

Compass Point Consulting
Proposal for Professional Services for the
Corporation of the Municipality of St. Charles
Community Strategic Plan (RFP 2024-6)

September 9, 2024



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1.0 Introduction

Compass Point Consulting is pleased to enclose our proposal to develop a community strategic plan for the Municipality of St.-Charles. Our team has extensive experience in strategic planning for small, rural municipalities, and we are uniquely situated to develop an aligned, inclusive, and flexible plan that provides a shared vision for St.-Charles' future and provides a clear and achievable plan to reach this goal.

We understand the unique needs of rural communities.

Compass Point Consulting has specialized in providing strategic planning for municipalities and public sector organizations in rural Ontario. We understand that every community is unique, and we reject a standard approach to our work. Our team collectively has decades of real-world, lived experience, and we understand that is not always possible to transfer one approach from one community to another. Our approach is to work with the community to develop a shared vision and a tangible plan for action.

Our approach is focused and flexible.

We recognize that successful strategic plans need to be flexible. We work closely with communities to understand their local environment, develop a shared understanding of goals and priorities, and create a tangible, achievable plan to reach those goals. Our approach is to create an environment where Council, staff, and the community can create a shared vision and plan for the future of their community. Our goal is to leave your community with a strategic plan that is reflective of its unique needs, responsive to its local context, and realistic in its goals.

We focus on achievable goals.

Plans are meant to be implemented. We are acutely aware of the pressures and challenges that municipalities face when delivering services, and this understanding informs all our work. Our goal is to ensure that the recommendations of the strategic plan are realistic and within the ability of your community to deliver.

We believe that the Municipality of St.-Charles has the opportunity for a transformative strategic plan, and that our team's experience and approach are best suited to deliver this. If you have any questions about our proposal, please contact James Cox at 705.641.0241 or james@compasspointconsulting.com.

2.0 Planning Team

Dr. Bill Irwin

Credentials: PhD (Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario)

MPA (Queen's University)

BAH (Political Science, University of Western Ontario)

Professional Background:

Bill Irwin is currently a Councillor for the Municipality of North Middlesex. Bill has just retired as an Associate Professor at Huron University College, where he served as Department Chair in the Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies program. He held standing appointment in both Western's Local Government program where he has instructed since 2007, and in Queen's University School of Public Policy. With many decades of public sector practice, his expertise focuses on the areas of strategic planning, leadership, policy, program development and evaluation, performance measurement, and community engagement.

Bill's previous consulting projects have focused on issues of strategic planning, economic development and community engagement. He has developed and delivered professional development workshops for the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) in both their executive municipal management designation and in specific topics of municipal management and has 20 years of management experience in the public and community sector, prior to returning to the academic community.

Related Experience:

Recent consultative practice includes developing the strategic plans for the Municipalities of Clearwater (2016), St. Mary's (2015), Bluewater (2015), Grey Highlands (2013), and Middlesex Centre (2012). As a senior staff Bill played a key role in developing strategic plans for the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at UWO (2010), the London Public Library (2000 & 2006), Fanshawe Pioneer Village (1999), London Investment in Education Council (1996), and Community Homes of S.W. Ontario (1992). He also acted as a Consultant for the Timmins Public Library Strategic Plan (2001) and served as a volunteer and/or Board Member in developing the following Strategic Plans: Big Brothers of London-Middlesex (2004), Merrymount Children's Centre (2003), London Public Library (1994-95) and LIFE-SPIN (1994).

James Cox

Credentials: MA (Public Administration, University of Ottawa)

BAH (Political Studies, Queen's University)

Professional Background:

James Cox is currently the Economic Development Officer for the Township of Muskoka Lakes. James has 15 years of experience working in municipal government, primarily in the fields of economic development and strategic planning. His work experience has included management roles with the West Parry Sound Economic Development Collaborative, Municipality of Leamington and Town of Goderich, as well as work with Chatham-Kent Police Service, the Town of Richmond Hill, and the Municipality of Markstay-Warren.

