



Strategic Plan – 2023-2027

Message from Mayor and Council

Dear Residents and Partners,

The Town Council of Bishop's Falls is pleased to present its strategic plan for 2023-2027. This Plan will guide our activities in the coming years, identifying key priorities, objectives, and actions. The Plan follows an extensive consultation and research program carried out in recent months including a planning session with Council in early May 2022 and a community consultation in mid-June 2022.

The Plan identifies a renewed vision, positioning our community as:

*Welcoming, engaging, family-friendly and committed to continued growth,
Bishop's Falls will be a community of choice for families and business.*

We have identified objectives across a number of priority areas. Council's role is to guide implementation of this Plan. We have established a process to enable ongoing Plan updates. We are committed to engaging residents every step of the way and to keeping you up to date on our activities.

Our Plan is realistic but must remain flexible and guided by available resources. Importantly, the plan requires the engagement and support of our key partners including residents, local and regional organizations, business, and government.

We welcome you to join in our renewed visions and updated plan.

Mayor and Council
Town of Bishop's Falls

Background to Strategic Plan and Planning Process

In April 2022, the Town of Bishop's Falls engaged Tract Consulting to undertake an update of the Town's strategic plan. The scope of work included the preparation of a research report summarizing the current situation of the Town and a 2-day strategic planning session with Council and staff to review progress to date and set new strategic priorities. The report from this planning session would in turn be the basis of a community consultation process to seek input on the renewed strategic priorities. The project would conclude with the development of a draft and final strategic plan for the Town. The project commenced in late April 2022 and was concluded with the adoption by Council of the strategic plan on July 19, 2022.

Community Profile

The Town of Bishops Falls is strategically located on the Exploits River at the intersection with the Trans-Canada Highway. The Town has a rich history in the development of Central Newfoundland particularly related to development of the logging and pulp and paper sectors of the forestry industry, the development of hydro-electric generation on the Exploits River and the development of the Newfoundland railway. It has played an important part in the story of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Today, Bishop's Falls is a strong municipality with a population of 3,082 (Census 2021). While the historical industries upon which the Town was built are gone, the Town has developed a reputation for its resiliency and forward thinking. The industrial base now includes innovative manufacturers such as Hi-Point Industries and Newfoundland Styro Inc along with a good selection of small businesses.

The Town of Bishop's Falls has a good suite of services and facilities for residents. The Town has developed an ongoing strategic planning system and developed specific strategies for economic development such as the Exploits River Development Strategy, completed by Tract Consulting in 2015, which outlines how the Town can position itself as a "destination" in the tourism sector.

A Commitment to Planning

The Town of Bishop's Falls has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to planning, guided by its 2019-2022 and earlier strategic plans, along with other planning documents. These plans and documents include:

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) – 2007-2012

- Town of Bishop’s Falls Strategic Priorities 2014
- Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) – 2014-2024
- Exploits River Development Strategy, 2015

The Town has completed an Asset Management Plan (AMP) called the Town of Bishop’s Falls Capital Program 2022-2026 to help guide its capital investment activities and has participated in preliminary discussions with regional partners, led by the Central Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) on a collaborative approach to regional economic development capacity.0

The Town operates in a labour relations environment and has a collective agreement (CA) with CUPE Local 1349 that expired on March 31, 2022.

Town Snapshot

The section below highlights key indicators for the Town across population and age classification, assessed values for residential and commercial property, new residential development permits, and business occupancy. Areas of potential concern are noted in **red**.

Population Change 2016-2021

Population, 2021	3,082
Population, 2016	3,156
Population % change	- 2.3

Distribution (%) of the population by broad age groups

0 to 14 years	10.9
15 to 64 years	60.6
65 years and over	28.2
85 years and over	2.1
Average age	48.5

Of those in the 15-64 years old category, the following sub-age groups are worth noting. Unless there is recruitment and replacement among younger age groups, the population over 65 will increase to 1,179 (38.25%) of the population by 2026.

50 to 54 years	235
55 to 59 years	275
60 to 64 years	310
Total	820

Assessed Values

Assessed residential and commercial property values in Bishop's Falls have seen modest growth over the past five (5) years, in line with provincial trends over the same period.¹

Taxable	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total taxable (residential & commercial)	181,954,800	186,865,100	187,206,500	188,958,800	190,817,900
% Change		2.70%	0.18%	0.94%	0.98%

New Dwelling Permits

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
15	5	4	9	9

Changes in Business Occupancy

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
3	(4)	(1)	(1)	(9)

Total Number of Businesses

The total number of businesses operating in the Town has declined by 17 (20.23%) over the 2016-2022 period.

