

# GANANOQUE CULTURAL PLAN



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FINAL REPORT

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Town of Gananoque

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# GANANOQUE CULTURAL PLAN



FIGURE 1: FORMER INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN LOWERTOWN, LOOKING SOUTH

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 WHY A CULTURAL PLAN?

The stated intent of this project is to produce a plan for Gananoque that will position the town to benefit from its local character in a period of economic and social transformation. This initiative- termed a “cultural plan” - intends to capitalize on the so-called “creative economy” as applied to small towns. The successful outcome of the study will be a cultural plan that will:

- identify community cultural resources of all kinds
- evaluate their potential for tourism and economic development
- provide strategies for realizing economic benefit from cultural tourism via community engagement, institutional strengthening and partnerships
- strengthen the creative cultural sector

The “creative economy” concept derives from the work of Richard Florida, an American academic now based in Toronto whose work centres on understanding the ways in which knowledge-based enterprises can revitalize urban economies. In essence, his conclusions are that economic success in future will be driven by two main groups within what he terms the “Creative Class”: knowledge-based workers in health care, business, finance and law; and those focusing on innovation, such as scientists, researchers, technologists, as well as artists, designers and writers. Such people normally congregate in cities but are by nature highly mobile and will relocate to places offering a high quality of life, as long as such places offer the basic infrastructure needed for running a knowledge-based business or agency.

A focus on creativity, and the importance therefore of cultural planning, links to the concept of sustainable development within which culture is one of the four “pillars” of a sustainable society, integral to a community’s future along with economic health, environmental responsibility, and social equity. In the shift from an economy based on resource extraction and manufacturing to one that relies on adding value through knowledge-based activities, Canada is investing in the creative economy at all levels of government. Funding for the current study is one element of this initiative, intended to take what has been a city-oriented approach and apply it to smaller communities in rural areas. Cultural planning is seen as the means for achieving the desired end of community revitalization.

Why is this plan important? Like many other small communities grappling with economic and social change, Gananoque is facing an uncertain future. Its formerly strong industrial base is gone, thanks to restructuring of global finance and manufacturing, and is unlikely to be revived in any substantial way. Traditional tourism in the region is facing the effects of a declining market, thanks to the twin effects of a decline in traditional high volume, low yield tourism and a weakening global economy. As well, the region within which the town functions is experiencing new pressures for growth from new residents and new businesses coming to Eastern Ontario from elsewhere. In the face of these pressures, Gananoque must adapt. A series of economic development studies prepared over the last decade (see the references in the Appendices for a list) have all concluded that the only future for the town is to adapt to these changing conditions by embracing new economic development opportunities instead of trying to revive its former industrial base.

But how to do so without losing the very qualities that make Gananoque a special place? A cultural plan is an excellent vehicle for easing the transition from the past to the future because it is, in essence, a change management tool. It functions this way because it defines local character and provides ways of conserving and enhancing what is unique, before suggesting ways of deriving economic benefit from exploiting Gananoque’s culture and place. Communities that know who they are before they begin marketing themselves to the outside world are much less likely to lose what is special in the push for economic revival.

An example of this is close by. Perth, Ontario, went through much the same process over 30 years ago. Then it was at the crossroads, on the one hand trying to revive a dying industrial economy, on the other hand aware of its substantial physical and cultural assets but uncertain of their economic potential. The catalyst for change was a commitment by local residents, with the help of outside experts, to emphasize the town's special culture and urban settings. Their process reached a consensus amongst the various constituencies in town as to what Perth was to become, as well as consensus on what was best about the past and the present. "Heritage Perth" became the brand, and the marketing campaign that promoted that brand focused on local cultural activities as well as on the beauty of the town's buildings and natural setting. Increased tourism activity was the initial benefit, but the Town's intent was always to view tourism as an interim strategy by which to attract residents and investment in new businesses. In this, they were successful, for Perth now enjoys an excellent quality of life based on an enhanced physical setting that attracts new residents as well as visitors, and complements a rapidly diversifying local and regional economy and an expanding cultural scene. Perth was able to use a cultural lens to identify and sustain what local people valued and, as a result, find specific ways by which to enhance the local economy that built upon these values. Most important, the broad consensus that underlay this approach ensured that no single catalyst was required to achieve results; instead, modest, everyday actions cumulatively made the difference.

## 1.2 WHAT IS A CULTURAL PLAN?

First, the term "culture" should be defined. This study defines culture very broadly, including what would have been termed in the past as "high" and "low" culture. This inclusive definition permits us to identify and enhance expressions of local character as well as local interpretations of regional, national and international cultural activities and trends. Local traditions, plays based on local characters and events, and local arts combine with productions of Broadway musicals and covers of international hits. In all of these, culture has a local flavour specific to Gananoque, based as much as possible on the fundamental character of the town, and broader cultural trends are seen through a local lens.

As for a definition of a cultural plan, the following quote from the Creative City website (toolkit for community cultural planning) puts it this way:

*Cultural planning is a way of looking at all aspects of community cultural life as community assets. Cultural planning considers the increased and diversified benefits of these assets could bring to the community in the future, if planned for strategically. Understanding culture and cultural activity as resources for human and community development, rather than merely as cultural "products" to be subsidized because they are good for us, unlocks possibilities of inestimable value. And when our understanding of culture is inclusive and broader than the traditionally Eurocentric vision of "high culture", then we have increased the assets with which we can address civic goals."*

We think that Gananoque can learn from places such as Perth and thus achieve much the same result in a shorter period of time. But the town cannot do so if it mimics the cultural planning now popular in major cities. Proponents of the so-called “creative economy” tend to see most potential in large urban areas where synergies between enterprises are most likely to be successful. Applying that model to rural areas and small towns is less successful because of the dispersed and smaller population but also because of the lack of institutional and economic capacity. Rural and small town life is also different from urban life in many significant ways. As a result, tying one’s future to a model intended for cities can be a recipe for failure.

Done well, however, cultural planning can be a crucial means of moving your town into the post-industrial age while celebrating key aspects of its past and present. This cultural plan will focus on under-developed resources, especially cultural ones. This addresses emerging markets and builds on current successes in local development. Highlighting key aspects of local culture helps tourism to broaden the local economic base and build community pride. So, while Gananoque may never again be an industrial powerhouse, and the boat lines may never again see visitation numbers comparable to the peak years, the town can find new ways of sustaining itself by recognizing and celebrating its cultural assets.

### 1.3 STUDY METHOD

This study takes an understanding of the creative economy and applies it to small communities. It begins by understanding what makes Gananoque special, using historical research and site tours, augmented by interviews and workshops, to determine what is authentic and worth preserving, enhancing and promoting. By the same token, it identifies issues raised by tourism’s impact on local communities, here and around the world. The research helps to determine what the community can bear in terms of tourism impact – the “carrying capacity” of local community life and the “tipping point” beyond which local identity is lost – that become the boundaries of cultural tourism development. Only once these fundamental values have been identified do we assess cultural resources, tying them to the key themes expressed by the community. From that base we develop strategies for developing cultural resources, based on an assessment of what is there now, and on good examples from elsewhere of successful development of cultural resources. The main development strategies are then proposed. The next step is the cultural plan itself, beginning with a vision for the future that shows the potential results of the proposed strategies. The body of the plan provides goals for development of each cultural component, followed by objectives and action plan steps. The study concludes with an implementation plan and timeline.



# 2 Gananoque Yesterday

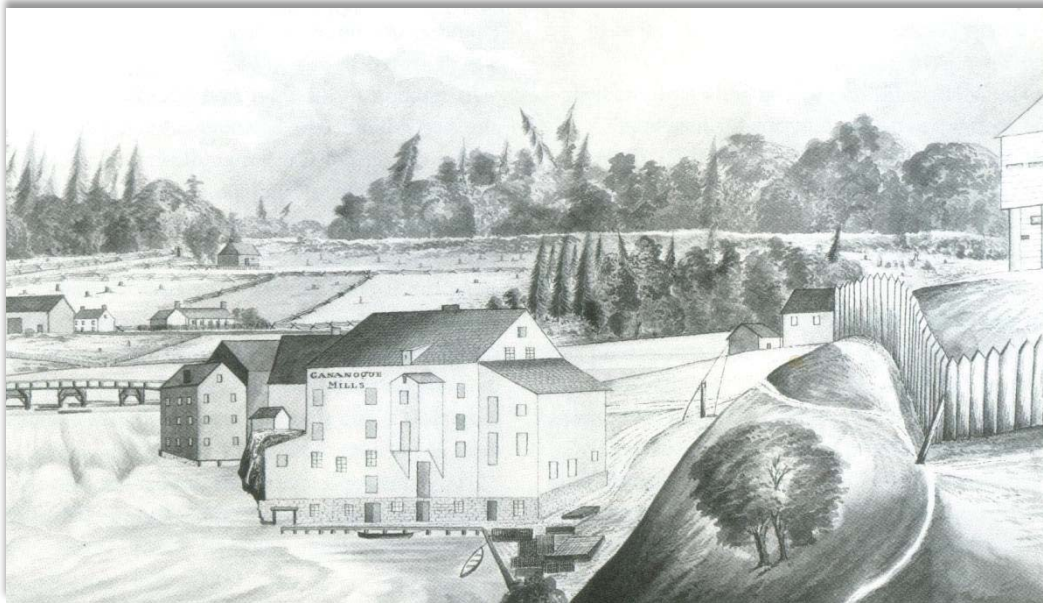


FIGURE 2: GANANOQUE (MACDONALD) MILL AND BLOCKHOUSE, PAINTED IN 1839 BY H.F. ANSLIE (NAC C520)

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding a community's character is not simply an exercise of taking a current slice in time and assessing how things are today. Instead, the character of a place – or of a person, for that matter - is built up by an accumulation of experiences and growth stages, over time. Many things that occurred in the past, though diminished by time or even forgotten, may still have relevance and be the source of new inspiration. Looking back into history reveals common traits that, collectively, define the place and can be expressed as enduring themes telling the story of that community. Those stories can then become the narrative for the community's revitalization.

The following thematic history summarizes the main events and developmental stages that have produced the town we see today. In each phase of the community's evolution, key initiatives determined the future economy and culture, as expressed in buildings and landscapes that were important in their time. The text is based on research using selections from the Gananoque Historical Society publications as well as other published histories and academic studies, each of which is cited in the references found in the Appendices.

## 2.2 EARLY VOICES

From what little is known about pre-contact habitation in and around what is now Gananoque, it is apparent that aboriginal peoples frequented waterside sites for both practical and cultural purposes. Assuming that they followed a pattern common to nomadic peoples of the post-glacial

age, small groups would range inland during the fall and winter months and move closer to the river shores during the warmer seasons.

Not only was this for access to better fishing and hunting, but it was also an opportunity for various groups to mingle and socialize. There may also have been a therapeutic element to this migration. Breezes made possible by large expanses of open water would have discouraged the malarial mosquitoes common in the inland swamps (Ross 2001, 48). Archaeological evidence and early maps suggest that headlands were aboriginal burial grounds, and this, along with the creation myths describing the Thousand Islands region, suggest a spiritual element for riverside promontories such as those found in Gananoque (ibid, 8-9; Staples 2010, 2). But there has been little further research, either archival or archaeological, on the aboriginal presence in and near the town, an omission that merits addressing. Even the town's name, supposedly of native origin, has an uncertain meaning (McKenzie 1967, 28).

## 2.3 PIONEERS

Gananoque has its own "creation" story involving the life and works of Joel Stone, United Empire Loyalist and entrepreneur. Stone's 700 acre land grant on the west side of the Gananoque River, secured after persistent lobbying on his part, became the basis for a burgeoning industrial empire. While Sir John Johnson, another Loyalist and half-pay officer, had received an even larger grant on the opposite side but never developed it. Beginning in 1792, Stone began a lumbering business that including cutting and rafting timber downstream. He used the river power to run a sawmill and dug canals to increase and regulate the power supply. He operated a ferry across the river and helped organize construction of a bridge in 1806. He was Collector of Customs at the new riverside Customs House and, following on from his military career in the Revolutionary War, was appointed Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leeds Militia (Hawke 1974, 13-14).

Across the river, Johnson's land was purchased by the other "founding" family, the McDonalds, who laid out the streets and block system there that survives to this day. Charles McDonald, from Scotland via upstate New York, formed a business partnership with Stone and helped create the mercantile, industrial and real estate foundations of the current town. Several generations of McDonalds (or Macdonalds, as the name was also spelled) played important roles in the town's business, political and social affairs into the early 20th century, and the family has been commemorated in the street names James, William and Charles (ibid 15-17). They sold merchandise, had lumbering operations, sawmills and flour mills, and developed land. It was the McDonalds who constructed the five storey mill on the Gananoque River in 1826, then one of the largest and most advanced flour mills of its kind in the new colony (ibid, 15-16). This building was soon to become instrumental in the next phase of Gananoque's evolution into a factory town and their large house, Blinkbonnie, remains a local landmark.

Gananoque also had a minor but important role in the War of 1812. At the beginning of the war, Gananoque was one of the staging points for convoys of men and supplies moving up and down the river in support of the British and colonial forces. It was thus vulnerable to attack and, in the early hours of September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1812, a group of American militia and riflemen crossed the lake from Sackets Harbour in small boats and, after repulsing Stone's militia units that had been mustered to oppose them (who had no fortifications), ransacked the small settlement and retreated. The following year, the military constructed a blockhouse on a height of ground near the present clock tower and established a gunboat station at the rivermouth (McKenzie 1967, 61; Hitsman/Graves 199, 107, 177). There were no further military engagements in the town, however and, after the war, the blockhouse, which had been disused for many years, was finally demolished in 1859 and its timbers re-used for dock piles and lumber sleepers (Hawke 1974, 19). Its precise location remains unknown, awaiting excavation.

## 2.4 RIVERS AND RAILWAYS

It was because of the promise of water power for milling that made Joel Stone seek a land grant at the mouth of the Gananoque River, and because of the transportation route to markets offered by the St. Lawrence River that made his mills viable. Gananoque's orientation was more to its eponymous river, however, than to the more famous one. It was factories on the smaller watercourse that determined the town's future, while activity on the larger river touched the town in other ways.

