



A REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Let's go back a few years, to 2014 more precisely. Council and the administration of the time were putting the finishing touches on a common vision, a work plan that would guide decision-making in the years to come. Thus was born the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan adopted by Council at its August 3, 2015 meeting.

Since then, a lot of water has flowed under the Lakeside Bridge. It is now time to examine each one of the priorities and report on progress with the Director General Gilbert Arel who had come into the job a few months earlier. "When I became Director General in 2014 it was clear to me that we had to give ourselves a strategic plan" said Mr. Arel.

There were five main priorities involved in the plan, corresponding to 26 action points. Their feasibility was linked to three time frames: short term, medium term and long term. "In hind sight, the exercise at the time was rather ambitious," says the DG, "but if we did not achieve a majority of our objectives, they nevertheless would serve as a guideline for the future".

"Because we had much work to do on the basic needs of the Town, for example the water supply issue and the infrastructure, the plan took an operational tangent rather than dictating broad outlines as it is usually the case," he added.



1 ■ MODERNIZING THE MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The priorities that appear on the front page of this publication touch upon the supply of water which had been the source of concern in the Town for a number of years. A number of actions and circumstances, such as the return to service of the Jolibourg well helped to solve this problem; this also brought to an end the restrictive water consumption notices.

The reconstruction of the road network and the sidewalks, as well as the renovations to town hall were two major priorities. "We are proud to see how the infrastructure has improved and continues to do so. We have been working intensely since 2015 on the repair of our roads and that work continues," mentioned Mr. Arel. It is to be noted that the reconstruction of the Blackwood Dam should start in 2021.

2 ■ INTENSIFYING ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

The second major priority was made up of a variety of files: tourism, the attraction of new residents as well as the revitalization of the town-centre. As indicated in a previous issue of *VLB info TBL*, construction of new housing units has seen an increase recently with a record number of residential construction starts. The objective of supporting the construction of 121 units has been achieved. "The residential projects appeared naturally, probably stimulated by the efforts in other areas," stated Mr. Arel.

The establishment of a team dedicated to tourism and the creation of a trademark for Tourisme Lac-Brome helped increase the visibility of Brome Lake. The completion of the network of trails (Quilliams and Trestle Cove) served as an important vector for economic development," added the DG.

We will have to be patient before we see the finalization of the revitalization of the town-centre, one of the more ambitious aspects of the strategic plan. A number of steps, such as the demolition of two buildings (30 Lakeside and 264 Knowlton Road), and the studies that will allow us to obtain plans for the creation of a Town Square, to name but two, have already been accomplished. "We would like our citizens to reinvigorate the town-centre. With the demolition of the buildings the message is clear: we have taken the necessary steps and the revitalization of the town-centre is well under way," stated Mr. Arel.

3 ■ ENHANCING THE RESIDENTS' QUALITY OF LIFE

The third major priority centred on improvements to be brought to the variety of activities offered to residents. Improving accessibility to the lake was identified as a priority. The acquisition of a new lot in the Bondville area, thanks to the support of the Carke Foundation, responded to this priority. "We have been able to expand activities, in particular by permitting lake access by non-motorized boats at Douglass Beach and with the construction of a skate park and a water play area," explained Mr. Arel.

By obtaining the MADA "*Municipalité amie des aînés*" (Senior Friendly Municipality) certification, the Town gave itself the tools that allowed it to establish priorities for this age sector of the population. It can be said that over the last five years, the Town has recognized its duty to support our cultural institutions "and we will continue to do so," said Mr. Arel.

4 ■ PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND BROME LAKE

Preserving our municipal jewel, Brome Lake, and on a broader scale, the environment, is at the heart of our concerns and is indeed our fourth priority. As a result, cooperation with Renaissance Lac Brome has resulted in an innovative programme to re-vegetate the shore line.

"The overflow from the sewer system remains one of our concerns," says Mr. Arel. "We now have the tools to measure these occurrences, giving us a clearer picture of the situation. The installation of generators in the pumping stations has helped us to reduce these incidents. A more complete report on our pumping stations will be prepared in 2021 so that we may take more specific action."

The majority of the septic facilities that surround the lake have been tested to verify their efficiency. The majority conformed to standards. The Town is working with OBV Yamaska to prepare a water management plan. Now in its second year, the collection of compostables has been accepted by a large part of the citizens of Brome Lake.

5 ■ STRENGTHENING MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Improving communication with the population remains a central element of the fifth and final priority of the strategic plan. Social media, alerts, monthly newsletters, the web site and video capsules are but a few of the tools implemented or improved over the past years which paved the way for a better transmission of municipal information.

"For three years now we have had the opportunity to work with a communications director which allowed us to diversify our way of doing things," said the DG. "We can now better address our population and show transparency."

The team had given itself an objective of improving public safety in the Town. In this regard, significant efforts were made to try to convince the Quebec government to allow the Town of Brome Lake to be served by the Bromont police force. "We are still working on this," said Mr. Arel.



In all, this kind of effort represents quite a challenge. Let us take a moment to salute those who worked on it. Obviously, for a number of reasons, certain elements were not achieved, despite the best efforts of all. "When we look at all that was done, we can be very proud," said Mr. Arel. "We accomplished a lot. Was it perfect? No. But I sincerely believe that we were able to improve the quality of life and the service offered to our citizens."

"We also professionalized our processes and our work patterns in all sectors. My great pride is knowing that the citizens' perception of municipal services has improved."

After the next municipal elections, the work and other consultations can begin again to prepare a new strategic plan. "This one could concentrate more on development than on the repairing or upgrading of the infrastructure," concluded the DG.