

Monica Hawkins

From: Phil Koning <makpgk@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 7:42 PM
To: Monica Hawkins
Cc: Pauline Rochefort - External; Erika Lougheed; Steven Trahan; Michel Voyer; Terry Kelly
Subject: Strategic Plan Progress

Mayor Rochefort and Council

There are a number of positive aspects to the progress noted in the East Ferris Strategic Plan Progress Report.

One is the existence of the plan in the first place....many communities around are working with 2013 plans and even at that there does not seem to be consistent reporting on any progress made.

East Ferris has updated their strategic plan as of 2018 with specific outcomes and measurements to determine the progress being made. This report provides an up-to-date look at how East Ferris Council can be held accountable, which shows leadership to the region.

I do have a couple of concerns however, with the Progress Report

No Reference to Survey Questions

Meaningful community engagement is listed as one of the Good Governance Priorities, but there is no measurement of the answers to the following question that was on the recent survey

"Do you feel that the Municipality offers meaningful engagement opportunities for local decision making?"

Nor is there any mention of the following question in the progress report.

Do you feel that the Municipality has increased its efforts to protect the environment and natural resources?

Asking questions on the survey and then ignoring the responses in the progress report may suggest to some that transparency is an issue and degrades the effort at accountability.

If there was a reason for not publishing a summary of the responses, that reason should be in the progress report.

In my opinion, all of the outcome indicators listed in the 2019 Strategic Plan should be in the Progress report with the numbers from last year and this year, so trends can be established and positive outcomes celebrated.

Outcome Indicators identified in Strategic Plan 2019

Build our Community

% of residents who reported that the municipality has increased its efforts to respond to community needs

51% agreed we have increased our efforts. 31% were unsure

of residents who reported volunteering with local community organizations/events

NOT REPORTED

Grow our Local Economy

of registered businesses in business directory on municipal website

NOT REPORTED

of building permits issued

NOT REPORTED

\$ value of building permits issued

NOT REPORTED

of Community Improvement Plan applications approved

NOT REPORTED

% of businesses registered in directory who reported that the municipality's by-laws and policies offer a business-friendly environment

7% of business owners felt the Municipality's by-laws and policies offered a business friendly environment

Provide Good Governance

% of residents who reported being satisfied with quality of municipal services delivered

62% of respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the Municipality

% of residents who reported that the municipality has increased its communication efforts with residents

Less than 20% of respondents felt that the Municipality has not increased its communication efforts over the past years

REPORTED DIFFERENT MEASURE THAN ORIGINALLY STATED

% of residents who believe the municipality offers meaningful engagement opportunities for local decision making

NOT REPORTED

Property taxes as a % of household income are at or below the average of municipal comparators

NOT REPORTED

Protect our Environment

% of residents who are aware of what materials can be recycled and collected at curbside

Majority of respondents feel that the Municipality has done a good job of communicating recycling needs

REPORTED DIFFERENT MEASURE THAN ORIGINALLY STATED

Total amount of solid waste diverted from landfill site

NOT REPORTED

of joint collaborative activities to address environmental issues and concerns

NOT REPORTED

% of residents who reported that the municipality has increased its efforts to protect the environment and natural resources

NOT REPORTED

I think there should be an attempt made to standardize the questions between the survey done initially in 2019 and subsequent surveys to make it easier to identify trends and changes in public perception.

With regard to the top three areas of concern identified in the survey (I hope all issues will be identified at some point)

Internet Access

I think East Ferris should have a line item in the budget for Internet Access....it is the highest concern for businesses and residents and should have resources allocated to it. Expenditures on expanding internet access will come back to the Municipality with the increased economic activity high speed access enables. Since there is a commitment to find solutions regardless of funding application outcomes, Blue Sky should be asked now to come up with alternatives to telcos providing broadband access. Other communities have implemented solutions successfully, there is no reason why the communities in the joint application cannot put something together. Planning should begin now so a solution can be implemented ASAP if funding is not received.

Slow the Rate of Development

The concern about East Ferris losing its rural character with development runs counter to the equally strong concern about keeping taxes low.

There should be a communication plan to address this with data to show how many new houses have been built over the years, how those numbers relate to our official plan, and how much additional revenue this has contributed that would otherwise have been required from existing residents

Excessive Speeds

If the plan continues to be re-directing calls to the OPP, it may be helpful to publish the number to call and create multiple FB posts advising residents of this. I assume if the number of calls results in more trips out by the OPP to do enforcement, the policing costs for East Ferris will increase accordingly. While the radar speed signs are great at identifying trouble spots, I have not seen any information on how effective they are at reducing speeds. If there is information supporting this, it should be made available so residents are aware something is being done. If they are not effective at reducing speeds, staff should do a cost/benefit analysis of photo radar and see if they are more effective, in addition to generating revenue to offset their cost.

Again, a communication plan that combines all the information needed could also make it known in the community that if speed signs do not work at slowing down traffic, photo radar could be implemented.

The fact that East Ferris council is measuring their progress against specific targets, is admirable. That action is as worthy of advertising as the positive outcomes it identifies. Where outcomes are not what is desired, council should consider publishing a modification to the plan.

Phil Koning
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