strategic plan identifies special areas of priority to insure that these will be addressed (and budgeted for) in the coming years. Successful strategic planning involves decision-making and prioritizing, and ensuring that timelines, resources, and specific responsibilities are assigned to ensure completion. Quite often, the greater the degree of consensus among the group on the critical areas identified, the greater the likelihood they will be achieved.

In this instance, there was unbelievable support among council (and staff) on the major areas needing immediate attention over the next five years. There was healthy discussion and debate on *how* and *when* plans should proceed, but the general areas themselves were not particularly contentious or divisive for the group. This was an excellent starting point.

After a relatively brief discussion, the critical areas identified and agreed upon for the Town of Paradise (in no particular order) are as follows:

1. Roads, transportation, traffic, and access
2. Continued expansion of the town's infrastructure
3. Recreational programs and facilities
4. Economic development and business attraction
5. Planning and development
6. Communications and accountability

These *six areas* are the areas where council feels they really need to concentrate their efforts for the next number of years, and very specific goals and objectives will be established in each area that will ensure success and quantify results.

We were now ready to focus our discussions on goal setting, and make fundamental decisions in each of these categories as to what can realistically be achieved in the five year timeframe established.

Following this, council and staff took part in a general discussion about each broad area that was adopted, and this

discussion enabled the group to consider the broader spectrum of thoughts and ideas which would eventually lead to the goal identification process. Discussion was designed to focus a little more on the details of each critical area that the group felt needed to be addressed, and why they felt that this was considered to be an issue that was in urgent need of council's attention as part of this strategic plan.

Before concluding, the group was challenged to consider other broad areas which are not included among the six critical areas agreed upon. It was important that the group agreed that the areas identified were the most important areas to focus upon in the shorter term, and that there was very solid support from council on these major areas or priorities.

Once the group was comfortable that they had identified the areas that needed to be addressed in the plan, the attention of the group turned to a more detailed (and focused) discussion around each of these critical areas, and the various challenges or opportunities that might be associated with each.

We were now ready to move on to the next important phase of the planning exercise - establishing our goals.

7. Establishing Goals

Goal

A goal is a specific statement of the desired results to be achieved within a specific period of time.

Goal setting often takes place towards the second half of the planning time when energy is waning and, ironically enough, this phase requires the greatest level of concentration and participation. But the group did a commendable job concentrating on the challenges and developing goals aimed at dealing with the major issues.

As always, the challenge in establishing goals is to ensure that the focus is squarely where it should be. Quite often in identifying issues and trying to find solutions to municipal problems, there is a tendency to address “symptoms” rather than to deal with “root causes”. Symptoms are more readily identifiable, are easily targeted, tend to be brought forward in the form of public complaints, and tend to be dealt with in a “knee jerk” fashion. Symptoms get the attention of elected representatives very quickly. Finding lasting solutions to problems can be a considerably more intensive and painstaking process, but almost always are worth the additional effort.

If, for example, there are repeated complaints about the behavior of “out of control” youth in certain areas within the community, there may be a tendency to take immediate action to deal with the issue by banning loitering of youth in an area, increasing police presence and patrols, installing video camera surveillance and other such actions. The actions of the youth may be symptoms of a much greater and more widespread problem. Maybe there is a need for more structured (or even unstructured) outreach programs for youth within the community, improved recreational facilities, increased access or better flexibility etc. Perhaps many youth feel disconnected and out of touch with what is being offered, and would like an opportunity to be involved in less structured programs and just have games and other activities which would make it more attractive to just “hang out” without a whole lot of pressure or structure. There is a time and place for all these individuals.

Sometimes, we even neglect to involve these youth in our discussions when trying to come up with meaningful solutions that may help address their issues or concerns.

So developing goals that are intended to deal with the root causes identified in our critical areas is always a challenge, and forces participants to seriously consider not just the superficial symptoms, but to go much deeper in our discussions to find more lasting and meaningful solutions.

For each of the critical areas identified, goals are carefully crafted to achieve results within a specified period of time. It is essential that goals be measurable and achievable so that an appropriate degree of accountability can be built into the plan. Participants reviewed each of the six critical areas that were prioritized by the group, and after having reviewed the basic elements of proper goal setting, attention was immediately focused on developing goal statement(s) in each of these important areas.