The Gananoque River was both dammed and channelled to supply power in the most efficient fashion. Water rights were secured by Stone and Johnson first, then held by the McDonalds. As industry grew and with it the demand for more and reliable power, the factory owners formed the Gananoque Water Power Company (1868) which sold water to shareholders depending upon the size of their mill wheels and the corresponding number of shares they held. It was thus that Gananoque became one of the early Ontario communities to develop and secure a source of power based on local, natural resources. Dams needed to control water levels were constructed or repaired throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> and there remains a canal linking the Upper Dam to the Fortis power plant (Hawke 1974, 27-28).

This river was both a power source and a barrier. First crossed by fording just below the Upper Falls, it was soon crossed by ferry (1801) and an early bridge (1806), later destroyed in the Forsyth Raid but replaced soon after. Ice and the elements destroyed subsequent wooden bridges until a substantial iron bridge was constructed in 1876 and remained in operation until replaced by the current concrete and steel bridge in 1930. This main bridge was supplemented over the 19<sup>th</sup> century with railway bridges, including the swing bridge at the river mouth (Hawke 1974, 27).

While the Gananoque River supplied ample water power, it was not a navigable waterway for commercial transport. It was the St. Lawrence that provided the main means of transport from town to town, and from town to city. Roads were in a primitive state in the early days of settlement so that, by the later 1820s, steamers became the preferred means of transporting people and goods. Early steamboats were built in Prescott but the “William IV” was recorded as being constructed in Gananoque in 1831. There was daily service stopping at Gananoque and extending from Montreal to Hamilton. As tourism became popular in the 1880s, excursion steamers were in service, travelling amongst the islands, across to the American shore and back, and to and from Kingston. With steamers came the demand for fuel, and some of the early mercantile fortunes in the town were made in supplying the steamers with cordwood (Hawke 1974, 22-23). At the height of the steamer era, before coal imported from Pennsylvania became the preferred fuel, the Gananoque waterfront had cordwood piles from the foot of Stone Street east to William, and along the foot of Main (Smith 1993, 72). Coal carriers subsequently became a common sight delivering fuel to the waterfront docks for homes and factories (Hawke 1974, 25).

River transport soon became superseded by rail transport. With roads still largely impassable, and steamers unable to travel the inland rivers or operate through the winter, rail transport became the most reliable way to ship people and goods. The main Grant Trunk line from Montreal to Toronto was begun in the 1850s and the section nearest Gananoque was constructed under the supervision of a Gananoque native, Charles Legge, whose mother was from the local McDonald family. The line passed several miles north of town, however, and it was not until 1889 that the Thousand Islands Railway was built, linking the main line station with the town waterfront, with stops at the town cemetery and main street along the way. Besides passenger traffic, the new rail line brought timber from inland and served the downtown industries. The current outer station, moved east in 1912 to improve track safety, had in common with other rail stations of the time an attractive flower garden (ibid, 29-32). Rail service into town ceased in the 1970s, although Gananoque is still a stop on the main Ottawa-Montreal-Toronto passenger line. Former rail tracks are now attractive trails weaving together the downtown, waterfront and adjacent countryside.

## 2.5 THE BIRMINGHAM OF CANADA

The industrial history of Gananoque has been well chronicled by several authors (Hawke 1974; de Zwaan 1987; Akenson 1999) and a common theme amongst these accounts is the remarkable concentration of skilled tradespeople in this town for a period of over one hundred years. Entrepreneurs anxious to take advantage of a newly settled and expanding region founded the town and they managed to exploit not only local and regional markets but also, thanks to their business acumen, access to capital and skilled workforce, gain access to national and international markets as the century progressed. It is interesting to note that most, if not all, of the initial factory owners were immigrants from the United States, with a few Scots and Irish: native-born entrepreneurs were not a presence in the key period during which industries were established.

For example, here are of some of the founding families of Gananoque, by country of origin and occupation (Hawke 1974, 64-72):

- Joel Stone, American, mill owner, lumberman, land developer
- Charles McDonald, Scottish, mill owner, land developer
- Joel Parmenter, American, factory owner
- Joshua Legge, American, lumberman, mill owner
- Alexander Auchinvole, American, tannery owner
- Robert Taylor, Irish, merchant
- James Turner, Irish, merchant
- George Mitchell, Scottish, factory owner
- David Jones, Canadian, factory owner

Many of these families had children who went on to prominent roles as local industrialists, politicians and church leaders and a few, such as Charles McDonald, achieved international fame (ibid. Pp. 71-72). As will be described below, it was these next two generations of many of the founding families that spurred the town into its main phase of growth and greatly diversified the local economy.

While many of these early entrepreneurs, such as McDonald, were successful businessmen and staunch promoters of Gananoque, a few of the next generations were not. Descendants of the Stone and McDonald families controlled most of the water rights to the Gananoque River but, after their industrial empire collapsed in 1847 and the McDonald mill failed in the 1850s, they did not either revive their businesses or relinquish control of the vital source of industrial power. Eventually, a consortium of new factory owners formed a joint stock company that bought out the rights and moved Gananoque into the next stage of its economic development.

It is during the next 50 years that Gananoque became the “Birmingham” of Ontario and, perhaps, of Canada. At the time, Birmingham, an industrial city in the English Midlands, was world famous as a centre for small shop manufacturing based on a work force of skilled artisans and factory workers; the opposite of the large scale industrial model normally associated with the Industrial Revolution and capitalist production. After flour milling and lumber milling were no longer financially viable due to changing market conditions, businesspeople in Gananoque took advantage of opportunities presented by a burgeoning agricultural sector in Eastern Ontario and began to manufacture tools and supplies for that market. Instead of mass production, the early stages of the economic boom in Gananoque were led by firms of less than five employees, mostly turning out some variety of metal product, from rivets to shovels to axle springs. And, in true entrepreneurial fashion, the first place that many of these craft industries began their existence was in the recently abandoned, five storey McDonald flour mill. Converted into small industrial spaces, this building became the core of the soon-to-expand factory district on the lower Gananoque River, running on the water power that Stone had initially created and that the joint stock company of new industrialists had secured (Akenson 1984, p. 291).

## 2.6 THE FLOWERING OF GANANOQUE'S CULTURE

If the town was booming economically, it was also maturing as a community. The capital accumulation that eventually led to the creation of approximately 40 industries in town also created a physical and cultural setting that offered, in simplified form, many of the components of a much larger centre. There was wealth here but also a strong middle class based on skilled labour as well as retail and tourism, a characteristic more typical of cities.

A unique aspect of local culture was a social hierarchy based on ties to the founding families via the emerging industrialists and merchants. Here it was those whose roots were in the US or the UK that dominated, with native-born Ontarians and Quebeckers being in the lower echelons, often working as unskilled labourers. Unlike some other communities in Canada of that time, it was country of origin and religious affiliation rather than ethnicity that determined one's place in town society, such that Gananoque, for most of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a town with a distinctly Protestant, immigrant culture (ibid. 301-338). In this way, Gananoque was more outward-looking than insular, more interested in acquiring the latest technological advances for local application, and more cosmopolitan than would have been expected of a community located in the heart of a predominantly agricultural region.

This outward view also applied to Gananoque's relationship with its surroundings. As a town on two rivers, one of which was becoming an international tourist attraction, Gananoque was able to capitalize on tourism early. Tourism became very important to Gananoque at the same time as its industries were at their peak. The Thousand Islands region had been noted for its natural beauty from the time of the earliest European explorers and had always been revered by the native First Nations peoples. Once the islands became available for development after the War of 1812, they were initially acquired for their timber resources although their use as bases for fishing expeditions became increasingly important by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. But what triggered a half century of commercial exploitation was George Pullman's interest in developing island homes for wealthy Americans. His efforts to draw attention to the natural beauty of the islands corresponded to an increasing desire on the part of American (and, increasingly, Canadian) city-dwellers to escape the crowding and insanitary conditions of industrializing urban centres and come away to a summer place.

Gananoque became a supply centre for the construction, servicing and maintenance of the often opulent and extensive summer homes and resort hotels. Local people found seasonal work as building contractors, hotel staff and water taxi operators. But it was not only the wealthy urbanites who saw the Thousand Islands as a retreat. People of more modest means came to tent or to stay in small hotels; local residents picnicked on the islands, and both locals and visitors enjoyed excursions on steamboat cruises through the islands.

Many Gananoque residents owned small boats, including the famous and locally-made St. Lawrence skiffs, and used them to visit friends on private islands or have family outings on islands in public ownership. Even though townspeople used the islands for summer recreation and employment, the municipality did not feel the need to secure island land for parkland - that was left to the national government - so when the opportunity arose in the early 1880s to purchase any islands remaining in federal hands, the Town demurred (Smith 1993, p. 88).

In other ways, however, Gananoque was very similar to Ontario communities of comparable size at that time. Aside from having an enviably large manufacturing sector and healthy retail activity, the town also had the community infrastructure expected of late Victorian society. There were schools in town from 1816 but the first substantial school, a stone structure on King Street, was erected by public subscription in 1849. More schools were built in 1859 and 1887 and the first high school constructed in 1896 (Hawke 1974, pp. 42-44). The first church was built in the mid-1830s but the main era of church construction was the period between 1840 and 1850 (*ibid.*, pp. 46-51). The first library began in a series of rented spaces in downtown commercial blocks, starting in the 1890s and continuing until the present Town Hall became available in 1911, at which time the library moved there along with the Town Offices and Council Chamber (*ibid.*, pp. 54-55).

Aside from providing places for religion and education, the town also developed cultural and recreational activities, and the facilities needed to support them. Like many small towns of the time, Gananoque had a band from the 1850s onwards, initially part of a militia unit, then sponsored by various factories, evolving into the Citizens Band which operated with a small municipal subsidy. The Band performed locally and in nearby towns, with engagements that included fairs, parades, competitions and moonlight excursions on the St. Lawrence (*ibid.*, pp. 56-59). Music would also have flourished in the churches and schools as well as, by 1908, the new Grand Opera house. Other forms of community activity included fraternal organizations such as the Masonic Order and Oddfellows, both of which were established in the late 1860s and early 1870s, and a Temperance Society, begun in the 1840s (*ibid.*, pp. 56-60; 80-81). And there were the usual range of year-round sports and recreational activities.

None of these activities was particularly distinctive to Gananoque, but local adaptations of typical activities were special. These included the Sunday services held in Half Moon Bay during the warmer months, where preachers from various denominations had their turn addressing congregations who arrived, participated and left by boat, while the preachers spoke from shore. Moonlight excursions by steamboat, sometimes with a band on board, were another feature of life along the St. Lawrence. But Gananoque was known for the quality of its paddlers, with a Canoe Club that developed high quality crews, some of which qualified for the early-mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century Olympic Games.

## 2.7 CHANGING ECONOMY AND CULTURE

At its height in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Gananoque shared with many other Ontario towns the best of both worlds. It had many of the advantages of a city in a strong and diversified economy, retail sector and community infrastructure while enjoying the benefits of a close-knit, small town culture located in a beautiful natural setting. It had factories that produced goods sold across Canada and internationally, yet they retained their small size and individual character. Local skilled tradespeople patented new products and adapted existing ones to suit their particular needs. Local merchants offered specialty goods from around the world. And tourism, important as it became, was still something that happened “out there”, on the St. Lawrence River, leaving the townspeople to enjoy their community in peace.

However, the very things that had made Gananoque distinctive in the beginning eventually led to its absorption into, and ultimate dismissal by, the larger economic system. In a capitalist, industrial economy, successful small firms don't tend to stay small; instead, they grow, either by expansion or by acquisition of related enterprises. Gananoque was no different. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the many local small firms were being consolidated into a few large ones which were of a size that could raise capital and respond to the demands of rapidly changing markets and growing competition from manufacturers in larger centres. The town was becoming less able to sustain small industries and the artisanal class that comprised them; instead, the few large industries became modeled on their urban counterparts, with a unionized workforce supplying wage labour to a business whose operations were increasingly controlled by interests located outside of the town. This pattern solidified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and ended with the closure of what had by then become branch plants of national and multi-national corporations.

This transition did not happen overnight. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gananoque was able to sustain a substantial industrial base. Town Council was aware of changing economic conditions early and took steps to retain and attract industry. Beginning in the early 1900s, Council offered tax incentives and promoted the town's assets (unsuccessfully, as it turns out). The large, locally owned industries continued on a course of corporate mergers and began shifting production to take advantage of the new automobile industry and, later, of two world wars. Local trades unions began organizing strikes to demand better pay and job security. All of these initiatives came to a head in the economic downturn following the First World War, when industries began to falter, unions lost membership in the face of layoffs, and the Town was reduced to organizing make-work projects to help those who had lost their jobs.



Accounts of the time suggest that the small town culture that had characterized Gananoque was fading. Conflicts still existed along religious lines and between skilled and unskilled workers, and the realization that the town could not compete economically with larger centres was beginning to sink in (de Zwaan 1987, pp. 139-250). As local industrialists either went out of business or sold out to larger, out-of-town corporations, the local political landscape changed. Prominent and successful local businessmen, many of whom were descendants of the founding families, no longer “ran” the town; instead, they became less influential or left town entirely. What was gained in terms of increasing democratic representation was balanced against what was lost in terms of influence over the town’s economic future. From now on, the local economy and, increasingly, the local culture, would follow national and international trends.

Aside from articles in the newsletters of the Gananoque Historical Society, and information in the Arthur Child Centre, there are few written records of the town’s history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Life in Gananoque after WWI can be traced through photographs and anecdotal accounts, some of which have come to light in the course of the current study. From what can be discerned from these sources, everyday life in town changed relatively little until the 1960s. Tourism, increasing in importance economically, expanded to take advantage of the new mobility offered by automobiles. The town weathered the Depression thanks in part to the patronage of the few wealthy island owners who continued to come each summer and, thanks to its location, to “rum runners” shuttling illegal alcohol across the international border. World War II boosted local industrial production, including such specialized war material as the Link flight simulator.

After the war, the national economy steadily expanded, as did the population. Gananoque, located on the main highway between Toronto and Montreal, benefitted from the dramatic increase in automobile traffic such trends caused but also endured the affects of congestion associated with this type of visitation. Cars also gave freedom to local residents, as did motor boats, and their use on the surrounding region’s land and waterways also increased. More islands were bought and developed for summer cottages, and Gananoque’s retail and service sector expanded to serve the new seasonal residents. Once Highway #401 was completed, the town’s main street was no longer a Provincial main highway, yet the boat line continued to draw large crowds and was able to expand as the century progressed. In the intervening years, Gananoque solidified its role as the tourism service centre for area cottagers, the boat tours and regional leisure activities in general. It has only been in the last few decades that a combination of free trade, increasing competition and diversification in tourism markets, and a general economic downturn, that Gananoque has experienced real economic pain.

