



Town of Watson Lake Council Strategic Plan 2025

Community Vision

Watson Lake will continue evolving to become a thriving, growing, and inclusive regional hub that honours our heritage, supports a strong, diversified local economy, connects people to the community and to each other, and offers a safe and healthy home for current and future residents.

Organizational Vision

The Town of Watson Lake is a proactive local government that takes pride in the responsible management and operation of public assets and values transparent government processes. We are committed to good governance and delivering high-quality services that meet the needs of residents at reasonable cost. Through collaboration, respect, and partnership with Liard First Nation and other regional and territorial partners, we foster a resilient economy, inclusive community, and strong sense of pride in our community.

Organizational Mission

The Town of Watson Lake provides effective, transparent, and accountable local governance that supports a safe and vibrant community. We deliver quality, affordable municipal services, manage public assets responsibly, and plan for long-term growth through collaboration with residents, Liard First Nation, regional partners, and other governments. Our organization is committed to professionalism, fiscal responsibility, and fostering a resilient community where residents and businesses can thrive.

Strategic Plan Approach



The role of Council is to provide strong governance and strategic leadership for the community of Watson Lake. Elected by residents, Council represents the interests of the community and makes informed decisions that guide the Town's future direction and long-term sustainability.

The role of administration and staff is to support Council through sound policy advice, professional recommendations, and responsible management of municipal resources. Staff are accountable for implementing Council's decisions and delivering programs and services in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner, consistent with service levels approved by Council.

As leaders entrusted with the stewardship of Watson Lake's growth and development, Council has undertaken a strategic priority-setting process to focus the Town's efforts and ensure that limited resources are directed toward the most important community outcomes. This Council is intentionally focused on the following six priority areas that will guide decision-making over the coming years.

Prioritization and Implementation of Plan:

The Council of Watson Lake will prioritize implementation of this Plan by first ensuring the effective delivery of all legislated and core municipal services outlined in the Municipal Act and other relevant legislation. Other strategic actions will be advanced based on community need, alignment with priorities, organizational capacity, and financial considerations. Implementation of actions will be actioned by incorporation into annual staff work plans and resourcing through the annual budget and capital planning processes. We recognize that timing and priorities may evolve in response to emerging needs, and commit to reviewing and updating this plan regularly.

Key Focus Areas



Town of Watson Lake
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2025



- 1) Housing, Heritage, Parks and Beautification:** This area addresses community development initiatives related to housing quality and availability, heritage preservation, beautification projects, and the enhancement of public parks and recreational spaces.
- 2) Sustainability, Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness:** This area focuses on long-term municipal sustainability, climate and environmental resiliency, and the community's readiness to respond to emergencies such as wildfires and natural disasters.
- 3) Open Spaces and Environmental Protection:** This area covers policies and actions related to the protection, management, and enjoyment of Watson Lake's natural environment.
- 4) Infrastructure and Transportation:** This area encompasses the management, maintenance, and development of municipal infrastructure and transportation systems. It includes water and sewer services, solid waste, roads, energy systems, and other assets essential to community health, safety, and mobility.
- 5) Economic Development and Partnerships:** This area focuses on initiatives that support business growth, employment, tourism, and regional collaboration. It emphasizes the Town's partnerships with Liard First Nation, the Yukon government, and the private sector to strengthen Watson Lake's role as a regional economic hub.
- 6) Health and Social Services:** This area addresses the Town's collaboration with other governments and agencies to support health, wellness, and social programming for residents.

1)



Housing, Heritage, Parks and Beautification

Goal

To enhance community livability and pride by improving housing quality and availability, preserving local heritage, and maintaining attractive parks and public spaces.

Key Actions

Ongoing:

- Continue Implementing Housing Accelerator Program
- Complete the Sani-Dump Project at Sign Post Forest

Now:

- Develop Regulations for Use of Dog Park
- Study Need and Opportunities for Industrial/ Commercial and Country Residential Lands
- Review Level of Service for Lucky Lake Recreation Area
- Provide Costing and Scope of Work for Lucky Lake Waterslide Replacement
- Develop Work Plan for Renewal of Remaining Watson Lake Parks (e.g., Two Mile)

Next:

- Review the Maintenance Bylaw
- Bring Forward Draft Accommodation Levy Bylaw for Discussion
- Investigate the Upgrading of Watson Lake Airport Signage

Advocacy:

Advocate to Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) to Enforce Property and Maintenance Standards at YHC-Owned Properties.





