

King meeting majority of goals, strategy plan reveals

By Mark PavilonisEditor

King is on target with most of its goals, despite hurdles over the past year. Staff provided councillors with an overview of the Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP), now in its third year. Despite pandemic restrictions stretching through 2021, some 98% of the plans' key actions are completed or progressing as planned. And another 30 of 37 of community benefits are heading in the right direction. The CSP runs the term of council, 2019 through 2022. The CSP is led by four priority areas, which include a green sustainable future; investing in infrastructure; cultivating safe, healthy and resilient communities, and service delivery excellence and innovation. Performance is measured through key performance indicators (KPIs). King has excelled in all four areas. Of the 38 key actions identified so far over the three years 37.5 have been progressing or completed. The community benefits achieved are definitely a feather in the Township's cap. In 2021, there was an 8.7% increase in waste diversion; a 257% increase in invasive species removal; .6% decrease in water consumption per capita; a 17% increase in access to broadband; a 30% increase in contributions to King's reserve fund and 683 properties brought into compliance with the Ontario Fire Code. Some 380 metres of watermains were replaced; 670 metres of new mains installed and 16 kilometres of watermain swabbing conducted. There has been a 38% increase in community engagement through virtual venues, along with a 3.5% increase in online services provided to residents. Staff reported a 94% motivation rate in their roles at the Township. King CAO Dan Kostopoulos praised staff for "going above and beyond" to provide service excellence, especially during the pandemic. He called the show of strength "inspiring." The update drew praise from councillors. One thing of concern was a decrease in tree coverage across the municipality. Chris Fasciano, director of community services, said a lot of it can be attributed to development. King does use satellite data provided by York Region. Mayor Steve Pellegrini noted the infestation of spongy moths also took its toll on King's trees last year. Councillor Avia Eek also pointed out that previously, the emerald ash borer also caused a lot of damage locally. Bruce Craig, representing Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT), pointed out the large (old) trees do all the heavy lifting in our ecosystem. When a large tree comes down, you would have to plant hundreds of smaller ones to make up the loss, he said. He's like to see a higher priority given to preserve the mature trees we have in King. On Sept. 21, 2020, the Township of King approved and adopted the 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan. Progress reports have been provided annually to Council for 2019, 2020 and now 2021 on May 9, 2022. "Through the vision of Council, and the dedication of King's talented staff, the Township continues to deliver on Council's priorities and objectives as approved in the 2019 to 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan," Kostopoulos added. "The pandemic brought with it program closures, challenges around staffing, hardship in people's personal lives and day-to-day uncertainty. Township staff have remained resilient, dedicated to providing high-quality service. King gets an A+ for completing so many of the key actions identified in the 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan. "The 2019-2022 Corporate Strategic Plan is an important tool for defining what's important to the residents and businesses in King and transparently reporting back to the community on how we are performing," noted Mayor Steve Pellegrini. "During the pandemic, the Township has continued to operate effectively, as demonstrated by the quantifiable performance indicators and trends identified in the Township's plan for the future. "Thank you to my colleagues on council for your continuing leadership, to our King staff team for making these achievements possible, and to the community for your contributions that make King a beautiful and unique place to live, with a quality of life we have come to expect and enjoy. "The plan and related documents can be found at king.ca/corporatestrategicplan.