

**Compassion.
Collaboration.
Innovation.**

**A Vision
for**

2025 - 2030



**DISTRICT OF RAINY RIVER
SERVICES BOARD**

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we work on is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Métis peoples, covered by Treaty 3, and that this land is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. We also recognize the presence and contributions of urban Indigenous communities within our district. In recognition of this, we commit to building partnerships that respect Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and ways of being, and to fostering an inclusive environment that supports shared growth, learning, and community well-being.



Photo credit: Dawn Gray

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Message from CAO and Board Chair

We are pleased to share a new **Five-Year Strategic Plan** for the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB). This plan reflects our commitment to working in partnership to meet the changing needs of our district. In developing this plan, we engaged with district members, partner agencies and support services, municipalities, First Nations, associations and provincial ministries. We heard that the DRRSB plays a critical role in not only delivering key programs and services - **Ontario Works, Housing and Homelessness Prevention, Children's Service and Paramedicine** - but also in coordinating and integrating our services with those offered by our partners.

As part of the work to build this new strategic plan, we made deliberate efforts to hear directly from employees, district members and partners to gather their perspectives on goals and priorities. We enlisted a third-party consultant, Housing Services Corporation (HSC), to ensure honest and frank feedback. In this, we heard that universally, there is a desire for quality, people-focused service that strengthens communities across the district.

This strategic plan sets our direction and our priorities for the next five years. It will guide our decision-making and the alignment of financial and staff resources to support us in achieving these goals. Our vision is focused on meeting district needs, with a renewed commitment to building and maintaining strong partnerships so we can collectively make a greater impact. We aim to maximize program funding and leverage our position to drive and support broader initiatives that foster economic, social and community development.

This document serves as a roadmap and touchstone for the Board, CAO, management, and staff to measure and monitor activities, ensuring we remain focused on achieving our priorities. However, we also recognize the need to be flexible, adaptable, and resilient in meeting new challenges and seizing opportunities as they arise. As such, this is a living document that will guide our decision-making and provide direction on which initiatives and innovations to pursue.

We wish to thank everyone involved in building this strategic plan. Your insights have been invaluable and have ensured this plan reflects the collective goals and priorities of our district. We look forward to working through the implementation of this plan together.



Charene Gillies
Chief Administrative Officer



Deborah J Ewald
Board Chair

About the District of Rainy River Services Board

Located in Northwestern Ontario, the District of Rainy River spans over 15,000 square kilometers and has a population of just over 20,000 residents.

The DRRSB was incorporated under provincial legislation in 1999 and is mandated to provide essential services for those in need. In our role we deliver:

- **Ontario Works:** Assists people in financial need to find sustainable employment and achieve self-reliance through the provision of supports and assistance.
- **Children's Services:** Promotes a coordinated, high quality child care and early learning system that supports early childhood development, healthy families and vibrant communities.
- **Housing and Homelessness:** Provides affordable housing, homelessness prevention programs and, in collaboration with partners, assistance for those experiencing homelessness.
- **Paramedicine:** Responds to urgent health crises, provides emergency medical care and offers community paramedicine in collaboration with health care and other community partners.

We are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 10 municipal representatives appointed by councils and three unincorporated representatives elected during municipal elections.

We employ approximately 180 people across the district and work closely with partners and stakeholders to deliver mandated services.

The municipalities we serve:

- Alberton
- Atikokan
- Chapple
- Dawson
- Emo
- Fort Frances
- Lake of the Woods
- La Vallee
- Morley
- Rainy River
- Unincorporated East, West and Central

VISION

Empowering communities to be inclusive and sustainable.

MISSION

To deliver quality services with accountability and respect to meet the needs of the district.