## 2.8 LOCAL CULTURE IN THE PAST: THEMES

In this context, it is useful to record those aspects of the town that have sustained Gananoque in the past, in order to provide ideas for revitalizing the town in the future. Each is an aspect of past practices that constitutes a common theme. Within each theme are components that describe “character defining elements” from Gananoque’s past and may still be relevant today.

### THEME #1: IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

- The local economy was founded and sustained for almost a century by individuals with origins elsewhere.
  - Primarily American, Scots, Northern Irish Protestants
  - Developed and expanded local power generation
  - Continuously adapted local buildings to changing industry requirements
  - Marketed the town aggressively
  - Formed strategic partnerships

### THEME #2: RIVER PEOPLE

- Both rivers were important: the Gananoque for industry; the St. Lawrence for recreation.
  - Private boathouses (both rivers)
  - Competitive canoeing (primarily St. Lawrence)
  - Camping, cottaging and pleasure boating (St. Lawrence)
  - Power source (Gananoque)

### THEME #3: GATHERING PLACES

- Townspeople congregated in important public spaces and made use of the commercial core.
  - King Street from Charles to the Town Hall
  - The King and Stone Street intersection (Provincial Hotel, former Post Office)
  - Town Hall Park and bandstand
  - (former) Market Square
  - (former) International Square
  - (former) Canoe Club
  - (former) Armouries
  - (former) Yacht Club
  - Churches and schools
  - (former) premises of fraternal organizations or community groups
  - (former) train stations

## THEME #4: SUBSTANTIAL BUILDINGS

- Key civic and private buildings were an essential element of the town’s physical character, either as landmarks or as important representations of the community’s past.
  - Town Hall
  - (former) factories on Gananoque River
  - Mansions
  - Hotels
  - 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century main street buildings
  - (former) blockhouse

## THEME #5: PHILANTHROPY

- Those who had made their fortunes in town “gave back” through public service, local investment and donations of civic elements.
  - Founding families and their descendants served on Town Council and in other public offices
  - Several generations managed to remain in town and sustain local ownership of the industrial base
  - Some donated key features of the landscape, such as the Clock Tower, even if they no longer lived in town
  - More recent philanthropists have been behind such cultural developments as the Arthur Child Centre and the Antique Boat Museum project

## THEME #6: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- Local economy flourished when based on small businesses of fewer than 5 people.
  - Had well-developed technical and business skills and capital, initially acquired elsewhere
  - Were highly attuned to regional, national and international market trends
  - Focused on variants of core skill base (initially lumbering, then metalworking, later tourism)

## THEME #7: SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE

- The beautiful natural setting, lovely homes and tree-lined streets in a compact setting matched ideals of what a small town should be like.
  - Community traditions, such as fairs, parades, water activities and winter festivals, reinforced by attractive settings
  - Solid economic base, established civic institutions and affordable property made it a good place in which to raise a family
  - Civic enhancement programs, such as tree planting and fundraising for community facilities and activities, encouraged volunteerism and mutual aid

These main themes and their defining elements speak to a town culture that was comfortable in its setting and confident in its self-sufficiency. While Gananoque's dependence on the outside world increased as Canada matured, there remained a sense of distinctiveness despite the homogenizing trends. Comments from older residents make it apparent that Gananoque was a town in which children could range freely, going out into the surrounding farmland, boating or swimming nearby, and generally making full use of their surroundings as part of their daily lives. The small size and compact nature of the town meant that the rivers or fields were always close by and their presence always apparent. While this was a common feature of many Ontario small towns over the last two centuries, the fact of being located on two rivers near an international border provided Gananoque residents with a sense of release – of freedom - that inland towns did not have. And whereas inland towns had strong ties to their agricultural surroundings, Gananoque's sights had always been set on trade with the outside world.

In terms of the ways in which local residents used their town, the patterns of use were quite different from those common today. For example, the riverfronts were largely occupied by industry: only the Canoe Club and Yacht Club (and private boathouses and launching places) provided public access to the water. The West Ward, in which most of these activities were concentrated, became treated as a part of town to be avoided unless one's work took you there. Compensating for an industrialized waterfront were well-used public spaces downtown, such as the three main blocks of the King Street commercial and civic core, as well as Market Square and International Square. Town Park was the major green space in the downtown, functioning as both the ceremonial and recreational heart of the community. All of these spaces were within walking distance of adjacent residential neighbourhoods and at a slight remove from the main industrial areas. With so many activities packed into a confined space, local culture became defined by the mixing of work and recreation, and of the interaction between functional spaces and natural settings.

# 3 Gananoque Today



FIGURE 3: CANOE RACING: A LOCAL TRADITION

## 3.1 KEY CULTURAL RESOURCES TODAY

From a review of what Gananoque has had in the past, it is now important to assess what the town offers now in the way of cultural resources that could be used to revitalize the community and its economy. The following is a high level inventory of cultural resources grouped under the categories used in cultural planning exercises and consistent with Provincial cultural mapping system. The listing does two things. First, it lays out most, if not all, of the businesses, organizations, facilities, places and activities that could be considered to be cultural resources. Second, it reveals gaps and limitations, as well as areas of strength, within Gananoque’s cultural resource base.

### CREATIVE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

<b>Theatre/Dance:</b>	Thousand Islands Playhouse, Dreams in Motion
<b>Food/Drink:</b>	Old English Pub, Socialist Pig, various local restaurants and bars, Tim Horton’s, McDonald’s
<b>Legal and Financial Services:</b>	Various lawyers, CAs
<b>Design:</b>	Various florists, hairstylists, CleverNet Multimedia and Web Page Design, Ivy Lea Shirt Company, Morgan Upholstery and Canvas, Photos by Arlene

## CREATIVE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES (CONTINUED)

<b>Engineering and Landscape Design Services:</b>	Ronald H. Smith OLS, Wright Engineering and Design, Daina Eliason landscape architect, Nature’s Way landscaping
<b>Wellness/ Fitness/ Sport:</b>	Carveth Care Centre, Yoga Loft, Family Fitness Centre, Best Western Health Club, Curves for Women, the Iron Station, Walking Program, 1000 Islands Kayak, Tai Kwan Do, Weight Watchers, Child and Youth Wellness Centre, Community Family Health, arena, parks and playgrounds, trail system (FABR, National Park), Horticultural Society, FA Paddling Assoc. , Canoe Club, hockey, baseball, soccer, fishing, martial arts, swimming, curling, belly dancing, acupuncture/alternative medicine, Delaney Bowling alley, dentists/ doctors/ chiropractors/ medical arts centre/spas/DMP laser skin care/food bank/hearing clinic/veterinary clinic/physiotherapists/massage therapists/pharmacies (3)
<b>Fine arts:</b>	Vaga, Farmhouse Studio (pottery), “Up the Garden Path’ studio tour, Parkway studio tours, Sculpture Park (Confederation Park); Kingston Portrait Prize (venue for)
<b>Music:</b>	Gananoque Concert Association, Choral Society, Teen Choir and Band (church choirs, schools programs and events)
<b>Literature/Journalism:</b>	Library (childrens’ reading groups), Gananoque Reporter
<b>Museum/History:</b>	Arthur Child Centre, Gananoque Historical Society, 1812 Commemoration steering committee, Town of Gananoque Heritage Committee, Doors Open, Local Flavours
<b>Tourism Assets (in addition to resources listed above and below)</b>	Gananoque Boat Lines, hotels, motels, restaurants and pubs, B&Bs, specialty retail and food, Edgewater Antiques, flea market

## CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

Archives of the Gananoque Historical Society, collections at the Arthur Child Centre, buildings designated and listed under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Gananoque and St. Lawrence Rivers, the Town parks and trails network, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Provincial wildlife area (north of Highway 401)

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Boatbuilders, storytellers, youth centre, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Army Cadets, Catholic Womens' League, service clubs (e.g. Rotary, Lions)

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Canada Day, Santa Claus Parade, fair, RibFest, (former) Festival of the Islands, sports tournaments, band concerts in Town Park, Remembrance Day ceremonies

## 3.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF LOCAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

The foregoing list provides a current snapshot of most, if not all, of the businesses, organizations and events that could be considered to be cultural resources. How they may be utilized is the next step in the cultural plan. Given that there are no criteria to provide a baseline condition for community cultural resources, the following is a general assessment of what Gananoque can currently consider to be its cultural resource base, we have used our professional opinions as enriched by comments from interviews, workshops and steering committee meetings. The resource base is described in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. Opportunities for utilizing and enhancing these resources are found in the remainder of the report.

What we have done is organize the assessment in terms of the themes identified in the previous section, in order to provide a framework that more clearly reflects local character.

### THEME #1: IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS

- New businesses from out of town being attracted in local service/tourism sectors
- Many current businesses owned by long-standing residents
- Factories owned by national or multi-national corporations mostly gone

## THEME #2: RIVER PEOPLE

- Town and rivers “intertwined” still
- Recreational use of Gananoque River and back country lakes not what it was; FABR/ St. Lawrence Park rarely mentioned
- Renewed interest in non-motorized water craft use of rivers

## THEME #3: GATHERING PLACES

- Downtown core and Town Park still popular but other former gathering places now gone
- “Berm” and Rotary beaches, Marina, park, ACM and heritage village now offer community access to waterfront
- Young people avoid large sections of town, confine their activities to parks, downtown, beach and schools
- Tim Horton’s and McDonalds most popular gathering spots, especially for seniors; new pub and coffee shops gaining customers in younger age groups
- Canoe Club (now TIPH) primarily a tourist destination; no longer a community dance hall

## THEME #4: SUBSTANTIAL BUILDINGS

- Mansions tend to be restored, converted to commercial use (B&Bs, hotels, apartments)
- Many fine homes
- Factories mostly abandoned but still standing
- Downtown largely intact but in need of upgrading
- Key civic buildings intact

## THEME #5: PHILANTHROPY

- Retirees are primary source of volunteer aid and funding

## THEME #6: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- Some new investment in tourism/service related businesses
- No current links to college/university programs



## THEME #7: SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE

- Significant job losses amongst former factory employees leading to anger, poverty, despair
- Fractiousness amongst various groups inhibiting community initiatives
- Some community events still popular; some could be revived
- Recreation at heart of most community activities today
- Service clubs remain strong
- Retirement community; bedroom community (cheaper housing, small town lifestyle)
- Tourism service centre (summer)

### 3.3 COMMUNITY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTER

Alongside the cultural resources listed and assessed above needs to be a profile of the town's current economic and social character. It is one thing to identify all of the potential components of a cultural resource base but it is also necessary to see how these elements might relate to how the town works today, so that might help produce local jobs and enhance everyday life in town.

#### 3.3.1 GANANOQUE'S POPULATION AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Gananoque's 2006 population (the most recent year data is available) was 5,285, an increase of just 1.3% since 1996. It is an older population, largely Caucasian and with moderate income levels, as evidenced by the following key characteristics:

- 27% of the population were over 60 years in 2006, with almost 12% over 75 years. Only 22% were under 19.
- The population is aging with a median age of 44.2 years in 2006, up almost 5 years since 1996.
- Fewer than 7% of the population were immigrants. Only 2% were visible minorities.
- The median household income was \$45,600 in 2006, down 6% from \$48,500 in 2001.
- 67% of the private dwellings occupied were owned; 33% rented.
- 57% lived at the same address five years earlier; 23% had moved within the same census subdivision and 18% had moved from elsewhere in the province. All mobility factors remained generally similar between 1996 and 2006.

FIGURE 4: GANANOQUE POPULATION: 1996 TO 2006 (STATISTICS CANADA)

