



**INSPIRE OPPI**  
Professional Planners in the Public Interest

**Strategic Plan 2020**



# Message from OPPI Council



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*About OPPI: OPPI is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession. Our almost 4,500 members work in government, private practice, universities, and not-for-profit agencies in the fields of urban and rural development, community design, environmental planning, transportation, health, social services, heritage conservation, housing, and economic development. Members meet quality practice requirements and are accountable to OPPI and the public to practice ethically and to abide by a Professional Code of Practice. Only Full Members are authorized by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994, to use the title "Registered Professional Planner" (or "RPP").*

On behalf of OPPI Council, I am pleased to provide you with the Inspire OPPI Strategic Plan 2020. These are important times for the planning profession in Ontario, as decision-makers and the public look to professional planners to address the challenges and opportunities that face our communities.

In the fall of 2015, OPPI Council initiated a major review of its strategy, mission and vision, with the goal to engage members. A Strategic Plan Team was struck from Council members to lead the effort working with external advisors.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Inspire OPPI planning process. Extensive input was provided by members and other stakeholders. We reached out to and engaged over 1,700 persons in the process. We received almost 1,300 responses to various surveys. Over 34 members and key stakeholders participated in focus groups. Eight in-depth interviews were held with other planning-related organizations and government. At the District and Committee level, over 400 OPPI members participated in face-to-face workshops or web-based sessions. Insights from this wide consultation were invaluable to Council's appreciation of how the planning environment is changing, how the profession and OPPI needs to evolve and what our members need and expect from OPPI.

The outcome of the Inspire OPPI planning project is this new Strategic Plan that sets out the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Directions of OPPI. Respecting our governance mandate and organizational structure, Inspire OPPI focuses our activities and helps us to allocate resources into areas necessary to move the profession and the organization to the next level.

This Strategic Plan sets out to engage members, related professionals and the public to inform and shape a better Ontario. Through this plan, OPPI is empowering members to expand their knowledge and expertise and to take ownership of their role in the Institute for the protection of the public interest. We believe in our members.

This is not the end of the process. OPPI will continue to engage members and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis in shaping our direction and initiatives; putting Inspire OPPI into action. We encourage you to be involved. Thank you for your participation and for your commitment to the planning profession in Ontario.

*Andrea Bourrie*

**Andrea Bourrie, RPP**  
**President**  
**Ontario Professional Planners Institute**

# Summary

The Inspire OPPI Strategic Plan is the culmination of listening to members and other stakeholders in the context of a changing and challenging planning environment. It reflects a strong commitment to protecting and furthering planning in the public interest for Ontario so that professional planners take a central role in furthering citizens' well-being, protecting vital resources, and creating healthy, sustainable communities and environments. Inspire OPPI reflects the role of planners as crucial integrators and visionaries, facilitating, collaborating and working in the space between diverse policy, practice and stakeholders.

Through the Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Directions, we establish our cornerstone commitment to the public interest and building public confidence in our profession.

## Vision

**With foresight, leadership and professionalism, Registered Professional Planners create and manage change in the built, natural and social environments for the common good.**

## Mission

**The mission of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute is to leverage member knowledge, resources, and relationships to facilitate excellence in planning by professional planners.**

## Values

- **Professional — Protecting the integrity of the practice of planning and its obligation to serve the common good**
- **Accountable — Meeting our commitments with openness and transparency**
- **Future-driven — Looking forward and being agile and innovative in response to opportunities and challenges**
- **Collaborative — Sharing our knowledge and working with others to achieve excellence**
- **Progressive — Empowering our community of members, together and one planner at a time**

## Four Strategic Directions

**Four Strategic Directions will guide our progress, support the profession and OPPI members, and sustain the organization:**

- **Promote and safeguard professionalism**
- **Build RPP as the recognized brand to planners, decision-makers and key stakeholders**
- **Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise for the betterment of planning in Ontario**
- **Empower member ownership and community experience**

Strategic Directions and their Goals will guide the development of annual Operational Plans. OPPI will continue to build good governance, partnerships, volunteer leadership and innovative responses to a complex and dynamic external environment. The Council will update the Plan as necessary given developments internally and externally in this dynamic environment.

# The Wider Landscape

Our environmental scan created a fresh and comprehensive view of OPPI's operating environment. We explored trends in society, changes in demographics, the evolving field of professional planning and shifts in relationships with key partners.