Discussion took place around the major issues and challenges in each area, and the group was asked to focus on addressing the root causes. The group was asked how these goals would *complement* or *support* the various statements and beliefs that the group had developed earlier in the planning process. The group was challenged to make sure the goals were consistent with their core values. They were asked to ensure the goals strengthen the commitment that is articulated in the town's Mission Statement. With these things in mind, the group promptly set out to develop goal statements in each of the areas identified.

Attached to each goal would be indicators by which we could "quantify" results. This provides greater assurance to the group that there are benchmarks in place for each goal, and that there will be tangible signs of "results" to further ensure the group meets its goal. This measure of accountability is essential throughout each stage of development and implementation.

Following this, the group reviewed its goal statements, and put forth qualifying questions to test the validity of each statement to ensure that everyone understood fully what

One of the secrets to success in life is to make stepping stones out of stumbling blocks.

Jack Penn

was intended (and expected) for each. This provided one final opportunity to test the goal and to affirm the group's support in each of the areas identified.

Once the group was clear on what they hoped to achieve, attention quickly shifted to establishing objectives or strategic actions which would help the group achieve its goals.

8. Formulating Goal Statements

The six (6) critical areas identified by the group are as follows:

1. Roads, transportation, traffic, and access
2. Continued expansion of the town's infrastructure
3. Recreational programs and facilities
4. Economic development and business attraction
5. Planning and development
6. Communications and accountability

The goal statements for each of the critical areas are as follows:

1. ROADS, TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC, AND ACCESS

Goal #1

By June 2011, the town will have developed a comprehensive traffic and transportation plan (including a roads construction and maintenance program) to facilitate the smooth and effective movement of people and goods throughout the town.

2. CONTINUED EXPANSION OF THE TOWN'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal # 1

By the end of the current five year planning cycle (December 2013), the town will complete a full 50% of the projected costs of unserviced infrastructure planned for the town.

3. RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Goal # 1

By December 2010, council will have finalized plans and work will be underway towards the completion of a new arena for the Town of Paradise located in the area of the new community complex.

Goal # 2

Before the end of December 2009, public consultation will be completed and a detailed implementation schedule developed to address additional recreational facilities and construction to be implemented during this five (5) year planning cycle.

Goal #3

To develop a comprehensive community based recreation and active living program by November 30, 2011 aimed at better meeting the needs of residents of all ages.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Goal #1

By the conclusion of this planning period, council will have increased its revenues by 100% over and above current revenues in the areas of commercial property taxation and business tax revenues.

Goal # 2

By June 2012, a comprehensive business development plan will be completed relating to the proposed expansion and development of the remaining commercial and light industrial development areas within the town.

5. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal #1

As a means to develop a more structured, inclusive, and balanced building and development plan that supports the priorities and objectives outlined in the town's municipal plan, by March 31, 2010, the town will complete a ten (10) year building and development framework (that includes public input and consultation) which will detail the town's development plans and priorities for that time period.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Goal #1

By July 1, 2011 the Town of Paradise will complete and adopt a new Communications Plan and Accountability Guidelines designed to improve and expand its internal and external communications, and implement more rigorous accountability standards in all facets of its operations.

Each of the critical areas outlined above were unanimously accepted by the group as being the most pressing areas of concern for the town for this planning cycle, and the goals needed to address core issues and concerns around each of these important areas. Obviously, there are many other challenges facing a growing town like Paradise at this stage in its development, but these are more day to day operational or administrative issues.

For the most part (as was repeated throughout the planning process) the strategic plan is NOT intended to be an all inclusive or all encompassing document, but is intended to focus on broader critical issues that support the town's vision and improve the delivery of programs and services to residents. This plan seeks to identify and support key issues and concerns that are critical to the town's continued growth and development, and which will accelerate the process of community development which is so important to building a vibrant and proud community.

Proper Goal Statements

Goals must be behaviorally based statements which articulate a clear timeline, which are measurable and defensible, and which clearly address a major issue or concern in one (or more) of the critical areas of concern identified by the group.

Transportation issues, recreational programs and facilities, a focused (and well balanced) development plan, efforts to improve communications with residents and to provide for greater accountability, improved economic development initiatives and sustainable growth, and the continued expansion of the town's water and sewer and infrastructure requirements are all critically important.

But members of council and senior staff also recognized the importance of actively engaging the residents of the town in more structured and meaningful ways, and are committed to finding ways to bring people (of all ages) together to increase their sense of belonging, to get them more actively involved, and to continue to build the necessary capacity to support this growing community for the benefit of everyone.

