

Strategic Plan  
2011 - 2015

# TOWN of Happy Valley-Goose Bay



## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Securing our future...

## Message from the Mayor:

I'm pleased to support a plan that establishes a vision that puts people first in our community. The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is poised to accept the challenges associated with significant growth and development over the next number of years, but there is much work still to be done to ensure we are ready to maximize these benefits for the people of our region.

The development of a strategic plan is an important step towards achieving our potential. It is not – and it is not intended to be a solution to all our challenges. Everyday programs and services will continue. But the plan establishes priorities “above and beyond” the everyday business of municipal government that are deemed to be important to the future success of our town

Above all else, we want to retain the character of the town that we all know, love, and call home. The priorities established in our strategic plan are part of a critical path that will better prepare us for the future. We will continue to work with various levels of government, our stakeholder groups, as well as developers and business partners to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. We are a determined and resilient people, and we are committed to doing our part to ensure the success of whatever natural resource developments come our way. At the same time, we must ensure that there are sufficient services, infrastructure, social programs, health care, and public safety programs established for the people of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and surrounding areas.

We are excited about the future. This plan outlines a number of important initiatives that will develop the proper supports and structures at the municipal level to help ensure our success. I want to thank members of council for their commitment and hard work in the development of this plan, and we eagerly look forward to its implementation.

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Leo Abbass, Mayor

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## 1. Overview

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Happy Valley-Goose Bay has always been considered the service hub for this region and for the north and south coasts of Labrador, and it seems that plans to develop Muskrat Falls will place even greater demands on roads, facilities, infrastructure, recreational programming, health care, education, housing, and so much more.

Just as the people of the town have embraced opportunities and challenges in the past, plans are already underway to ensure that the town is in a position to maximize the opportunities associated with the development of such a huge hydro development that is located on its door step. But if this project is to succeed, Happy Valley-Goose Bay will bear a considerable burden for ensuring that the necessary infrastructure and amenities are in place to effectively facilitate and support this project. The town embraces this challenge. But being ready will place incredible demands on every facet of the town's operations and services, and will not come without a cost.

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*Think like a wise man,  
but communicate in the  
language of the people.  
(W.B. Yeats)*

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Part of the town's readiness plans includes a detailed review of the potential effects the project might have on municipal operations, and how Happy Valley-Goose Bay might be better prepared to address these challenges going forward.

But whether or not Muskrat Falls proceeds at this time, a systematic review of the town's operations, programs, and services is of tremendous benefit - and is probably long overdue. Making strategic investments, decisions, and establishing clear priorities that will enable the town to yield greater return on its investments, and be better positioned to improve the level of programs and services it provides to residents is at the core of this strategic plan.

Strategic plans are not all encompassing. The plan will not address every facet of municipal programs and services. And it is not intended to do so. Everyday programs and services will continue as usual. Roads will be cleared, garbage will be collected, infrastructure will be built, and

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recreational programs and facilities will be maintained. But at the same time, members of council and senior staff are examining ways to improve organizational structures, expand and improve services, develop partnerships, invest wisely, and prioritize needs to better serve taxpayers in the future. The overriding question is this, “What are the strategic decisions and priorities we must undertake over the next four years to better prepare us for the future?”

Every community has values which sets it apart. Towns must commit to living and practicing these values daily. They must become integrated into their daily practices and decision-making.

To maximize opportunities and help the town reap the rewards of its resources and investment, there must be a vision. What kind of community do you really want Happy Valley-Goose Bay to be in the future? How do you define

*What are the strategic decisions that must be undertaken now in order to secure a better future?*

“success” for your community? How would you really like Happy Valley-Goose Bay to be viewed in the next ten years? If you could “dream the

dream”, what would Happy Valley-Goose Bay look like ten years from now? Unless you know what you would like to achieve, you will never know if you’ve been successful or if you have achieved your goals.

Another important part of the planning process includes a review of the many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the town at this time. In the midst of so much uncertainty, and the prospect of such a huge natural resource development imminent, a SWOT analysis was not only necessary, but had incredibly greater meaning and potential because of the significant impact this project could have on the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay at this time. This is a very unique time in the town’s history and development. There is excitement and anticipation for the future, but inevitable concern for how the future will unfold and the effects this project may have on the people who call

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Happy Valley-Goose Bay home.

There is tremendous pride and passion among council and senior staff, and there is a willingness to do whatever needs to be done to better prepare the town to face the challenges of the future – whatever they may be. While this strategic plan primarily outlines the priorities of the town council for the next several years, staff will be primarily responsible for ensuring these priorities are successfully implemented. From personal interviews with staff to the development of the plan itself, we proceeded with professionalism, sensitivity, and respect, and the focus was on looking ahead and moving forward. There is a sense of hope and optimism for the future. There is also commitment among all parties to ensure success.

