

# 2026 Town of Cobourg Operational Plan

*Actioning the Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan*





# 2026 Town of Cobourg Operational Plan

## Actioning the Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan

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The *Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 and Beyond* is a living document that provides Council and staff with the framework for decision making. Council's strategic plan defines the long-term goals for Cobourg. The annual Operational Plan outlines the steps staff will take to achieve them.

Cobourg's Chief Administrative Officer and senior management team are responsible for developing the Operational Plan each year. Guided by the Strategic Plan, this annual report provides an outline of the programs and special projects recommended by staff to help Council achieve their strategic vision. Further, the operational plan and corresponding dashboard, provides opportunity for regular reports to Council, and the public, on the progress that is being achieved.

# Executive Summary

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The Annual Operational Plan is a critical bridge between Council's Strategic Plan and the day-to-day work of the corporation. The Strategic Plan identifies why we are operating in the space we are – it defines our long-term vision, priorities, and the community outcomes we are striving to achieve – while the Operational Plan outlines how we are going to be successful in delivering on those commitments within a defined fiscal year.

Municipalities face constant obstacles in maintaining this alignment, including legislative changes, infrastructure pressures, limited financial and human resources, emergency response demands, and the immediate service expectations of residents. 2026 will be a transformative year for Cobourg as we prepare for the 2026 Municipal Elections. During an election year, the operational plan must balance the execution of the election with the structural readiness required to prepare for this next term.

Balancing long-range strategic objectives with urgent operational realities requires discipline, clear performance measures, and regular reporting to ensure that short-term decisions do not inadvertently divert us from Council's established direction. The annual Operational Plan provides that structure, enabling us to remain responsive to community needs while deliberately advancing the strategic goals Council has set for our municipality.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** are a set of quantifiable metrics used to track and measure progress towards specific goals and objectives. The development of KPI's help staff identify areas of success, as well as areas that need improvement. As Staff continue to work towards achieving the goals set out in the *Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 and Beyond*, some KPI's will remain consistent while others will be added to better represent new initiatives.

# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Thriving Community

### Strategic Plan Actions

1. Provide the physical infrastructure to support a healthy community that will enable each of us to flourish and reach our full potential.
2. Institute development policies that promote the provision of a mixture of housing options that support the community.
3. Invest in Programs and services that encourage active lifestyles for all age groups.
4. Maintain resiliency and competitiveness through investments in people and resources in collaboration with other public sector agencies and levels of government.



# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Thriving Community

### 2026 Operational Initiatives

#### 1. Development plans for 117 Durham Street (Multi-Year Project)

- 2026: Community Engagement and Staff Report to Council
- 2027: Next Steps for property

#### 2. Town Official Plan Update (Multi-Year Project)

- 2026: Tender Project and Establish the Official Plan Process
- 2026: Employment Lands Study
- 2027: Draft OP Update for Council Review

#### 3. Furnace Street Severance - Affordable Housing Program (Multi-Year Project)

- 2026: Include subject lands within the Town's OP review and update zoning to permit proposed uses in line with Northumberland Workforce Housing Corp Inc.'s project.
- 2027: Complete the severance of the subject lands and enter into an agreement with Northumberland Workforce Housing Corp Inc. for the transfer and development of the subject lands.

#### 4. Mayoral Directive #1: Options and Recommendations for Building more Homes in Cobourg (Multi-Year Project)

- 2026: Policy and procedural updates. Focus on improving customer service and administrative methods. Streamline approval processes. Begin investigating strategic zoning improvements for intensification.
- 2027: Implement zoning improvements, update public consultation methods.

#### 5. Mayoral Directive #2: Options and Recommendations for Activating Development and Revitalization of the Tannery Lands (Multi-Year Project)

# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Thriving Community

### 2026 Operational Initiatives

#### **6. Cobourg East Community Secondary Plan (Multi-Year Project)**

- 2026/2027: The Brook Road N, Kerr Street E and Willmott Street road network environmental assessment
- 2026/2027: Brook Road N/Nagle Road Realignment and Elgin Street East and Danforth Road Class C Municipal Class EA

#### **7. McMurdo Park (New Amherst Village)**

#### **8. YMCA New Facility Project – Lands and Feasibility Process (Multi-Year Project)**

#### **9. Municipal Accommodation Tax**

# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### Strategic Plan Actions

1. Assess points of contact with customers to identify ways to streamline communications, increase stakeholder engagement, demonstrate user friendliness and provide optimal service.
2. Embrace new technologies that will improve customer service and increase efficiency and accessibility.
3. Ensure that human resources policies and practices make Cobourg the employer of choice to attract and retain the best talent.
4. Develop and Implement Key Performance Indicators and Continuous Improvement Plans for municipal programs and services to measure Customer Satisfaction, Community Impact and Efficiency.



# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### 2026 Operational Initiatives

1. Aging Well at Home Annual Education Program – Cobourg Fire
2. Implement Cloud Permit (Digitize Planning Application Process)
3. Snow Removal Assistance Pilot Program
4. Traffic Signal Upgrade – University at D’Arcy Street/Elgin at D’Arcy/University at Division
5. Transition to Electronic Billing
6. Transition to eTransfer for Vendor Payments
7. Onboard Windows 365
8. IT Asset Management Plan
9. Onboard Tax Bill Portal (Multi-Year Project)
  - 2026: Project outline
  - 2027: Community Engagement and implementation
11. Town of Cobourg Accessibility Awards Program



# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Sustainability

### Strategic Plan Actions

1. Preserve and promote the heritage, history and culture of Cobourg to sustain it as a vibrant and appealing destination.
2. Protect Cobourg's harbour and waterfront for use and enjoyment by residents, visitors and future generations.
3. Take a community approach to making the future of Cobourg equitable, resilient, and sustainable in response to our ever changing natural environment, including efforts to address climate change.
4. Enhance our Financial and Asset Management Plans to provide appropriate levels of services and ensure long-term sustainability.



# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Sustainability

### 2026 Operational Initiatives

1. **Addressing Bill23 Heritage Matters (Multi-year-project)**
  - 2025: Finalize list of “identified” properties to prioritize heritage designation
  - 2026: Process 5 to 10 “Identified” properties through Part 4 Heritage Designation
2. **Building Permit Fee Update**
3. **Community Engagement and Education Regarding New Ontario Fire Code Regulations Mandate on CO Alarms**
4. **Parks Master Plan (Multi-year-project)**
  - 2026: Stakeholder Engagement and Community Task Force
  - 2026: Draft plan to Council
  - 2027: Master Plan Adoption and Implementation
5. **Sports Field Turf Maintenance Classification System**
6. **Victoria Beach Washroom Retrofit**
7. **Green Development Standards**
8. **Advancing Action 11 of the ICSP to Pursue More Naturalization in Parks and Open Spaces**
9. **Advance Action 12 of the ICSP to Support Waste Reduction and Diversion**

# Operational Actions

## Strategic Pillar: Sustainability

### 2026 Operational Initiatives

11. **Environmental Services – Electrical and Disinfection System Upgrade**
12. **Sanitary Sewershed Master Plan (Multi-Year Project)**
  - 2026: Community Engagement Sessions (Q1 & Q3)
  - 2027: Staff report to Council
13. **Residential Licensing By-law**
14. **Plan, Prepare and Execute 2026 Municipal Election**
15. **Cobourg Public Library MOU**
16. **Cobourg Police Services MOU**
17. **Pre-Authorized Payment Due Date Program (Multi-Year Program)**
  - 2026: Community Education and Registration
  - 2027: Program Implementation
18. **Procurement – Review and Assessment of Municipal Contracts**
19. **King Street Reconstruction – Burnham to William/Ontario Street (Multi-Year Project)**
  - 2026: Reconstruction work from the bridge to William street
  - 2027: Reconstruct from Burnham to the bridge
20. **Council Orientation Program (2026 – 2030)**
21. **Council Strategic Plan Update (Multi-Year Project)**
  - 2026: Community Pulse Check
  - 2026: Divisional SWOT Analysis
  - 2027: Council Strategic Plan Update



# Key Performance Indicators

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Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are a set of quantifiable metrics used to track and measure progress towards specific goals and objectives. The development of KPI's help staff identify areas of success, as well as areas that need improvement.

As Staff continue to work towards achieving the goals set out in the *Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 and Beyond*, some KPI's will remain consistent while others will be added to better represent new initiatives.

# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Thriving Community

### Community Engagement Meets Population Sample

**About the indicator:** For a community of 20,000 people, 377 represents a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. To ensure community engagement for major projects such as the Parks Master Plan can be considered an appropriate sampling of community input, staff aim to engage with 377 individuals.

**How this is measured:** Engagement is measured by number of surveys completed, number of residents spoken with at community pop-up sessions and number of residents interacted with at community stakeholder meetings.

**Why this measurement is important:** Ensure a large enough sample size to accurately demonstrate community needs.



# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Thriving Community

### NEW: Quarterly CBO Building Report

**About the indicator:** To increase transparency regarding development in Cobourg, the Chief Building Official (CBO) will update the municipal website with building permit statistics as well as submit a quarterly update to Council.

**How this is measured:** The CBO will submit a staff report to appear on the Council agenda on a quarterly basis.

**Why this measurement is important:** By making these reports available to Council on a quarterly basis, staff are providing increased transparency on the rate of development in the Town of Cobourg.

### 1000 Fire Safety Education Initiatives

**About the indicator:** The Cobourg Fire Department seeks to improve its community engagement and education initiatives. The Fire Department has set a goal of 250 home visits per platoon in 2026 for a total of 1,000 Fire Safety Education visits.

**How this is measured:** The Cobourg Fire Department tracks calls and community engagement initiatives conducted by each of its platoons.

**Why this measurement is important:** Community engagement is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health and safety of our residents.

# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### 25% Improvement in Citizen Satisfaction with Municipal Website

**About the indicator:** The municipal website is one of the most important sources of information for residents. Therefore, staff believe it should be easy to navigate and provide an enjoyable user experience. Staff completed a community engagement survey in Q1 2024 help inform the updates to the website in 2025. Staff will conduct community education on the new features of the municipal website and follow up community survey with the goal of improving overall satisfaction with the site by 25%.