James has also developed and delivered professional development workshops for the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario on a variety of topics including improving municipal service delivery, citizen engagement, grant writing, and project management. This work has given him the opportunity to travel widely across Ontario, engaging with leaders in municipal administration and gaining insight into how different communities are meeting the common challenges facing municipal government.

3.0 Company Information

Compass Point Consulting has been providing strategic planning services to municipalities and public sector organizations since 2007. It is registered as a consultancy business in the Province of Ontario, and it carries \$2,000,000 General Liability and \$2,000,000 Professional Errors and Omissions insurance.

Compass Point Consulting has two regional offices:

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Outlined below are descriptions and references for three relevant projects that are similar in scope to the St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan. This is not an exhaustive list of recent experience but demonstrates our experience in municipal strategic planning.

St. Marys Strategic Plan

Town of St. Marys

Contact: Brent Kittmer, CAO, Town of St. Marys
519.284.2340 ext. 216
bkittmer@town.stmarys.on.ca

Compass Point Consulting was retained in 2015 to review and update the Town of St. Marys 2010 Strategic Plan. The expectations of this project were:

- Provide a clearer time horizon to drive staff activities;
- Develop progress measurements for each key priority;
- Seek collaboration and avoid competing priorities through alignment; and
- Produce a document that promotes discipline during the strategic plan implementation.

Compass Point Consulting conducted in-depth consultation with Council, municipal staff, and the community to develop a series of key strategic pillars. These pillars were then developed into a new strategic plan with associated tactics for implementation. The revised strategy was adopted in mid-2016.

Grey Highlands Strategic Plan

Municipality of Grey Highlands

Contact: Dan Best

Member, Ontario Land Tribunal

Former CAO for Municipality of South Huron and Municipality of Grey Highlands

519.868.6204

best4@hay.net

Compass Point Consulting was retained in 2013 to design and deliver a municipal strategic plan through a community engagement strategy. The project was developed through an iterative process of consultation with Council, staff, and the public, where community feedback was gathered, refined, and analysed. The final strategy was adopted in late 2013.

West Parry Sound Economic Development Strategy

West Parry Sound Economic Development Collaborative

Contact: John Fior

CAO, Township of The Archipelago

705.746.4243 ext. 303

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The West Parry Sound Economic Development Collaborative is a cooperative agency that provides economic development services for seven single-tier municipalities in Parry Sound District. Although the area has common economic interests, the member municipalities had different priorities, opportunities, and interests. As part of this project, consultation was conducted with the regional business community and refined into a strategy that advanced regional development while reflecting local priorities.

4.0 Project Approach and Workplan

4.1 Our Understanding

A strategic plan is the core guiding document supporting governance in a municipality. The plan should provide direction for the municipality's activities but also reflect community priorities and issues that are top of mind within the community. With its last strategic planning process taking place over a decade ago, the Municipality of St.-Charles has a transformational opportunity to assess its context and set the course for the future.

The Municipality has experienced critical changes in the past 10 years, some of which are shared with other municipalities, and some are unique to the local context. The Municipality of St.-Charles is well positioned for growth, but changing circumstances mean that future growth will look very different what the Municipality has traditionally experienced. Opportunities for residential development, experiential tourism development, and expansion of the year-round economy need to be carefully considered and managed for maximum benefit of the community.

Like most other Ontario municipalities, St.-Charles is under financial pressure. Residents expect service levels to be maintained or expanded, while at the same time municipalities are facing significant threats to their financial sustainability. Increasing construction costs, climate change-related costs, the impact of provincial legislation and policy changes all put pressure on the limited revenue tools available.

Over the next five years, the Municipality has critical choices about where and how to invest its limited resources to support its growth and respond to community needs. The Strategic Plan will support and decision-makers as they confront these decisions and build the capacity of their community.

Our role in this project is to create a strategic plan that is flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstance, creates alignment between Council, staff, and the community, and provides a realistic plan for implementation.

