

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF

G NANOQUE

Canadian Gateway to the 1000 Islands



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

WWW.GANANOQUE.CA

Introduction

Strategic planning is the process of positioning an organization to meet its future goals and objectives. Strategic planning can effectively manage change and define the direction and allocation of resources needed to accomplish the desired outcomes.

Strategic planning has become increasingly important for local governments due to the complex and rapid changes that have occurred in recent years. Strategic planning can assist municipalities in focusing on their priorities amid an otherwise overwhelming ambiguous environment.

In 2015, the Town created its first Strategic Plan that would shape the future direction of the community for the next five years. The Strategic Plan evolved and was updated and massaged over this five-year period.

In 2020, the new Council, under the leadership of Mayor Ted Lojko, met with various community stakeholders and staff during a facilitated public session on February 3, 2020 to discuss seven (7) sector areas to be addressed and identified specific actions to be undertaken to achieve the identified goals and objectives.

The Sector Areas addressed:

1. Economic Prosperity
2. Environment and Infrastructure
3. Planning and Development
4. Sports and Recreation
5. Arts, Culture and Heritage
6. Tourism and Events
7. Community and Social Service
8. Governance, Finance and Administration

Mission Statement

The mission statement identifies the Town's mandate (who we are) and clarifies the municipality's mission and values. The stakeholder's analysis allows the municipality to determine its mission statement and to create responsive and effective strategies. This statement may need to be reaffirmed or refined throughout the process.

***“We are a vibrant, historic waterfront community
promoting economic prosperity and
cultural diversity in an
environmentally sustainable manner.”***

SWOT Analysis

The community underwent a SWOT analysis in 2015 and assessed the Town's internal strengths and weaknesses in relation to its external opportunities and threats. This process identified current and emerging issues that require immediate and upcoming action. (See Appendices)

Vision Statement

The Town of Gananoque created the following vision for the future in the form of a vision statement. The vision statement indicates where the municipality would like to see itself in five years. This statement guided the discussion to develop the implementation plan, strategies, and action items to get there.

The creation of a vision statement has numerous benefits including: reduction of conflict, self-leadership, ability to overcome barriers, motivation, achievement, more effective use of time, guidance, and a sense of the expected outcome.

***“To be a progressive, vibrant, financially sustainable community,
intent upon supporting growth and development
in an historic and culturally friendly manner
while maintaining our small-town allure.”***

SECTOR #1

Economic Prosperity

Strategic Initiative #1

Ensure that Gananoque is and remains an affordable place to do business and raise a family.



Actions

- A) Maintain a competitive tax rate to attract/retain businesses.
- B) Establish yearly budgetary goals benchmarked at the Consumer Price Index.
- C) Adopt a debt review of the Corporation to ensure that debt remains manageable.
- D) Complete a Service Delivery Review of Town operations to identify opportunities.
- E) Be aggressive in seeking out and applying for grant opportunities.
- F) Develop and implement a long term sustainable financial plan.
- G) Identify partnerships, shared services and resources with TLTI and the County.
- H) Ensure recipients of Town funds are completing compliance and accountability reports.
- I) Address the Infrastructure Gap through the development of a long-term capital financing plan.
- J) Develop policies in consultation with the Municipal Auditor (Reserve, Investment, Financial Controllershship)
- K) Continue the Internal Finance Committee with two representatives from Council, the CAO, and Treasurer.
- L) Explore Public/Private Partnerships that would generate ongoing revenue sources for the Town.
- M) Link financial planning to public education opportunities.
- N) Be prudent with Asset Management planning and funding.

Strategic Initiative #2

To create an economically prosperous and vibrant downtown business district.



Actions

- A) Create a comprehensive Beautification Plan that creates a year-round business and tourism friendly environment that will be attractive to both investors and tourists.
 - a. Continue the annual downtown spring clean-up day with the community.
 - b. Ensure a clean community by garbage pick-up, litter pick-up, street sweeping, weeding, painting posts, remove outdated posters, tree maintenance, more flowers, bump outs for patios, etc.
 - c. Dedicate excess parking revenue to a reserve fund for future downtown beautification projects.
 - d. Take an active approach in enforcing the property standards and signage by-laws to ensure a clean, tidy and maintained appearance in the all Town areas.
 - e. Introduce more artwork/sculptures into the downtown. (Kid friendly)
 - f. Explore the concept of outdoor patios.
 - g. Plant edible plants in town planters when considering the beautification of main street and patios.
 - h. Beautify the King Street train bridge via painting/commissioning a mural.