**How this is measured:** Resident satisfaction will be measured in person and online through EngageCobourg.ca, residents spoken to at community pop-up sessions and interacted with at community stakeholder meetings.

**Why this measurement is important:** Survey results will allow staff to assess points of contact with customers to identify ways to streamline communications, increase stakeholder engagement, demonstrate user friendliness, and provide optimal service. As per Council Strategic Plan, staff will embrace new technologies that will improve customer service and increase efficiency and accessibility.

# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### Average length of service for Town of Cobourg Employees is 5 years or more

**About the indicator:** With improved policies and benefits packages being provided by neighbouring municipalities, employee retention is becoming increasingly competitive. Through improved employee appreciation, flexible working environment and compensation review, the Town of Cobourg is doing what it can to attract and retain talented and experienced personnel.

**How this is measured:** Human Resources Department tracks staff onboarding and departure dates. An average term of stay report will be provided to Council annually through the end of year Operational Plan dashboard update.

**Why this measurement is important:** To ensure that human resources policies and practices make Cobourg the employer of choice to attract and retain the best talent.



# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### Complete 310 hours of Cyber Security Training Per Year

**About the indicator:** Small municipalities are strategic targets for cyber attacks based on the assumption that they are not equipped with appropriate cyber security measures and their significant financial impact. The Town of Cobourg Corporate Services Division is taking initiatives to ensure that all Town of Cobourg employees receive cyber security training.

**How this is measured:** Human Resources Department in partnership with the Corporate Services division will monitor mandatory training hours. This metric is based on a staff composition of 210 full time staff. All staff will receive a minimum of one hour of training per year and additional training provided to management and other identified staff.

**Why this measurement is important:** Training will provide staff with the knowledge and skills to identify potential cyber threats, helping to reduce the likelihood of falling victim to an attack.



# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Service Excellence

### NEW: Service Standards – Centralized Customer Service Desk

**About the indicator:** In 2024, the Town of Cobourg implemented a Centralized Customer Service Desk and established a Customer Service Charter. A centralized customer service function streamlines inquiry management, minimizing interruptions to individual departments, enabling them to dedicate more time to their primary operational work and core responsibilities.

As staff continue to make residents aware of the centralized customer service desk, the following key performance indicators will be measured as an indicator for success:

- Percentage of calls resolved at the first point of contact when contacting a customer service representative.  
Target: 70%
- Phone messages returned within 1 business day when contacting a customer service representative.  
Target: 95%
- Percentage of emails resolved at the first point of contact when contacting a customer service representative.  
Target: 70%
- Emails acknowledged within 1 business day when contacting a customer service representative.  
Target: 85%



# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Sustainability

### Reserves as a Percentage of Expenses

**About the indicator:** This measure shows how much money is saved for future capital needs and unexpected expenses compared to our overall spending. Reserves, also known as "savings," are set aside to cover large capital expenditures like road and bridge construction. The percentage tells us how much we have in reserve compared to our annual needs. The Town of Cobourg aims for reserves as a percentage of expenses greater than 30%.

**How this is measured:** This data is based on the Town of Cobourg's audited financial statements.

**Why this measurement is important:** Financial sustainability refers to the ability to provide and maintain service and infrastructure levels without resorting to unplanned increases in tax rates or reductions in service.

### Improved Project Tracking and Budgeting

**About the indicator:** The Town of Cobourg is committed to providing transparent and timely financial reporting to Council and the community. In 2026, staff will conduct quarterly financial reporting and project status updates.

**How this is measured:** A quarterly financial report will be provided by the Director of Corporate Services at the Corporate Finance and Legislative Standing Committee. Additionally, staff have developed a new program dashboard to provide quarterly updates to Council and the community on the Strategic Operational Actions identified in the annual operational plan. The dashboard will be easily accessible to all members of the community via the Town website.

**Why this measurement is important:** Regular financial reporting promotes better financial control by enabling staff to monitor cash flow, manage working capital and control expenses. Quarterly reporting will allow staff to identify current and future risks as well as provide a more informed estimation of future budget requirements.

# Key Performance Indicators

## Strategic Pillar: Sustainability

### NEW: Reduce Cost of Postage by 5% / year

**About the Indicator:** Currently the Town of Cobourg conducts a high volume of its financial transactions via paper. By transitioning to electronic billing and eTransfer payments, the Town stands to reduce the cost of postage expenses over the next two years.

**How this is measured:** In 2025, the Town of Cobourg spent approximately \$41,000 on postage. Staff have set a target of reducing this cost by 5% in 2026 and an additional 5% in 2027.

**Why this measurement is important:** Transitioning to electronic payments and billing makes financial transactions more accessible for our residents and vendors and reduces the cost of each transaction.



# How We Will Use This Operational Plan

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This operational plan identifies projects and initiatives that are aligned with the Town of Cobourg Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 and Beyond. The plan and corresponding program dashboard will be our instrument to monitor progress.