



Powering Progress

Strategic Directions 2017-2021

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Executive Summary

Renfrew Hydro Inc. built its reputation in the community based on delivering electricity 24/7 safely and reliably at the least cost. Its rates are significantly lower when contrasted with other utilities especially Hydro One service areas. Renfrew Hydro values its relationships with its customers and demonstrates that by providing responsive service. It's all about keeping the community's best interests at heart.

Maintaining the local grid through investments in refurbishing and rebuilds at the right time, coupled with running an efficient and effective operation is critical to containing the costs Renfrew Hydro can control.

Renfrew Hydro is a private business with one shareholder, the Town of Renfrew. Leveraging this high value utility with other critical services, such as sewer and water, contributes to a stable and attractive environment for economic growth.

The cost of electricity is increasing the pressure on some families and their ability to pay—and Renfrew Hydro staff is responding by providing information on financial support for low income families, and ways to rethink how electricity is used and how to manage consumption. As part of its licence from the Ontario Energy Board, Renfrew Hydro is responsible for outreach programs to encourage consumers to conserve electricity and manage demand by using less electricity during peak hours—the point at which electricity is most expensive.

Renfrew Hydro will build on its record of providing the highest value in electrical services, at the least cost to our community and the customer, through continuous improvement, technological investment and sustainable environmental and business practices while adhering to government legislation and regulations.

Renfrew Hydro is pursuing new business opportunities, partnerships and best management practices that complement our skills, support our financial objectives, and focus on the expectations of our community to provide electricity safely and reliably at the least cost. Through cost sharing, efficiency gains, cost savings, improved reliability, superior customer service, and responsible environmental stewardship we will achieve our objectives.

Our staff is our greatest resource and key to Renfrew Hydro's success. We will invest in our staff by providing an employee-oriented, high performance culture that emphasizes empowerment, quality, productivity, and accountability.

Their safety, the people who work with them, and the safety of our citizens is paramount. We are strongly committed to an accident-free record, and our exemplary safety record will be sustained through a strong safety culture within RHI, and a safe and well-maintained electricity grid.

Our Vision

POWERING PROGRESS FOR OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATIONS THAT DELIVER ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO OUR COMMUNITY.

Our Mission

PROUDLY AND EFFICIENTLY DELIVERING ELECTRICAL ENERGY, SAFELY, RELIABLY, AND KEEPING THE COMMUNITY'S BEST INTEREST AT HEART.

Our Values

- SAFETY AND WELL-BEING
- INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY
- RESPECT
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- TEAMWORK
- FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
- CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS

Going Forward

Company Ownership/Legal Entity

Renfrew Hydro Inc. is a regulated electrical distribution company that operates within the Town of Renfrew. It is incorporated under the Ontario Business Corporations Act.

The Corporation of the Town of Renfrew is the sole shareholder. Electricity distribution, and energy conservation and demand management are its core businesses. Renfrew Hydro is governed by an independent board of directors appointed by the shareholder.

Strategic Context

Renfrew Hydro's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 provides an overview of the changing business climate and trends within Ontario's electricity system—policy and regulations, technological changes, and costs—and how Renfrew Hydro will respond using sustainable business strategies and partnerships, and financial projections for the next five years.

Renfrew Hydro's Plan is based on meeting our continued commitment to delivering electricity, safely, efficiently and reliably and at the least cost to our customers, producing a dividend for our shareholder, and becoming an important economic driver to sustain and grow the local economy.

The Plan uses an integrated approach and focuses on continual improvement in five key areas:

- 1) Organizational Effectiveness
- 2) Customer Service
- 3) Financial Performance
- 4) Commitment to the Community
- 5) Conservation and the environment

This strategic plan sets our priorities going forward, and focuses our energy and resources to provide a stable, reliable electrical distribution system.

Over the past 10 years, the electricity industry has changed—as the result of legislation including the *Green Energy Act*, *Ontario’s Long-term Energy Plan*, *Conservation First: A Renewed Vision for Energy Conservation in Ontario*, and now, *the Climate Change Mitigation and Low Carbon Economy Act*.