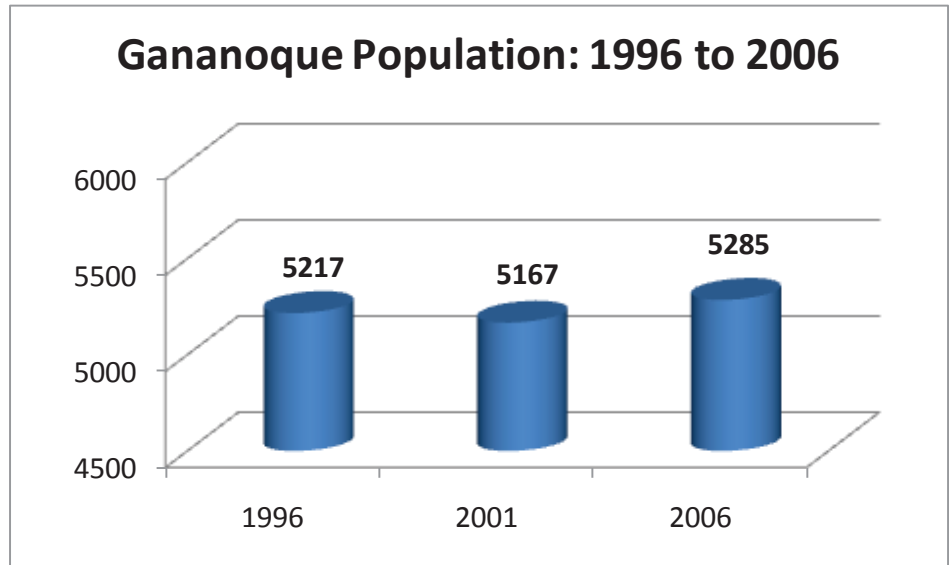
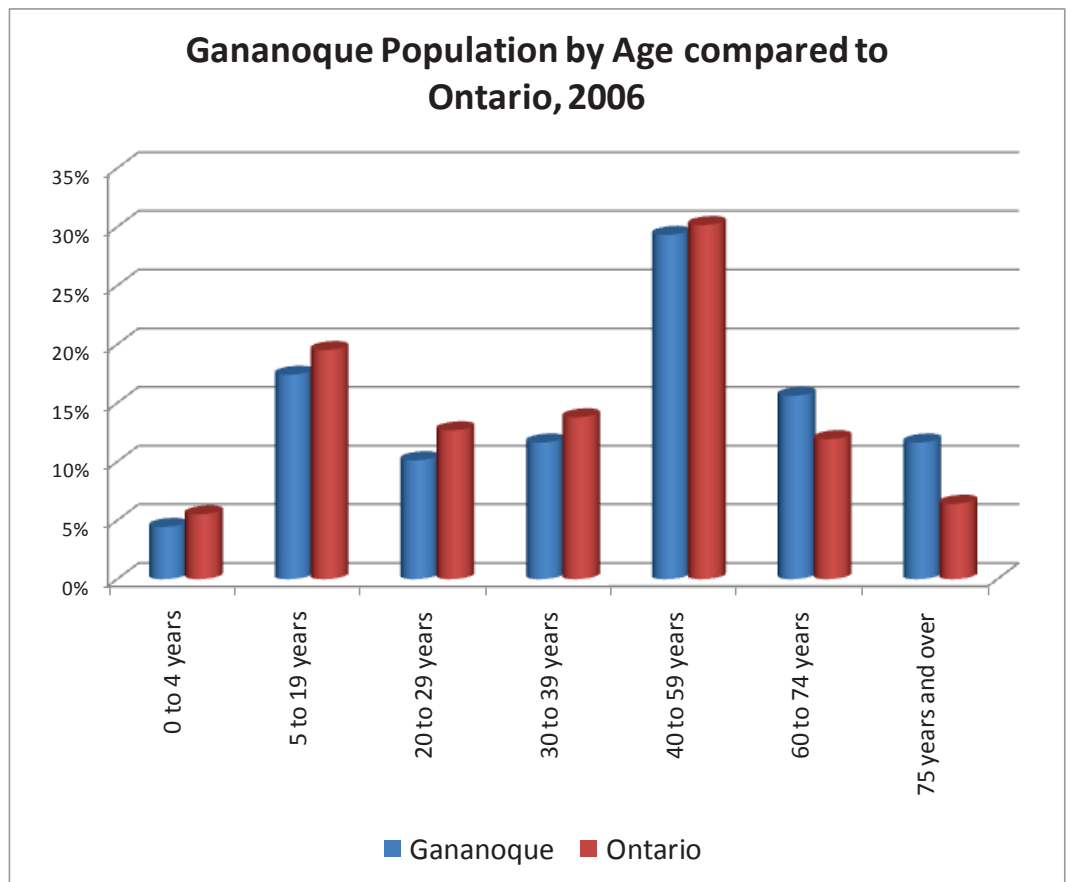


FIGURE 5: GANANOQUE POPULATION BY AGE COMPARED TO ONTARIO, 2006 (STATISTICS CANADA)



Compared to Ontario as a whole, Gananoque's population profile is quite different. Growth is far below that for the province overall; Ontario's population grew by 13% between 1996 and 2006.

Gananoque's population is also older, as illustrated in the graph. In particular, the town has a much higher than average proportion of its population in the 75 years and over category, 11.6% compared to 6.4% for the province overall. The median age in Ontario in 2006 was 39 years, compared to over 44 for Gananoque.

Household income levels are lower compared to the Ontario average, which was over \$60,000 for 2006. And Gananoque's population is far less diverse than for Ontario as a whole which reports almost 23% visible minorities and 28% immigrants.

### *Implications* <sup>1</sup>

*An aging population and workforce means:*

- Gananoque needs to build a community as an attractive place for people to live, both for retirement and to raise a family. This includes having services for an older population as well as for younger people.*
- There need to be economic opportunities for an aging workforce*
- It is important to think about possible labour shortages in the future; this will likely hit the tourism industry particularly hard since it is dependent on seasonal labour. Gananoque may need a strategy to attract immigrants (inter-provincial and international) to fill jobs in the future*

*<sup>1</sup>Implications taken from comments provided by Sandra Wright, Executive Director, 1000 Islands Region Workforce Development Board, email October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010*

### 3.3.2 LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT <sup>2</sup>

There were 3,650 jobs in the Town of Gananoque according to 2006 census data and a local labour force of some 2,570 persons who were employed. Some 56% the labour force worked in Gananoque (including those who worked at home) with the balance commuting to work outside the town. This data indicates that some 60% of the jobs in the Town of Gananoque are actually filled by people living outside the town, such as in other municipalities in Leeds & Grenville and elsewhere.

Data from the 2006 Census also provides information on the distribution of both jobs and the labour force by sector.

*<sup>2</sup>Employment and labour force data should be viewed with caution since it is for 2006. Since then there have been significant layoffs in the manufacturing sector in Gananoque, with an estimated 350 jobs lost.*

In 2006, the largest number of jobs in the Town of Gananoque was in the manufacturing sector (700), closely followed by retail trade (630), accommodation and food services (550) and arts, entertainment and recreation (370; includes casinos). There are also noteworthy numbers of jobs in health care and social assistance, other services and other services, as well as in education, administration and professional & scientific sectors. The significant layoffs in the manufacturing sector since 2006 suggest that retail trade, accommodation and food services and perhaps even arts, entertainment and recreation are now the top three sources of jobs in the community.

Gananoque's labour force is distributed a bit differently than the jobs in the community. The top labour force sectors are accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and retail trade, each containing 310 – 335 persons.

### *Implications*

*A significant portion of the jobs and labour force in Gananoque is in industries that depend to a significant degree on tourism (accommodation, food service, retail trade, arts & entertainment), indicating the importance of a strong and vibrant tourism sector to the economy of the town. There are only a small number of jobs in the core cultural industries sector but a strong base of jobs in the broader creative economy.*

### 3.3.3 TOURISM ACTIVITY

#### **3.3.3.1 Tourism In Ontario**

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism compiles information on tourism activity in Ontario overall and for each county and region, as well as major cities. This data is based on surveys conducted by Statistics Canada. These surveys define tourism to include domestic trips (trips made by Ontarians and other Canadians within Ontario), both overnight trips and same day trips of more than 40 km one-way that are not regular trips such as commuting to work. It also includes all foreign trips into the province, those made by US and overseas residents, both same day and overnight. Tourism activity data is measured in person-trips or visits – one person making one trip that meets the trip definition is a person-trip. The most recent data available is for 2008.

Person-trips in Ontario totaled almost 101 million in 2008. Over 80% of these person-trips are made by Ontario residents with 13% from the United States, 4% from other parts of Canada and 2% from overseas. Sixty per cent of these person-trips are same day trips.

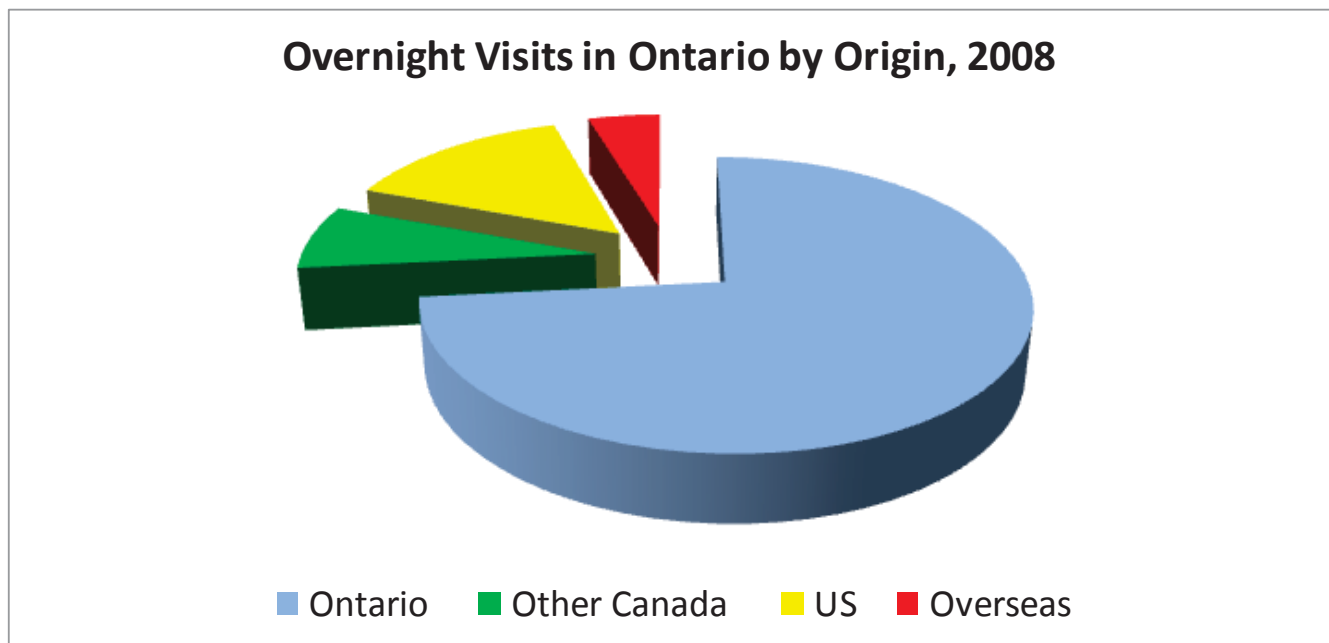
Tourism activity in Ontario declined by 8% between 1999 and 2008 (data for 2009 is not yet available). By far the most significant decline has been in visits from the US, which declined by 56% in this period. A substantial portion of this decline was in same day visits from the US; overnight visits declined by only 21% during the same period. Factors impacting overall visits to Canada such as border security issues, passport requirements and economic conditions have also had a big impact on visits to Ontario from the US.

2008 visits to Ontario from other parts of Canada and overseas were at similar levels to those experienced in 1998.

Provincial data for 2009 indicates a further decline in US visits to Ontario, and this trend has continued into 2010. During the first 8 months of 2010, same day crossing from the US declined 8.7% over the same period in 2009, and overnight crossings dropped 2.3%. However, the volume of overseas visits to Ontario appears to be improving, with an increase of some 6% to the end of August 2010, compared to the same period in 2009.

There were 42.3 million overnight visits in Ontario in 2008; Ontario residents made the majority of these overnight trips as illustrated in the graph.

FIGURE 6: OVERNIGHT VISITS IN ONTARIO BY ORIGIN, 2008 (ONTARIO MINISTRY OF TOURISM, TOURISM RESEARCH, HISTORICAL STATISTICS)



### **3.3.3.2 Tourism in the Gananoque Area**

Local data on visitation to Gananoque is not available. Such data, which would include hotel occupancies and the volume of passengers on Gananoque Boat Lines, is seen to be proprietary business information and is not shared within the local tourism industry. As such, it is not possible to estimate the volume of visitors to Gananoque itself, or to describe their profile.

Tourism activity data is available from the Ministry of Tourism's Regional Tourism Profiles for Leeds & Grenville United Counties and for Regional Tourist Area #9 (RTO#9) which stretches from Prince Edward County all the way to the border with Quebec. Since Gananoque is the primary tourism destination and overnight stopping place within Leeds & Grenville, it is reasonable to assume that a significant portion of the tourism activity within Leeds & Grenville occurs in Gananoque.

Leeds and Grenville had 1.6 million person visits in 2008, a decline of 10% since 2006. This includes people travelling for all trip purposes, residents of Ontario travelling more than 40 km one way and all visitors from the US (same day and overnight).

Key characteristics of the tourism activity in Leeds and Grenville were as follows:

- 40% of person-visits were overnight visits, 60% were same day visits; same-day visits were more likely to be from Ontario residents.
- 63% of person-visits were from Ontario residents, 31% from the US.
- Visits from the US declined 18% between 2006 and 2008; visits from Ontario residents declined by 6%.
- The top places of residence of visitors were:
  - Ottawa-Carleton (33%)
  - New York State (29%)
  - Frontenac County (14%)
  - Elsewhere in Leeds & Grenville (12%)
- 60% of visits were for pleasure, 30% to visit friends and relatives and the balance for business or personal reasons.
- Quarter 3 (July to September) was by far the most popular time to visit, with 40% of trips occurring in this period, compared to 26% in April through June, 20% in October to December and 14% in January to March. US visitors were more likely to visit in July through September.
- The average length of stay for overnight visitors was 3 nights, with visitors from other parts of Canada staying almost 5 nights and those from the US staying almost 4 nights.

- Total visitor spending in Leeds & Grenville was \$173 million, representing only 1% of total visitor spending in Ontario. Visitors from other parts of Canada had the highest average spending but their low volumes means that these visitors accounted for only 8% of total spending. Visitors from Ontario generated 54% of total spending and those from the US, 35%. Overnight visitors generated 70% of total spending, with average spending per overnight visitor of \$188, some 3.5 times higher than the average spending of same day visitors (\$54).
- The highest proportion of spending was on food and beverage (34%) (in stores and at restaurants) and on accommodation (20%).

Tourism in Leeds & Grenville represents about 25% of all tourism activity in RTO#9. However, Leeds & Grenville has almost twice the proportion of US visitors than does RTO#9 overall.

### *Implications*

*Based on this data, it is clear that attracting more overnight visitors to the area, encouraging existing overnight visitors to stay longer or converting same day visitors to overnight stays will have the greatest impact on the local economy.*





# 4 Cultural Resource Development Strategy



FIGURE 7: REHABILITATED INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN LOWERTOWN

## 4.1 THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As is evident from the analysis of the current state of culture in Gananoque, tourism has a dominant but specific role in local social and economic life. For many years now, the town has pursued, and benefited from, what could be termed “service centre” tourism, that is, visitors who use Gananoque as a service centre for tourism attractions located outside of the town. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the town has been a source of services for seasonal residents and summer visitors to the 1000 Islands, whether they are coming to fish, sightsee or stay in accommodation throughout the region. Before Highway 401 was completed, Gananoque was a pass through service centre on the main route between Toronto and Montreal. Today, the dominant tourism component is the Gananoque Boat Lines, again using the town primarily as a departure and arrival point. This type of tourism, though beneficial because it generates spending on local retail, accommodation, and food and beverage providers, does not capitalize on the town’s unique aspects nor does it entail development of cultural components in the community as a whole.

By contrast, the strategic framework being proposed here broadens the emphasis from the town as service centre to include the town as an attraction in itself. An emphasis on cultural tourism development implies a shift in focus to the community’s unique characteristics and prompts improvements to local facilities and activities that will enhance local culture.