The environmental scan was the backdrop of Council's planning sessions and provided key contextual elements for Council direction-setting.

Some of the key trends identified were:

## Mega-Issues in a Low-Growth Environment

Challenge and disruption is happening in every dimension – economic, technological, demographic, environmental, social and cultural, political, etc. Major themes here included climate change, energy planning, infrastructure deficits, slow/low-growth or no-growth economies, demographics, economic development, and sustainability, public health, digital transformation and technology developments. Governments are struggling to find the funds to pay for what needs to be done to prepare communities for the future.

## New Planning Information and Technologies

There is excitement about the potential of new technologies to advance planning. In the coming era of the Internet of Things and smart cities and regions, planners and decision-makers will have a lot more data and must learn how to interpret and use it. Much of this data will be available to increasingly well-informed and outspoken public stakeholders.

## Generational Change / Professional Pathways

A large number of professional planners from the Baby Boom generation are retiring or expected to retire in the next decade, taking a wealth of knowledge and experience with them. New professionals expressed their need for a sense of belonging and a welcome space for their exchange of knowledge and ideas.

## Ontario's Planning Realities

The work in regulatory due diligence is increasing, at the same time as budgets are being squeezed for planning work. With a large number of regulatory and legislative changes coming in the next two years, planners will need help understanding the implications of these changes to their work.

## The Standing of the Profession

A planner's professional opinion must be respected and recognized as independent in order to serve the public interest rather than narrow or private interests. Most members see strengthened professional regulation as a way to generate more recognition of what professional planners do in a highly collaborative environment.

## National and Global Focus

Collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) and other Provincial and Territorial Institutes and Associations (PTIAs) is valued. There is great appetite for collaboration on continuing education, advocacy for sound policies on national issues, and enhancing awareness of the Registered Professional Planner.



# The Wider Landscape

## The Rise of Public Participation in Planning

The public has more access to planning information than ever before and expects engagement. New technology has accelerated expectations for information sharing, transparency of process, and digital channels for consultation.

## Collaboration In Planning

There is great appetite for collaboration with other organizations both in supporting inter-disciplinary professional learning and focusing on issues that challenge Ontario. Planners are also developing specialty competencies and interests while upholding the core principles of planning.

## Membership Value and Participation

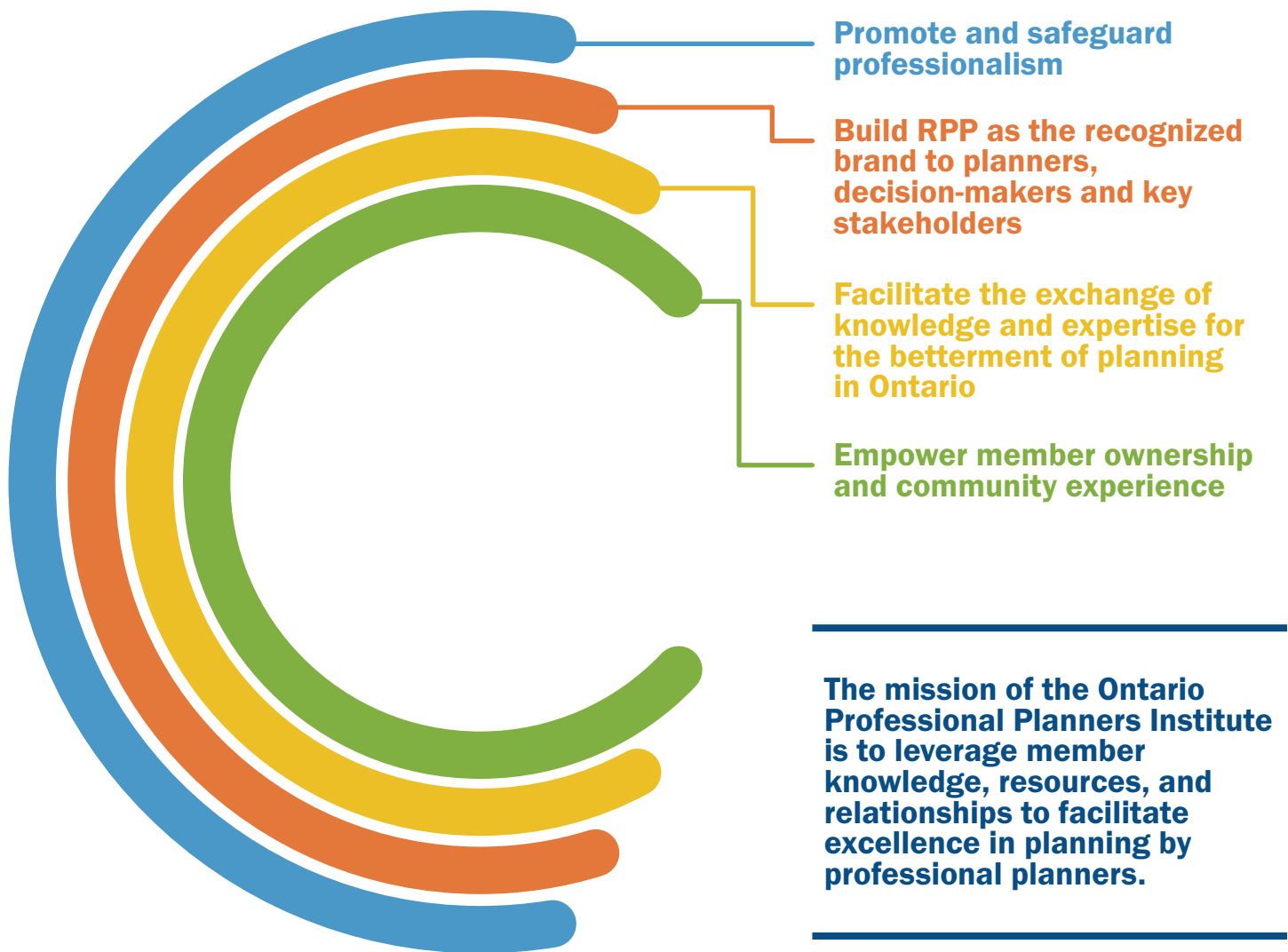
Members want OPPI to be relevant and provide information, tools, support, connection and representation that meets their schedules, budgets, needs and interests. Affordability of fees was a concern for many. Some members expressed desire for more visibility into OPPI's decision-making processes, and opportunities for input into those decisions.