Ontario moved away from coal-fired generation and created new clean and renewable capacity—wind, solar, biomass, and hydro-electricity. It is refurbishing nuclear plants, investing in smart grid infrastructure, and created more reporting to ensure utilities are held accountable. The result has been a doubling of the cost of energy and significant hardship for consumers.

At the same time, a report commissioned by the Ontario Government pointed to the consolidation of local distribution companies (LDC’s) on the false assumption that they are inefficient, costly, and unable to keep pace with technology. The OEB (Ontario Energy Board) website electricity bill calculator however illustrates that most LDCs in the province are less costly to operate than the government’s distribution utility, Hydro One, and the local LDCs rank higher in terms of efficiency measures.

Renfrew Hydro and other LDCs have engaged in co-operative arrangements-sharing resources and knowledge through the co-operative *Cornerstone Hydro-Electric Concepts* and the Electrical Distributors Association. These LDC’s have generally scored well in service quality, customer satisfaction including billing accuracy, safety, system reliability, asset management, conservation and demand management, and are financially-healthy organizations.

The Renfrew Hydro Management Team continues to seek out cost saving administrative opportunities and is part of groups such as the Utility Collaborative Services Group which has developed a cost-effective billing program with the capacity of accommodating the continuing changes in billing regulations.

Going forward, Renfrew Hydro will continue to embrace the future as a locally-owned utility, one that balances the needs of its customers with the responsibility to operate a modern, reliable, efficient and cost-effective system, generate a yearly return and serve as an economic driver to retain and grow business. Strategic partnerships, sustainable business practices and opportunities for non-regulated business investments are key goals.

Guiding Principles

Renfrew Hydro is guided by its commitment to continuous improvement in all areas including customer service, safety, system reliability, and cost management. Renfrew Hydro will work with its customers to meet the conservation goals set by the Ontario Energy Board.

Our Commitment to the Community

Renfrew Hydro will build on its record of providing the highest value in electrical services, at a significant cost benefit to our community and the customer, through continuous improvement, technological investment and sustainable environmental and business practices.

Our Strategies to Support Our Vision

- Pursue new business opportunities, partnerships and best management practices to meet or exceed financial objectives and service expectations.
- Form partnerships and alliances with other local distribution companies and municipal entities to generate economies of scale and cost-sharing opportunities
- Invest in the development of our staff to provide an employee-oriented, high performance culture that emphasizes empowerment, quality, productivity, goal attainment and ongoing development of a superior workforce
- Promote conservation and demand management initiatives

Five Key Areas of Focus

Renfrew Hydro is focusing on five key areas of performance:

- 1) Organizational Effectiveness
- 2) Customer Service
- 3) Financial Performance
- 4) Commitment to the Community
- 5) Conservation and the Environment

Financial Overview

Renfrew Hydro's financial outlook is based on its cost of service application filed in August 2016 now before the Ontario Energy Board. The cost of service application, covering a five-year time frame from 2017 to 2021, consists of a detailed profile outlining how Renfrew Hydro plans to maintain, operate, or replace infrastructure at the end of its life cycle and add new connection capabilities. The plan is all about continuing to deliver electricity, safely and reliably and at the least cost. It is also about safeguarding Renfrew Hydro's long-term financial viability by making the right decisions at the right time to protect this valuable community asset. These applications go through a very rigorous approval process with all aspects questioned by the OEB and Intervenors. This process is repeated every five years to ensure the utility has the revenue it requires to operate safely and effectively for the upcoming five years through an adjustment in the Delivery rates paid by consumers. Renfrew customers enjoy a significant cost advantage over nearby Hydro One Residential Medium Density customers where they pay 78% more than Renfrew customers, and Hydro One Residential

Low Density customers pay 240% more for Delivery than Renfrew Hydro customers. Renfrew Hydro will do its best to maintain a significant cost advantage for Renfrew customers and balance the needs of safety and reliability with cost.