VALUES



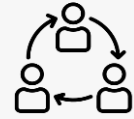
Respect



Innovation



Compassion



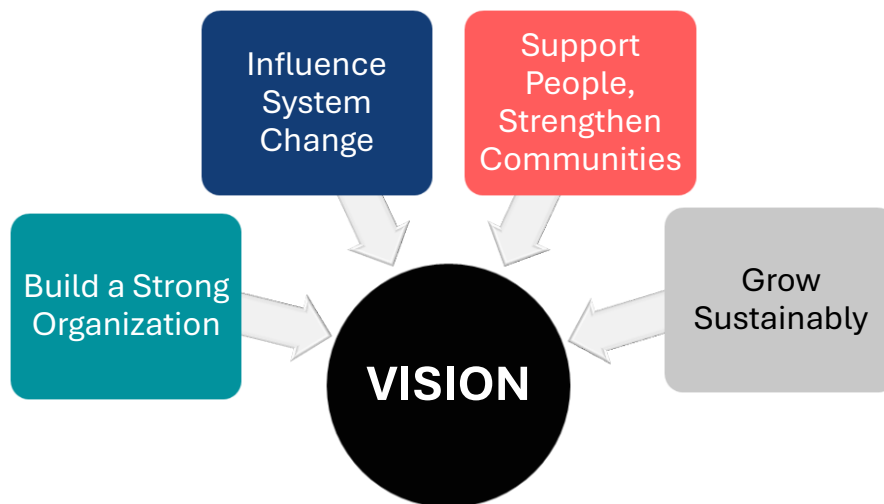
Collaboration

Respect: We commit to building inclusive services by recognizing the diversity of citizens across our district and treating every person with dignity.

Innovation: We strive to meet the evolving needs by pushing ourselves to be flexible, adaptable and forward-thinking.

Compassion: We provide services with empathy and kindness, contributing to a district where everyone can thrive, succeed and feel valued.

Collaboration: We build strong and transparent partnerships to grow services sustainably and achieve shared success.



Shaping Our Path Forward

We developed this plan using a multi-phased approach, allowing us to set clear priorities and actionable steps to achieve our goals. This plan will serve as our compass, guide decisions, help us to align our efforts and resources, and support us to navigate challenges with a clear focus on results. With this plan we have created a roadmap that reflects our values and outlines our way forward.



- 1** The first phase of the process involved a thorough review of core documents including government funders expectations, corporate strategies and service delivery plans, to identify current and planned priorities across all service areas. During this phase the incoming Chief Administrative Officer, Board Chair and Vice-Chair, and the senior management team were consulted to gather insights.
- 2** Next, we undertook a comprehensive engagement strategy to consider and inform the organization’s mission, vision, values, guiding principles, and both short and long-term goals and priorities. Details of the stakeholder engagement strategy can be found on page 8.
- 3** Following extensive consultations, we developed a framework outlining our program priority areas and created this Strategic Plan. This plan is a roadmap that articulates our vision for the next five years and details the goals and priorities that will guide our decision-making in pursuit of our mission and vision.

Accompanying our Strategic Plan is an implementation plan that provides specific steps, targets and resource requirements to enable us to execute our strategy effectively.

Partners in Progress: Stakeholder Engagement

We recognize that the most effective way to serve our district is through collaboration, which is why a key priority in developing this plan was to engage as many perspectives and voices as possible. The DRRSB engaged an external consulting team from Housing Services Corporation (HSC) to ensure objectivity and encourage candid, honest input. HSC is a non-profit that works with municipalities and social service organizations across Ontario. Over the summer and fall of 2024, the HSC team conducted a variety of stakeholder engagement sessions, held individual interviews and administered online surveys to assist with plan development.

To hear from employees, interested parties, and partners, HSC employed the following tactics:

- **District members:** To ensure that district members’ perspectives were included in our plan, HSC administered a public survey inviting individuals from across the district to share their experiences with DRRSB services and their thoughts on DRRSB’s priorities.
- **Municipal, Provincial and First Nations input:** HSC reached out to municipal councilors, municipal clerks, provincial officials, and First Nations communities requesting input from district leaders to inform our new plan.
- **Employee engagement:** Staff input was critical to our process. Engagement efforts included virtual meetings, an anonymous staff survey, and an in-person facilitated session. These activities provided staff the opportunity to share insights, identify priorities, and contribute to shaping our organization’s direction. Feedback gathered through these efforts will help ensure the plan reflects the ideas and perspectives of our team, fostering alignment and shared ownership of upcoming initiatives.