B) Build upon the current targeted investment attraction plan (Strengthen relationships with BIA merchants).



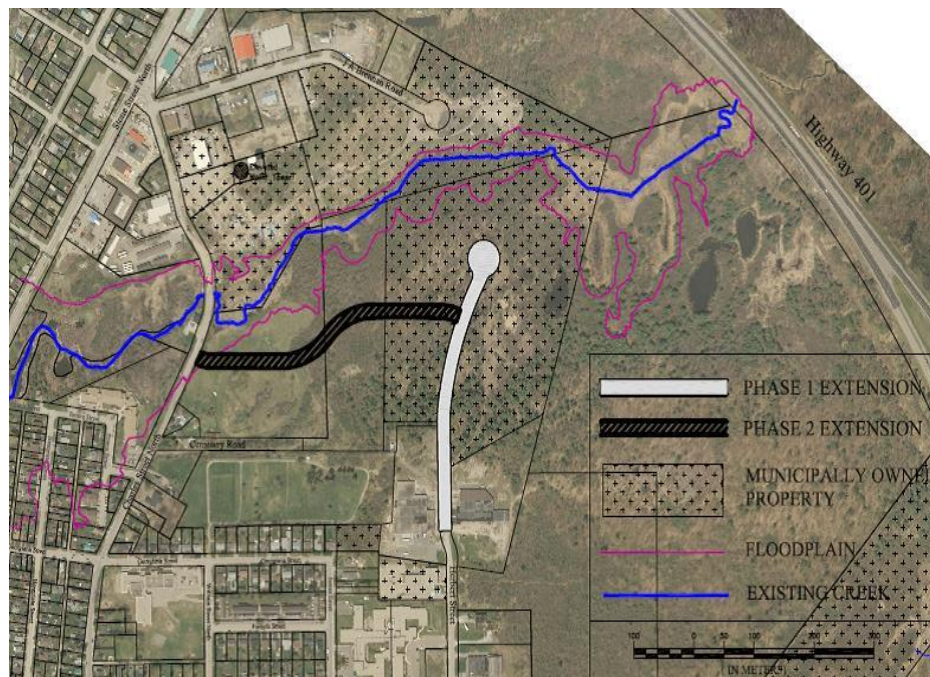
- a. Implement the recommendations of the Gap Analysis.
- b. Maintain and market a comprehensive list of available spaces for rent/lease.
- c. Promote the award winning “Make a Life, Make a Living” marketing campaign to attract new business.
- d. Continue the Grow With Us marketing campaign each Spring.
- e. Implement the Digital Service Squad to help main street small businesses improve their online capabilities.
- f. Re-introduce the Community Improvement Plan.

Strategic Initiative #3

To identify and service business lands to support development opportunities to increase the Town's assessment base and support year-round job creation.

Actions

- A) Seek out grant funding and/or Issue an Expressions of Interest to seek developers wishing to front fund the Herbert Street Extension and/or work with the Ministry to establish Investment Ready Certified sites.
- B) Explore opportunities with King Street West for future development.
- C) Identify serviceable/developable employment lands. Visibility from Hwy 401 would be ideal.
- D) Update the municipal land inventory to identify surplus lands that might be available for development. Explore disposal of surplus lands.
- E) Work with the Township to service lands outside municipal boundaries (Service Agreements/Annexation).



Strategic Initiative #4

Actively work to retain existing Gananoque businesses and encourage job growth and expansion opportunities.



Actions

- A) Cross promotion of businesses – engaged in promoting each other.
- B) Partner with the County Small Business Enterprise Centre’s mentoring program.
- C) Continue collaboration with local and regional partners including BIA, Chamber of Commerce, TLTI, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Small Business Enterprise Centre, Ontario East Economic Development Commission, etc.
- D) Continue offering business workshops and training opportunities.
- E) Promote various grant opportunities for businesses.
- F) Continue to promote Youth Entrepreneurial opportunities. Example: Summer Company.
- G) Promote diversification in our economy and business portfolios using the Gap Analysis.
- H) Encourage social enterprise ventures that support local food-related small business and skill development.
- I) Consider 15-30 minutes of free parking to encourage people to make a quick stop at one of the stores in Town.