¹ Municipal Assessment Agency 2020 – 2021 Annual Report, p. 10

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total businesses	81	84	80	79	78	69	67

Community Survey

A community survey was carried out in June 2021. Key findings included:

- Sixty percent satisfied with Town services
- Seventy percent want roads better
- Recreation facilities and programs mixed response
- General support for beautification and recreation programs

2019-2022 Strategic Plan Update

The Town’s 2019 – 2022 strategic plan was prepared in 2019 and identified forty-six initiatives across six (6) strategic priorities including:

- Recreation and Social (9)
- Economic and Community Development (10)
- Tourism (8)
- Infrastructure (10)
- Community Aesthetics (7)
- Citizen Engagement (2)

Of the forty-six (46) initiatives identified, action taken on forty-one (41) of these (89.13%). Five (5) initiatives (10.86%) indicated that “no work” had been completed. Nine (9) initiatives (19.56%) indicated that they had been included in current year (2022) operational plans.

SWOT Analysis

What is SWOT?

The role of SWOT analysis is to take the information from the environmental analysis and separate it into internal issues (**strengths and weaknesses**) and external issues (**opportunities and threats**). Once this is completed, SWOT analysis determines if the information indicates

something that will assist the organization to accomplish its objectives (a strength or opportunity), or if it indicates an obstacle that must be overcome or minimized to achieve desired results (weakness or threat).

Strengths

- Strong competent council and staff
- Unified
- Engaged residents
- Great public works department
- History/long service
- Policy framework is tight and comprehensive (being copied by others)
- Governance body and good relationships and communication between Council and Staff operations
- Good relationship with Federal Government
- Based on recently completed Asset Management Plan, Municipal Infrastructure Assets in decent shape and give the Town some flexibility in being able to grow
- Fleet renewal ongoing
- Financial situation – Debt Servicing Ratio (DSR) @ 18 - 19%
- Strong fire department – equipment and volunteers
- Abundant Natural resources, river, forest
- Manufacturing center – one of largest in central NL
- A number of domestic sawmills
- Two commercial sawmills

Weaknesses

- Time and capacity to get work done a challenge
- At times, unrealistic expectations on turnaround times
- Do well using electronics
- Unrealistic timelines around goals and objectives timelines
- Financial resources limited
- Emergency plan due for review

- Wastewater system – maintenance of lift stations
- Fire Department - lack of volunteers & new recruitment
- Internal/external communications
- Aging population
- Lack of serviced development land and limited room for expansion
- Capacity to provides services based on resident needs and growth
- Community may not understand resources required in terms of meeting level of service expectations
- Uncertainty of provincial government funding.
- Inflation impacting purchasing power

Opportunities

- Exploits River
- Forest, especially with two commercial mills
- Mining
- Tourism and support business growth/time to “sell”
- Access to Abitibi (Resolute) lands
- ATV trails
- Regionalization
- Health accord –Bishop’s Falls can be a leader and a member of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Botwood Port
- Folks retiring and moving to the Town
- Immigration strategy and five thousand targeted for the province
- Miawpukek First Nation, Indigenous tourism and Qalipu First Nation

Threats

- Aging population
- Health care in Central
- Cost increasing
- Limited volunteer base

- Regionalization
- Staff Recruitment
- Fire Dept recruitment
- Fiscal constraints at the province and potential change of municipal capital funding ratios
- Downloading services to towns
- Lack of law enforcement capacity (RCMP) and Municipal Bylaws

Our Vision

Our vision for the Town of Bishop's Falls is:

*Welcoming, engaging, family-friendly and committed to continued growth,
Bishop's Falls will be a community of choice for families and business.*

Our Mission

Our mission is to deliver quality, resident-focused municipal programs and services, with an emphasis on responsible fiscal management, ongoing infrastructure enhancement, and sustainable economic development and growth.

Our Guiding Principles

We will accomplish our mission by:

- *Planning effectively in collaboration with community, regional and other partners*
- *Providing opportunities for residents to engage, and by being accountable and responsive to residents needs*
- *Promoting the Town and its unique features*
- *Encouraging active participation among residents*

Our Priorities and Objectives

External Priorities

Family Doctor/Health Care

On physician recruitment, this is an immediate and very current priority with action and engagement required urgently. This priority may or may not remain within the longer term strategic plan, assuming current challenges are met.

Objective: Physician recruitment and ensuring the appropriate medical provider is in the appropriate place.

Tourism/River Development

Objective: Align with regional and provincial destination development priorities.

Objective: Continue focus on Exploits River as key tourism asset.

Objective: Enhance tourism marketing and capacity.

Objective: Prepare a beautification plan for the Town.

Objective: Create physical recreation links to neighboring communities.

New Resident Recruitment

Objective: Stabilize population at 3,086 by 2025 and grow population thereafter.

Business Retention/Expansion and Investment Attraction

Objective: Retain and expand existing businesses

Objective: Attract new investment to Bishop's Falls.