The development of a strategic plan is one of many tools that can be used to focus priorities and better prepare the town to succeed. Understanding the role (and limitations) of a planning exercise is extremely important. Because an initiative is not identified in the strategic plan does not mean that it is not significant or important. There are many worthwhile projects and initiatives that have already started (such as the town's waste water treatment facility) and for which commitments have been made. And there are many other important projects and priorities that have been identified that will continue as planned.

The bigger challenge is trying to build consensus on a number of priorities that can make a difference in the immediate future – especially in the area of systems, structures, and procedures. There are so many demands and so few resources. The inclination is to want to do too much, and this can be particularly dangerous.

Participants were able to set aside their differences, focus on their needs, limit their ambitions, and come to agreement on what the priorities should be. This is never an easy task, especially when there are so many needs and so few resources.

This is just the beginning of a much longer process of putting the proper systems and building blocks in place to

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move forward. There is so much that the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay does well already. Things can only progress with improved resources, systems, priorities, and protocols in place.

## 2. Values

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### VALUES

*What a community considers important. The principles upon which decisions are made and municipal government operates.*

*What is it that the people of Happy Valley-Goose Bay value most?*

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Every community has values and principles which reflect the expectations, priorities, commitment, and culture of its people - principles that set them apart and make them unique. These values should be reflected in the decision-making of council and in the interactions that staff have with taxpayers each and every day. They become an integral part of the work ethic and represent the town's professional commitment to the people they serve.

### VALUES:

#### *Respect/ Fairness*

We are committed to treating every individual with fairness and respect, and ensuring that the same high standards of integrity and consistency are applied to everyone we serve and represent.

#### *Environmental Stewardship*

We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and we believe we have an obligation to care for them and be good stewards of our environment.

***Accountability*** We are here to serve. We are accountable to the people and commit to full disclosure and transparency in all our undertakings on behalf of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

***Investment*** We value strategic investment that strengthens our community and provides employment, opportunity, and encourages business partnerships and investment in our town.

***Strong Sense Of Community*** We are committed to supporting families and building a safe and healthy community for people of all ages. Happy Valley-Goose Bay is more than a destination – it is a proud community where people come first.

***Cultural Diversity*** We are a people of strength, courage, and resiliency where cultural diversity and inclusion are hallmarks of our people and make our community strong.

*Only the man who crosses  
the river at night knows the  
value of the light of day.  
(Chinese Proverb)*

### 3. Vision

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Vision is important. Some will argue it is “most” important – especially in strategic planning. Unless you know what you would like to achieve, what kind of community you aspire to be, or how you would ideally like to be viewed by others – you really have no idea what you are striving for. You must have a vision. Establishing a vision that is widely subscribed to and supported by others is extremely important.

It is obvious that the Town Council of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has a vision.

*A community where people come first and where programs, services, and resources benefit all.*

This is what council is striving towards. To be recognized and respected as a “people focused” council that wants to ensure that the programs and services they offer can benefit everyone in the community.

This is a healthy vision that places emphasis where it should be – on the residents and taxpayers of the community. No double standards, no preferential treatment, no inconsistency – fairness and equity for all.

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*A community  
where people  
come first and  
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programs,  
services, and  
resources  
benefit all.*

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## 4. Mission

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*Mission is a statement of commitment that is often shared with the public as your pledge to the people.*

Commitment is important to any relationship. There must be trust and commitment.

A town's mission statement should be a reflection of both the vision and values that are shared with the community.

Obviously, mission statements deal more with the here and now, and try to articulate a commitment that is clear, concise, and an honest reflection of what council perceives to be valued by the community.

***We are committed to providing a good quality of life for our people and ensuring accountability and outstanding municipal services within our means.***

The commitment is undeniable. The Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay cares about its people and the quality of life they live – regardless of their age, origin, or circumstance.

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### MISSION

*We are committed to providing a good quality of life for our people and ensuring accountability and excellent municipal services within our means.*

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## 5. Establishing Goals

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The most demanding and tedious phase of the planning process is identifying goals. Goals are carefully crafted to achieve results within a specified period of time. Each goal must be measurable and achievable. Critical to the success of this stage in the planning process is to avoid the temptation of taking on too much.