“Accessibility for an aging community”

“Access to information through various forms of media”

“Work collaboratively to support healthy communities”

“Investigate potential partnership opportunities”

- **DRRSB Board consultation:** Board members played a crucial role in our efforts. Through a series of interviews with the Board Chair and Vice Chair, along with a facilitated in-person session for the full Board, members provided insights and guidance to help align our goals with our mission and values. By actively participating in this process, Board members have ensured that the plan reflects both governance priorities and strategic opportunities, shaping a shared vision for future success.
- **District partners:** Local agencies, associations, and community organizations were actively involved in the strategic planning process through facilitated focus group meetings and a survey. The feedback from our partners provides valuable insights into shared challenges, collaboration opportunities, and areas where alignment can drive greater impact. This engagement ensures that the strategic plan reflects the needs of the district and strengthens partnerships essential for achieving long-term goals.

We sincerely appreciate everyone who took the time to share their valuable feedback on how the DRRSB can best serve our district. Their insights have been instrumental in shaping this strategic plan.

Our Vision

Empowering communities
to be inclusive and
sustainable.

Our Mission

To deliver quality services
with accountability and
respect to meet the
needs of the district.

Our Values

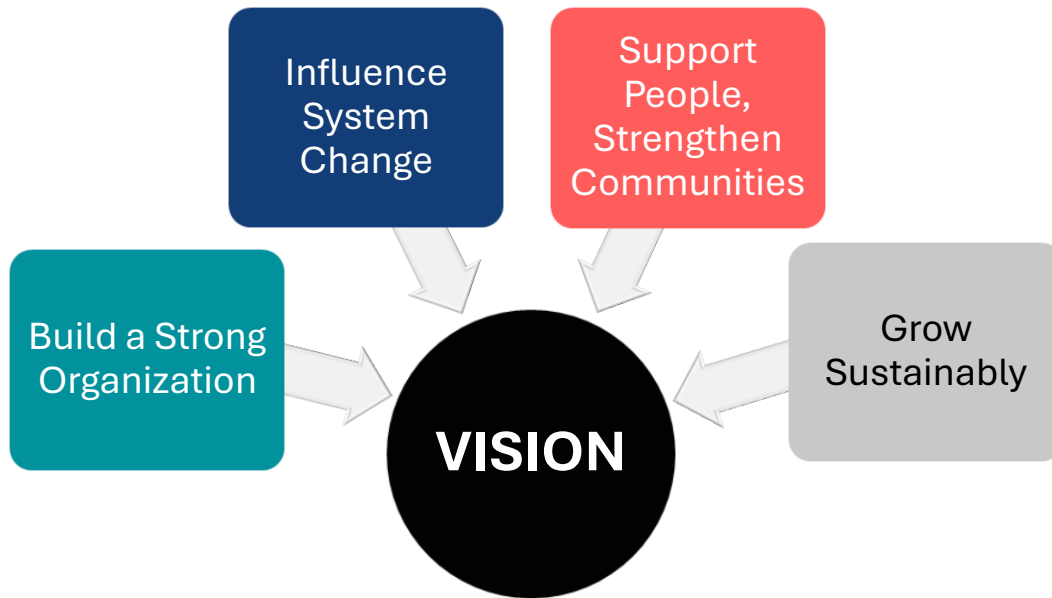
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Strategic Goals and Objectives



Strategic Goal #1: Build A Strong Organization

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
<p>We are dedicated to building a resilient, inclusive, and adaptive organization that values respect at its core. By recognizing the diversity of citizens across our district, we commit to treating every individual with dignity as we foster an organizational culture that supports growth, inclusivity and collaboration.</p> <p>To achieve this, we will prioritize professional development, enhance operational efficiencies, and invest in resources that empower our staff. Through these efforts, we aim to build a strong organization capable of delivering high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Take action to thoughtfully and deliberately integrate the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion into all aspects of our work. b. Invest in actions to strengthen employee adaptability and resilience through professional development and well-being initiatives. c. Establish clear planning and communication practices to reduce uncertainty, align efforts and build cohesion. d. Prioritize digitizing processes to improve operational efficiency.

