

# Best Practice

## Strategic Planning

### CONTACT

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### THE PRACTICE

The Town of Kindersley initiated strategic planning in the summer 2008, which led to “Listening to Kindersley 2009”, and the development of Kindersley’s first Strategic Plan. This started with the Council only, facilitated by members of Administration. Prior to this, Council had not developed a long-term strategic plan, with Key Result Areas and goals.

### THE PROCESS

Town Council and Administration implemented formal strategic planning in the summer and fall of 2008. Administration facilitated a number of sessions where Council defined a draft vision, mission, values and Key Result Areas within a 5 year strategic plan.

By late fall 2008, the draft plan was ready to be presented to various groups within the community for feedback and input. Town Administration officials met with the managers of the West Central REDA and the Meridian Community Futures Region, to strategize on and arrive at an effective process. The process used to achieve the 2004 Community Plan was agreed upon, with some minor changes. It would be facilitated by local resources within the Town, REDA and Community Futures. Sector groups were identified and tentative dates, locations and times were set for these meetings. An advertising/communication plan was set in place, including the local media, posters and the Town website. Contact lists from the 2004 planning process were used, so that phone and email invitations could be extended.

In winter 2009, the Town officially launched "Listening to Kindersley 2009" – a community consultation process to gather feedback on Council's draft strategic plan and provide input into where the community should focus its efforts for the next 5 years. The Town CAO had previous experience with strategic planning facilitation and thus primarily led the various sessions within the community. Town staff transcribed the flip chart notes from each session, which were then posted on the Town website.

In addition to an initial public meeting at the Elks Hall, the following cluster/sector groups were consulted in individual group meetings between January and April 2009 - Town employees (all-staff meeting); Public Meeting; Construction & Trades; Arts, Culture, Heritage & Tourism; Agriculture; Energy & Manufacturing; and Youth (3). Following the completion of these meetings, Town Administration analyzed the community input and presented the major themes to Council. These themes were incorporated into the strategic plan, which was finalized and formally adopted by Council in September 2009.

## THE RESULTS

Specific outcomes of this practice include:

- Increased youth involvement and engagement in the community. 16 Grade 8-12 students from Kindersley Composite School applied for the Youth Council and all are still involved in some way. They are attracting more young people into the process, and the Town will track and report on these numbers on an annual basis. The long-term involvement of these young volunteers will also be tracked (hours and types of volunteerism), and which ones may eventually run for Town Council.
- Creation of a Council-appointed Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee, comprised of 8 different groups to date. The Town will annually track the number and types of arts and culture events to monitor if this sector has gained momentum in a community that has traditionally emphasized sports and recreation.
- The number of heritage-related activities and projects will be tracked annually to monitor success of this committee. Having a specific committee to oversee and steward this area should create greater interest and commitment to heritage activities and sites which have received little emphasis in the past.

- Citizen engagement through the Town's new website will be tracked to determine types and topic areas. Citizens can report concerns, sign up for email communications and alerts, and register for activities and events on the website.
- Semi-annual progress reports on the Strategic Plan in the spring and fall, communicating with the public through a variety of methods (print, web, meetings, media). An annual review of the plan will also occur in the fall, to ensure that Key Result Areas and goals are up-to-date and relevant.
- Annual measurement and monitoring of Town population, with the goal to exceed 5000 in the 2011 federal census, in order to apply for city status. Population will be tracked annually through Saskatchewan Health to determine progress towards the stated goal of 6000.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Municipalities undertaking formal strategic planning should engage experienced and knowledgeable personnel in pre-planning and facilitation. Use in-house resources if they exist, but be prepared to invest financial resources at the front-end to ensure a quality product.