Revenue growth predictions are modest for RHI—a small increase in residential and small business customers is projected. Renfrew Hydro has experienced a decline in load—largely due to the decreased demand from the manufacturing sector and small business closures. New home occupancy, primarily in Hunter Gate, is producing a slow increase in customer numbers—some of whom are senior citizens moving from rural to a town environment. Roughly 25% of Renfrew’s 8,200 residents are seniors as compared to an average of 15% for the province. Looking forward, the population is expected to increase by 580 by 2026, and the employment base is expected to increase by 290 by 2025. The extension of a divided Highway 17 from Arnprior to Renfrew, while not confirmed, would change growth projections.

The operation, maintenance and administration costs (OM&A) costs are controllable by Renfrew Hydro to a certain extent—they include labour, program costs and external costs. Renfrew Hydro has a goal of continuous improvement in all areas including safety, reliability, customer service, and cost control—areas where Renfrew Hydro has performed well historically according to the Ontario Energy Board’s Scorecard. Software upgrades, matching resources to the work plan to improve efficiencies, program reviews based on quality and quantitative benchmarks and the impact on customers, and conducting studies on line losses are just some of the initiatives Renfrew Hydro will be undertaking to ensure value for consumers.

Renfrew Hydro’s current distribution rates were approved by the OEB in 2010 and included an expected (deemed) regulatory return on equity of 9.85%. The OEB allows a distributor to earn within +/- 3% of the expected return on equity (ROE). Since 2010, there have a number of factors that have affected Renfrew Hydro’s ability to earn the deemed ROE:

- a drop in commercial customer numbers largely because of a decrease in businesses
- lower volumes of electricity because of increased energy costs and conservation programs
- increased operational and capital costs related to aging infrastructure
- requirement for new line depot/office facilities
- an increase in regulatory requirements and expenses
- increased supplier costs
- the addition of the provincially-mandated smart meter operations and meter reading
- labour increases

Renfrew Hydro achieved a Return on Equity (ROE) of -0.92% in 2015—well below the 9.85 +/-3% range allowed by the OEB. Approval of the new cost of service rates by the Ontario Energy Board, and Renfrew’s plan to seek new revenue opportunities is projected to increase Renfrew Hydro’s ROE to the new allowable amount of 9.19%.

Renfrew Hydro will actively seek new business opportunities, partnerships and utilize the best management practices available to meet or exceed financial objectives and the expectations of our community to provide electricity safely and reliably at the least cost. Cost sharing, efficiency gains, cost savings, improvements to

reliability, superior local customer service and environmental stewardship will be major considerations in the formation of partnerships.

Capital Investments

Between 2012 and 2016, Renfrew Hydro invested \$2,233,200 in repairs, upgrades and replacements including an estimated \$567,500 in 2016. Between 2017 and 2021, an additional \$2,936,000 will be invested to keep the system modern safe and reliable, subject to OEB approval.

Capital Expenditures

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
System Access	105,000	15,000	35,000	129,000	10,000	10,000
System Renewal	432,000	325,000	335,000	380,000	385,000	350,000
System Services	10,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
General Plant	20,500	410,500	360,500	10,500	10,500	20,000
Total	567,500	760,500	750,500	529,500	415,500	390,000

Financial Projections

Renfrew Hydro's cost of service application, if approved by the Ontario Energy Board, will enable the company to provide a reliable (*predictable*) dividend to the Shareholder by producing a Net Income of approximately \$250,000 annually, and function as a partner in support of economic development.

Risks and Uncertainties

A number of factors that could affect Renfrew Hydro's ability to achieve its projected results include but are not limited to:

- Ontario's policies and regulations
- the economy and how it impacts customers
- market prices for electricity
- climate change
- technological infrastructure
- the ability to find appropriate business partners

Governance and Reporting

Renfrew Hydro Inc.'s Board of Directors exercises leadership and oversight and is guided by the Shareholder Direction issued by the Town of Renfrew. The three-person Board of Directors, along with Executive Management, sets the overall strategic direction. Board members are corporate independent board members—which conforms to the Affiliate Relationship Code. The conduct of the business and the affairs of Renfrew Hydro are detailed in By-Law 1, and Board governance policies.