Building a proud and united community does not happen by accident. In most successful communities it is more a matter of design and a result of an ongoing and concentrated effort. Some communities never seem to attain this goal. It takes a great deal of planning, commitment, outreach, and meaningful support to bring people together and to truly build community pride. It is sometimes more tempting (and

often easier) to “do it yourself” than to reach out and get others involved in the process. But “going it alone” does not build ownership or provide buy in from the community. When people do not feel they are part of the process there simply is not the same feeling of ownership or pride. People need to feel that they are wanted (and needed), and that their efforts make a difference. When events, programs, and activities are truly “their” events, people will come forward and support them, and even more importantly, they will reach out to others to get their support and encourage their involvement. Token involvement where people are not empowered, or where they are not provided with the proper support, resources, or the mandate to make decisions are doomed to failure.

Building Community

Building community is hard work. But the underlying desire behind every goal, action, and decision undertaken by participants throughout this planning process was to do just that.

Building community is hard work. But the underlying desire behind every goal, action, and decision undertaken by participants throughout this planning process was to do just that. Paradise does not want to be viewed as a series of large scale housing developments. It wants to become a community of people where pride, involvement, energy, and a strong sense of belonging abounds. It wants to develop a unique “synergy” that is unmistakable in the region. Paradise wants to be a place where people of all ages and all walks of life come together and share a strong sense of community spirit. To achieve this goal, this has to be uppermost in the minds of council and staff in every stage of the plan’s development and throughout the implementation of this strategic plan. When people are asked to be involved there is ownership. And nothing builds pride more quickly or effectively than ownership.

Throughout the development and implementation of this strategic plan there will be countless opportunities for participation and involvement. This needs to be encouraged and embraced, and it needs to be integrated wherever possible so that people will develop a sense of belonging and ownership in their community.

Generally speaking, the goals established were well focused and practical, and there was a thoughtful and logical progression in the timelines developed to further ensure that council did not take on too much in the first year or two of

the planning cycle.

Council felt they were able to manage these goals over the next five years, and if they were successful in doing so, the town would be much better served as a result.

Goals need to be behaviorally based statements which articulate a clear timeline, which are measurable and defensible, and which clearly address a major issue or concern in one (or more) of the critical areas of concern identified by the group. All of the goals developed by the group seem to satisfy these basic criteria, and appear to be very focused on moving the town forward and (one way or another) increasing the sense of community pride.

9. Identifying Actions to Achieve The Goals

Strategic Actions

Behaviorally based actions or incremental milestones which result in changes or benefits the town hopes to attain as it strives to achieve its goals.

Strategic Actions (or objectives) are behaviourally based initiatives that incrementally move groups towards the fulfilment of a goal. Sometimes these actions are sequential or incremental in nature, and other times they are not. But in all cases, implementing the various actions or objectives identified brings you one step closer to attaining the goal.

The strategic actions developed must clearly focus on fulfilment or attainment of the goal, and must address a particular issue or challenge which, if successfully implemented, will address one of the critical areas of concern raised by the group.

The first challenge is always to ensure that the goals identified by the group are realistic and attainable. But specific steps or actions have to be identified to support the fulfilment of each goal.

The group was challenged about how they felt each of these goals can best be achieved, and what steps needed to be taken to adequately address the issues and challenges associated with each. Specific thoughts and ideas were discussed, and this helped clarify participants' understanding of the root causes associated with each goal, and enabled them to dig a little deeper in their understanding of what they hoped to achieve (and why).

Strategic actions are very specific actions, decisions, or initiatives that effectively advance the agenda, help achieve the goals, and address (and resolve) critical issues. They focus on "doing" and they articulate specific steps designed to help achieve important goals that have been identified.

Before the strategic actions were developed, each goal was carefully considered and presented to the entire group for a final review and evaluation, and to re-affirm the group's commitment to achieving each goal one final time. The facilitator's role is simply to take these thoughts and ideas and present them in a reasonable and sequential format that

is in keeping with good strategic planning principles and guidelines.

At this stage the discussion shifted towards *how* the group planned to go about achieving their goals. Strategic actions provide the template for action. They outline the details, the decisions, the commitments, and the incremental steps required to move you closer to the fulfilment of your goals.

10. The 2009-2013 Strategic Plan

Roads, Transportation, Access, and Traffic

Goal # 1

By June 2011, the town will have developed a comprehensive traffic and transportation plan (including a roads construction and maintenance program) to facilitate the smooth and effective movement of people and goods throughout the town.