4.2 Our Approach

Our approach to strategic planning is grounded in community engagement, with the goal of creating a comprehensive, action-oriented plan. We believe that a whole-of-community engagement is necessary to lay groundwork for implementation.

Our work is grounded on three main principles:

Alignment: The strategic plan needs to reflect the values of citizens, Council, staff, business, and other key stakeholders. Ensuring that these values are aligned through the vision, mission, and priorities of the strategic plan will help ensure the plan can be successfully implemented. By building alignment, we will create a strategic plan that can be a lasting and positive bridge between all stakeholders in St.-Charles.

Inclusivity: Our role as consultants is to drive the process, while the community develops the content. As a result, our approach to community engagement is to be as inclusive as possible. We aim to work with Council and municipal staff to identify key stakeholders and groups within the group to be proactively engaged in the process.

Achievability: Plans are meant to be implemented. As we develop the strategic plan, we are always guided by the capacity of the Municipality and the broader community to implement change. Our approach to community engagement will help create public buy-in for the plan and build excitement for the community's future.

These principles will help ensure that the final product captures a comprehensive overview of the current context of St.-Charles and charts a sustainable and achievable vision for the future.

4.2.1 Consultation Approach

Our approach to consultation is to involve the community at each major step of the strategic planning process. Our usual approach is to take the “conversation to the people”. Beyond repeated focus groups and facilitated session, we seek to work with Council and administration to develop a calendar of community events so we can solicit candid input from residents in places where they naturally congregate. In the past, this has taken the form of “pop-up” consultations at community events or in popular locations in the community.

Community engagement is the cornerstone of our approach. Our aim is not just to inform the public that the plan is being developed, but to actively solicit their ideas, thoughts, and opinions. This helps engage the public and build public buy-in for the plan. Many strategic priorities cannot be achieved without public buy-in, and this is more likely when the community understands they are the co-creators of a plan that is designed for them. We aim to build excitement, enthusiasm, and momentum about the process. Council leadership will be key in this process.

As outlined in Section 4.3 of this proposal, we are proposing a series on focus groups, interviews, and community events to gather input during this process. Consultation will be scheduled in-person whenever possible, with virtual platforms used as a contingency if needed. Direct consultation will be supplemented with surveys to capture sentiment of key issues. All results from our consultation sessions and surveys will be summarized and included as an appendix to the final report, with the raw data made available to the Municipality.

4.3 Project Workplan

We are planning a four-phase approach to this project, summarized in Section 5.0 of this proposal. The approach is designed to provide the deliverables outlined in RFP 2024-6 and deliver the completed strategic plan by **March 28, 2025**.

4.3.1 Phase 1: Project Kickoff

The first phase of the project is “planning to plan”; conducting the preparatory activities that will allow a successful engagement and planning process in later phases. It will establish the current context of the Municipality of St.-Charles, create a mutual understanding of the project, and identify key parties for engagement. There are four activities planned for this phase:

Project Kickoff Meeting: The initial project kickoff meeting will establish a shared understanding of the project, identify any potential challenges that may emerge during the process, and establish the procedures necessary for effective project management. Biweekly project updates meetings will begin following the initial kickoff.

Data and Document Request and Review: Our team will review relevant municipal documents (previous strategic plan, Sudbury East Official Plan, etc.) to establish the Municipality’s current context. Our team will consult an externally focused political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) analysis and a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis to identify any changes in public sector trends, demographics, and economic realities not reflected in the previous plans. External data will be consulted to give a better understanding of emerging trends.

Focus Groups with Council and Staff: The initial focus groups with Council and staff can be conducted collectively or separately. These facilitated discussions will conduct a candid review of the previous strategic plan’s successes and challenges, identify the key decisions that will face Council over the course of the plan, and begin to establish strategic directions to be developed during the planning process.

Identification of Key Stakeholders: Our team recognizes that there are key community groups (non-profits, associations, service clubs, etc.) that need to be engaged in addition to the core groups of Council, staff, and the general public. We will work with Council and staff to identify which groups in the community need to be proactively engaged. This stage will also identify a calendar of events that may be suitable for “pop-up” consultation.