The day-to-day operations are led by the Management Team which consists of Renfrew Hydro's President, the Secretary Treasurer, the Billing Supervisor, and the Crew Leader. The President is accountable to the Board and the Management Team is accountable to the President.

The Board will monitor the progress of the strategic plan on a quarterly basis, making adjustments where required. The President will provide quarterly reports, including financial reports and forecasts, to the Board and will present an annual report on the strategic plan summarizing progress at the Shareholder's meeting. Similarly, staff will be briefed quarterly on the progress.

Business Goals and Strategies

Organizational Effectiveness

The five-year forecast is encompassed in a master plan outlining asset management and capital expenditure planning. Prudent capital investments and maintenance plans are essential to ensure the sustainability of the distribution network.

Renfrew Hydro will continue to maintain its equipment in safe and reliable working order, and when economically justified, upgrade or replace its equipment. Safety of its employees and the general public will continue to be its top priority.

A) Safety and Health

Renfrew Hydro is committed to a top tier culture of health and safety for our employees, customers, and community by employing health and safety training for staff, and educational outreaches to customers of all ages. We will also employ leading indicators to ensure the effectiveness of the safety training in the field.

Strategy #1 Safety Training: Internal Responsibility System

Introduce safety training that focuses on workers taking personal responsibility and accountability for their safety and the safety of co-workers.

Strategy #2 Employ Leading Indicators to Measure Performance

Educate employees on the Proactive Reporting process, Workplace Inspections, and Job Observation process. Arrange a schedule for programs and track progress.

Strategy # 3 Third Party Safety Review

Conduct a third-party peer “cold eyes” safety review of facilities and work practices by a Cornerstone Hydro Electric Concepts (CHEC) utility member.

Strategy # 4 Proactive Safety Training for Contractors

Introduce a proactive hydro safety education program for contractors working within the Town of Renfrew.

Strategy # 5 Safety Training for the Public

Organize safety training for the general public to raise awareness and knowledge about safety and hazards. Use passive communication messages as well as continued education for the community to improve the results of the Electrical Safety Awareness (ESA) survey.

Strategy # 6 General Health Initiatives

Implement ergonomic assessments for all staff on a 3 to 5-year basis to prevent injury or illness and identify concerns. Promote an employee wellness program geared toward overall health and fitness.

Strategy # 7 Mental Health Support

Identify and implement programs available to support employee mental health.

Strategy # 8 Support Safety & Health Week

Develop an agenda and support for Safety & Health Week activities.

B) Reliability

Renfrew Hydro’s long-term Distribution Service Plan is based on lifecycle optimization policies and practices, preventative and predictive maintenance, condition-based monitoring, and risk analysis. Renfrew Hydro will continue to adopt technological improvements to improve its system, and at the same time, maximize the life of system parts using scheduled and preventative maintenance without compromising safety or reliability.

Strategy # 1 Develop an Asset Management Plan

Develop an asset management plan that incorporates condition-based assessment, risk analysis, and equipment redundancy sufficient to meet unplanned incidents.

Strategy # 2 Business Continuity Plan

Address the resiliency of facilities and equipment, redundancy and spare capacity, the ability to recover as quickly as possible, and contingencies for services to ensure Renfrew Hydro can continue to operate in the event of a natural or man-made emergency or disaster.

Strategy # 3 Smart Technology

Ontario’s renewed regulatory framework for electricity carries an expectation that Renfrew Hydro optimizes investments and reflects regional and smart grid considerations.

Ongoing Activities

Maintain the 24/7 availability of staff in the event of a service disruption.

C) Staff

Renfrew Hydro will invest in the development of our staff to provide an employee-oriented, high performance culture of organizational effectiveness that emphasizes empowerment, quality, productivity, goal attainment, and ongoing development of a superior workforce.