Citizen Engagement

Objective: Enable ongoing citizen engagement.

Regionalization/Regional Collaboration

Objective: Enhance opportunities for greater regional collaboration.

Internal Priorities

Infrastructure and Public Works

Objective: Based on priorities within the Town's Asset Management Plan (AMP), maintain and improve existing infrastructure.

Objective: Maintain and enhance capacity and leadership in infrastructure and public works.

Recreation and Leisure Programming and Infrastructure

Objective: Build capacity for recreation and leisure programming.

Objective: Determine feasibility of regional approach to recreation and leisure programming and infrastructure.

Objective: Continue investment and planning in recreation and leisure facilities and infrastructure.

Staffing and Succession Planning

Objective: Build organizational capacity for continuity of municipal operations.

Objective: Align strategic priorities with staff resources.

Objective: Undertake succession/retention planning.

Municipal Plan Renewal/Land Use

Objective: Ensure municipal, development plan/regulations and related plans are up to date and able to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Volunteer Capacity, Recruitment and Recognition

Objective: Build capacity within Town's voluntary sector.

Plan Evaluation and Monitoring

Ongoing Plan Review and Updates

The Town will review the progress of Plan implementation and provide an update to residents on an annual basis. The Plan will be updated as required to reflect progress and new circumstances as they arise.

Annual Work Plans

Each year, Council and staff will prepare an annual workplan to guide activities in the coming year. A copy of the workplan template for the Strategic Plan is provided as **Appendix A**.

Appendix A – 2023-2027 Work Plan (Draft)