Strategic Initiative #5

Increase the supply of skilled workers to meet the demand of the current and future local economy.

Actions

- A) Promote skilled trades through training and awareness initiatives.
- B) Work directly with local Colleges/Universities to create training programs that directly meet the needs of our businesses.
- C) Attend High Schools to talk to students and guidance counsellors about the types/number jobs available in various sectors in our area.
- D) Encourage Gananoque and area graduates to return home after post-secondary education to start their careers.



SECTOR #2

Environment and Infrastructure

Strategic Initiative #1

Recognize the global climate crisis and actively position Gananoque to address this reality.



Actions

- A) Environmental Working Group to create a Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Plan;
- B) Promote home vegetable gardens. Develop and support a program that pairs would-be gardeners with home owners who have land to share;
- C) Promote anti-idling of parked vehicles to reduce air pollution; (Consider changing evening traffic light timing to avoid unnecessary waits that burn gas)
- D) Replace trees when removed and expand the Town's tree canopy by developing a standard operating procedure for retention of trees and public green space.
- E) Prior to undertaking all procurement and capital projects determine if there a more environmentally sustainable product or approach.
- F) Identify a mechanism to recycle Styrofoam for homes and businesses;
- G) Complete an energy audit of municipal buildings;
- H) Establish water bottle filling stations at key locations across the community;
- I) Implement the Gananoque water bottle initiative;
- J) Promote cycling and active transportation;
- K) Investigate the Feasibility of a Transit System. Consider the GAN-TLTI food system, food literacy programming, and food access opportunities e.g. community gardens, farmers' markets, communal dining, etc.
- L) Explore the reduction/elimination of single-use plastic bottles and containers.

Strategic Initiative #2

Maintain an ongoing assessment of the Town's infrastructure to ensure sufficient capacity exists to support future growth.



Actions

- A) Expand and fund the Asset Management Plan to list and prioritize infrastructure replacement based on age, state of repair, number of homes serviced.
- B) Identify all municipal services and document their existing conditions. Map the Town's infrastructure using Geographic Information Systems (Piggyback on County system). As built vs construction – location verification.
- C) Develop a plan to put the burden on the homeowner for sump pump diversion, storm water realigning,
- D) Investigate a (Submerged Attached Growth Reactor) SAGR system to enhance the efficiency of the Lagoon System.

Strategic Initiative #3

Enhance the connectivity of the Town.



Actions

- A) Ensure that sidewalks connect, and accessibility is factored in to all rebuilds.
- B) Promote walking trails
- C) Explore “green paving” systems that allow run-off and reduce heat collection for pathways from Visitor’s Centre to Snapper’s Bridge
- D) Identify future parking lot needs and opportunities.
- E) Create bicycle pathways when constructing or reconstructing roads and sidewalks.
- F) Enhance the built environment to incorporate natural/native features
- G) Continue the downtown “feel” beyond Charles Street towards East Gate.
- H) Re-establish grass verges and tree planting from Charles Street to East Gate.
- I) Enhance walkability from downtown to waterfront with directional signage, planting, walkways.

Strategic Initiative #4

Complete a Marina Master Plan to ensure the Marina remains cost effective and enhances visitor and resident experience.

- A) Implement the recommendations of the Marina Master Plan;
- B) Pursue certification of the Gananoque Marina as a Blue Flag Marina;
- C) Enhance amenities through partnerships with businesses and facilities;
- D) Enhance gathering spaces and recreational spaces around marina facility, e.g. seating areas; and cleanliness of docks.



Strategic Initiative #5

Identify ways to reduce waste through the creation of various waste reduction programs.

Actions

- A) Create a Waste Management Master Plan.
- B) Encourage increased recycling by imposing higher garbage bag tag fees...i.e. clear bags
- C) Create a depot to return the small green propane canisters.
- D) Investigate the savings of moving to bi-weekly garbage pickup.
- E) Implement a green bin (organic) composting program. Use compost in community gardens.
- F) Implement a green shopping bag program.
- G) Support provincial initiatives for full producer pay for recyclables and organics programming
- H) Promotion and education of the 3 R's



SECTOR #3

Planning and Development

Strategic Initiative #1

Investigate opportunities to create affordable housing in Gananoque including affordable rentals to attract younger residents.

Actions

- A) Create an Affordable Housing Working Group to look at increasing density and/or shared housing initiatives.
- B) Explore Downtown Living Options
- C) Identify “Town sponsored” sites for development.