However, if the town is to attract new visitors who value the place itself, and if it hopes to have some of those visitors return as new residents, it must also have a high quality of life. While a beautiful physical setting is important, so is a vibrant community life that benefits both visitors and local residents. It is this twin emphasis on serving tourists and the local community that is at the core of the cultural tourism strategy.

The cultural plan is designed to position Gananoque to benefit from the creative economy, using tourism as a key component. The action plan (Section 7) includes an identification of the cultural sector's role, objectives for enhancing that sector, and specific recommendations, including those covering tourism's role in supporting cultural development.

## 4.2 WHERE TOURISM FITS

This study identifies tourism development as an immediate priority. However, this does not mean that tourism will be the only economic and cultural focus of the town. Instead, tourism is also an important transitional strategy that plays on Gananoque's special strengths while providing a catalyst for diversifying the local economy. The type of tourism being proposed is "cultural tourism", a form of travel based on fully experiencing life in other places – "knowledge-based" tourism, in other words. This is an international trend. Many traditional tourism attractions and appeals have been losing ground while others have been growing in effectiveness. Travelers today are increasingly seeking "authentic" cultural experiences that are both personally enriching and memorable. Due to the Internet and modern communication tools, they are better informed of their options and their expectations are heightened. In other words, the tourism marketplace is changing and therefore requires fresh approaches to be successful and sustainable, both economically and culturally, within the host community.

It is important to realize, however, that Gananoque already benefits from tourism through its established retail, accommodation, food and beverage, and tour providers. The economic benefit generated by tourism comes from these key components, not so much from admissions to attractions or from fees charged for activities. It is these "spin-off" benefits that the town already gains from current tourism activity, but could gain more by expanding its offerings into those suited to cultural tourism markets.

In every case, tourism has both positive and negative impacts on host communities; it should not be seen as a panacea for economic development and prosperity. The strategy should be to pursue the tourists you want, not just the ones you get by default. Examples of the most desirable tourist types are those with the following characteristics:

- High yield, low impact visitors
- Those who come in numbers and in time periods that the community can comfortably handle
- Visitors that will respect community values

- Tourists who are attracted by the community’s cultural and natural heritage and are willing to appreciate and conserve it

Being successful in attracting such tourists can lead to having tourism that local residents are proud to be part of. However, in order for the town to be an attraction in itself, a considerable amount must be done to construct the organizational capacity and the funding base to provide the services and facilities cultural tourism requires, and to ensure that these services and facilities also enhance the quality of life of local residents.

### 4.3 TOURISM TRENDS

The past ten years or so has seen significant shifts in consumers’ travel habits, their interests, destinations selected and expectations for their travel experiences. These changes have been driven by a wide range of factors, including:

- Continued growth in the use of the Internet for travel-related purposes. This includes exploring and researching what other destinations have to offer, comparing prices and booking all aspects of travel. The Internet has created price-transparency, making it easy for travelers to compare prices and value before making a decision.
- Strong competition for travel dollars, from domestic and international destinations, and from travel experiences such as cruising. In particular, emerging destinations such as in Asia and eastern Europe are eroding the market share of traditional destinations; North America is being hit particularly hard by this trend.
- Exposure to a wide range of entertainment options, on-demand through the Internet and television. This means that today’s consumers are jaded and demanding, with high expectations.
- Increased importance of family and friends and sharing meaningful experiences.
- Growing concern about healthy lifestyles, exhibited through increased interest in physical activity and active vacations, and in local foods and cuisine.
- A growing environmental consciousness which is impacting travel activity and destination choices.
- Growth in use of social media, both for marketing and for communications. This is also creating a marketplace that expects immediate results and attention.
- Increased use of revenue management techniques by tourism operators to maximize revenue on a four season basis.

The recent economic recession has resulted in a travel market that is price conscious and seeking value; this is expected to continue over the medium to long term with more modest spending levels than was seen earlier in the decade. Many consumers are also facing time poverty as they grapple with the pressure of careers and families – both children and aging parents - thereby constraining their ability to travel.

Travel by Ontario residents, by far the largest tourism market for the region, is also impacted by demographics and settlement patterns such as:

- A large aging population, the boomers, with more time to travel and an interest in exploration and learning. This segment is better educated, healthier and more interested in travel than earlier generations of travelers. Travel has been an important part of their life and, more and more, they are travelling outside Ontario and Canada to experience other parts of the world.
- A growing urban population.
- A growing multi-cultural population, particularly in the Toronto area, with different interests and travel habits.
- Emerging travel markets such as those in their 20s and 30s, with a wide variety of interests and a desire to explore different destinations.
- The strong Canadian dollar which makes both US and overseas destinations more appealing to Ontarians.

The US market, which has traditionally been very important to the Gananoque area as well as to Ontario and all of Canada, has suffered significant declines in the past decade, particularly in same day traffic. While the rate of decline appears to have slowed, there is no sign of a sustained improvement. This is the result of a number of factors:

- Increased border security and more stringent documentation requirements
- Much longer border crossing times
- Perceptions that Canada is expensive, heightened by the increased value of the Canadian dollar
- High gas prices
- More competition from within the US
- No strong reason to travel to Canada
- Poor economic conditions in the US
- Increased competition for the US market from global destinations

The implication of all of these trends is a highly competitive marketplace in which the consumer rules. With the Internet at their fingertips and competitively priced packages to appealing and exotic destinations, consumers have endless options for their travel dollars and time. The challenge for destinations is threefold – to know their target markets and what they want, to offer great experiences at great value and to be very easy to find and purchase.

Today's travellers are looking for experiences that are meaningful. They seek out the simple pleasures – a good bed, good food, no hassles, an experience or activity that makes them feel good, something that helps them create memories with their partners, families and friends.

Some growth markets include:

- Culinary tourism, including visiting wineries, shopping for/picking local food and locally made food products, visiting farms, learning, experiencing regional cuisine, participating in the harvest, etc.
- Getaway travel – short trips (both day and overnight) to provide a break from the day-to-day grind. The recession and concerns about increasing gas prices have helped drive this. These could be with family, girlfriends, partners, and groups with similar interests. It might be as simple as a scenic drive, going on a studio tour, or heading out to a park or forest area for a picnic.
- Attending festivals and events, particularly those offering a unique experience.
- Travel that provides opportunities for learning and hands-on experiences.
- Spa trips
- Sports tourism.
- Outdoor activities such as cycling, hiking, kayaking, canoeing.
- Experiencing local culture and history.
- Volunteer tourism.

The retiring baby boomers are also creating markets for new types of residential development with a focus on quality of life, recreational experiences and opportunities for entertainment and continuing education. “Lifestyle” developments catering to these markets are appearing in locations across Ontario, including in small heritage communities, on waterfronts, and in popular summer and winter vacation and recreation areas and rural areas which offer a mix of appeals. Examples include Niagara-on-the-Lake (heritage community), Brockville (waterfront), Owen Sound (Cobble Beach Golf Links with residential development, hotel, conference centre, spa) and Blue Mountain in Collingwood (summer and winter recreation area).



# 5 Cultural Resource Development Potential



FIGURE 8: COMMUNITY EVENTS: RIBFEST

## 5.1 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

There is no “one size fits all” model for small community cultural planning: each community is unique and must be treated that way. What is becoming standard practice in cultural planning in Ontario now includes a broad range of “cultural resources”. These include traditional events, activities and programs associated with the performing or fine arts as well as organizations that create and manage cultural activities. In addition, traditional community activities intended primarily for local residents are also essential elements of local culture, often because they are unique and therefore important components of community identity. Sustaining these resources is the underlying physical infrastructure of built heritage resources and cultural landscapes, natural heritage resources, and cultural venues and other facilities. Such a broad scope of components can initially seem daunting but it overcomes barriers that often exist when “arts”, “culture” and “heritage” are treated in isolation.

By considering cultural resources as having the same importance as other kinds of economic resources allows communities to expand the range of development opportunities to be considered. Whereas arts and cultural organizations and activities may have formerly been considered as “frills”, peripheral to the main concerns of the municipality, they can now become one of the driving forces behind a community’s revitalization. They do so by providing essential elements of local quality of life: activities for residents of all ages, opportunities of new types of employment, and facilities that can retain and attract investment.

Add these to the inherent and existing benefits of small town life – the friendly, safe atmosphere, the natural beauty, the historic buildings, the convenience of a compact urban form – and the town now has advantages it may not have been aware of. It can now take these advantages, enhance them, market them, and begin to use them to broaden the local economic base and re-invigorate local community life. This is where a cultural plan is an essential step in realizing the community and economic benefits of a town’s cultural resources.

Small communities that successfully capitalize on their special cultural resources do several things:

- First, they inventory and assess the cultural resources in their community, both those in existence today and those that were important in the past but may now be underused or even forgotten.
- Second, they find out what local people value in local culture today, and what they valued in the past, to identify common and recurring themes that collectively define the town’s character.
- Third, they assess the organizational capacity of the municipality to develop, promote and sustain cultural resources, including the Town, the private sector, and the non-profit and volunteer sectors.
- Fourth, they develop strategies for cultural resource development that fit their town’s character and capacities.
- Fifth, they put together an action plan that has explicit goals and objectives from which are recommended actions that can be prioritized and that include projects that can begin immediately.
- Sixth, and most important, they actively pursue business and economic opportunities based on the foregoing steps and insist on seeing results.

The culture plan for Gananoque follows each of these steps.

## 5.2 EXAMPLES FROM OTHER PLACES

Several communities near Gananoque have been cited as good examples of successful regeneration led by cultural activities. Here is a short analysis of each place, with suggestions for ideas that are most applicable to Gananoque:

### PERTH

**Former state:** Perth began as an administrative centre for the Bathurst District and was founded by lawyers, civil servants and former military personnel. Even after Ottawa became capital, the townspeople maintained excellent links to the colonial and national government and developed both regional and national/international industries thanks to these ties. However, by the late 1960s, industry was declining, as was population, and the town risked becoming a backwater.



**Key initiatives:** The town's leaders – mostly the “old money” and professional class – recognized and publicized the town's heritage. They convinced Council to conserve rather than demolish downtown buildings and to develop its own marketing campaign based on this theme.

The Town was successful in attracting federal funds to revitalize the downtown – they were the pilot project for the Heritage Canada Main Street program – and established a strong BIA as well as gained some key building rehabilitations based on that program. They became a centre of excellence for building conservation and rehabilitation, initially thanks to local entrepreneurs, later by establishing the Canadian Centre for Heritage Trades and Technologies at the Perth campus of Algonquin College. They made full use of local “elders” who helped the community successfully manage the transition into a post-industrial economy.

**Current state:** Perth has a diversified economy, with a range of traditional and creative industries, a strong volunteer base drawn from the quarter of the population who are retirees, as well as many programs for children and youth, including a youth centre integrated within a mixed use complex created from a former shoe factory. The restored downtown is one of the most photographed in Canada and has retained its strong regional role as both a local supply centre and regional tourism attraction, complementing rather than competing with the “big-box development” on Highway 7. The town is well-administered and remains fiscally sound. Perth is a creative hub, with a local arts and crafts co-operative on the main street, well-established studio tours, musical events and festivals (especially the annual Stewart Park Festival, held in Code Park each July, with free admission and new bands each year). The local hospital, schools and community college are important parts of local life, as is the local newspaper. The community choir puts on a sold-out Broadway musical each year and the local high school drama program turns out award-winning productions and its students go on to professional careers in the arts.

**Applicable ideas:**

- Town “elders” and leading citizens should be regularly consulted to arbitrate controversies and be involved in key activities to strengthen the town.
- The BIA should be strong and pro-active, with excellent promotion and customer service, and high levels of property maintenance and sidewalk beautification.
- The Town should promote its heritage consistently.
- A high quality of life in Gananoque should include jobs, activities for all ages, and excellent recreational facilities.
- Partnerships with educational institutions can help revive and consolidate the local skilled trades.
- The local arts and cultural community should be highly valued, and established on sound financial foundations.

## MERRICKVILLE

**Former state:** The town flourished as an industrial and rural service centre on the Rideau Canal. Several local industrialists and a professional engineer became very wealthy and were community leaders. By the late 1960s, however, local industry had declined, the old mills on the river were being demolished, and the downtown was essentially derelict. Even so, the town had a lovely setting along the river/canal, a collection of excellent 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, a compact and intact downtown, and proximity to Ottawa.

**Key initiatives:** An entrepreneur with extensive tourism experience established a hotel/conference centre and galvanized the local business community. Retired civil servants from Ottawa established boutiques and bed-and-breakfast accommodations, attracting day visitors from the capital region.

**Current state:** The downtown has become a regional tourism destination; local pubs sponsor regular music and dinner theatre events and the downtown business association is strong. The Rideau Canal and the World Heritage Site designation give additional visitation and recognition.

### **Applicable ideas:**

- Although remote from a major centre, Gananoque could still attract day visitors from the Kingston region and from the US, as well as from the summer residents throughout the 1000 Islands region.
- Entrepreneurs adept at serving the changing tourism market should be encouraged.
- Heritage settings should be conserved, restored/rehabilitated and promoted consistently.
- Proximity to national/international cultural resources (1000 Islands, Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, St. Lawrence Islands National Park) should be promoted widely and used as a key component of economic and cultural revitalization.

## WESTPORT

**Former state:** The village was a local service centre and popular summer resort that slowly declined in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century so that, by the late 1960s, it was a backwater offering little more than basic services to summer visitors and rural residents in the surrounding region.

**Key initiatives:** A local clothing designer developed a widespread reputation and opened a shop on the main street, where she was joined by other retailers who catered to a regional market for gifts and clothing. The local hotel offered jazz nights featuring local and international artists, expanded to include a spa, and it and other accommodation businesses offered retreat/conference/wedding packages, catering to markets from Ottawa and Kingston. Old buildings were conserved and restored. The waterfront on Big Rideau Lake was upgraded to provide a marina and a very attractive alternative entrance to the downtown.

**Current state:** The downtown is crowded with shoppers throughout the summer and into the shoulder seasons and at Christmas. There is a range of tourist accommodation. Old mills have been converted to condominiums and new apartments and housing built for a retiree market.