Outcomes Measures:

- ✓ Fewer complaints regarding traffic congestion and the amount of time it takes to get in and out of the town
- ✓ Decrease in the amount of time required to move from place to place within the town and enter or exit the town
- ✓ Public consultation and input into transportation and traffic issues completed
- ✓ Measurable increase in the number of kilometres of paved roads within the municipal boundary
- ✓ Overall increase in the width of roads and number of traffic lanes in high priority thoroughfares (such as Topsail Road) and provision of turning lanes in designated high priority traffic areas
- ✓ Improved access into and out of the town; provisions for future access and egress considered in the plan

Desired Outcomes:

- ✓ Provide better gateways into the town as means to further develop a unique community identity
- ✓ Improve the flow of traffic within the town and apply acceptable traffic standards and wait times in keeping with national standards
- ✓ Establish a practical plan for future road construction and ongoing maintenance that establishes life cycles classifications for various road networks within the town
- ✓ Consider public transportation requirements and alternatives and connections to existing regional transportation links
- ✓ Listen to the concerns of the people and apply

standards that are realistic and in keeping with a town our size

Strategic Actions:

- Undertake a detailed Traffic Study for the Town of Paradise with an expected completion date of April 1, 2010
- Initiate a public consultation process to discuss issues and concerns relating to public transportation and traffic safety, and to share findings of the Traffic Study with developers and the general public
- Implement a longer term (10 year) roads construction plan for the town, and develop a new roads classification and roads maintenance program that establishes regular maintenance provisions that are in keeping with national guidelines and expectations
- Complete Phase I of the expansion and widening of Topsail Road (from Paradise Road to McNamara Drive) as part of the 2009 roads construction season
- Develop a strategy (with supporting detail and documentation) to highlight the need for government to address issues relating to the overpass, road linkages, and the flow of traffic into and out of the town at the intersection of the Outer Ring Road
- Initiate a study to review the town's current and longer term public transportation needs, and explore alternatives (possibly within the context of an expanded regional service) with other municipalities within the region

Continued Expansion of the Town's Infrastructure

Goal # 1

By the end of the current five year planning cycle (January 2014), the town will complete a full 50% of the current projected costs of unserviced infrastructure planned for the town.

Outcome Measures:

- ✓ Sizeable increase in the number of residential dwellings provided with water and sewer services above current numbers
- ✓ Improved quality of drinking water for residents who have been added to the system
- ✓ A quantifiable five year plan will be developed to address water and sewer servicing within the financial parameters outlined above
- ✓ Reduction in the percentage of residents dependent on private well and septic tanks within the town's boundaries

Desired Outcomes:

- ✓ Provide optimal levels of clean drinking water to residents of the town
- ✓ Reduce the reliance and thereby minimize the environmental and health risks associated with private septic systems within the town's boundaries
- ✓ Continue to build on the town's reputation as a well planned and progressive full service urban municipality
- ✓ Demonstrate a commitment to addressing unserviced residential areas in a systematic and affordable manner

Strategic Actions:

- Develop a five (5) year water and sewer expansion plan to address the continued expansion of water and sewer services to areas within the town that are currently not serviced
- In an attempt to secure more funds for basic water and sewer expansion to meet the growing needs of the town, develop an Infrastructure Feasibility Plan and Cost Analysis to present to the provincial government outlining the town's needs for an

increased percentage of capital funding to meet the town's demands for expanded services over the next 5 to 10 years

Recreational Programs and Facilities

Goal # 1

By December 2010, council will have finalized plans and work will be underway towards the completion of a new arena for the Town of Paradise located in the area of the town's community complex.

Outcome Measures

These are also viewed as quantifiable and measurable results that will be attained upon successful implementation of the goal. Outcome measures provide an integral measure of accountability and results.

Outcome Measures

- ✓ Greater percentage of youth involved in winter related activities such as hockey, skating, figure skating etc...
- ✓ Increase in participation levels of adults of all ages in recreational skating, recreational hockey, and other winter related activities
- ✓ More residents will stay in Paradise for winter recreational activities (economic advantages can be a tremendous asset to local businesses etc...)
- ✓ Will be an increase in visitors and user groups to the town to access the new facility
- ✓ Increase in employment opportunities and in the development of the town's volunteer base as a result of having this new facility

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Establish a stronger sense of community pride
- ✓ Help build the town's volunteer base and find more reasons to bring people together to share common interests and to support community based projects and initiatives
- ✓ Reduce demands for new recreational facilities
- ✓ Increase the sense of community identity and independence
- ✓ Provide more opportunities for active involvement and healthy living for residents of all ages
- ✓ Reduce the town's reliance on the generosity of neighbouring communities and access to their recreational facilities
- ✓ Increase the profile and reputation of the Town of Paradise as a town very much on the move

