Introduction

Strengthening the capacity of communities to improve their quality of life can facilitate greater success not only to meet immediate needs, but to provide community resources and organization for addressing future needs.

Neighbourhoods should contain all the necessary types of housing, land uses, programs and services to provide for a safe, healthy and sustainable community. Strathcona County should contain these attributes and they should be accessible to all residents.

Strathcona County citizens have expressed the desire to create a safe, caring and respectful community. They want their neighbourhoods to convey a sense of place and to provide a broad range of services and facilities that allow them the opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle. Although various levels of government are involved in addressing social issues, the County is in the best position to understand and support the development of programs and facilities to address the social well-being of its citizens.

Objectives

Strathcona County's social development objectives are to:

1) Sustain a high quality of life for citizens in the community;
2) Provide a balanced and diverse range of social, educational, environmental, health, recreational and cultural opportunities;
3) Improve public participation and involvement in the municipal decision making process;
4) Provide an equitable distribution and accessibility to community facilities and services;
5) Promote the development of balanced neighbourhoods;
6) Encourage a mixture of housing and a broad range of housing choices in all neighbourhoods;
7) Coordinate the provision of protective, emergency, social, recreational and cultural resources to provide residents with the most efficient programs and services; and
8) Maintain a community which promotes the healthy social, emotional and physical development of all children.

Policies

General

Strathcona County will:

12.1   Identify the community's social values and issues through the preparation of a Social Sustainability Framework;

12.2   Integrate the recommendations of the Social Sustainability Framework into both statutory and non-statutory documents to work towards implementing the programs or service delivery changes, while acknowledging the reality of cost;

12.3   Encourage volunteer involvement in community groups or organizations;

12.4   Support projects and programs that build social capital, develop a sense of community and encourage social inclusion;

12.5   Support provincial agencies in the development of strategies which enable people in disadvantaged circumstances to become self sufficient; and

12.6   Provide affordable and accessible public amenities and community services.

Public Participation/Education

Strathcona County will:

12.7   Provide community access to information and resources, with respect to materials and appropriate agencies to address community support services;

12.8   Encourage public participation in the creation of safe communities;

12.9   Encourage communication between citizens and government agencies;

12.10   Ensure the public is informed and consulted within a timely manner for implementation of new initiatives; and

12.11   Encourage public involvement and cooperation in the development of our communities.

Equitable Distribution and Accessibility of Community Facilities/Services

Strathcona County will:

12.12   Promote healthy, self-reliant, sustainable communities by seeking to provide accessible, social services;

12.13   Encourage the development of public parkland, recreational and cultural facilities that are distributed in a suitable manner throughout the community; and

12.14   Provide residents with a safe living environment by ensuring access to emergency and protective services.

Balanced Neighbourhoods

Strathcona County will:

12.15   Encourage the conservation of neighbourhood character which will in turn help create a "village" atmosphere or a sense of community within neighbourhoods;

12.16   Provide a variety of residential and non-residential uses within neighbourhoods, to ensure accessibility to basic everyday needs;

12.17   Encourage and support new development which implements traditional elements of neighbourhood planning, including environmental design, which considers safety and security;

12.18   Encourage resident-based efforts to promote safety and security at the neighbourhood and community levels;

12.19   Support technological advances that provide residents with the opportunity to work where they live;

12.20   Ensure new infrastructure meets the needs of residents today and in the future;

12.21 Ensure neighbourhoods are developed to protect, conserve and incorporate significant environmental features (green infrastructure);

12.22 Promote the reduction of waste and recycling of waste materials; and

12.23 Promote communities and housing developments that are socially cohesive, reduce isolation, foster community spirit, and share resources.

Housing Needs

Strathcona County will:

12.24 Require the development of a range of housing options to meet the economic and lifestyle needs of residents (see Chapter 5 - Residential Development);

12.25 Assist local housing agencies and the private sector in determining the needs and demands for affordable, special needs, and senior's housing in the community;

12.26 Promote the development of urban villages that provide residents with the opportunity to remain in their neighbourhood as their housing needs change;

12.27 Encourage the development of higher density, more affordable housing in the community, in appropriate locations; and

12.28 Support innovation and flexibility in housing designs, including the potential for secondary suites in appropriate land use districts.

Partnerships

Strathcona County will:

12.29 Encourage the initiatives of private, non-profit organizations for special needs housing;

12.30 Encourage senior levels of government to coordinate and collaborate with local groups and agencies on social services planning, programming and funding;

12.31 Liaise with community health and social service providers to investigate opportunities to improve program coordination;

12.32 Work cooperatively with provincial and federal governments as well as adjacent municipalities to ensure the efficient, cost effective and safe delivery of regional services;

12.33 Encourage partnerships and the sharing of resources and information within the community; and

12.34 Work with interest groups to develop programs and facilities to meet the social needs of the community.

Culture

Strathcona County will:

12.35 Continue to provide the opportunity for a variety of cultural programs such as visual and performing arts, history, music and literature;

12.36 Encourage the development of new cultural programs and events in our community;

12.37   Support initiatives that promote cultural diversity;

12.38   Encourage events which promote the character of our Rural Service Area, such as Summer Trails and Tales; and

12.39   Continue to provide information and tours that celebrate the history and culture of Aboriginal people in our community.