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*Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.*  
(Pankaj Jha)

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### **Goal #1**

By March 31, 2012 develop an advocacy plan to lobby the provincial government to undertake a detailed analysis of the requirements of the Muskrat Falls Development Project as it relates to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the effects this project will have on the town and its people

### **Goal #2**

By June 2012, the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay will undertake a detailed review of its organizational structure, staffing requirements, communications, reporting protocols, equipment and resources, and complete a thorough review and re-structuring of operations in an attempt to gain efficiencies and provide the necessary resources and structures to enable staff to carry out their work effectively.

### **Goal #3**

The Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is committed to fully completing the planning of the Goose Bay Center Development Project before the end of 2012 to provide certainty and stability to a diverse development area that requires council's urgent attention and support.

### **Goal #4**

By June 2013, the town will have developed a plan to expedite acquisition of Department of National Defense lands and Crown lands that have been identified for development that are within the town's boundaries.

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**Goal #5**

Before the end of this term of municipal office (September 2013), The Town Council of Happy Valley-Goose Bay will revise the functions and operational structures of council to ensure greater accountability, transparency, teamwork, and improved communications at all levels

**Goal #6**

Before the end of 2013, the town is committed to reducing its Accounts Receivable (outstanding taxes and fees) by a full 50% from current levels.

**Goal #7**

At the conclusion of 2015, the town is committed to reviewing and re-designing its *suite of services* to taxpayers to streamline programs, services, and operations to improve efficiency and develop a culture of improved customer service and access.



## 6. Actions, Outcomes & Indicators of Success

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Each goal has been identified as a priority. But each goal must have clearly identified strategic actions or objectives to ensure a process has been outlined to attain completion. As well, Desired Outcomes are appended for each goal to articulate a rationale for each. Most importantly, there must be specific measures identified by which to evaluate success.

### Goal #1

By March 31, 2012 develop an advocacy plan to lobby the provincial government to undertake a detailed analysis of the requirements of the Muskrat Falls Development Project as it relates to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the effects this project will have on the town and its people.



### Desired Outcomes:

- Maintain proper focus on readiness and the needs of Happy Valley-Goose Bay to support the Muskrat Falls development
  - Properly prepare for the vast social impact on public safety, fire and emergency services, soaring housing costs (and increased demands), poverty, crime, education, homelessness, employment, the widening gap between rich and poor, increased demands for medical (and related) services and the multiplicity of other effects of a project of such magnitude
  - Ensure the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is not forgotten and that funds are allocated to help the town prepare for the inevitable impact of such a huge project and to facilitate its role as the service center for
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#### Muskrat Falls

- Take steps to ensure the town benefits from the project and that it is not viewed negatively from a public perspective
- Be proactive in identifying and establishing the necessary resources including “outside the box” funding arrangements

#### **Indicators of Success:**

- Written commitment from the provincial government and/or NALCOR to talk readiness and accept responsibility for the need to invest in the town
- Public consultation undertaken by the province and/or NALCOR
- Specific projects, initiatives, and infrastructure requirements prepared and identified and shared with government for consideration
- New provincial monies identified to invest in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to assist in readiness plans
- Commitment for expanded resources, especially in the areas of social programs and supports, to ensure that all levels of social services and supports are considered and increased as required

#### **Strategic Actions:**

- Almost immediately establish a committee of influential community partners representing a wide spectrum of society who will immediately demand attention from the province
  - Create a clear “Terms of Reference” for the committee to ensure all members understand their roles and what they are hoping to achieve
  - Develop a “critical path” to help you realize your goals
  - Engage public support and debate on issues of importance and demand that the province be prepared to work to resolve problems at the local level and better prepare the town through investment in human and other resources
  - Ensure promises are kept and monies allocated are spent and accounted for in the areas that were identified as being deficient
  - Maintain an ongoing assessment of issues & concerns
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## Goal #2

By June 2012, the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay will undertake a detailed review of its organizational structure, staffing requirements, communications, reporting protocols, equipment and resources, and complete a thorough review and re-structuring of operations in an attempt to gain efficiencies and provide the necessary resources and structures to enable staff to carry out their work effectively.