Strategic Actions

- Immediately begin the process of community consultation with the public and potential user groups to establish parameters around needs, size, usage etc., for the new arena
- Hire an engineering consulting firm to develop a detailed plan and cost analysis for construction of the proposed arena (with various options) attached for council's feedback and consideration
- Develop a financial plan to fund construction of the arena (including support and funding from various levels of government)
- Initiate the public tendering process for construction of the arena
- Begin site preparation work and phase 1 development of the facility
- As soon as feasible, commence with the erection of concrete and steel and the remaining phases of the arena construction
- Hire a qualified arena manager to assist with overseeing the detailed construction, hiring other staff (towards the completion of the arena), and developing an operational plan in consultation with the Recreation Director (and others as may be required)

Goals must be measurable and quantifiable as a means to ensure accountability and completion.

Strategic Actions

Are the incremental behavioral actions that ultimately lead to the completion of each goal. These are the essence of all successful strategic initiatives.

Goal # 2

Before the end of December 2009, public consultation will be completed and a detailed implementation schedule developed to address the requirements of the town for increased recreational lands, improved recreational facilities, and any new construction to be implemented in the area of community recreation during this five (5) year planning cycle.

Outcome Measures

- ✓ Additional recreational facilities (in addition to the arena) will be built and/or refurbished for use by residents
- ✓ Increased year round recreational programming will be available to residents
- ✓ More extensive use of outdoor facilities and recreational open spaces

- ✓ More variety and options available to residents as a result of improved facilities

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ A wider range of recreational needs will be met
- ✓ Ability to provide program choices and active participation twelve months a year
- ✓ Greater opportunities for community capacity building and active involvement
- ✓ Strengthen the town's reputation as a vibrant "family oriented" community

Strategic Actions

- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of current indoor and outdoor recreational facilities with a view to possible expansion of existing facilities and/or construction of new ones
- Assess the potential of the former Steel Mill property for recreational use and explore options that can be developed to rehabilitate this area for the expanded use and enjoyment of residents
- Initiate a Feasibility Study before the end of the planning cycle into the construction of a new aquatic complex for the town
- By December 2009 finalize plans for the addition of 4,000 square feet of new recreational and community meeting space by developing the second floor of the community complex
- Actively work to see the development of the Peter Barry Duff site completed as an added attraction and destination for residents and visitors alike
- Explore the potential for expanded use of the trails, walkways, and open spaces for more extensive year round use to increase participation levels during the shoulder season and throughout the winter season
- Undertake an internal study to determine the potential of Horse Cove Beach as a developed beach site within the town
- Invite public participation and input into the expanded use of Memorial Park for active use by seniors and/or other user groups

I can accept failure. But I can't accept not trying.

Michael Jordan

Goal #3

To develop a more comprehensive community based recreation and active living program by November 30, 2011 aimed at better meeting the needs of residents of all ages.

“Motivation will almost always beat mere talent.”
Norman Augustine

Outcome Measures

- ✓ Increase participation rates in recreational programs by 30%
- ✓ Increased revenues from recreational program usage
- ✓ Programs are adjusted (added, amended, or deleted) based on enrolment, participation, and usage by residents
- ✓ Greater diversity in program offerings
- ✓ Greater degree of satisfaction and higher approval rating from residents on the town’s recreational program offerings

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Have more attractive (and diverse) program offerings that will be attractive to a greater percentage of residents
- ✓ Improve usage rates and maximize the benefits of the town’s recreational facilities
- ✓ Make the best possible use of both indoor and outdoor facilities
- ✓ Be more creative and innovative in our approach to community recreation programming
- ✓ Use recreation as a means to bring people together and help build community

Strategic Actions

- Review the current governance/ownership model currently in place relating to recreational programs and use of facilities with a view to expanding community sponsored program offerings for residents
- Revisit the current practice of *facility rental vs. community based recreational programming* and bring forth recommendations for the future
- Do an analysis of other successful community based recreation programs to implement new ideas and programs
- Meet with various sports governing bodies, youth

groups, seniors, and other user groups to discuss programming options and expanded use of the town's recreational facilities

- Introduce an expanded recreational program and events calendar aimed at increasing widespread participation and use by residents
- Develop partnerships with the town's community events volunteers and explore ways to actively expand the volunteer base and further engage them in community sponsored events and activities

Economic Development and Business Attraction

Goal #1

By the conclusion of this planning period (December 2013), council will have increased its revenues by 100% over and above current revenues in the areas of commercial property taxation and business tax revenues.