**Applicable ideas:**

- Specialty and gift-related retail is successful if targeted to regional/summer visitor markets.
- A full service, attractive waterfront, directly linked to the downtown, is a significant attraction.
- Residential accommodation in converted mills can be successful, especially on waterfront.
- Cultural packages offered by local hotels/B&Bs address an important market segment

## PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY:

**Former state:** Prince Edward County was facing significant challenges related to economic restructuring. It had traditionally been dependent on agriculture and a limited number of small industries. A 2004 Economic Development Strategy concluded that the County would “never be competitive using traditional economic development strategies – chasing business and industry” due in part to its location away from main transportation routes.

**Key initiatives:** A Cultural Strategic Plan undertaken in 2005 determined that the County could “build a sustainable economic future through a strategy rooted in quality of place and creativity ... built around four pillars – culture, tourism, agriculture and commerce/industry – for focused development.

The plan concluded that one of the most serious barriers to achieving this was a limited vision or mindset about culture was and its importance in the region. The plan drew attention to the numerous cultural and tourism resources in the region, the markets available; it defined the characteristics of the County’s culture and established a multi-year agenda around Capacity Building for Culture and County Strategic Priorities. These priorities included:

- managing growth and development;
- extending and improving cultural places;
- cultural tourism – building on strengths and overcoming barriers
- extend the season
- strengthen tourism packaging
- strengthen marketing and promotion through collaboration and shared investment

**Current state:** Five years later the County is emerging as a leading region in developing a ‘new rural economy’ based on creativity and quality of place. It now boasts a growing tourism industry, and is home to thirty wineries, a number of renowned restaurants, the Taste Trail and the Arts Trail, several major festivals and special events and a popular destination for summer vacations, getaways, culinary tourism, cycling and scenic touring. New creative and ‘footloose’ businesses are seeking out the County as a place to set up due to its quality of life. There is a rebirth of traditional agriculturally-based businesses such as a brewery and cheese factory.

**Applicable ideas:**

- Build a collaboration among stakeholder organizations.
- Focusing on cultural products, including culinary, arts/artisans and agri-tourism.
- Use events as a mechanism to increase visitation and extend seasons.
- Promote through media relations and publicity.
- Enhance and promote quality of life as a means of attracting new businesses.

# 6 A Vision of Gananoque's Future

If the cultural plan proposed here is followed, it is possible that a visitor to Gananoque in future would see a town that has celebrated its unique character in many ways. It has revived its strengths in small industrial production using skilled trades and expanded this market niche to include knowledge-based activities. The town's role as the hub of the 1000 Islands is well known and has been enhanced thanks to infrastructure and programming to support year-round cultural and recreational activities. Town staff are supported by a strong BIA and by a range of volunteers, community agencies and service clubs. Partnerships between the municipality, non-profit organizations and local businesses are commonplace. A two-part tourism development strategy has been adopted, enhancing the town's previous strengths as a tourism hub for the region and adding an emphasis on Gananoque as an attraction in itself.

Stewardship of people and place is at the heart of its economic revival. New businesses are created fostering wellness in residents and visitors; services for youth and the elderly are a specialty. Key skills in environmental sustainability create jobs in natural resource conservation, harvesting, interpretation and research, using links to nearby colleges and universities. New residents are attracted by the high quality of life offered here, and former residents have reasons to return.

The look of the town has changed for the better. The downtown has been restored to its former high level of care and attractiveness. Heritage buildings have been restored and occupied by a mix of retail, office and residential tenants. The streets and sidewalks are clean and safe: parking is consolidated in rear lots accessed by attractive walkways. Former community gathering places have been rehabilitated and traditional events revived. Lowertown now has buildings containing housing along with shops, offices and cultural attractions. Parking for the boat line and other uses has been co-ordinated and consolidated in a combination of nearby surface lots, parking structures and satellite lots that are linked by shuttle services to the waterfront and downtown. Abandoned factories are alive again with new small businesses. Local artists and musicians have studio space and the Thousand Islands Playhouse has consolidated its role as the performing arts centre for the region. The Arthur Child Centre now houses the town museum and is complemented by the new Antique Boat Museum. Boating activities of all kinds flourish along a continuous sequence of waterfront parks and beaches, as envisioned in the Lowertown Master Plan. Overall, the town has been reunited with its historical roots as an entrepreneurial centre on the river, a place where quality of life and creativity are valued.

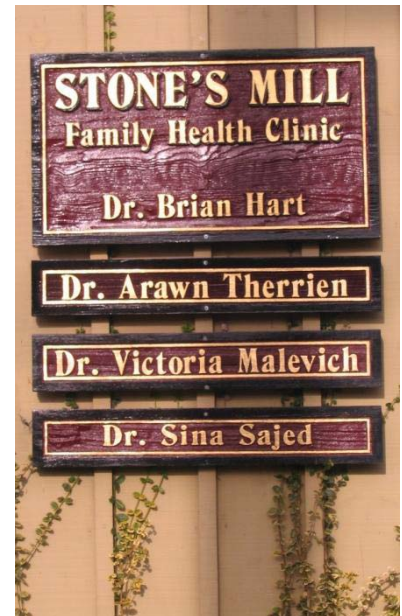


FIGURE 9: NEW BUSINESS IN LOWERTOWN



# 7 Development Goals and Objectives

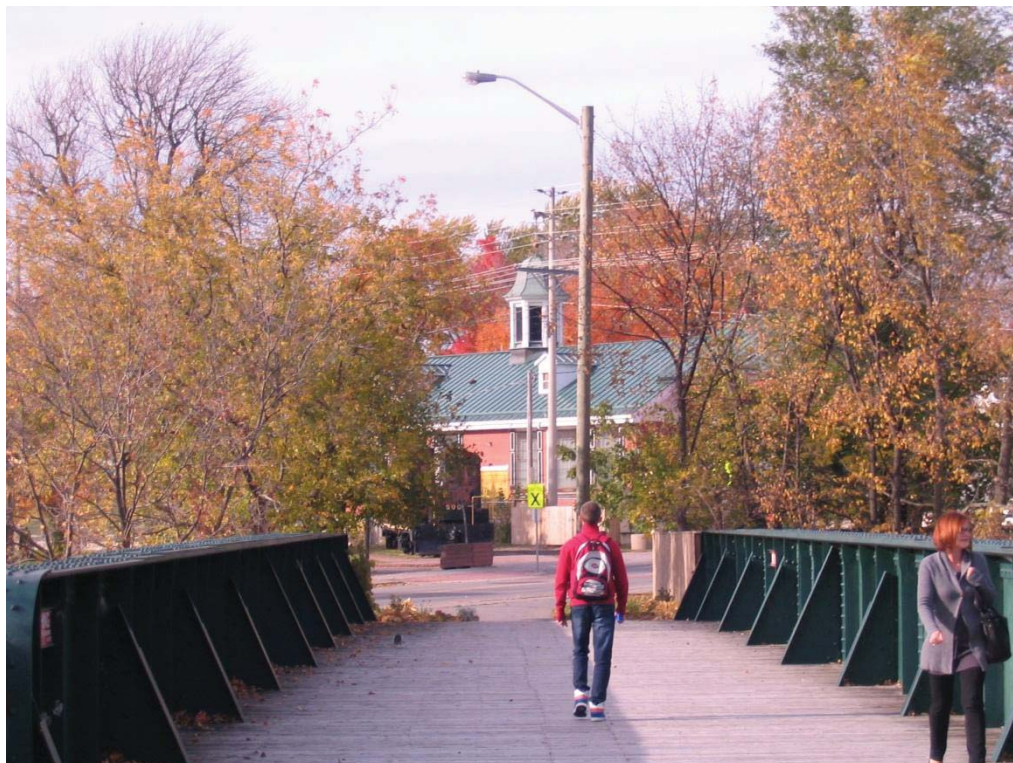


FIGURE 10: PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE FROM LOWERTOWN TO DOWNTOWN

## 7.1 DOWNTOWN

**Goal:** To apply concentrated revitalization efforts to the core three blocks of the downtown, between William Street and Town Hall Park.

### **Objective 1:** Fill empty store windows with temporary displays

**Action 1.1.** Display local art and historical material in empty shopfronts, based on the themes outlined in this plan. Begin with willing and enthusiastic storeowners and rotate and refresh the displays regularly. Treat the displays as promotion for the cultural plan objectives and as temporary placeholders, pending lease-up of the retail space.

**Priority:** Short term

**Shared Responsibility:** Town staff, in consultation with local artists, the Gananoque Historical Society, and property owners.

## **Objective 2: Create a functional and dynamic BIA**

**Action 2.1.** Encourage new entrepreneurs to create a core group of committed business owners who share a vision for the revitalization of the downtown. Create capital projects based on the objectives and action plan steps recommended in this plan. Begin joint marketing and promotional activities.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Business owners, with assistance from Town staff, mentorship from retired businesspeople in local service groups, and with the Chamber of Commerce and the accommodation partners.

## **Objective 3: Spruce up the streets and sidewalks**

**Action 3.1.** Using some of the funds available from the OMAFRA grant, clean and repair sidewalks. Enhance and co-ordinate seasonal decorations. Ensure ongoing maintenance, especially collection of litter.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, seasonal staff

**Action 3.2.** Over time, consider implementing some or all of the Basterfield comprehensive streetscape plan that includes new streetlighting, signage, planting and parking components. Base the final design on the information gathered in the inventory of heritage resources, and on the vision for the town, as recommended in this plan.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town, BIA, consultant landscape architects

## **Objective 4: Inventory and evaluate buildings and cultural landscapes**

**Action 4.1.** Using a template based on that developed by the City of Kingston, create an inventory and statement of heritage significance for each building within the downtown core, concentrating on the section along King Street between the Gananoque River and William Street. Consider designating under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* buildings and cultural landscapes of high significance and add all other properties of interest to the Town Heritage Register. Based on the information in this inventory, develop interpretive materials, such as plaques. Use this information to upgrade existing self-guided and guided walking tours, and to create visitor and school guidebooks.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff overseeing summer students, BIA



### **Objective 5: Fix up shopfronts**

**Action 5.1.** Using the information gathered in the inventory and evaluation, and based on conservation best practices, create a set of design guidelines for renovation work. Provide the guidelines in an easily understood and accessible format, using the plans and designs prepared by Commonwealth as a basis. Use funds from the existing facade grant program and identify willing and enthusiastic storeowners for pilot projects. For the rest, consider providing incentives, such as tax holidays, information workshops, loans, and other forms of available grant aid.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, heritage architectural consultants, in consultation with the BIA and property owners.

### **Objective 6: Improve customer service**

**Action 6.1.** Sponsor workshops for business owners and their staff to learn how to provide high quality customer service, in order to better compete with out of town competition and meet the needs of the changing retail and tourism marketplace. Monitor customer satisfaction and provide feedback to business owners. Establish quality standards for customer service, for adoption by all downtown businesses.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Provincial agencies, Town staff, BIA, accommodation partners

### **Objective 7: Provide more community events**

**Action 7.1:** Support and revive traditional local activities, in winter outdoor skating and tobogganing, and in the warmer months fairs, parades, festivals, dances as well as musical performances and river-based competitions and religious services. Make as many of these as possible free of charge and situate them in public places such as Town Park. Sponsor local musicians to perform regularly in outdoor venues. Hire an events co-ordinator to work with Town staff and local service groups and community organizations.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town, BIA, service groups

### **Objective 8: Revitalize former public outdoor spaces**

**Action 8.1.** Conduct an archaeological investigation of the former blockhouse site, implementing the proposal received by the Town for this work. Hire a licensed archaeologist to conduct a Stage 1 and 2 archaeological assessment to determine the likely location of the former War of 1812 fortification.

Assuming that the assessment concludes that some remains are likely to be intact, conduct a Stage 3 and 4 assessment to determine the scope and extent of the remains. Consider sponsoring a public archaeology program to assist the archaeologists in Stage 3 and 4 excavation of the remains. Members of the public are invited to participate, as paying adult volunteers or members of school groups, supervised by the licensed archaeologist. Excavated remains are to be stabilized and interpreted at surface and any recovered artifacts are to be removed to a professional curatorial facility for future research, followed by display, if possible, in the Arthur Child Centre.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, consulting archaeologists

**Action 8.2.** In concert with the excavation of the blockhouse site, revitalize the former Market Square. As part of a master plan for the site, consider reconstructing the viewing tower overlooking Lowertown and the waterfront and creating views by selective thinning and removal of trees along the edge of the slope. Create a central paved space that can function as a market/events space and incorporate the blockhouse ruins. Improve pedestrian access to the Square from King Street by upgrading the existing passageways between main street buildings by adding paving, signage, and lighting.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, consultant landscape architects/architects, in consultation with private landowners

**Action 8.3.** Over the longer term, consider reviving the former International Square, on King Street where it splits west of the Gananoque River bridge, by encouraging compatible redevelopment of the sites formerly occupied by historic buildings. Consider replanting the corridor of street trees along King Street leading to the bridge. Redesign the streetscape, in concert with the traffic pattern, to highlight the special quality of this gateway.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, urban design consultants

### **Objective 9: Link the waterfront to the downtown**

**Action 9.1.** In concert with initiatives to redevelop Lowertown, provide directional and interpretive signage that encourages pedestrians to walk to and from King Street to the waterfront.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, property owners

## 7.2 LOWERTOWN

**Goal: Make Lowertown a vibrant, mixed use district with significant cultural attractions.**

**Objective 1. Review the Lowertown Plan and other past proposals for this area of town to identify opportunities for viable mixed use development**

**Action 1.1** Revisit this earlier plan in the context of current conditions and the new opportunities addressed in this report. Particular attention will need to be given to the Gananoque Boat Line's operational and parking needs.

*Priority:* Medium term, unless Action 1.3 proceeds in the short term, in which case this review will need to happen concurrently with 1.3

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, GBL, Arthur Child Centre

**Action 1.2** Review the Sustainability Centre Plan for viable implementation opportunities. This proposed initiative has not been able to proceed to date due to capital investment requirements that have not been resolved. It should be revisited in the context of other opportunities for the area and how its operational self-sustainability might be enhanced.

*Priority:* Medium term, in conjunction with Action 1.1

*Shared Responsibility:* FABR, Parks Canada, Town staff

**Action 1.3** Review earlier proposals for an Antique Boat Museum. This project was not able to proceed earlier, however, there is still interest among its sponsors in seeing it happen in Gananoque or elsewhere in the 1000 Islands region. Like the previous two projects, its potential for Gananoque should be revisited in the context of the strategies identified in this report.

