

- The City of Kingston's Strategic Plan is in its final year. Do you feel that it achieved its intended goals for this concluding term of Council?

In general, the City's Strategic Plan has largely been successfully implemented while a number of goals are ongoing and a few are wanting.

*** Maintaining and enhancing infrastructure - The City has made good progress in completing capital projects and thereby maintaining its 4 year capital replacement schedule. Asset management is ongoing. The development of a public transit service that 'people want to use' and the Culture Plan have been slowed by budget constraints. It is evident that, if redevelopment of downtown is to succeed with greater densities on arterial roads and relatively lower parking requirements, then a much better express bus transit system is necessary to make it work - otherwise excessive traffic and parking issues will tend to choke out potential economic returns. To this extent we have lost some ground in the last term by not fully appreciating the multiple returns that a good transit system brings. To some extent the slowing up of the Cultural Plan implementation is also delaying our necessary conversion to a largely service-high tech-culture-military economy. The airport expansion proves to be desirable but fraught with risk of only weak returns and more capital intensive than anticipated; runway expansion by itself may be possible. The Third Crossing and Wellington St. extension are both decidedly premature and currently too tax heavy and/or too-high debt load and involving serious opportunity costs.**

*** Enabling economic development - The infrastructure side of supplying employment lands and Williamsville redevelopment has been very strong with good results. The tourism and immigration strategies are lagging.**

*** Rejuvenating brownfields - Beautifying small gateway brownfields has been a step forward. Remediation and partnership strategies have yielded some progress where formerly there was almost none.**

*** Facilitating Affordable Housing - Some small intermittent progress has been made. In general, the City's strategy has been inadequate to addressing mid-to-long term needs both in terms of housing residents in need and undermining any effective labour market strategy in a city with an aging population and relatively low immigration.**

- Please name the most important step the next City Council can do to support economic growth in Kingston.

If there is one "most important step", it is to maintain the 1% for infrastructure tax increment; it is crucial to allowing City the means to meet its capital needs, become capital self-sustaining (in the absence of proper senior government funding) and attaining better budgetary flexibility. Other necessary infrastructure steps: completing water and sewer plant (re)development, maintaining employment lands inventory, downtown infrastructure renewal, continue improving the quality of life in Kingston (the main reason people and many businesses locate to Kingston), marginal brownfields improvement marketing strategy, immigration strategy.

- What steps can be taken to ensure that Kingston is perceived to be “open for business”?

If "open for business" means 'welcoming to business' that is a good goal; if it means 'anything goes' or 'regardless of community concerns', that is a self-defeating premise that will turn creative economy businesses and people away from our city. To welcome business means attaining clear, transparent, fair and balanced development processes delivered by good customer service; changes in the development process and currently in train and investment in that change must continue.

- Do you agree with the results and recommendations found within the Mayor’s Task Force on Development? What, if any changes can be made to increase the City’s customer service and transparency with developers?

In general, I support the recommendations of the Task Force.

Implementation must balance 'good for business' with 'community concern', a sometimes difficult challenge. More consideration and effort needs to be put into explaining interests to differing interests if we are to proceed productively forward as a community at a necessary and balanced pace. One of the most important changes to the development processes is the computerization of the planning process and the

provision for on-line tracking of proposals/projects by developers and the public alike. This should lend transparency and monitoring to the process which, in turn, should improve service and satisfaction levels; it should also improve developer-staff-public relations by increasing accurate communications and information.

- **Do you believe that land use planning reform is necessary in Kingston? If yes, what reforms will you support?**
It is unclear what is meant here by "land use planning reform". If this means curtailing urban sprawl, then the answer is (generally) 'yes'. The latest independent research shows that currently low density new suburban development never pays for itself either in capital or operating budget terms. Briefly put, the density of new suburban taxpayers is too low to pay for the high cost of City capital infrastructure (not paid for when in need of replacement) and new service delivery. In effect, existing residents and businesses subsidize the development of low density new suburbs. As such, new suburbs involve a built-in ongoing structural tax rise for everyone else. They also entail longer travel distances that produce greater greenhouse gas emissions which incur negative, weather, health and economic effects (such as higher car and home insurance; increasing city taxes to cover climate change effects). We literally cannot afford to carry on in the same manner. Higher densities must be effected in new suburbs and along arterial roads to cut city costs and yield higher tax returns. Higher densities also yield higher neighbouring business returns. Developers should be allowed incentives to transition to new forms of denser and sustainable development (something some are already trying to do).
- **Kingston has three award-winning post-secondary institutions within its city limits, yet most of the students that are trained here, go elsewhere after graduation. What can Kingston do to help retain the bright and skilled people that receive their education here?**

KEDCO research indicates that most students leave because they have come from somewhere else, they 'go home'. Nevertheless Kingston should try to retain more of these highly educated people. The biggest retention issue for students (and others) is job availability. KEDCO tries to induce businesses to Kingston that may provide that needed employment; it conducts job fairs and employment visits. But more is needed. Kingston is still transitioning into the creative economy. Research indicates that young people tend to enjoy creative workplaces and the excitement of a creative inter-disciplinary (arts, science, business, technical) environment. A greater focus is needed by the municipality and potential partners to create that environment by including business and artistic incubator spaces in new and old business spaces and in vacant and low-enrollment schools, providing low rent opportunities (as Portland does), building an artist's housing co-operative in the North Block, providing artist and business mentoring, allowing young artists, musicians and writers to make a creative atmosphere where young entrepreneurs can create their own economy, Kingston already has the seeds of this culture and an alternative economy - we need to cultivate it and let it spill over and nourish existing businesses (they will need food, supplies, homes, entertainment, etc). There is some risk - but success is just below the surface.