Outcome Measures

- ✓ Increased revenue stream from commercial property tax and business taxation
- ✓ More commercial properties developed within the town
- ✓ The town will fund more projects and increase its spending capacity as a result of its expanded revenue stream

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Generate a more diverse revenue stream that does not rely so heavily on residential taxation for revenue
- ✓ Have Paradise viewed as a good place to do business
- ✓ Develop the town's Business Park to its full potential
- ✓ See more of the business market choose Paradise as its location of choice; particularly businesses in the energy sector
- ✓ Create a supportive business climate and eventually expand the town's economic development base to better support industry and commercial development

Ability is what you are capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.

Lou Holtz

Strategic Actions

- Continue to aggressively market the town's Business Park and highlight its many advantages of location, access, proximity to major centers and transportation links, and the growth potential that exists within the town
- Develop a brand, marketing strategy, and attractive promotional materials to support the town's business development initiatives, and which highlight the assets and growth potential of the Town of Paradise
- Establish a mechanism to engage business partners, developers, and representatives from the energy core to determine their future needs and find ways to position the town to better meet those needs

Goal # 2

By June 2012, a comprehensive business development plan will be completed relating to the proposed expansion and development of the remaining commercial and light industrial development areas within the town

Outcome Measures

- ✓ New and additional commercial and light industrial business locations will be planned and made available (over time) to potential investors for future development
- ✓ More options will be available to the business community for expansion and growth
- ✓ Longer term financial projections will include increased revenues from new commercial and light industrial sites
- ✓ Greater prosperity as a result of the town's expanded revenue stream from the business sector

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Improved partnerships and a more active and involved business community
- ✓ Town will have a longer term business development plan for the future to complement its growth
- ✓ Continued investment in the business sector and ongoing expansion of the town's commercial development potential
- ✓ Paradise will be viewed as the prime location within the region for business growth and expansion
- ✓ A more sustainable and integrated approach to building and development that includes significant growth in the business sector

Strategic Actions

- Take immediate steps to conclude the Octagon Development Corporation deal
- Finalize longer term development plans for other suitable business development locations, including small commercial neighbourhood sites, locations for big box stores and other retail outlets, additional commercial and light industrial locations, warehousing and fabrication, and so much more...

- Develop a longer term economic development plan that goes beyond business attraction initiatives and which actively supports the business community in their efforts to prosper and grow in a business friendly environment
- Conclude the agreement for the development of Bremigan's Pond
- Support steps to develop an independent voice for the Paradise business community which will see businesses initiate efforts for advocacy and support for Paradise businesses within the region

Planning and Development

Goal #1

As a means to develop a more structured, inclusive, and balanced building and development plan that supports the priorities and objectives outlined in the town's municipal plan, by March 31, 2010, the town will complete a ten (10) year building and development framework (that includes public input and consultation) which will detail the town's development plans and priorities for the next ten (10) years.

Outcome Measures

- ✓ Reduced uncertainty and anxiety among land owners and business developers
- ✓ Fewer complaints relating to the uncertainty or speculation surrounding the town's development plans
- ✓ Increased knowledge and awareness about specific development plans and schedules for completion
- ✓ Cost savings achieved as a result of a "planned" approach to development
- ✓ Locations identified for higher density housing developments as part of the town's overall building and development plans
- ✓ Developments are prioritized and scheduled according to a carefully designed plan based on sound planning principles

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Paradise wants to be viewed as a leader in planned development within the region, and to be able to provide land owners and developers with a plan for building and development that is realistic, cost effective, and sustainable
- ✓ Council wants to ensure that its approach to development is fair, consistent, and inclusive and that there is an appropriate balance that addresses the needs for a wide variety of housing needs to address the needs of all residents – regardless of their income or circumstances
- ✓ Steps need to be taken early in the development process to ensure that appropriate measures are taken

to locate higher density housing in areas that can be serviced by public transportation, and which are in close proximity to shopping centers and other essential amenities

- ✓ To ensure that there remains a place for larger unserviced building lots in designated areas to support this balanced approach to development
- ✓ Land owners and developers deserve to know that there is a development plan, and that this plan is based on carefully developed and objective development plan

