

Strategic Planning Terminology Guide

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August 2024

Purpose

This document has been prepared by the Corporate Planning & Performance (CPP) team to create standardized terms and definitions to be used for strategic planning across the municipality. Many of the terms in this document are often used interchangeably – the intent of this guide is to create a consistent understanding amongst all business units and employees.

Terminology Guide

The Terminology Guide is listed from top to bottom following the outline of the Strategic Plan. This is to facilitate better understanding of how each term relates and connects to those above and below it.

Halifax Regional Municipality (the municipality)	Refers to the municipal government. Represents the political (Regional Council) and the employee (Administration) sides of the municipal government for the Halifax region.
Vision	- Declares where the municipality wants to be in the future. It is aspirational and forward-thinking, and is designed to be ambitious and connect logically to the mission. The vision is not timebound. - The vision helps the municipality make strategic decisions by aligning effort with goals. It provides direction and inspiration by answering the question, “Where do we want to be in the future?”.
Mission	Explains what the municipality does, who it serves and how it runs. The mission statement is more externally focused.
Values	Support the mission and shape our workplace culture. They are the essence of the municipality’s identity – the behaviours that are at the heart of everything we do.
Strategic Plan	The Strategic Plan is developed at the start of a new Regional Council term, and reflects the Halifax Regional Municipality’s vision, mission, values and priorities. The Strategic Plan outlines goals and actions which guide how the municipality tracks progress and aligns business plans and budgets. The plan also helps employees understand how their work fits into the organization’s long-term goals to make a difference in our region

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Lens	A lens is a point of view that is applied for perspective on an issue or problem. For example, you can use an Equity Diversity Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) lens to better understand how an action taken by the municipality might impact women and gender diverse individuals.
Council Priorities	Established by Regional Council, these priorities are developed to reflect the municipality's most pressing needs and biggest opportunities, and in support of our vision, mission and values. Priorities categorize the desired future state into themes that align with our vision.
Administrative Priorities	Priorities established by the Chief Administrative Officer, in collaboration with municipal business units, to deliver on Council Priorities. These outline the road map to enable Regional Council to deliver on its Council Priorities and to provide employees with the resources and tools they need to not only meet, but exceed expectations, in the delivery of programs and services.
Outcomes	Represent a specific result that a priority is intended to achieve. Outcomes are measurable statements that describe the end state for the community (Council Priorities) and/or for the organization or service recipient (Administrative Priorities).
Goals	Achievable statements of intent to support priorities and advance our vision and are timebound to the period of the Strategic Plan.
Actions	Describe how the municipality will achieve its goals and are timebound over the Strategic Plan period.
Deliverable	A quantifiable output that must be provided upon the completion of an action.
Strategic Plan Initiative	A Council-approved initiative created to support the achievement of a priority. These have a lead business unit but may have more than one collaborating business unit.
Business Unit Initiative	Created to support the achievement of the business unit's budget and business plan and is internally facing to that specific business unit.

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Framework	A framework provides a structure or system for organizing ideas, concepts or processes. It offers guidelines, principles or models that help users understand how different components fit together. A framework doesn't prescribe specific actions but provides the foundation for creating strategies, plans and actions.
Strategy	A long-range directional plan that outlines how to move from today to a desired future/end state. Strategies typically encompass the entire municipality.
Plan	A plan has a limited scope, and aligns timing, resources and expectations to complete a focused goal. Plans are typically owned at the business unit level. Examples include Budget and Business Plans and Service Plans.
Program	Represents the operationalization of a plan or strategy, in other words it is the delivery of a plan or strategy. Programs are typically broader and more long-term, often encompassing multiple projects or services.
Services	Public-facing and internal support services provided by the municipality that are legislatively mandated or non-legislatively mandated.
Performance Measurement Framework	An accountability system that regularly monitors and measures progress towards outcomes and goals using metrics.
Council Priority Indicators	Quantifiable measures that gauge progress against the outcomes currently being reported (either internally or externally). These are not timebound to the Strategic Plan and there is a shared accountability for progress towards the vision. They answer the question, "Is the municipality doing the right thing(s)?".
Administrative Priority Indicators	Quantifiable measures that gauge progress of the outcomes currently being reported (either internally or externally). These may be timebound to the Strategic Plan, but it is not required. Their end state is focused on the internal organization and the customer. They answer the question, "Is the municipality doing the right thing(s)?".

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Strategic Performance Indicators	Quantifiable measures that gauge performance of the goals against a set of targets and/or objectives currently being reported. Strategic Performance Indicators are timebound to the Strategic Plan and are mostly or fully tied to the municipality for execution. They answer the question, "How well is the municipality achieving its goals?"
Service Delivery Performance Indicators	Measure results which generate reliable data on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and its programs at the service level.
Service Standard	A reasonable and measurable level of performance that customers can expect under normal circumstances.
Target	Represents a level of performance to be achieved.
Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)	Ensures that risks are appropriately identified, assessed, and treated throughout the business planning process by responsible business units and supporting functions. The ERM Framework outlines how strategic and operational risks are managed and mitigated by risk owners through business and strategic plans.



What's the difference?

Framework	Strategy	Plan	Program	Initiatives	Deliverable
A framework provides a structure or system for organizing ideas, concepts or processes. It offers guidelines, principles or models that help users understand how different components fit together. A framework doesn't prescribe specific actions but provides the foundation for creating strategies, plans and actions. For example, the Diversity & Inclusion Framework or the Framework for Addressing Homelessness.	Strategies are long-range directional plans that outline how to move from today to a desired future/end state. They typically encompass the entire municipality. For example, the 2021-2025 Strategic Priorities Plan, or the Rural Recreation Strategy.	A plan has a limited scope, and aligns timing, resources and expectations to complete a focused goal. Plans are typically owned at the business unit level. Another term used to describe a plan is an 'Action Plan'. For example, the Urban Forest Management Plan.	A program represents the operationalization of a plan or strategy. In other words, it is the delivery of a plan. Programs are typically broader and more long-term, often encompassing multiple projects or services. For example, the Affordable Access Program, or the FlexWork Halifax Program.	There are two types of initiatives: Strategic initiative: a Council-approved initiative created to support the achievement of a priority. These have a lead business unit but may have more than one collaborating business unit. For example, Employee Wellbeing is a strategic initiative found in the 2021-2025 Strategic Priorities Plan. Business unit initiative: created to support the achievement of the business unit's Budget and Business Plan. These are internally facing to that specific business unit. For example, the Redesign of the Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations.	A deliverable is a quantifiable output. It is the result of the completion of an action. For example, the HFXGO transit app is a deliverable of the Fare Management Strategy.