Strategy # 1 Create a Master Work Plan

Renfrew Hydro will prepare a master work plan, master training plan, and master resource allocation plan matching resources to the work plan.

Strategy # 2 Performance Management

Implementation of annual performance appraisals, setting of personal goals, performance incentive programs, and service recognition plans.

Strategy # 2 Develop Training Program

Analyze knowledge deficiencies and areas for improvement, and implement a comprehensive training program. Create a succession plan based on knowledge and abilities from the training program.

D) Change Management

Given the evolving nature of the electricity system in Ontario and the requirement to meet legislation, guidelines, policies and regulations, we will employ change management strategies to help our staff through changes in business activities, and support our customers through transitions so that the highest level of customer experience possible is maintained.

Strategy # 1 Communicate Strategic Plan to Staff

Once the strategic plan is approved by the Board of Directors and the Shareholder, the Strategic Directions Plan and how it affects staff and operations will be communicated to staff. Activities that change the way a service is delivered will be communicated to customers using a mix of communication strategies and media.

Strategy # 2 Change Management as a Process

- i) Change is a process, and will be preceded by measuring service levels, and customer needs and expectations before decisions are made on changes to service levels. It will include an analysis of how service changes will impact staff in general, staff that will be affected, the shareholder, and ratepayers.
- ii) Change management will be modelled after best practices to help individuals move from how things are done today, to transitioning to how things will be done; it is predicated on five

building blocks: awareness, desire to participate, knowledge about how to change, the ability to implement skills and behaviors, and reinforcement.

Customer Service

Renfrew Hydro will continue to excel in all aspects of customer service by providing helpful, professional and timely service. Renfrew Hydro interacts with its customers using a choice of contact points: front counter in-person service, by telephone, via our website, by email, on-the-street, and social media.

Strategy # 1 Level of Customer Service

Renfrew Hydro has a reputation of providing responsive and effective personal service to its customers. Retaining Renfrew Hydro's strong sense of identity with customer service and the goodwill it generates is juxtaposed with the need to consider resources and competing needs and wants.

Strategy # 2 Conservation and Demand Management

Accelerate the program to help customers manage escalating hydro bills by focusing on conservation and demand management and other changes that will affect the customer.

Strategy # 3 Host Information Sessions

Host information sessions with the local BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and other businesses, service groups, seniors' groups, to brief the community on key Renfrew Hydro developments and changes in Ontario's electricity system.

Strategy # 4 Paperless Bills

Provide customers with a choice of receiving paperless bills.

Financial Performance

To be a valued community asset delivering electricity safely and reliably at the lowest cost; a business investment that produces a yearly return on equity of 9.19% and reliable dividends for our shareholder, the Town of Renfrew; and a strategic economic driver, supporting the Town's economic development objectives.

Strategy # 1 Successful Cost of Service Application

The priority is the successful completion of Renfrew Hydro's cost of service application filed with the Ontario Energy Board for a five-year rate increase beginning January 1, 2017.

Strategy # 2 Sell Former Location

Sell or lease the Bridge Street facility.

Strategy # 3 Form Strategic Partnerships

Identify and cost out strategic partnerships supported by business plans to support positive growth and when justified create a separate business unit for unregulated activities.

Strategy # 4 Service Agreements with the Town of Renfrew

Engage in discussions with the Town of Renfrew about entering into service agreements.

Strategy # 5 Invest in Accounting Software Upgrades

Invest in accounting software upgrades to improve efficiency, analysis and time management.

Strategy # 6 Review & Update the Dividend Policy

Review the current dividend policy based on % Net Income or set an annual dividend amount.

Strategy # 7 Investigate Bulk-Purchasing Opportunities

Engage in discussions with Cornerstone Hydro Electric Concepts about group purchasing, safety reviews or other joint opportunities.

Our Community

Renfrew Hydro has built its reputation in the community based on delivering electricity 24/7 safely and reliably at the least cost. Its rates are competitive when contrasted with any LDC (Local Distribution Company).