Strategic Actions

- By June 2009, establish a timeframe for completion of the review of the town's municipal plan
- Identify the development potential for areas within the town that are above the 190 contour, and participate fully in regional decisions relating to such development that are in the best overall interests of the town (and the region)
- Continue active participation in discussions surrounding the new North East Avalon Regional Plan to protect the interests of the town
- By December 2010, identify areas that are to be zoned and developed for higher density housing development, and make decisions based on sound planning principles
- Take steps to ensure that there is adequate long term protection of recreation areas and open spaces, including neighbourhood recreational areas, walking trails, and open spaces
- Identify (and protect) wetlands, ponds, rivers, and lakes and other areas of environmental concern within the town's boundary to ensure adequate protection of our eco-systems
- Identify and secure larger lot serviced (and unserviced) building lots as part of the town's longer term development plans

Communications and Accountability

Goal #1

By September 30, 2010 the Town of Paradise will complete and adopt a new Communications Plan and Accountability Guidelines designed to improve and expand its internal and external communications, and implement more rigorous accountability standards in all facets of its operations.

Outcome Measures

- ✓ More frequent communications with residents
- ✓ Greater variety of means to communicate with residents and keep them informed of events that are happening in the town and decisions that are being made on their behalf
- ✓ Improved access to online electronic services for residents
- ✓ Higher satisfaction rating among the public regarding and awareness of public issues
- ✓ Increased performance of the town's professional staff

The most important political office is that of private citizen.

Louis Brandeis

Desired Outcomes

- ✓ Improve the means of providing information, knowledge, and awareness to the public about municipal issues, events, and regulations
- ✓ Increase opportunities for electronic access to online services for residents
- ✓ Ensure that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and that there is an appropriate (and necessary) degree of accountability provided to the public
- ✓ Work towards a more open and transparent means of municipal government
- ✓ Develop more integrated internal and external means of communicating
- ✓ Empower staff to do their jobs effectively and professionally, and provide the necessary means to keep everyone informed (council, staff, and the general public) about what's happening in the community

Strategic Actions

- Complete the implementation process relating to the town's Organizational Review and Re-structuring to ensure that there is adequate (and appropriate) staff to meet the needs of the town
- Initiate a plan for improved online access to basic municipal services and payment of (limited) fees, and which improves the overall online accessibility of information to the general public
- Initiate a new branding exercise for the Town of Paradise which includes a new logo and tag line, and which is consistent with the town's image as a fast growing and progressive family oriented community
- Develop a comprehensive Communications Strategy for the Town of Paradise that includes a wide variety of proven and effective communications strategies and techniques for improved *internal* and *external* communications
- Initiate a Professional Growth and Evaluation Plan for staff that emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional growth and development and holds staff accountable for their performance and high service standards
- Ensure that there is an annual review of progress of the town's strategic plan to ensure accountability in areas which are considered to be critical to the town's future operation, growth, and prosperity

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The location of the town next to airports, highways, harbour front, and other amenities is a huge advantage ➤ Plenty of opportunity for business development and expansion ➤ The availability of land for residential development is an obvious asset ➤ Paradise is a community of young growing families for the most part ➤ Generally, a good fiscal capacity that is continuously expanding ➤ A united council with a strong vision for the future ➤ A tremendous water supply to sustain development ➤ The footprint of the town is reasonably small and conducive to high service levels (at a reasonable cost) ➤ Professional, experienced, and qualified staff ➤ Good (and reasonably new) infrastructure and services ➤ A new and modern sewer treatment plant with an excellent life cycle ➤ Abundance of linear trails, walkways, and open spaces, and even more potential for future development ➤ Space and opportunities for recreational expansion – programs and facilities ➤ Strong position within the region ➤ Tremendous energy and impetus for expansion and growth ➤ Great deal of diversity within town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transportation and road networks need to be improved ➤ There is a need for a K-12 community school system to help strengthen the sense of community ➤ The cohesive development of an identifiable “downtown” core is an ongoing challenge ➤ Deficiencies in some areas of recreational programs and facilities at the present time ➤ Deficiencies and growing demands for expanded infrastructure to keep pace with our rapid level of growth ➤ Current practice of the province to maintain current levels of funding allocations to municipalities and to base capital funding allocations more on past practice (and size) than a genuine demonstrated need ➤ Level of growth is accelerating demands from the public to keep pace in many different areas at once ➤ Need to do better in the broad area of communication and public relations; do a better job of sharing our success and telling our story ➤ The lack of meaningful ways to integrate and involve individuals and community groups ➤ More structured community based activities and programs to reach out and help build community