Strategic Goal #2: Influence System Change

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
<p>We are committed to driving meaningful, system-wide change by embracing innovation to meet the evolving needs of our district.</p> <p>As champions for the Rainy River District, we will advocate for policies and practices that address challenges experienced by those we service.</p> <p>By strengthening our expertise, building strategic partnerships, we will dismantle systemic barriers, advancing sustainable improvements that benefit our entire district. Through these efforts, we will create a foundation for lasting impact, fostering a resilient, equitable, and thriving district for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthen our expertise and thought leadership to advocate for and influence change. b. Prioritize developing and maintaining strong relationships to build trust, enhance collaboration, build partnerships, and enhance our ability to bring about change. c. Leverage a wide range of communication channels to build our profile, highlight our value and showcase district-wide impact.

Strategic Goal #3: Support People, Strengthen Communities

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
<p>We are committed to delivering person-centered services across our district that nurture belonging, dignity, and empowerment.</p> <p>By strengthening our network of partners and expanding responsive programs, we will help individuals reach their potential and foster vibrant, resilient communities across our district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design innovative, agile and person-centred approaches to deliver responsive, equitable and high-quality services. b. Leverage digital tools and platforms to reduce barriers and enhance the quality of service we provide. c. Take a data-informed approach to evidence-based decision making for program planning, and to measure our impact. d. Strengthen relationships with community and municipal partners, government funders and others to create a cohesive network of services and contribute to the strengthening of district communities.

Strategic Goal #4: Grow Sustainably

GOAL	OBJECTIVES
<p>By planning thoughtfully, embracing innovation and effectively utilizing resources, we will enhance our impact and ensure sustainable growth while creating opportunities for future success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Take a strategic and planned approach to managing our infrastructure and assets to realize maximum efficiency and long-term sustainability. b. Design service delivery approaches that adapt to shifts in workforce availability and that are responsive to the needs of individuals and communities in our district. c. Identify and collaborate with key partners to explore innovative development and financing models that support housing growth across the district. d. Integrate financial and social sustainability into our ongoing planning processes to guide our growth and enhance our ability to serve the district effectively.

Implementation Plan

This Strategic Plan sets out our vision, mission, goals and priorities, renewing our focus, defining our direction and underscoring our commitment to achieving success in partnership with others.

To guide us in realizing the Strategic Plan, we have created an Implementation Plan that provides a roadmap for both organizational and program specific activities. As with the Strategic Plan, the Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually to assess progress and identify any necessary adjustments in activities or timelines. This will help us to stay focused while allowing flexibility to adapt to new opportunities and respond to unexpected challenges.

A central element of the Implementation Plan is communication. We are committed to sharing the DRRSB's activities and to using our platform to enhance access to programs and services offered by our district partners. Through regular communication, we will share updates on our progress towards achieving the vision, mission, goals and priorities that our plan articulates.



Actioning Our Plan

This Strategic Plan is our cornerstone. It updates our mission and vision and illuminates our ambitions. It reflects our commitment to realizing our vision and reinforces our commitment to our partners and community members throughout the district.

As we move forward, we will focus on achieving our core goals of influencing system change, building a strong organization, supporting people and strengthening communities, and growing sustainably. Our Implementation Plan will guide us in staying on track, ensuring progress towards our goals. Our Board of Directors is committed to an annual review of our progress which will help us identify emerging priorities and adjust our approach as needed.

This strategic planning process has reconfirmed the vital importance of building and maintaining relationships with agencies and municipal partners, associations, government funders and district members. Collaboration will be essential in turning our vision into reality.

Over the next five years we will share and celebrate our achievements. This plan is intended to be a living framework that will evolve with us, ensuring that we remain responsive, forward-thinking, and aligned with the needs of our district.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this plan. We look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our shared goals.

Stay informed

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