### Desired Outcomes:

Improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of operations:

- Provide the necessary human resources to ensure our success and meet increasing demands
- Attain efficiencies among existing positions
- Ensure we are availing of new technologies, systems, and communications practices
- Improve service delivery and provide clarity, consistency, and “best practice” in all our operations, programs, and services

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*You will never  
be a leader  
until you first  
learn to follow  
and be led.  
(Tiorio)*

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### Indicators of Success:

- Improved workplace satisfaction among staff
- Clearer expectations about roles and responsibilities
- Fewer complaints from tax payers/general public
- Reduced response times for information or services
- New technologies and practices introduced
- Enhanced professional relations (council & staff)

### Strategic Actions:

- Establish clear timelines and critical path for Organizational Review and establish budget for completion
  - Outline parameters for the review and/or seek proposal(s) which establish the same
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- Ensure the Terms of Reference and rationale for the review are properly communicated to staff to reduce anxiety and build support for proceeding
- Ensure access to professional staff and council and provide access to information, practices, job descriptions, equipment and resources, policies and procedures, job classifications, wage scales, reporting protocols, and other information (as required)
- Assign a senior staff member to be responsible for coordinating an “Implementation Plan” and timelines in conjunction with senior staff



*Vision is the art of seeing  
what is invisible to others.  
Jonathan Swift*

### Goal # 3

The Town Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is committed to fully completing the planning of the Goose Bay Center Development Project before the end of 2012 to provide certainty and stability to a diverse development area that requires council's urgent attention and support.

#### Desired Outcomes:

- Be better prepared to address challenges associated with the proposed development of Muskrat Falls
- Improve long range planning for more diversified commercial and retail development
- Ensure taxpayers have better access and more options

*Some people dream of success, while others wake up and work hard at achieving it!*  
*Author Unknown*

for retail, commercial and residential development for the future

- Be proactive in establishing full disclosure and longer term development planning for the benefit of the public and investors
- Effectively develop remaining lands to maximize benefits for tax payers and increase opportunities for sustainability
- Improve accountability and public confidence

#### Indicators of Success:

- Increased land availability for commercial and retail development
  - Able to attract big box store and/or other retail and commercial developers
  - Improved access to basic retail supplies & materials
  - More options for residential development
  - Subsequent "phased" development disclosed in preliminary planning stages
  - Increased revenues through municipal taxation
  - Higher confidence/approval ratings from public.
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- Fewer complaints relating to shopping and retail options

**Strategic Actions:**

- Make Goose Bay Center Project a planning priority among staff and council
- Review and amend municipal plan requirements as well as the town's development regulations to ensure there are no issues that can delay development
- Ensure the Request for Proposals or discussions with potential developers for Goose Bay Center Project clearly outline the longer term (phased) development requirements & plans for all phases of development
- Ensure all development phases address priorities and needs of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Provide public consultation and input into the development, and keep the public informed of the development plans at various stages
- Refer development proposals to the town's consulting engineers and planning technicians for careful review and recommendations (as necessary)
- Finalize development agreement with successful developer
- Provide professional oversight in all development stages to ensure compliance

**Goal #4**

By June 2013, the town will have developed a plan to expedite acquisition of Department of National Defense lands and Crown lands that have been identified for development that are within the town's boundaries.

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Ensure there is sufficient land for future development
  - Finalize agreements with both the federal and provincial governments beyond "agreements in principle" which result in no firm action being undertaken in the past
  - Be better able to ensure sufficient lands for commercial and warehouse development to support Muskrat Falls development
  - Broker good partnerships among all three levels of
-

government for the overall benefit of the province, the country, and the people of the region

**Outcome Measures:**

- DND will be made fully aware of the specific areas of land within the towns boundaries that the town would like to develop and for what purpose
- Crown Lands will be identified for development with specific development uses outlined
- The amount of land available for development within the town will have increased considerably
- Greater confidence among investors and developers about the certainty for growth in the future
- Improved relationships among all three levels of government

None of us is as smart as all of us!  
(Ken Blanchard)

**Strategic Actions:**

- Committee will be struck with widespread representatives from individuals (decision-makers) from the 3 levels of government, as well as representatives from bureaucrats, NALCOR, aboriginal groups, and representatives from the private sector (investors, developers etc...)
  - Terms of Reference will be developed to establish parameters of the committee and its role
  - Critical path will be developed for completion
  - Public consultation will be held relating to the identified lands and proposed uses
  - Details of the proposed land transfers will be developed and shared with various Ministers involved in decision-making
  - Commitments and timelines will be established to finalize transfers and outline “*terms and conditions*”
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### Goal #5

Before the end of this term of municipal office (September 2013), The Town Council of Happy Valley-Goose Bay will revise the functions and operational structures of council to ensure greater accountability, transparency, teamwork, and improved communications at all levels.

