

# East Central Ontario Regional Council

## Strategic Plan – Interim Report

November 2024

### Grading:

A = Completely on track, met all measurables

B = Mostly on track, met most measurables

C = Partly on track, some measurables met

D = Little progress

E = No progress

### Overall Assessment

Despite some areas that did not get the attention required, the Regional Council has done quite well in advancing the priorities it had set for itself in late 2023. Staff have identified that there are ongoing requests for assistance with projects and activities that fall outside the scope of our plan, which puts them in the uncomfortable place of having to say 'no' in order to stay focused without working significant additional hours. We must also remember that this is an evolving plan that may require some changes within the three-year period it covers.

### Activity Stream 1: Community of Faith Self-Assessment Tool

Activity: Develop a tool, hold a workshop, get communities of faith using it to assess themselves.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Tool created and refined, workshop held, all communities of faith using it by Spring 2025 (at least 75%)

Result: The tool itself is being used by congregations at this point. 10 congregations have used it, many more may be doing it at annual meetings in the Spring.

Analysis: B, this is moving forward as predicted. There is a team of six looking at these.

Recommendation Going Forward: We will need to advertise the tool a little more so that it is part of annual reporting.

### Activity Stream 2: Collaborative/Shared/New Ministries Resources

Activity: Creation of resources, holding of roadshow events, workshop held at Regional meeting

Measurable Outcome Projected: Resources gathered and available, roadshow events held, workshop held, engagement of at least 50% of communities of faith by Spring 2025.

Result: Largely on track. Workshops held in Brighton/Hastings, Cobourg and area, upcoming: Tweed/Madoc, Dunford area. More requests coming in.

Analysis: B, there is large uptake from those who have been invited.

Recommendation Going Forward: Keep doing what we've been doing, a regional council wide workshop may not be needed, but we can advertise this a little more.

### **Activity Stream 3: Amalgamating and Disbanding Resources**

Activity: Tools researched and gathered, how-to workshop/video/guide created, refine language about what disbanding or amalgamating represents.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Resources gathered and adapted, how-to products produced and made available, review of them done by those who used them.

Result: Resources created, shared and in use. An amalgamation resource has been locally developed and shared.

Analysis: B, This is moving forward as planned, some pieces remain to be done (evaluation, tweaking, web presence)

Recommendation Going Forward: Check with those who have reviewed the resources, some need to be tweaked for legacy language. Needs to be easy to find on the website.

### **Activity Stream 4: Alternative Worship links on Regional Website**

Activity: Alternative worship resources crowd-sourced, gathered and posted online so that they are accessible to all and inspiring people to use new and creative ways to worship.

Measurable Outcome Projected: By summer 2024, a resource page is available to inspire people to use alternative worship resources.

Result: Webpage created in draft mode but needs more resources added.

Analysis: C

Recommendation Going Forward: Overall, this area is very open to interpretation and is a little vague. Survey folks about what they might be looking for in this category of work, and what they are doing already to be shared, calendar of experiences that are already underway.

### **Activity Stream 5: Justice Feature**

Activity: Quarterly, a specific justice issue will be featured and materials related to that feature will be offered to the regional council so that we can integrate and focus our justice work.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Calendar of justice issues developed, first quarter launched in early 2024, evaluation done in June 2024.

Result: We have done a few shorter sessions (two-months) in the earlier part of the year, anti-racism/Black History Month, Pride in April/May, Indigenous Justice in June-September, 40 days of anti-racism in October and November.

Analysis: B, we have not been branding these as features, but we have been doing these as projected.

Recommendation Going Forward: Move to quarterly as previously planned and recruit from the whole Regional Council. Prepare a sample 'package' and schedule this for the whole year. Possibly recruit from other Regional Councils too. General Council is now doing a focused media strategy, we should consider, where possible, to align our efforts.

### **Activity Stream 6: Media Strategy**

Activity: Spokespeople identified and trained, develop ability to respond quickly to emerging issues, presence in the public sphere.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Training provided by Spring 2024, five media stories in non-church media by Spring 2025, evaluation to be done in the Summer of 2025.

Result: Nancy Payne will lead a Media Training Session on November 15<sup>th</sup>, invitation has been emailed to the region.

Analysis: B

Recommendation Going Forward: Identification of spokespeople remains to be done (possibly during the media training), gather stories that have appeared in the media.

### **Activity Stream 7: Faithful Footprints and Greening Sacred Spaces**

Activity: Identify who is participating in the programs now (inventory) and grow the number of communities who are involved with an engagement strategy.

Measurable Outcome Projected: 10% of our communities of faith have participated or are participating in these projects.

Result: 13 in Discussion, 3 approved, 5 project completed, 13 Final energy data submitted = 34 – Stories have been shared in the weekly newsletter. (% achieved)

Analysis: B+, still a strategy to develop here, but we are doing well in participation overall.

Recommendation Going Forward: Continue sharing stories in our weekly newsletter. Consider use of the Climate Forum to engage with this. Engagement strategy still to be defined.