Strategic Initiative #2

Review/Update the Official Plan and the Development Permit By-laws.

Actions

- A) Create stronger policies/verbiage
- B) Modernize both documents
- C) Compare policies with other communities
- D) Streamline application/approval processes
- E) Include thoughtful preservation of the waterfront in policies.
- F) Include Pedestrian Access and Safe Trails

Strategic Initiative #3

Actively reduce the remaining brownfields/contaminated sites in Town.

Actions

- A) Renew the Community Improvement Plan to address Brownfields.
- B) Actively lobby the Ministry of the Environment to approve clean up initiatives.
- C) Develop policies to disallow new brownfields.

SECTOR #4

Sports and Recreation

Strategic Initiative #1

Implement actions of the Joint Recreation Master Plan.

Actions

- A) Create a joint committee between TLTI and Gananoque to develop physical infrastructure in both communities based on identified service needs.
- B) Prioritize the Plan's actions, assign tasks, find funding opportunities, etc.
- C) Continue the communication plan thereby promoting continuous community engagement
- D) Establish a connection with existing community groups and their initiatives.

Strategic Initiative #2

Provide opportunities that complement the natural environment of the Town.



Actions

- A) Promote/support the sailing school, walking trails, kayaking, etc.
- B) Tie into Parkway Parks programs
- C) Build partnerships with cycling, birds, hiking, etc.
- D) Seek out and encourage the establishment of recreational businesses such as e-cycling, paddle boarding, canoeing.

Strategic Initiative #3

Creation of group opportunities for those with common interests.



Actions

- A) Identify groups that already exist and create a master list. (Example: running/cycling/walking groups.) Create a “conduit” for similar interests.
- B) Improve recreational facility offerings for retirees and seniors in our community.
- C) Improve shoulder season recreational facility offerings for children in our community. (Examples: pool, indoor basketball, etc.)

Strategic Initiative #4

Develop Infrastructure that creates “year-round” opportunities.

Actions

- A) Explore the concept of a Multi-Purpose Regional Recreation Centre that attracts shoulder season events such as major tournaments. (TLTI community centre, Kinsmen building, Arena, outdoor fields, indoor bike park, etc.) Include accessible, inspected commercial grade kitchens for use by non-profits providing food literacy opportunities and for use by groups requiring catered activities.
- B) Discuss potential funding partnerships with neighbouring townships, private sector, community groups, and service clubs to seek out the most cost-effective service delivery of recreation (Ex. Fundraising).
- C) Look at the connectivity and further development of paths/multi use trails and their connections to sidewalks. (Example – sidewalk on south side of King Street east of Carmichael Drive)

SECTOR #5

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Strategic Initiative #1

Acknowledge the First Nations and Indigenous settlements within Gananoque.

Actions

- A) Create a Land Acknowledgement Statement
- B) Host an annual dedication/sacred ceremony

Strategic Initiative #2

Recognize that Arts create a vibrant community and a year-round economic driver.

Actions

- A) Highlight the Kingston Prize and promote it as an event in Gananoque
- B) Enhance Kingston Prize to include a Gananoque specific component
- C) Establish an Arts and Culture working group
- D) Establish a directory for filming and documentaries
- E) Encourage active use of public spaces (permanent easels placed in parks)
- F) Create an environment that supports and encourages artistic activities



Strategic Initiative #3

Preserve environmental built form heritage, natural heritage and oral heritage.



Actions

- A) Collectively work with the library, Thousand Islands Boat Museum, Thousand Island History Museum and the Playhouse
- B) Build on the “Gananoque Love” Facebook page and create a “then and now” of historical sites.
- C) Actively participate in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network (FABN).
- D) Encourage the sustainability of the St. Lawrence and Gananoque River to promote/preserve shorelines and safer waterways; public access for tourism and local residents.

Strategic Initiative #4

To ensure the heritage of our community is protected.



Actions

- A) Update all Part IV Municipal Heritage Designations to reflect the updates to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- B) Develop an ongoing Maintenance Plan/Reserve Fund to maintain local memorials/monuments. (Cenotaph, Town Gates, etc.)
- C) Create a list of cultural assets – non-designated
- D) Continue the Town funded Heritage Building Restoration Fund to assist property owners of municipally designated Heritage Buildings to restore heritage features.
- E) Maintain the Town's artifact collection.
- F) Encourage owners of heritage buildings to promote the historical significance of their properties with signage.



