

According to the business dictionary, a plan explains in detail what needs to be done as well as when, how and by whom. North Bay City Council's Strategic Plan Framework Draft 2016 – 2026 falls woefully short on almost all counts. The point form presentation vacillates between a campaign style brochure and a bucket list of rhetorical statements containing no planning details.

Planning is a management function which involves identifying goals and formulating strategies to achieve them. Simply restating goals, most of which have been copied from the Baylor report, does not constitute a plan. Planning also requires creating the means to implement, achieve and monitor the desired objectives.

The document contains no details on how its goals are to be accomplished and no details on who will be responsible for implementing them. There is no setting out of benchmarks and no provisions for measuring results. There is also no indication of the costs involved or the monetary benefits to be gained. Consultant's fees have already cost us \$50 thousand, a fact that requires an explanation all on its own.

Releasing this report at budget time is another attempt to divert the public's attention away from the fact that we are now borrowing \$1.5 million per year to cover our operating expenses. This is similar to a family borrowing to pay for groceries.

Council's first mandate is to protect the interests of citizens. Over the past four years taxpayers have had a myriad of reviews, committees meetings and paid consultants to improve City operations and reduce expenses. Over that time period citizens have continued to see steady increases in the tax burden.

Getting public input is part of the democratic process. The purpose of public input is to suggest ideas for consideration not to provide plans to implement them. When is council going to concentrate on providing citizens with a tax levy that coincides with taxpayers' ability to pay and provides needed services which represent value for money?

Government of Ontario Population Projections 2015 – 2041 indicate that *"The population of Northern Ontario is projected to be relatively stable over the projection horizon, with a slight decrease of 2.2 per cent, from 798,000 in 2015 to 780,000 by 2041. Within the North, the Northeast is projected to see a population decline of 21,000 or 3.7 per cent, from 559,000 to 538,000."*

Based on those facts, City administration must ask itself how much energy and resources should be expended on growth while the trend to a lower population is forecast.

As for the public town hall meetings, the only message that we are advocating for is that we want a community that is affordable, maximizes the value of tax dollars and that we live within our means. This strategic plan is simply a rewording of the Baylor report and is being aired at a time when council and staff should be fully committed to reducing City expenditures.