*Priority:* Short term, given the current active process the ABM group are pursuing with respect to this project.

*Shared Responsibility:* 1000 Islands Antique Boat Museum Trust, Town staff, Arthur Child Centre

**Action 1.4** Review the role of the Heritage Village and Arthur Child Centre. This facility is central to Lowertown. Its potential synergies with the other possible Lowertown initiatives as well as opportunities for its own enhancements would be worthy of investigation.

*Priority:* Longer term, unless in conjunction with Action 1.3

*Shared Responsibility:* Heritage Village Board, Town staff, Arthur Child Centre staff

**Action 1.5** Make Lowertown inviting to residents. This will have to be pursued as part of a new Lowertown development plan.

*Priority:* Medium term, in conjunction with Action 1.1

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, property owners

**Action 1.6** Create linkages to downtown. (See earlier recommendation Downtown Objective 9, Action 9.1)

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, property owners

## 7.3 CULTURAL AND TOURISM HUB OF THE 1000 ISLANDS

**Goal: Make Gananoque the hub for cultural activity in the 1000 Islands – the arts, including performing arts – along with the area’s recreational and tourism experiences.**

**Objective 1: Provide venues throughout Lowertown and downtown for artistic and cultural activities**

**Action 1.1** There are a number of empty or underutilized venues in town that could potentially be used for arts and cultural programming of one kind or another, including revenue generating activities.

*Priority:* Short/Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, BIA, property owners

**Objective 2: Enhance and promote the trail network within town**

**Action 2.1** Install directional signs for pedestrians, along with interpretive panels at special interest locations and provide an interpretive map to visitors. Make sure that there is directional signage and a town map installed at key waterfront locations, such as the marina.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber

**Objective 3: Support the role of the Thousand Islands Playhouse as the performing arts hub of the 1000 Islands**

**Action 3.1** Provide an augmented level of marketing and other support to the Playhouse to generate more attendance from local, regional and visitor markets.

*Priority:* Short/Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, TIAP, TIPH

**Objective 4: Leverage the membership of the Gananoque Historical Society for support of local philanthropic activities**

**Action 4.1** Establish a community fundraising effort targeting members of the society as well as 1000 Islands and local residents.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Heritage Centre Board

**Objective 5: Provide year-round cultural and sports events along with seasonal boating events**

**Action 5.1** Schedule, organize and promote community events on a year-round basis to attract visitors in all seasons.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, TIAP, BIA, service clubs

**Action 5.2** Offer special event facilitation and hosting services to yacht clubs and other boating organizations (for non-peak periods). Primary target markets would be Ontario, Quebec and New York.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, municipal marina staff, other marinas, Chamber, Parks Canada

**Action 5.3** Organize facilitation services to assist special interest visitor groups with arranging logistical support for their activities. This could include equipment rentals, outfitter and guide services, parking areas, as well as meetings and conferences. Examples would include fishermen, cyclists, and those with similar recreational interests.

*Priority:* Short/Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, local marinas and other businesses

## 7.4 TOURISM HUB FOR THE ENTIRE REGION

**Goal: Make Gananoque the Headquarters for regional recreation and tourism experiences.**

**Objective 1: Foster the town's role as a regional hub for walking/biking trails and road-based touring in Leeds and the 1000 Islands and the rest of the region**

**Action 1.1** Develop and promote suggested itineraries and packages for walking, driving and cycling tours in the township. Develop specific itineraries and packages for touring in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, township, packaging partners

**Objective 2: Foster the town's role as a hub for water-based activities in Leeds and the 1000 Islands – the St. Lawrence and Gananoque rivers, as well as the lakes and streams in the township generally**

**Action 2.1** Develop and promote water-based touring and outdoor adventure itineraries and packages in Gananoque's two rivers and across the township. The lakes and waterways in the township to the north of Gananoque offer a diverse mix of water-based touring trips, by canoe or kayak. Gananoque is a logical base location and service centre for these activities.

*Priority:* Medium/Long term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, township, Parks Canada, local outfitters and adventure operators

**Action 2.2** Establish and facilitate a program/packages for pre-formed groups of island picnics, dinners and events on nearby national park islands.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Chamber, Parks Canada, local water taxi operator

**Objective 3: Promote and provide infrastructure to support the town as the hub of the 1000 Islands**

**Action 3.1** Establish a coordinated effort among the tourism stakeholders in Gananoque to provide a comprehensive range of services in support of objectives 1 and 2 above. This would involve the following components:

- Suggested itineraries
- Packages involving mixes of relevant services; information, accommodations, outfitting and guiding services, shuttle services where necessary, etc.
- Interpretive collateral and website
- Marketing
- FAM tours for tour operators and adventure operators serving the region
- A Chamber of Commerce empowered to act as a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)
- An on-line trip planning and booking system

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, township, municipal marina and other marinas, Chamber, TIAP, Parks Canada

## 7.5 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**Goal: Examine all opportunities for establishing and enhancing creative industries in Gananoque, based on the town's unique character and assets.**

**Objective 1: Make the town attractive to entrepreneurs**

**Action 1.1** Re-establish a proactive effort to grow existing Gananoque businesses and attract new ones. This will involve information and facilitation services to support the efforts of entrepreneurs.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, property owners

**Action 1.2** Identify and research prospective candidates for growth and new development based on the findings and recommendations in this report.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber

**Action 1.3** Engage the community in the strategy for creative industry development through public communications, information sessions, public lectures and presentations.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, service clubs, community colleges/universities

### ***Objective 2: Establish an incubator for small enterprises***

**Action 2.1** Work with the 1000 Islands Community Futures Development Corporation on establishing and funding a shared facility and support program for business start-ups in Gananoque. Especially consider opportunities presented by renovating abandoned or underused industrial buildings in Lowertown.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, 1000 Islands CFDC

### ***Objective 3: Promote development of businesses based on wellness, environmental stewardship and local food production***

**Action 3.1** Pursue development opportunities in these three sectors as part of the town's economic development effort, building on the existing assets in Gananoque. Ideally this would be done in partnership with the township.

*Priority:* Longer term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, township, Chamber

### ***Objective 4: Establish a mentorship program for small businesses***

**Action 4.1** Establish and coordinated a program that engages retired business people living in the community and township to provide coaching and mentoring services to existing and new businesses in the community.

*Priority:* Medium term

*Shared Responsibility:* Town staff, Chamber, service clubs, GSS



**Objective 5: Assist local businesses in embracing new technologies and business practices that can assist their viability and growth.**

**Action 5.1** Host business workshops on modern marketing methods, such as web-based marketing tools, online booking, social media, and customer loyalty. Consider initiating an excellence awards program for local businesses. Hire a facilitator to manage these tasks on behalf of the partners.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Chamber, OMAFRA, 1000 Islands CFDC

**Action 5.2** Host workshops for management of accommodations , retailers and attractions on the how-to's of revenue management and other modern business tools as a means of growing shoulder and off-season business and enhancing profitability in all seasons. Hire a facilitator to plan and manage the workshops.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Chamber, BIA

**Action 5.3** Host workshops on special events, packaging, and other methods of adding value and enhancing profitability of businesses. Hire a facilitator to plan and manage the workshop.

*Priority:* Medium/Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* Chamber, 1000 Islands CFDC

**Action 5.4** Encourage retail and other businesses to extend their hours and seasons of operation to meet new seasonal demand patterns.

*Priority:* Short term

*Shared Responsibility:* BIA, Chamber



# 8 Putting the Plan into Practice



**FIGURE 11: KING AND STONE STREET, CA. 1920, MURAL PAINTED BY PIERRE HARDY (GANANOQUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER)**

## 8.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

### 8.1.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

Putting in place the capacity necessary for moving the Cultural Plan into action is a vital prerequisite. It requires having the right community organizations with the appropriate mandates, people and resources in place to get things done. At present, the capacity to achieve the desired results with the cultural plan is simply not there; the few community organizations in place have very limited resources to work with, and mandates are not clearly defined. They also need to be better organized, with up-to-date business methods in hand.

The following is a summary of the current capacities of the various partners referred to in the action plan, with recommendations for their enhancement into fully functional entities capable of making the recommendations of the Cultural Plan manifest.

## THE TOWN

- Has a small staff and limited financial resources.
- With a shrinking tax base, the Town faces a difficult and ongoing challenge in sustaining basic municipal services.
- Has very little money or staff resources to do much.
- Has traditionally been cautious, not able to offer strong leadership.

***The municipality needs to augment its economic development role and effort, focused on helping local businesses grow and attracting new businesses in the creative economy.***

## THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Has a directly relevant mandate in supporting its members and promoting them to target markets.
- Has only a skeleton staff.
- Has a small budget.
- Offers a modest scope of marketing activities.

***With more funding, it could play a considerably enhanced role in marketing its members as well as the community as a tourism destination.***

## BIA

- Has a legislated revenue model based on assessments to its members.
- Is generally a hidebound group this is not very aggressive or entrepreneurial.
- Experiences conflict between new and old owners/managers.

***Perhaps it can be re-engineered as an entrepreneurial group if membership parameters were to be changed, requiring some evident engagement in quality offerings, good customer service and marketing.***

## TIAP

- Has the major tourism players as members.
- Has about \$300,000 to work with annually (that will be lost in 2 years when the DMF is ended; it is unclear whether they will be able to continue beyond that time).
- Their mandate is limited to “bums in seats, heads in beds” for their members.
- The members recognize the important synergies between their welfare and that of the community as a whole.

***They potentially could play a broader role in areas that impact tourism, such as King Street retail, through working with a rejuvenated BIA.***

## THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY GENERALLY

***The business community as a whole needs to embrace modern methods of pricing, marketing and customer service in order to remain competitive and to grow.***

## SERVICE CLUBS

- Have traditionally been strong in providing community services.
- Their scope is limited by small numbers.
- They have not traditionally combined efforts with other service clubs.

***With the inherent base of managerial and business talent they possess, these clubs could play an important role in mentoring local entrepreneurs and promoting local business and cultural activity.***

## ARTHUR CHILD CENTRE AND ITS BOARD

- Faces a continuing challenge to self-fund its operations.

***The Centre could play a broadened leadership role in heritage initiatives***

Beyond the capacities and potentials of existing town organizations, there are other groups whose roles in improving economic and community conditions in Gananoque could be substantially enhanced if these groups were brought to the table by the Town and its partners. The key groups are listed below.

## FUTURE MARKETING PARTNERS

- Regional Tourism Organization # 9
- 1000 Islands International Tourism Council
- Tourism stakeholders in Leeds and the Thousand Islands
- Rideau Heritage Route
- Parks Canada
- St. Lawrence Parks Commission

## POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS

- OMAFRA
- CFDC
- FEDDEV

## 8.1.2 CURRENT PLANNING AND FUNDING TOOLS

Within the current policy framework the Town possesses, there are a number of tools that offer some opportunities for municipal action to implement the Cultural Plan. These include the Official Plan and the related aspects of the Provincial *Planning Act*.

### **The Town of Gananoque Official Plan, 2009**

The development of land within the Town of Gananoque is guided by the Official Plan which establishes land use policy districts across the entire municipality and includes policy directions to achieve the desired land development pattern. The Official Plan includes an overarching vision statement which is intended to guide the long-term growth and development of the Town. The vision section states:

*“Our Vision is to preserve and enhance the Town’s unique “small town” heritage, preserve our historic and environmental character, and provide a high quality of life through a sustainable development pattern.”*

In order to achieve this vision the Official Plan includes guiding principles which have been developed in consultation with the community. As stated in the Official Plan document, the following principles are intended to form the foundation of the policy directions established within the Official Plan:

1. We will be dedicated to maintaining and improving Lowertown through the long term implementation of the Lowertown Master Plan.
2. The waterfront will be maintained and improved as a community focal point and will be enhanced through balanced, sustainable public and private development.
3. We are committed to revitalizing our downtown commercial district as a mixed use pedestrian friendly area while respecting the area’s architectural heritage.
4. We are committed to preserving and enhancing the quality of our residential neighborhoods through appropriate housing types, densities and transitions from adjoining land uses.
5. We are committed to increasing the number and diversity of employment opportunities in the Town of Gananoque by promoting the rehabilitation of industrial properties and the introduction of a mixed use approach in our employment areas.
6. We will plan for a connected system of greenways and parks facilities to serve residents and visitors.
7. We are committed to increasing the diversity of arts, cultural and recreational opportunities.
8. We will protect our natural environment.
9. We will ensure public involvement in the planning process to ensure the protection of everyone’s property rights.

Fostering the cultural development of the community is an underlying theme within the principles of the Official Plan which include development of Lowertown and the waterfront area; downtown revitalization; neighbourhood development; increasing employment opportunities; the further development of the park system; promoting creative arts, cultural, and recreational opportunities; and protecting the natural environment. All of these themes of the Official Plan contribute to establishing a unique identity for Gananoque and the continued development of the Town's cultural identity.

The Official Plan includes special recognition of the Lowertown district as an area of the Town unique in its built history and waterfront location. As a former industrial area of the Town, the Official Plan envisions the redevelopment of the public and privately owned properties to create a mixed-use heritage district with waterfront park space. As a heritage district, the area would not only provide an attraction for tourists but also a hub for cultural events within Gananoque. The Official Plan permits a range of uses to achieve this vision including low, medium, and high density residential development; tourism commercial uses; service commercial uses; arts and cultural uses; office commercial uses; and home based employment. Implementation of this vision began with the development of the Lowertown Master Plan in 2005. The Master Plan includes detailed design consideration of redevelopment opportunities, streetscaping, parkland development, protection of natural features, pedestrian and traffic circulation among other features that contribute to the consolidation of the area into a distinct district. Recent initiatives such as the planning for a proposed Sustainability Centre, and the design and funding of a waterfront park as part of the War of 1812 bicentennial, are outcomes of this Master Plan.

The Official Plan includes broader Town-wide policies to protect the built heritage of Gananoque which contributes to the identity and cultural development of the community. The Plan states the Town will maintain a database of heritage properties and archaeological resources and use the *Ontario Heritage Act* to designate and conserve properties with heritage value. The Plan states development adjacent to heritage properties may be permitted provided the heritage value of the property is not compromised. The implementation of the heritage objectives of the Official Plan has included the creation of a Municipal Heritage Committee in 2007. The Official Plan indicates the Town will continue to use available planning tools to ensure the heritage characteristics of the community are preserved and enhanced where possible.