#### Desired Outcomes:

- Provide a more effective form of municipal government for the people of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Increase levels of understanding and cooperation among members of council
- Establish a clear understanding of priorities and functions of members of council and staff
- Improve functions and teamwork at all levels
- Re-develop committees and functions of council
- Seek ways to improve communications at all levels within the organization (among council, between staff and council, and with various stakeholder groups)

*Team work divides the task  
and multiplies the success.*

- Instill public confidence and improve transparency in municipal operations

#### Indicators of Success:

- Better understanding of roles and responsibilities (staff/council)
  - Improved levels of workplace satisfaction among members of council
  - Greater interest in seeking public office at municipal level
  - Clear guidelines and protocols for communication and sharing of information among council
  - Greater public trust and confidence
  - Greater sharing of responsibility and workload among members of council
  - Improved commitment and teamwork among elected
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- officials
- Higher levels of public satisfaction and support for council

**Strategic Actions:**

- Develop clear Terms of Reference for review of functions and operational structures of council
- Identify problem areas with current practices and structures (for the purpose of improvement only)
- Research best practice and acquire data (either internally or with assistance of external consultant)
- Consider alternatives/options which best suit needs of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Prepare DRAFT Recommendations and Options for council's consideration and review
- Revise/amend recommendations to ensure they meet the intended goals identified in TOR
- Adopt new operational structures, protocols, committees, and functions of council



**Goal #6**

Before the end of 2013, the town is committed to reducing its Accounts Receivables (outstanding taxes and fees) by a full 50% from current levels.

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Improve taxation compliance and collections rates to improve cash flow
  - Reduce reliance on borrowing
  - Demonstrate responsibility, fairness, and consistency in collections
  - Ensure the town receives payment for what it is owed in all areas of operations and services
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- Improve public accountability in public finances
- Demonstrate a responsible approach to fiscal management and restraint and restore the confidence of investment partners and various funding agencies
- Close loopholes that provide access to operations and services to those who are delinquent in payments

**Indicators of Success:**

- Increased collections rates
- Improved cash flow
- Less time allocated to collections efforts (following initial efforts)
- Raised level of awareness and improved attitude among taxpayers about importance of prompt payment
- Less reliance on borrowing and/or need to increase mil rates or service charges to generate revenues



**Strategic Actions:**

- Validate benchmark data on current collections rates and sources of outstanding accounts
  - 25% of pre 2010 collections to be completed by December 31, 2012; and 25% collections to be completed by December 31, 2013
  - Develop an action plan for collections with December 31, 2013 as deadline for attainment and make this known to the public
  - Assign staff/resources to complete the task and attain quarterly updates on progress
  - Review outstanding accounts for verification and “write off” accounts that are uncollectable and where all reasonable means have been exhausted
  - Update outstanding accounts listing and develop an aggressive collections plan with progressive steps and penalties
  - Implement the collections plan and apply an expeditious appeals mechanism and payment options
  - Develop and apply new collections targets and work
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to maintain them on an ongoing basis

### Goal #7

At the conclusion of 2015, the town is committed to reviewing and re-designing its *suite of services* to taxpayers to streamline programs, services, and operations to improve efficiency and develop a culture of improved customer service and access.

### Desired Outcomes:

- Provide outstanding levels of service to taxpayers for their tax dollars
- Ensure staff are held in high esteem for the work that they do on behalf of taxpayers
- Attain greater efficiencies in all areas of operations
- Re-evaluate and fine tune the service culture among staff (and council) and devise ways to work together
- Develop a more streamlined communications and public response protocol that places people first and establishes reasonable benchmarks for



communicating with clients

### Indicators of Success:

- Increased response times for service
  - Higher public confidence in municipal staff & services
  - Improved levels of services
  - More requests for service
  - Fewer service related complaints
  - Greater interest in municipal employment
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**Strategic Actions:**

- Undertake a complete and thorough review of all town services, programs, and operations currently offered
- Attain information about requests, procedures, response protocols, current benchmarks, and customer follow up
- Identify service areas that could/should be added
- Determine most common areas of complaint in various service areas and client relations
- Engage staff in assessing and improving service levels
- Develop means to streamline and improve services and service response times in all areas of operations
- Develop a simple “service survey” for immediate feedback to clients and customers
- Create a marketing scheme (in conjunction with PR professionals) to create awareness and develop a new service brand for Happy Valley-Goose Bay (eq. People First; We Make It Easy; Here to Help)
- Provide training and support in the areas of customer service to all front line staff, senior managers, and service providers
- Ensure there are tangible signs of a new approach and attitude across the entire organization (change front counter; provide comfortable waiting areas; welcoming environment; coffee; well trained professionals)
- Monitor progress and explore areas for continued improvement
- Reward employees and recognize and highlight good service

Customer service is not a department – it’s an attitude.