The deliverable at the end of this phase is a consultation plan that specifically identifies how Council, staff, and the community will be engaged during the next phase, and what questions they will be asked during this process.

4.3.2 Phase 2: Engagement

The second phase of the project will directly engage the public and build community alignment behind the project. It is an opportunity for Council and staff to work together, which strengthens corporate culture. Inclusivity is a focus during this phase, as the more inclusive the process is the more successful implementation will be. There are six activities planned for this phase:

Develop Engagement Materials: Although all the materials used during engagement will be focused on the same strategic priorities, we aim to tailor our approach to the needs and understandings of the specific audience. Materials will be written in plain language as much as possible to encourage participation. All materials will be verified with the Municipality in advance to ensure alignment.

Individual Interviews with Council and Senior Staff: We will conduct a series 30–45-minute individual interviews with the leadership of the Municipality to identify and investigate the priorities and concerns facing municipal decision makers.

Staff Engagement: At the Municipality’s discretion, facilitated staff focus groups and/or an all-staff survey will be used for staff engagement. This process will both collect feedback and build staff buy-in, which is necessary as staff will be responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan when complete.

Public Survey: The public survey will be succinct and focused on understanding of the community’s priorities. Questions will focus on the respondent’s concerns and priorities for their community, as opposed to getting direct input on the Strategic Plan.

Community Engagement Sessions: In consultation with Council and staff, we will engage with the public through in-person consultation, either through traditional open houses or through attendance at community events. Where possible, engagement sessions will align with existing community events. If needed, online open houses could be used to supplement these activities. As with the public survey, the consultation will be tailored to the context and understanding of the public and engage them in a discussion about the future of their community.

Interviews with Community Stakeholders: Where identified by Council and staff, interviews with key community groups and/or partner organisations will be conducted to supplement public feedback and gain additional insight to specific areas of the community.

The deliverable at the end of this phase is a mid-term report to Council that summarizes what was heard during the engagement period and identifies initial directions emerging from this feedback.

4.3.3 Phase 3: Strategy Development

The third phase of the project is the core strategy development, involving prioritizing strategic goals, drafting the strategy, and validating the strategic priorities. There are four activities planned for this phase:

Prioritization Session: Our team will produce a long list of potential strategic priorities, for consideration by Council at a facilitated session. This session will focus on prioritizing the “must-have” goals for this planning cycle. Council is responsible for all major policy decisions, and it is important that they can select and discuss which priorities they wish to see in the final plan. A strategic plan can include anything, but it cannot feasibly do everything, so a short and succinct list of essential priorities is vital.

Strategy Development: Following the prioritization session, our team will prepare a complete draft of the strategic plan. This will be done in close consultation with senior staff to ensure that the priorities and implementation plan align with the municipal business plan and individual workplans.

Strategic Priority Presentation: Prior to the submission of the final draft, the strategic priorities will be presented to Council for endorsement. This will reflect the results of the prioritization and provide the first public confirmation of the key elements of the strategic plan.

Public Validation: Once the strategic priorities are endorsed by Council, the community will be engaged again to update them on the focus of the strategic plan and thank them for their participation in the planning process. A survey would be conducted to ensure that the plan reflects the community as a whole and identify any issues that require clarification or refinement.

The deliverable at the end of this phase is a draft strategic plan to the municipality for review and comment. The project schedule allows for at least two weeks between this submission and the next phases to give Council the time and opportunity to consider the “fit” of the plan and identify any issues that require clarification.

4.3.4 Phase 4: Final Strategy

This phase will involve the final revisions to the strategy, considering feedback received during the validation process. Specific attention will be given to addressing any issues, major or minor, that require resolution. The deliverable at the end of this phase is the ratification of the final strategic plan by Council and the submission of final documents to the Municipality.