2)



Sustainability, Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness

Goal

To ensure Watson Lake builds community resiliency, and is well-prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies and environmental challenges.

Key Actions

Ongoing:

- Adopt Watson Lake Emergency Management Plan

Now:

- Review, Discuss, and Provide Resources for the Long-Term Sustainability and Operation of the Watson Lake Municipal Protective Services Department

Next:

- Develop and Implement a Community-Focused Communications and Engagement Plan Regarding Public Safety

3)

Open Spaces and Environmental Protection



Goal

To protect Watson Lake's natural environment and maintain accessible, well-managed open spaces for present and future generations.

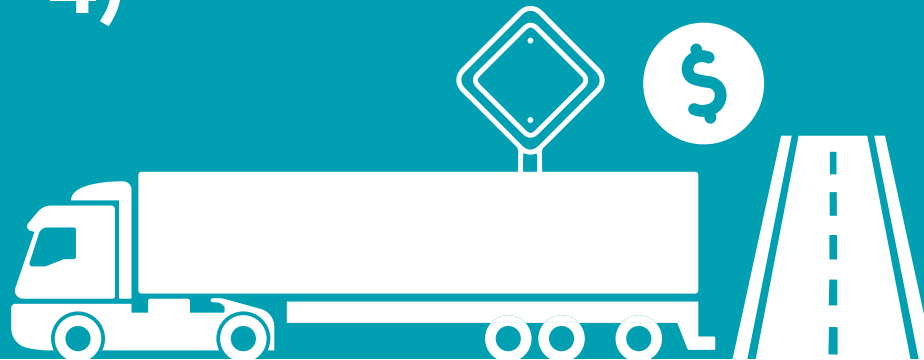
Key Actions

Next:

- Develop and Adopt a Wildfire Protection Plan for Watson Lake



4)



Infrastructure and Transportation

Goal

To maintain, upgrade, and plan for reliable municipal infrastructure and transportation systems that support community safety, connectivity, and long-term growth.

Key Actions

Now:

- Develop and Adopt a Long-Term Financial Sustainability and Asset Management Policy/Plan for the Town of Watson Lake
- Review of the Town of Watson Lake's Road Maintenance Policy with a Focus on Rehabilitation/Replacement of Paved Roads Within the Municipality

Next:

- Develop Controls for the Regulation of Transport Trucks. Identify Areas for Off-Street Overnight Parking to Limit the Exposure of Residents to Dangerous Goods and Traffic on Shared Road Spaces

Advocacy:

Advocate to Territorial and Federal Government for Sustainable Infrastructure Funding and Increases to the Canada Community-Building Fund Allocations for Municipalities



5)



Economic Development and Partnerships

Goal

To strengthen Watson Lake's economy through business development, tourism, and collaboration with Liard First Nation, regional partners, and other levels of government.

Key Actions

Now:

- Review the Short Term Rental Provisions Included in the Zoning Bylaw
- Develop a Reconciliation Policy for the Town of Watson Lake

Next:

- Review Economic Development initiatives and Programs and Create a Plan for the Town of Watson Lake

Advocacy:

- Continue to Engage with Liard First Nation and other First Nation Partners on Projects and Initiatives that Provide Mutual Benefit.
- Engage with the First Nations Education Board, YG Department of Education, Yukon University, Liard First Nation and others, to Develop a Local Trades Program



6)



Health and Social Services

Goal

To collaborate with partners and other levels of government to support accessible health care, social services, and community programs that enhance quality of life for all residents.

Key Actions

Now:

- Engage in a Review of the Town of Watson Lake's Recreation Services



Advocacy:

- Continue to Advocate for Improved Local Mental Health and Social Service Supports
- Continue to Engage in Community Safety Planning with Liard First Nations, Yukon Government, and other Partners.