# Inspire OPPI Strategic Plan 2020

## OUR VISION

With foresight, leadership and professionalism, Registered Professional Planners create and manage change in the built, natural and social environments for the common good.



*Professional – Accountable – Future-driven – Collaborative – Progressive*



# Mission, Vision and Values



## VISION

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## VALUES

### **Professional:**

Protecting the integrity of the practice of planning and its obligation to serve the common good

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Meeting our commitments with openness and transparency

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Looking forward and being agile and innovative in response to opportunities and challenges

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### **Progressive:**

Empowering our community of members, together and one planner at a time

# Strategic Directions and Goals

In the context of a dynamic changing environment, Council has determined that four main Strategic Directions will advance OPPI's vision and mission until 2020. They promote the public interest, support the profession and members, and sustain the organization.

Our Strategic Directions are:

## Promote and safeguard professionalism

2016 is a watershed year for OPPI. In 2016, Ontario is expected to approve strengthened legislation governing professional planning in the province. Strengthened professional regulation will enhance the public's confidence in professional planners and their commitment to protecting and furthering the public interest.

In the context of this change, OPPI will review and renew our commitments to professionalism. We will strengthen proactive education and communications on ethics and practice issues and act on other matters that challenge planners in providing independent facilitation and advice on behalf of the public interest in complex environments.

We will ensure that individuals have a clear path to join the profession. We will offer CPL opportunities for planners through all stages of their careers, so that they continue to possess the knowledge, skills and judgement necessary to guide the planning process and render opinions with excellence and leadership.

As we implement the new Act, we will monitor its impact and seek ways to further ensure that professional planners are supported in their provision of independent and skilled practice on behalf of the public interest.

## Strategic Goals:

- **Implement the new Act (when the statute comes into force)**
- **Support planners along their professional journey**
- **Strengthen the professional practice of members (core competencies and ethics)**
- **Monitor and explore opportunities to advance professional regulation**



# Strategic Directions and Goals

## **Build RPP as the recognized brand to planners, decision-makers and key stakeholders**

OPPI will seek to enhance stakeholders' confidence in professional planners and their commitment to protecting and furthering the public interest. Our intent is that these stakeholder groups become more aware of the education, skills and ethics of RPPs, and that they understand and respect the RPP as in the role of integrator and visionary in the space between government planning policies, the public, and other regulated professionals.