4.4 Project Management

Effective project management is a cornerstone of our approach. James Cox will be the point of contact from the project team to the Municipality. To support the delivery of the strategic plan on time and on budget, Compass Point Consulting has designed our workplan with the following project assumptions:

Compass Point Consulting Responsibilities:

- Designate a main point of contact with the Municipality for the project.
- Schedule and conduct virtual bi-weekly project update meetings. These meetings will share project progress, identify challenges, and reach key decisions.
- Communicate challenges as soon as possible to support resolution.
- Submit all deliverables to the Municipality with sufficient time for review and revision.

Municipality of St.-Charles Responsibilities:

- Designate a staff member to coordinate with the project team, including attendance at bi-weekly update meetings.
- Provide data and within five business days of request, where possible.
- Provide feedback on consultation materials in a timely manner.
- Share meeting requests and key Council meeting dates with Compass Point Consulting in advance to confirm availability.
- Facilitate engagement activities (booking meeting venues, coordinating social media, etc.)

5.0 Work Schedule

This schedule describes the general course of work for the proposed project. Dates are necessarily flexible to allow for scheduling among members of Council, staff, and the community.

Regular bi-weekly project update meetings will occur throughout the project, starting after the project kick-off meeting.

Phase 1: Project Kickoff	Week of:
Kick-off meeting and finalization of contract	October 7
Data and document request/review	October 14
Focus groups with Council and senior staff	October 21
Identification of key community stakeholders	October 28
Deliverable: Consultation Plan	October 28
Phase 2: Engagement	Week of:
Develop engagement materials	November 4
Individual interviews with Council and senior staff	November 14
Staff engagement	November 18
Develop and launch public survey	November 18
Community engagement sessions	November 25
Interviews with key community stakeholders	December 9
Deliverable: Midterm status report to Council	December 16
Phase 3: Strategy Development	Week of:
Prioritization sessions with Council	January 13
Consolidation of feedback and strategy development	January 20
First draft of strategic priorities presented to Council	February 3
Public validation survey	February 10
Deliverable: Draft strategy submitted to Municipality	February 17
Phase 4: Final Strategy	Week of:
Revision of strategy passed on Council/staff/public feedback	February 24
Submit final strategy to senior staff for validation	March 3
Final presentation to Council for ratification	March 17
Final submission	March 24

6.0 Fee Structure

Compass Point Consulting provides services at an hourly rate of \$260.00. The proposed fee for the scope of work described in this document is \$52,840.00 exclusive of HST.

	Hours	Cost
Bi-weekly project update meetings	12	\$3,120.00
Travel	--	\$5,000.00
Phase 1: Project Kickoff		
Kick-off meeting and finalization of contract	3	\$780.00
Data and document request/review	6	\$1,560.00
Develop consultation plan	6	\$1,560.00
Focus groups with Council and senior staff	6	\$1,560.00
Identification of key community stakeholders	3	\$780.00
Phase 2: Engagement		
Develop engagement materials	6	\$1,560.00
Individual interviews with Council and senior staff	18	\$4,680.00
Staff engagement	8	\$2,080.00
Develop and launch public survey	8	\$2,080.00
Community engagement sessions	32	\$8,320.00
Interviews with key community stakeholders	10	\$2,600.00
Develop and deliver mid-term status report to Council	6	\$1,560.00
Phase 3: Strategy Development		
Meeting with senior staff to develop work plan and test financial feasibility	4	\$1,040.00
Consolidation of feedback and strategy development	6	\$1,560.00
First draft of strategic priorities presented to Council	2	\$520.00
Public validation survey	4	\$1,040.00
Drafting of strategic plan document	20	\$5,200.00
Phase 4: Final Strategy		
Revision of strategy passed on Council/staff/public feedback	8	\$2,080.00
Finalize document content and design	10	\$2,600.00
Submit final strategy to senior staff for validation	2	\$520.00
Final presentation to Council for ratification	4	\$1,040.00
	Total Project Hours	184
	Total Professional Fees	\$52,840.00
	HST	\$6,869.20
	Total	\$59,709.20