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
External				
Family Doctor/Health Care				
Physician recruitment and Ensuring the appropriate medical provider is in the appropriate place.	Continue to lobby government and Central Regional Health Authority.	Immediate/Ongoing		
	Engage in proposed seat at Community Advisory Committee.	Immediate/Ongoing		
	Align messaging and approach with proposed health accord model.	Immediate/Ongoing		
	Keep residents apprised of Council leadership.	Immediate/Ongoing		
Tourism/River Development				
Align with regional and provincial destination development priorities.	Review Adventure Central Destination development plan (DDP).	Short term		
	Engage in regional destination development activities.	Ongoing		
	Initiate day-long conference on Tourism Product Development for Exploits region.	Medium term		
	Engage in opportunities to input into Provincial DDP.	Medium term		
	Review Indigenous Tourism Plan and engage with the Miawpukek First Nation and Qalipu First Nation where possible on collaborative approach to implementation.	Short term		
Continue focus on Exploits River as key tourism asset.	Review development plan to determine next stages of development and prepare investment program and rationale.	Short term		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
	Prepare Maintenance Impact Statement(s) for current and proposed infrastructure and reflect considerations in Town’s preventative maintenance plans and approach (see Infrastructure and Public Works above).	Medium term		
	Continue the Trestle’s lighting and complete Trestleview Park.	Short term		
Enhance tourism marketing and capacity.	Prepare promotional video.	Medium term		
	Develop off site promotional signage focused on trestle	Medium term		
	Review/assess effectiveness of current gateway signage.	Medium term		
	Explore options for community-based tourism program manager.	Medium term		
	Prepare a digital marketing plan for the Town.	Medium term		
	Assess potential to expand RV Park to 150 sites.	Medium term		
Prepare beautification plan.	Prepare/update beautification plan.	Short term		
Create physical recreation links to neighboring communities.	Utilize T’Railway to provide surface linkages to Grand Falls – Windsor, Botwood and Peterview.	Long term		
	Utilize Exploits River to prove water linkages to Grand Falls – Windsor, Botwood and Peterview.	Long term		
New Resident Recruitment				
Stabilize population at 3,086 by 2025 and grow population thereafter.	Position Bishop’s Falls as rural high quality of life living with proximity to major amenities i.e., shopping, education, medical etc.	Long term		
	Determine potential housing requirements arising from Marathon Gold/other mining developments.	Short/medium term		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
	Prepare and maintain inventory of vacant positions in Bishop's Falls and region to assist in partner recruitment/attraction for incoming workers.	Medium term		
	Prepare promotional video and marketing materials focusing on new resident recruitment.	Medium term		
	Engage with school on video productions.	Medium term		
	Approach sub-division developer on potential cost-sharing for marketing activities.	Medium term		
	Include region's unemployment rate/available labour pool in promotional activities.	Medium term		
Business Retention and Expansion/Investment Attraction				
Retain and expand existing businesses and attract new investment to Bishop's Falls.	Utilize the regional destination product development session (see above in Tourism/River Development) as an opportunity to introduce the concept of a cost-shared approach to economic development planning and capacity within Exploits region.	Medium term		
	Pursue regional approach to economic development officer (EDO) in collaboration with Towns of Grand Falls – Windsor, Botwood, and potentially other communities, and the Exploits Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC).	Short term		
	Engage local service providers and business owners in supporting the EDO.	Short term		
	Survey the businesses who left or closed and determine why they left or closed.	Medium term		
Citizen Engagement				
Enable ongoing citizen engagement.	Continue leadership role of Community Relations Committee.	Ongoing		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
	Continue general and targeted communications to residents and stakeholders, at minimum two times per year.	Ongoing		
	Continue general and targeted surveys to residents and stakeholders.	Ongoing		
	Engage community in quality of life assessment to identify any gaps that exist	Medium term		
	Continue social media activities with a focus on Facebook.	Ongoing		
Regionalization/Regional Collaboration				
Enhance opportunities for Greater regional collaboration.	Initiate focused conversation with Exploits region communities, including Local Service Districts (LSDs), on the proposed regionalization framework and report of the working group on regionalization.	Short/medium term		
	Identify potential opportunities for regional collaboration.	Short/medium term		
	Undertake needs assessment/viability of collaboration.	Short/medium term		
	Engage government and action where alignment is feasible and agreed.	Short/medium term		
Internal				
Infrastructure and Public Works				
Maintain and improve existing infrastructure.	Continue to invest in capital program on an annual basis.	Ongoing		
	Continue to seek support through Municipal Capital Works and related government infrastructure programs.	Ongoing		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
	Assess condition/appearance of the Country Road water tower and determine cost of painting and other immediate requirements.	Short term		
	Focus efforts on areas of Town which continue to have discolored water.	Medium term		
	Focus efforts on areas of Town where water pressure is low.	Medium term		
	Continue ditching program.	Ongoing		
Maintain and enhance capacity and leadership in infrastructure and public works.	Utilize Asset Management Plan (AMP) In setting priorities for annual and multi-year Capital Investment Plan (CIP).	Ongoing		
	Undertake annual review/update of CIP.	Ongoing		
	Maintain leadership from Public Works Committee of Council.	Ongoing		
	Develop communication and messages for residents to enable better understanding of how Council determines priorities on infrastructure.	Short term		
	Continue preventative maintenance approach.	Ongoing		
	Continue fleet maintenance plan.	Ongoing		
	Continue internal maintenance policies and procedures.	Ongoing		
Recreation and Leisure Programming and Recreation Infrastructure				
Build capacity for recreation and leisure programming.	Consider adding capacity to the Recreation Department for tourism/business/marketing	Short/medium term		
	Continue to explore/pursue funding opportunities/applications for programming.	Ongoing		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
	Prepare a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Bishops Falls.	Medium term		
Determine feasibility of regional approach to recreation and leisure programming and infrastructure.	Add recreation and leisure programming to agenda of future Joint Mayors/Regional Council agenda.	Short term		
Continue investment and planning in recreation and leisure facilities and infrastructure.	Maintain investment in recreation programs and infrastructure.	Ongoing		
	Prepare costing and identify resources to enable an immediate investment in additional dressing rooms and showers at the Arena.	Immediate		
	Explore route and costing for potential bike trail.	Medium term		
Staffing and Succession Planning				
Build organizational capacity for continuity of municipal operations.	Prepare Business Continuity Management Plan.	Medium term		
	Update Emergency Management Plan (EMP).	Medium term		
Align strategic priorities with staff resources.	Undertake operational review/organizational assessment to determine resources and responsibilities in terms of strategic plan implementation.	Medium term		
	Identify new or emerging human resource requirements/positions.	Medium term		
	Consider workload assessment within review.	Medium term		
Undertake succession and retention planning.	Assess current human resources for best fit and potential advancement.	Medium term		
Municipal Plan Renewal/Land Use				
Ensure municipal,	Defer mid-term municipal plan/development	Medium/long term		

Priority/Objective	Action(s)	Prioritization	Timelines	Status
development plan & regulations and related plans are up to date and able to address emerging challenges and opportunities.	regulations review/update to required review in 2025.			
	Assess the procurement needs of local mining operations and, if feasible, reprofile, the industrial park to reflect these needs.	Short/medium term		
	Seek resources, potentially through Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), to undertake Climate Change Adaption Plan in 2023.	Medium term		
	Assess and quantify the amount of available developable lands in the Town. Using the Towns GIS base map, identify all unencumbered land in the Town with economic development potential.	Medium term		
Volunteer Capacity, Recruitment, Recognition				
Build capacity within Town's voluntary sector.	Continue leadership role of Community Relations Committee.	Ongoing		
	Include support for volunteer groups in Recreation and Leisure Programming and Infrastructure and as well within organizational assessment/operational review in Staffing and Succession Planning.	Medium term		
	Prepare web-based inventory of volunteer opportunities.	Medium/long term		
	Continue ongoing volunteer recognition activities, in April of each year as part of Volunteer Appreciation Month.	Ongoing		