### **Activity Stream 8: Carbon Footprint Reduction**

Activity: Task Group identified, strategy developed and lowered carbon emissions achieved.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Task Group formed, strategy developed and reduction of 10% of our carbon emissions achieved by end of 2024 through things such as a carpool strategy.

Result: We have begun tracking this through a fillable form on the website and through our registration system for meetings.

Analysis: C-, While our regional council meetings can be tracked, we need to consider how all decision-making in the Regional Council is made when it comes to physical meetings that require travel (choice of location, choice of liaisons and supervisors that are close to their charges, etc.)

Recommendation Going Forward: We didn't anticipate creating a baseline year, which should be 2024. We also need to define what qualifies in the calculation. Reminding people to fill out the form and evaluate at the end of the year. Helping people make connections for carpooling.

### **Activity Stream 9: Climate Forum**

Activity: Gauge interest in a Climate Forum and collectively discern how this forum could contribute to this priority.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Survey conducted to gauge interest, gathering of interested people discerned way forward.

Result: Survey conducted, emailed some people individually, many emails to try to gather by zoom. 5 people have confirmed their interest.

Analysis: C, challenges in finding common time to meet. People are expressing an interest in the topic, but may not have the energy.

Recommendation Going Forward: Another call out for members to help pull this together. Once the group meets, they will need to consider what they will take on, work plan, etc.

### **Activity Stream 10: Lay Mentoring Network**

Activity: Gauge interest for a Lay Mentoring Network and gather interested people to discern the structure and goals of such a network.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Survey completed, first gathering held, goals identified.

Result: The survey was completed, emails were sent to the interested parties (8 people), but this has not yet come together as expected.

Analysis: D, staffing challenges have moved this to a lower priority for the moment.

Recommendation Going Forward: This project needs a volunteer lead that can advance it.

### **Activity Stream 11: Association of Ministers**

Activity: Bring together interested parties to determine a way forward for such an association, inspired by the NS/Bermuda example, present result of agreed-to shape of the association for launch in 2024.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Discernment of interested people completed in early 2024, launch in late 2024.

Result: There was a group that met in the Spring, but there was great diversity on how this would work and what it would prioritize.

Analysis: C, the original team had good intentions, but there are two very different perspectives – one that is more about ministerial support, another that is more about standing up for colleagues (solidarity).

Recommendation Going Forward: More discussions to be held about meeting the needs expressed in this activity stream.

### **Activity Stream 12: Governance Models Toolkit**

Activity: Research and collect alternative governance models and provide these options to help generate new ways to structuring ourselves at the community of faith level.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Materials surveyed from other regions, collection of models assembled and provided for use by communities of faith.

Result: The collection is ready to be presented to the Council of Elders. Covenant Support has tweaked and approved it.

Analysis: A, completely on track.

Recommendation Going Forward: Approval by Council of Elders, distribution to congregations (website or sharing by email)

### **Activity Stream 13: M&P Refresher**

Activity: Offer materials and workshops for M&P Committees from our communities of faith so that they may be more effective in their work.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Tools and workshops provided by Spring 2024, used by at least 50% of our communities of faith by Spring 2025.

Result: We offer these twice a year, they have been tweaked and adapted. May have approximately 40% who have participated so far. We encourage congregations that have issues to attend.

Analysis: A

Recommendation Going Forward: Remind folks about this training to encourage folks in the 60% who have not participated yet.

### **Activity Stream 14: Healthy Connections Forum**

Activity: Recruit and gather a forum of people who seek to help communities of faith be better connected with the Regional Council and to provide care for them. These would function as 'soft liaisons', and would help everyone to feel supported and to identify emerging issues that need to be addressed.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Group assembled and terms of reference created and approved by Spring 2024, functioning by end of 2024.

Result: People are identified, but training event of those people has not yet occurred. We could use more connectors for this to be most effective.

Analysis: B, a few things left to be done and more people to be recruited.

Recommendation Going Forward: Hold the workshop sometime by end of January 2025 and continue to tap people on the shoulder to join the team.

### **Activity Stream 15: Covenant Renewal**

Activity: Using the information we gather in the Healthy Connections Forum, work to renew the covenants the Regional Council has with its communities of faith.

Measurable Outcome Projected: By Spring 2025, a process for this project would be established by the Healthy Connections Forum, by Summer 2025 the schedule and contact process will begin. By Spring 2026, 65% of covenants will be renewed.

Result: This is dependant on the Healthy Connections Forum being up and running.

Analysis: N/A - goals set for 2025.

Recommendation Going Forward:

### **Activity Stream 16: Centres of Excellence**

Activity: A task group would be named to help identify current areas of strength within each community of faith, identify gaps and help fill them.

Measurable Outcome Projected: Establish task group, begin surveying congregations in Winter 2024, identifying and filling gaps in Winter 2025 and launch public facing expression of these centres in Spring 2025.

Result: Have been encouraging communities of faith to share their areas of strength through our communications. These are built into visioning work with congregations.

Analysis: B, Unlikely that we will meet the date goals for this task, but they are still valid pieces of work to be done.

Recommendation Going Forward: Moving forward, even if delayed.