Specifically, OPPI will seek to reach students, potential members, related planning professionals, employers, and government in order to articulate the role and value of the professional planner in the planning process. OPPI will help members communicate directly to employers, decision-makers, and others the value of the RPP designation. In the public interest, we will engage members in collaborations that advance understanding of the role of the RPP.

This Strategic Direction is also about repositioning OPPI's role under the new legislation. There will be a strengthened accountability, not only for professional planners, but for the organization itself. Under the proposed public legislation, the Institute would ultimately be accountable to the government and the people of Ontario.

### **Strategic Goals**

- **Work with CIP, Professional Standards Board (PSB), Professional Standards Committee (PSC) and other PTIAs to brand RPP across the country**
- **Promote the value of RPPs to employers**
- **Promote the role and value of the RPP to decision-makers**
- **Promote the value of professional planning**
- **Shape planning conversations as the recognized authority in Ontario**

# Strategic Directions and Goals

## **Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise for the betterment of planning in Ontario**

Given communications technology, the strength of our District Leadership Teams, and the potential of digital volunteerism, we will enhance the ways members can build and exchange knowledge and expertise. We will help members convene on special topics of interest and source solutions within our OPPI network to address their immediate planning challenges. To support sound planning policy in the province of Ontario, OPPI will harness member expertise and experience.

We will strive to make the content derived from both face-to-face and online exchange available to the wider membership of OPPI. This flow of knowledge and expertise will extend provincially, nationally and internationally, and will include working with partners. By facilitating exchange in this wider community, we will share what we know, learn from others, and together advance knowledge in the field of planning. OPPI's role will be to support the systems and processes that allow this exchange.

Planners routinely work on a collaborative basis with other professionals in a range of disciplines. OPPI will engage with the broader planning community (including engineers, architects, public officials, lawyers, etc.) as we strengthen our action on planning challenges and respond to proposed provincial policies.

### **Strategic Goals**

- **Provide a range of learning opportunities that address relevant and current issues**
- **Develop and support the ways and means through which knowledge and expertise can be easily exchanged amongst planners**
- **Leverage relationships with other organizations to share, integrate, and advance relevant knowledge**
- **Influence the planning system in Ontario**

# Strategic Directions and Goals

## Empower member ownership and community experience

A participatory organization best advances the standing and profile of members, expands the professional knowledge and expertise available, and advances the public interest in Ontario. Member engagement links to other Strategic Directions – protecting professionalism, communicating the value of planning and the RPP, and knowledge exchange.

Our goal will be to foster and support members' sense of teamwork, unity, and "stake" in the work we do together to the benefit of people in Ontario. We will enhance members' understanding of their role in OPPI – how they can participate, advance their profession, and make a difference in Ontario's various planning systems.

Our aim is to nurture a sense of "We are OPPI" and for our culture to be alive with member-led meetups, online special interest groups, District-level communities undertaking meaningful activities, and rich collaborations with partners. Communities of interest will be formed, shift, and evolve as members with common interests, issues, and ideas interact with each other. We will seek to understand not only members' needs but what skills, knowledge and experience individual members can contribute.

Clear, timely, and in-context information about our processes, outcomes, and decisions can help advance confidence in our organization and bolster a sense of ownership amongst our members. We will strengthen our governance-level communications so people know what role the Council plays and how the organization works as a whole.