Sector #6

Tourism and Events

Strategic Initiative #1

Develop and promote Gananoque as a four-season Tourist destination that supports the local economy.



Actions

- A) Create a Citizen/Volunteer of the Year award recognizing local efforts.
- B) Aim to create/reinvent two new events per year. (Winter light festival, Local War Veterans/light posts, Craft Beer Festival, Kris Kringle kiosks, Fall Colours tour, Christmas Disney on ice, Hallmark movie locations/film venues)
- C) Create a Gananoque “Approved Accommodation symbol” sticker
- D) Hire a Special Events Coordinator to create a 12-month calendar across ALL events, sports and community groups
- E) Promote in-bound American tourism – upstate New York, Vermont
- F) Partner with the Casino (i.e. Auditorium – Shows)
- G) Create a shoulder season tourism plan.
- H) Create a plan to maximize the use of the new Canada 150 Rink
- I) Promote winter activities such as hockey tournaments, ice fishing, snow shoeing, etc.
- J) Identify shoulder season sports tourism opportunities. (Hockey tournaments, curling events, figure skating shows, outdoor rink skating, etc.)
- K) Implement a seasonal/unique downtown art installation that sets Gananoque apart (i.e. Napanee Christmas lights)

SECTOR #7

Community and Social Services

Strategic Initiative #1

Be proactive in implementing the Community Safety and Well Being Plan.

Actions:

- A) Evaluate and address addiction issues, elder abuse, justice reform, etc.
- B) Explore the concept of the “What’s App” – Neighbourhood watch program.
- C) Address mental health issues – Crisis worker (addiction and homelessness), funded by provincial grant.
- D) Improve access to health services including more doctors/clinics to help with substance abuse, children at risk, dysfunctional families, seniors, etc.
- E) Promote local senior services to help seniors stay in their homes longer.
- F) Continue to encourage and support new Canadians to move to Gananoque by being culturally inclusive. Create events to welcome newcomers.
- G) Host a networking event to create links between health care providers across the spectrum of mental and physical health.

Strategic Initiative #2

Be proactive in our commitment to making Gananoque an accessible community for citizens and visitors.



Actions:

- A) Understand the accessibility needs of seniors and Ontarians with Disabilities.
- B) Ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. (AODA).
- C) Perform an accessibility assessment of all municipal properties
- D) Identify and address current barriers to accessibility.

Strategic Initiative #3

Make the Health and Safety of all staff and citizens a key priority.

Actions:

- A) Ensure compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- B) Enhance the Health and Safety Program.
- C) Ensure Health and Safety training of staff is a key priority.
- D) Promote awareness of current Health and Safety issues as they arise.



Strategic Initiative #4

Be proactive in Emergency Preparedness.

Actions:

- A) Conduct Annual Emergency Exercises as mandated.
- B) Create a public awareness campaign to promote best practices in how citizens can prepare themselves in the event of an emergency (72-hour kits, etc.)



SECTOR #8

Governance and Administration

Strategic Initiative #1

Prioritize the use of Strategic Planning as the tool for the Town's long-term planning goals.

Actions

- A) Attribute annual resources (human and financial) to projects that directly support the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Initiative #2

Develop a welcoming approach/atmosphere to visitors.



Actions

- A) Promote a positive approach at the front counter and on the telephone.
- B) Provide training and development staff on how to deal with difficult clients.
- C) Sharing of information to keep front line staff abreast of happenings in the Town.

Strategic Initiative #3

Using technology to deliver information.

Actions

- A) Document Access
- B) Council Meeting Streaming
- C) Accessible forms on the Town's website
- D) Ensure all forms can be completed and submitted online and that payment for Town services and bills can be made electronically.



Strategic Initiative #4

Town Council will ensure openness and transparency in its operations.

Actions

- A) Review and update existing policies on an ongoing basis.
- B) Develop a policy and record tracking of adopted policies to ensure they are reviewed every 5 (or so) years so that they are kept current with the Municipal Act and other legislation as well as the needs of the community.
- C) Ensure compliance with the Council Code of Conduct.
- D) Ensure corporate records are preserved and made accessible to the public.
- E) Promote citizen engagement via public meetings, deputations, the use of surveys, website, social media, etc.