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The opportunity for growth and expansion of our business park is significant ➤ The potential for even greater expansion of recreational trails and open spaces and its value within the region ➤ The number of ponds within the town and the potential development of these for increased participation and expanded use by residents (and visitors) for recreational uses ➤ Tremendous potential for improved access and egress within the community and many options still to be explored ➤ Young and energetic population to sustain growth and build a viable volunteer base ➤ The timing of Paradise's "coming of age" being commensurate with the province's "have" status; at least there are resources that were never there before ➤ The availability of land and the many options (as a result) for balanced and sustainable development ➤ Opportunities for residents to still have a voice in how the town will be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Although it continues to be hugely unpopular and unsupported, the ongoing threat of a "forced" amalgamation would entirely change the profile (and future) of the community if it were to occur ➤ The effects of the worldwide economic downturn and the devastating effect this can have on our own province (and people) ➤ Related to this, the continuous slide in the price of oil and the province's dependence on this to realize the full potential of its natural resources ➤ The lack of integration and support of various individuals, groups, and regions within the town who share a common interest and vision for the future ➤ Issues pertaining to attraction, retention, and availability of good qualified professional staff within the region, and being able to provide them with what will be necessary to compete ➤ Escalating costs of regional services and the restrictions placed on municipalities to provide more cost effective and integrated services (such as fire and transportation) within the region

Conclusion

While this strategic plan is both extensive and ambitious, it has been developed with the support and input of council and senior staff with the full intention of implementing each and every goal and objective identified.

Working from a carefully developed strategic plan will provide invaluable direction to both council and staff, and perhaps more than anything else, will provide a clear vision and direction for the future in a number of different (and equally important) areas of operations and services.

Mary Kay Ash once wrote, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't - you're right."

As much as it is anything else, success is an attitude. Those who really believe in the possibilities for the future, and initiate carefully developed plans to take full advantage of them will succeed. This is not a new phenomenon or concept. In some respects, success is quite simple. While success takes a great deal of hard work and commitment, the main ingredient is always careful planning.

Much work and effort has gone into the development of this plan, and it is hoped that it will become an important template for decisions and action by council (and staff) over the next five (5) years. It is important to commit to the "implementation" of all components of the plan that were identified, and for ensuring that the plan becomes fully integrated into the priorities and decision-making of council.

Council must be committed to holding itself (and its professional staff) accountable for the implementation of this plan, and for annual reviews that will force council to examine its progress and ensure incremental steps towards completion. That is the only way to ensure council will achieve its goals.

No plan is perfect or timeless. There may be a need to make

revisions or adjustments to the plan over the next five years, and as required these amendments should be undertaken. As circumstances and/or priorities change, especially those which are beyond your control, adjustments may need to be made to the plan to have it retain its relevancy and importance. But these should not be necessary on a widespread scale.

It is important not abandon the direction and priorities that have been established. While amendments may be made, they should only be undertaken to strengthen the plan and to help secure commitment to the things that were felt to be important.

Everything cannot be done at once. Establishing timelines and priorities will be something that council (and staff) will have to grapple with very early in the implementation process. Patience is important, but there is also a need to make sure that regular progress reviews and implementation strategies are integrated into future meetings of council and meetings of staff, and that both staff and council are held accountable for the successful implementation of this plan. Ultimately, the plan's implementation will be the responsibility of the Town Manager and senior staff, but much help will be necessary to see it to completion.

At least annually, a comprehensive strategic plan review should be undertaken, either in consultation with a professional facilitator, or by the town's own professional staff, to ensure that the issues and initiatives are reviewed and that progress is carefully monitored and measured.

One thing is certain. There was incredible participation, support, and enthusiasm on the part of all participants throughout the strategic planning sessions, and in the end, this will pay dividends in sustaining efforts towards implementation. Members of council and senior staff deserve praise for their commitment and professionalism throughout the planning process.

In closing, I want to thank Mayor Wiseman and members of the Paradise Town Council for their vision and participation in the planning process. To the town's senior staff, a special word of gratitude and congratulations is extended.

Residents of the Town of Paradise can take great comfort in the abilities of their professional staff and the knowledge and commitment of their council. The affairs of the town are in very capable hands in running the town on a day to day basis. Hopefully, this strategic plan will be another important milestone in your development as a municipality.

Thank you all for your commitment, professionalism, and support.

JW Consulting Associates
11 Wembley Crescent
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4T8
(709) 747-8595 (office)
Email: cet@nl.rogers.com