### **Town of Gananoque Development Permit System (under appeal), 2010**

In order to implement the policy directions established within the Official Plan, the Town has recently adopted a Development Permit By-Law. The By-Law replaces the previous Zoning By-Law and regulates the development of land and aspects of urban design. It should be noted that, at the time of writing, the Development Permit By-Law is under appeal. Until the appeal has been resolved, the previous zoning by-law is in effect.

In terms of cultural and heritage development, the Development Permit By-Law goes beyond the traditional zoning regulations and includes design guidelines to ensure a consistent approach to development and design. Similar to the Official Plan, the Development Permit By-Law divides the Town into multiple designations consistent in use and design characteristics. Within each designation, development regulations including minimum lot sizes, permitted uses and yard setbacks, among other provisions, control how development will occur. Each designation includes design guidelines to ensure future development is consistent with the existing character of the area and in concert with policy directions within the Official Plan.

The By-Law designations all include provisions and design guidelines that seek to create functional and aesthetically appealing urban environments which ultimately contribute to the development of the overall community's identity and culture. Design elements such as façade treatments, building orientation, landscaping, and parking arrangements are addressed within each designation. The By-Law promotes further heritage preservation by including special recognition of the Lowertown area and the traditional downtown commercial area as having unique heritage built form and architectural detail. The design guidelines for these designation areas promote building forms and design treatments including cladding and heritage colours that contribute to the existing heritage characteristics of the area. A fundamental approach to heritage preservation within these designation areas is the maintenance of existing heritage buildings and encouraging new development which is complementary in appearance and function.

### **Community Improvement Planning**

Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) are one of the many sustainable community planning tools found in the *Planning Act*. They can help communities and municipalities address challenges that prevent optimization of areas that are currently underutilized. This tool provides a means of planning and financing development activities that effectively assist in use, reuse and restoring lands, buildings and infrastructure.



A CIP is a document that identifies an area or areas of a municipality where, in the opinion of a Municipal Council, improvement is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason (Section 28 (1) of the Planning Act). For a municipality to have the ability to approve a CIP, it must have policies in its Official Plan that set out where, what, and how these plans should be used.

A CIP is a way to allow municipalities to provide incentives in the form of financial assistance to property owners in defined areas to overcome shortfalls and barriers to improvement of these areas. A CIP also allows a municipality to acquire, rehabilitate and dispose of land and to provide grants and loans to owners and tenants, as well as to undertake infrastructure and public space improvements. CIPs are not a new tool and have been proven as an effective option for encouraging change and improvement using a focused approach which allows a municipality to be a partner with private sector property owners.

Gananoque understands the benefits of a Community Improvement Plan as demonstrated through the King Street Historic Commercial Area CIP. However there is room to both expand the existing CIP and to initiate a plan for the Lowertown area. As an example, financial incentives could be created to promote the redevelopment of the many brownfields in Lowertown while broader programs could be developed to encourage improving the efficiency of buildings and the initiation of renewable energy projects. CIPs and the programs within them would go hand in hand with the Development Permit System (DPS) which provides design criteria in particular areas throughout the town which is particularly important to the more historical areas. While the DPS does provide certain controls, overall the DPS is designed to be more flexible than a traditional zoning by-law.

### **Community Improvement Policy Direction**

The Town of Gananoque Official Plan designates the entire municipality as a Community Improvement Area. Designating the entire town provides the Town with the greatest authority to assist in the redevelopment of key properties and areas. The policies of the Official Plan also offer a great amount of flexibility in terms of what a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) can do for Gananoque and policies address everything from traditional façade improvement to brownfield redevelopment. Gananoque's community improvement objectives include the preservation of heritage buildings along with the maintenance of the existing building stock.

### King St. CIP

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) has been developed for the downtown strip known as the King Street Historic Commercial Area and has been in place for over five years. This CIP covers a focused area located generally on either side of King St. from Charles St. to the Gananoque River then on the south side of King St. from the Gananoque River to Main Street. This plan primarily addresses façade improvement with the desire to ensure the downtown remains a viable economic centre.

### Lowertown

The Official Plan considers the Lowertown Policy Area as a high priority Community Improvement Project Area. As a former industrial hub that now operates as the gateway to the Thousand Islands, there are many unique opportunities and challenges that will have to be faced when considering redevelopment of the area. Many of the steps have already been completed to initiate a CIP for this area. The Lowertown Study is an excellent resource and guide when considering improvements to this area. It is also our understanding that a draft Community Improvement Plan has been prepared specifically for Lowertown: this plan needs to be reviewed and, if still relevant, acted upon.

### Recommendations

The King Street CIP should be amended to include a historical improvement program (short term). This program would generally fall under façade improvement with a twist that requires special attention to the historical attributes of the buildings. Such a program would augment the Town's existing façade grant program.

The King St. CIP does not discuss any municipally initiated programs related to community improvement such as signage or streetscape improvements. Amending the King Street CIP to include a series of municipally initiated programs would add to the cultural experience of the Town. In particular, a plan to redevelop Market Square should be considered (medium term).

The Lower Town CIP should be developed (medium term). Throughout the policy documents and public consultation process the need to revitalize Lowertown is apparent. Municipally initiated programs should focus on providing better access to the water and providing better linkages between downtown and Lowertown (i.e. signage for tourist and improved pedestrian access). Overall financial incentive programs to stimulate private investment will need to consider brownfield development and encourage mixed use development focusing on the cultural attractions.

## 8.2 NEXT STEPS

### 8.2.1 SHORT TERM

The foregoing action plan suggests both priority projects and the partnerships that have the best chance of completing those projects. For the many different public and private sector groups shown in each action plan step, there will be choices involved as to whether these are suitable projects for their mandates and capabilities. But the choices will also be made based on assessment of the projects that each potential partner wants to make their own – to champion – and thus commit the necessary energy and creativity to achieve success. In this way, each partner has a chance to be a hero by completing a specific project in the Cultural Plan.

What is required immediately are projects that are simple to accomplish, have broad public support, and can be completed quickly. In other words, the way to give the Culture Plan a high profile and encourage public acceptance is to be able to “declare success often” by finishing several small projects in a short time period. Suitable projects include those listed in the previous section as being “short term”: they are selected on the basis of their ability to be implemented successfully and soon.

Each of these projects (e.g. storefront displays, facade revitalization, events in Town Park, and an archaeological dig) provide immediate results and support development of both the community and tourism aspects of the Cultural Plan. Each requires perhaps one willing and enthusiastic partner to join with the Town in putting the project in place. In several cases, funds already exist and, in the case of the archaeological dig, War of 1812 bicentennial funds as well as paid admissions to the dig will be options. Many of them can include participation by schoolchildren and the general public. A focus on the downtown also produces results in the part of town most frequented by all age groups of local residents.

### 8.2.2 MEDIUM TERM

Projects listed as “medium term” require preparation of varying kinds. Organizational capacity must be increased in order for the BIA, Chamber and Town to take on new responsibilities and the projects that such capabilities make possible. Workshops providing skills upgrades to local businesses will be a necessary step towards improving their customer service as well as their financial viability.

For downtown projects, wise spending of the remaining OMAFRA funds will produce tangible results in the near term. The facade grant program may get new momentum if the first year’s pilot project is a success. Improvements to private properties in the downtown should begin with the most capable, willing and enthusiastic owners and work outward from there.

The path of least resistance is usually the best course, with the few recalcitrants eventually brought to the program through personal persuasion and peer pressure. Inventory and evaluation of the building stock is an ongoing project that can be carried on by summer students and volunteers. In the longer term, and as public funds become available, further improvements to the public realm become possible, such as the downtown streetscape revitalization and the rejuvenation of Market Square.

For Lowertown, the existing studies and proposals therein should be re-examined in the light of the findings and recommendations of the Cultural Plan. No project should proceed that cannot demonstrate a viable business plan. Revitalization efforts should be concentrated on finding financially feasible uses for the vacant industrial buildings, with an emphasis on creating start-up opportunities for local entrepreneurs. In several instances, tenants that provide artistic and cultural activities may be the initial occupants, creating value and a presence that will encourage other economic activity there. Such tenants should also have a permanent role in Lowertown's revitalization, reinforcing existing cultural attractions such as the 1000 Islands Playhouse and making the area attractive to local residents and visitors alike.

In order to enhance the town's role as a regional hub and service centre, the Town should facilitate the enhancement of the Arthur Child Centre to include a town museum. It should also make every effort to ensure that visitors know what is available in town by installing directional and interpretive signage, especially at the waterfront and marina, to help link Lowertown and downtown by encouraging pedestrian and vehicular traffic between the two. Work with the local and regional tourism partners can also proceed to promote events, trails and itineraries for both land and water-based activities.

### 8.2.3 LONGER TERM

Much of the activity in the "longer term" category involves capacity building for all partners mentioned here. The Town needs to have staff capable of handling the increased workload entailed by enhanced community facilities and by the economic development recommendations in the Cultural Plan. Council will need to monitor the impact of the initial projects and, when in partnerships to implement some of the larger initiatives, fine tune their actions to ensure greatest effect for their limited resources. Milestones to be achieved need to be established and schedules for improvement actions framed.

Fostering entrepreneurial activity will take time and will be manifest in many small initiatives at first. What everyone must do is be patient. Diversification of local cultural and community development activity will, over time, create a sufficiently compelling local quality of life to attract economic activity that can employ a broad range of local workers, and not only those in the core elements of the creative economy. As noted in most of the studies of local economic development opportunities commissioned in the last five years, the traditional factories may not

return, but some similar manufacturing can be created if it is based upon the inherent strengths of the community in water-based and tourism-related activities. Playing to the town's strengths will ultimately provide the competitive edge required to establish Gananoque as both a regional service centre and a centre for specialist enterprises, founded on a small town lifestyle of high quality.

In summary, the role of cultural planning in enhancing the town's future is to identify what is special about Gananoque and use these characteristics to identify development opportunities. It is a traditional role of artists to anticipate the future, to sense new opportunities and to visualize them in various ways. Couple this visionary ability with Gananoque's own tradition of entrepreneurship and craft industry and there can be a unique partnership of cultural and economic development, all focused on those places, values and activities that set the town apart. In this way, culture becomes a bridge to a diversified economy and an improved local quality of life. The cultural plan pulls together the findings of previous studies and recommends the best ways for the town to determine its own future.



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# Appendix A: References

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- Millier Dickinson Blais (September 17, 2007) *1000 Islands Region Workforce Development Board, Community Economic Development Initiative: Bringing Jobs to Gananoque and Township*.
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# Appendix B: Acknowledgements

## GANANOQUE CULTURAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE:

- Diane Kirkby – GSS Co-op student coordinator
- Brett Christopher – Marketing Director – Playhouse
- Harold Hess – Principal / Linklater public School
- Jennifer Butchart – Dreams in Motion
- Ed Lowans – Retired consultant – BSC steering committee
- Ashley Rowans – FABR and FABR arts
- Jim Garrah ( council representative )
- Linda Mainse – Arthur Child Heritage Museum
- Shannon Yates – Axle Steel company
- Kathrine Christensen – TIAP
- Bonnie Ruddock – Chamber
- Ron Fioole – BIA treasurer
- Peter Meyers – board member of the Arthur Child / Economic consultant
- 2 Students GSS Student Council – Tanya Young and Esther Chino

Pam Staples, Economic/Tourism Coordinator for the Town of Gananoque, was project manager. The consulting team consisted of Carl Bray, Bray Heritage, lead consultant, Gordon Phillips, Economic Planning Group, and Margo Watson, FoTenn Consultants Inc. Stephen Burnett of Burnett Thorne Cultural Tourism was the study advisor. Rounding out the consulting team were Sue Mathieu for Economic Planning Group, Michael Keane and John Henderson for FoTenn, and Alissa Golden for Bray Heritage.

The consulting team also wishes to thank the principal, staff and students of Gananoque Secondary School for organizing and hosting both the student and public workshops for this study.



# Appendix C: Consultations

## CARL BRAY INTERVIEWS/SITE VISITS:

- Town site visit (14 Sept.)
- Pam Staples (15 Sept.) start up meeting
- Telephone interviews (14 Oct.)
  - Sandra Wright (WDB)
  - John Nalon (Historical Society)
  - Doug Bickerton (history/Rotary)
- Town guided tour (Oct. 19)
- Personal interviews (2 Nov.)
  - Linda Davis (local merchant)
  - John McLeod (trails committee)
  - Linda Mainse (Arthur Child Centre)
  - Scott Ewart (Kayaking business)
  - (the Socialist Pig folks)
- Personal interview (10 Nov.)
  - Chris Cunningham (resident)
- Personal interview (12 Nov.)
  - Kathryn Mackay (TIPH)
  - Greg Wanless (TIPH)
- Special Meeting (Dec. 22)
  - Members of the new Council
  - Members of the steering committee
  - Representatives of several interest groups

## TEAM-FACILITATED WORKSHOPS:

- High School class workshop (15 Nov.) Grades 10/12 combined (civics, careers, Gr. 12 biology)
- Public workshop #1 (15 Nov.)

## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- Steering committee #1 (4 Oct.)
- Steering committee #2 (22 Oct.)
- Steering committee meeting #3 (14 Dec.)

## CONSULTING TEAM MEETINGS:

- Consulting team meeting (15 Nov.)
- Consulting team meeting (30 November)

## GORD PHILLIPS INTERVIEWS/SITE VISITS:

- Ron Fioole, Woodchuck Gallery
- Don Matthews, Sleepy Hollow B&B
- Katherine Christensen, TIAP
- Bonnie Ruddock, Chamber
- Joy Cuthbert, former Chamber Chair
- Dave Seal, Glen House Resort
- Cliff Edwards, MacNeil's Landing Restaurant, TIAP
- Linda Mainse, Heritage Village
- Jeff Brown, Brown Hospitality Corp.
- Chris McCarney and William Hayes, Gananoque Boat Line
- Sandra Wright, 1000 Islands Workforce Development Board

## UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS (FOR INTERVIEWS):

- Raj Mann, Best Western Country Squire Resort
- Karen Cross, OLG casino
- Heather Howard, Duty Free shop and Gananoque seniors residence
- Terry Serason, This, That and Everything
- Chris Green, Green Acres Golf