Staying in touch with our consumers and our shareholder by providing up-to-date information about changes is critical to building on community trust and understanding.

Strategy # 1 Regular Discussions with the Shareholder

Schedule regular discussions with the Shareholder to provide up-to-date information about Renfrew Hydro's cost of service, strategic plan, and communications roll-out.

Strategy # 2 Maintain Contact with Elected Representatives

Maintain contact with the provincial government and the local MPP to ensure Renfrew Hydro has the most up-to-date information about contemplated or impending developments and ensure that the MPP understands the value of this utility for the community.

Strategy # 3 Ratepayers' Communication

Maintain a regular program of communications with ratepayers intended to: *Inform, Engage and Involve* them in understanding how the electricity system works, how to manage their hydro bills, and support sustainable changes to the electricity industry.

Strategy # 4 Advocacy

Have a discussion about the merits of advocacy involving allied stakeholders such as CHEC and other local LDCs to counter the oft-repeated theme that small LDCs are not efficient or effective and not capable of keeping up with the investments required in the future electricity system.

Conservation Demand Management and the Environment

Conservation and Demand Management

Ontario is placing a major emphasis on energy conservation as the first resource to be considered as means to offset future growth of electricity demands. Its policy states that conservation will be considered first before building new generation and transmission facilities and will be preferred choice where it is cost effective. Targets have been set for all local utilities, and can be accomplished only with the support of the consumer. Increased emphasis will be placed on conservation/demand management using outreach programs to commercial/industrial and institutional and residential customers to help customers conserve electricity and manage their hydro bills, and to ensure that Renfrew Hydro meets the conservation targets set by the Ontario Energy Board.

Strategy # 1 Revisit Hydro Ottawa Agreement

Revisit the service agreement between Hydro Ottawa and Renfrew Hydro to evaluate the current program against costs, and meeting Renfrew's needs.

Strategy # 2 Community Outreach

Host meetings/open houses with the Renfrew BIA, the Chamber of Commerce, and service groups to provide information about Renfrew Hydro and energy management programs; invite Hydro Ottawa energy managers to attend.

Increase our interactions with our customers to encourage electricity conservation and demand management.

Strategy # 3 Conduct a Line Loss Study

Conduct a line loss study to determine the causes of the losses of power that occur between the amount of energy delivered to the distribution system from the transmission system and the amount of energy customers are billed.

Strategy # 4 Rethink, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

Utilize "rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle" strategies wherever possible to reduce Renfrew Hydro's environmental footprint. Work with suppliers and vendors to purchase environmental-friendly products.

Strategy # 5 Investigate Voltage Reduction

Voltage reduction: investigate potential savings and technical challenges of the approach.

Strategy # 6 Investigate Load Reduction

Load reduction: investigate the risks and savings associated with taking one of five substations out of service.

Strategy # 7 Electronic Storage

Utilize electronic storage of files.

The Environment

Renfrew Hydro is committed to respecting the environment by managing and operating its facilities, services and programs in an environmentally-responsible way, complying with applicable environmental legislation, and developing additional programs to lighten our footprint on the environment.

Strategy # 1 Removal of PCB Transformers

Continue Renfrew Hydro's program of systematically removing transformers having PCB levels above acceptable levels and complying with storage and disposal regulation.

Strategy # 2 Review and Reduce Environmental Impacts

Review the environmental impacts of facilities and programs, and identify, assess and develop programs to reduce impacts:

- reduce the consumption of fossil fuels by using policies such as a no-idling policy;
- expand the rethink, reduce, reuse, and recycle practices currently in place (recycling poles; turning tree and shrub waste into top soil);
- include an assessment of the environmental impact of products during their lifecycle as part of the price and quality evaluations before purchasing.

Appendices

Appendices are set up as a separate document: Strategic Directions 2017-2021 Appendices

Appendix 1: Literature Review

Appendix 2: Situational Analysis

Appendix 3: Stakeholder Interviews

Appendix 4: Notes from September 6 and 7, 2016