### Strategic Goals

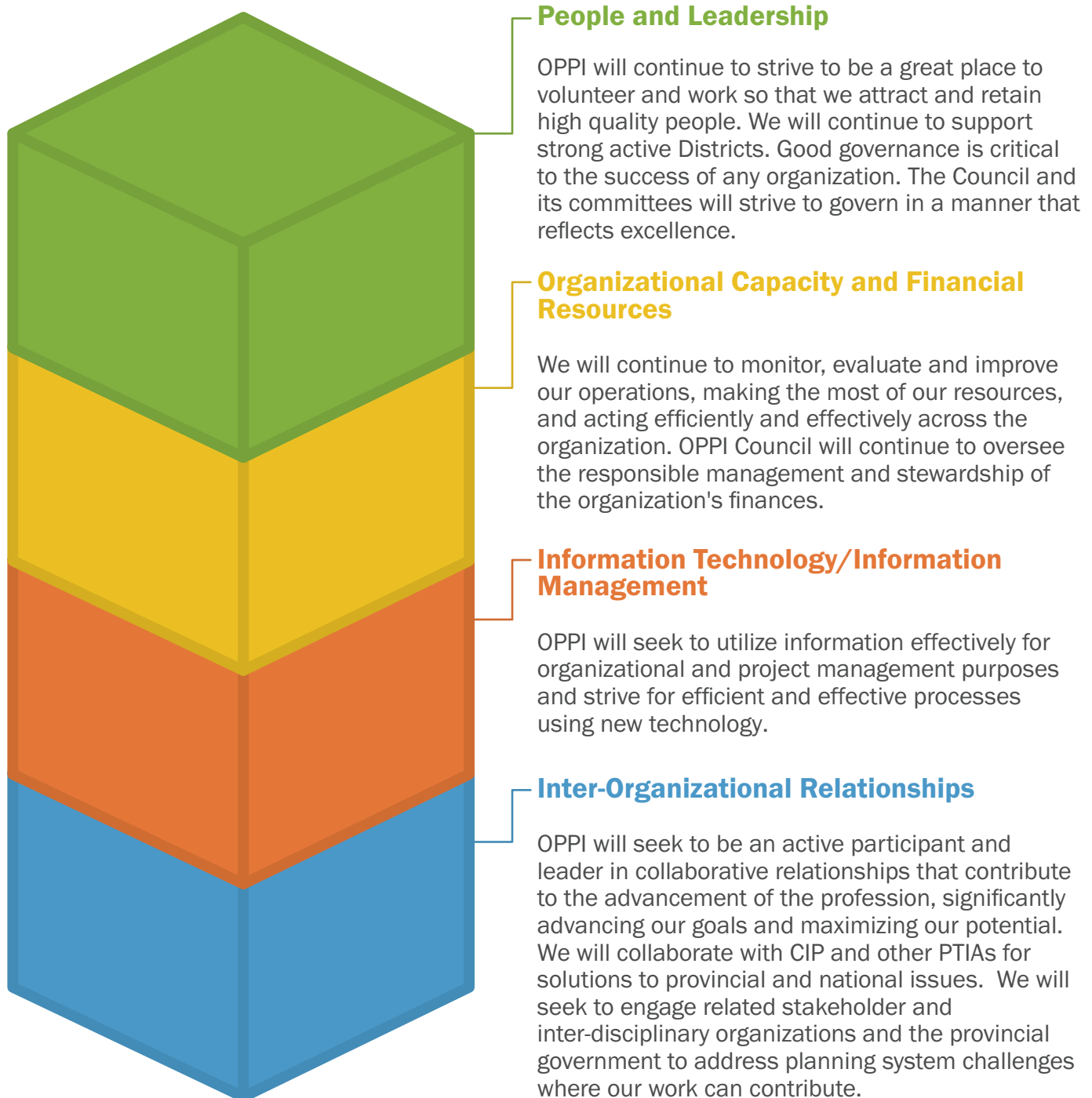
- **Cultivate members' sense of ownership in OPPI**
- **Foster opportunities for members to interact in communities of interest**
- **Enhance the transparency and accountability of organizational processes and communications**



# A Strong Foundation

As Council looked to the future, it affirmed that this Strategic Plan builds upon OPPI's strong footings. Arising from the mandate for the organization set out in the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act and our role as an association of members, we undertake core activities daily that are related to our obligations.

Going forward, our members, and the organizational supports provided to them, will be key to realize success. We will align these activities to support this strategy ensuring that we make the best use of our resources to perform at a consistently high level:



# Conclusion

The plan is the result of a disciplined and consultative strategic planning process. It reflects Council's confidence about the future of planning in Ontario and the important role our members will play. Critical to the successful execution of the Strategic Plan will be both the engagement of professional planners as competent, accountable and collaborative professionals, and strong relationships with our stakeholders.

Operational plans will support the strategic plan with greater detail on how OPPI will achieve its goals and fulfill our refreshed vision and mission. In this dynamic environment, the Council will review this Strategic Plan annually and update it as necessary given developments internally and externally. This Plan is dynamic.

OPPI looks forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure RPPs are empowered to take their essential place in multi-sectored planning systems – so that Ontario develops in ways that serve its citizens' well-being, protect vital resources, and sustain healthy sustainable communities and environments.



Thank you SGL Planning & Design Inc., Dillon Consulting Limited and Huron County for providing images