

Municipality of St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan Nordicity Response

September 9, 2024

Prepared for
The Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles

Prepared by
Nordicity Group Ltd. (“Nordicity”)

Primary Point of Contact

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Attention: Denis Turcot
Chief Administrative Officer, Municipality of St.-Charles
2 King Street East, St.-Charles, ON P0M 2W0
tenders@stcharlesontario.ca

Re: The Corporation of the Municipality of St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan

Dear Denis Turcot,

On behalf of Nordicity, I am pleased to submit our proposal to support the Municipality of St.-Charles in developing its new Community Strategic Plan. With over 40 years of experience in strategic planning, policy, and community engagement across Canada, we bring a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by small and rural communities like St.-Charles.

Our approach to this project is guided by five core principles: pragmatism, feasibility, integration, nuance, and collaboration. These principles ensure that the strategic plan will be both actionable and forward-looking, rooted in a thorough understanding of local conditions and community aspirations. Throughout the planning process, we will work closely with St.-Charles' leadership, residents, and key interested parties to create a plan that reflects a broad range of perspectives, builds community ownership, and aligns with your vision for a sustainable and prosperous future.

We have assembled a multidisciplinary team with extensive experience in community development, municipal strategy, and inclusive engagement. Our team is well-equipped to deliver a thorough and inclusive strategic plan for St.-Charles, with innovative approaches to engaging both English and French-speaking residents, Indigenous communities, and a diverse range of local stakeholders. We are committed to fostering a transparent, accessible, and meaningful engagement process that reflects the values and priorities of the St.-Charles community.

Nordicity is excited about the opportunity to collaborate with the Municipality of St.-Charles on this important project. We are confident that our experience, tailored approach, and dedication to community engagement will help St.-Charles chart a clear and compelling path forward over the next decade.

We look forward to the opportunity to work together and would welcome any questions you may have about our proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KR", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kristian Roberts
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Contents

1. Project Context	3
2. About Nordicity	4
2.1 Project Team	5
Mila Dechef-Tweddle Director	6
Gaeby Abrahams Senior Consultant	7
Daniella Jaramillo Analyst	9
Charlotte Panneton Analyst	10
3. Our Approach	11
3.1 Proposed Work Plan	12
Phase 1: Project Scoping	13
Phase 2: Strategic Assessment	14
Phase 3: Community Engagement	16
Phase 4: Analysis	20
Phase 5: Reporting	21
3.2 Project Timeline	22
3.3 Project Fees	23
4. Relevant Experience	24
4.1 Municipal Strategy and Policy Development	24
4.2 Economic Development and Innovation Ecosystems	26
4.3 Labour Market and Workforce Development	28
4.4 Additional Tourism Experience	29
4.5 References	30
5. Supporting Information	31
5.1 Innovative and Inclusive Approaches	31
Innovative Stakeholder Engagement	31
Inclusive Research Practices	32
5.2 Digitally-Driven Solutions	33
5.3 Quality Assurance	34

1. Project Context

The Municipality of St.-Charles is seeking to refresh its strategic direction to address the changes and opportunities that have emerged over the past decade. Since the last strategic plan was developed in 2013, the landscape has shifted significantly, requiring a new approach that reflects current realities and community priorities. With new developments on the horizon, including enhanced broadband and natural gas access, as well as ongoing changes in the local economy and land use, this strategic plan aims to set clear priorities for sustainable growth and improved quality of life over the next ten years.

Fostering Community Engagement Across St.-Charles

A central pillar of this strategic planning process is engaging the full breadth of the St.-Charles community. It is essential to gather input from all sectors, including both English and French-speaking residents, as well as local Indigenous communities, to ensure that the plan reflects diverse perspectives and priorities. The aim is to foster a sense of ownership and inclusion among all stakeholders – including community clubs and organizations, business owners and service providers, and residents young and old – by creating multiple avenues for meaningful participation and dialogue.

Effective engagement will not only build buy-in but also enhance community resilience by grounding the strategic plan in local needs, values, and aspirations. By prioritizing a transparent and accessible engagement process, we aim to create a foundation for long-term collaboration and ongoing trust between the municipality and its residents.

Balancing Challenges and Opportunities

St.-Charles faces several challenges that require careful consideration, such as a limited industrial base and a tax structure heavily reliant on residential properties. At the same time, the community has significant opportunities for growth, including new residential developments, enhanced infrastructure, and emerging agri-tourism activities. The strategic plan will need to navigate these complexities by setting priorities that balance growth with sustainability, enhance local services, and attract investment while preserving the community's rural character and natural assets.

A Tailored and Forward-Looking Approach

Nordicity recognizes the unique characteristics of St.-Charles and the need for a strategic plan that is both forward-looking and rooted in the local context. Our approach will draw on our experience with similar municipalities to offer fresh insights, while also remaining adaptable to the specific conditions and priorities of St.-Charles. We will focus on creating practical, actionable strategies that build on the community's strengths, address its challenges, and support its aspirations for a vibrant and sustainable future.

By combining a strong emphasis on community engagement with a clear-eyed analysis of local conditions, this strategic planning process will position St.-Charles to make informed decisions, leverage opportunities, and navigate challenges effectively over the coming decade.

2. About Nordicity

Nordicity is a leading consulting firm specializing in strategy, policy, and planning across various sectors, including arts, culture, heritage, economic development, and community building. With over 40 years of experience, our work is characterized by a commitment to evidence-based analysis, innovative approaches, and meaningful stakeholder engagement. We have partnered with municipalities, organizations, and communities across Canada to deliver **strategic plans that drive growth, resilience, and inclusivity**.

Our multidisciplinary team is spread across Canada and the UK, with key offices in Toronto, Vancouver, and London, UK. Our team combines expertise in public policy, economic analysis, strategic planning, community engagement, innovation ecosystem development, and labour market analysis – among other areas – making us ideally suited to support the Municipality of St.-Charles in its effort to develop a forward-looking, practical, and inclusive strategic plan.

We have a proven track record of working with regional and municipal governments across Canada on a diverse range of strategic planning and policy projects. Our experience spans arts and culture, economic development, workforce planning, parks and recreation, and more. This breadth of expertise allows us to deliver **tailored, actionable strategies** that align with local priorities and foster community resilience.

In the realm of arts and culture, we are working with the **Town of Fort Frances** to develop a complementary culture plan and museum strategic plan and with the **City of Thunder Bay** to create a culture plan that aligns with broader economic development objectives. We are also currently at the outset of a comprehensive master plan for the **Greater Sudbury Public Library** system. Outside of Ontario, we have developed cultural plans for the **Regional District of Fraser-Fort George** in BC and created **award-winning cultural strategies** for the **City of Victoria** and the **City of Maple Ridge**, which earned the Award of Excellence in Cultural Planning from the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC) in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

Our expertise extends to economic development and innovation ecosystems. For example, we were engaged by **Calgary Economic Development** to craft their Creative Economy Strategy and Digital Media Strategy, positioning Calgary as a leading North American hub for creative industries. We also supported the **Vancouver Island Economic Development Association** in developing a Technology Attraction Strategy, aimed at fostering economic growth through technology sector investment.

Additionally, we bring experience in parks and recreation planning and labour market analysis. We worked with the City of Pitt Meadows to develop a **Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan** and conducted a cultural facilities needs assessment for the **City of Red Deer**. We have also undertaken labour market studies, such as analysis for **SaskInteractive** on the technology and creative industries in Saskatchewan and the development of a Future Skills Research framework for **Yukon University**, aimed at supporting innovation-led growth in the region.

We are also well-versed in conducting feasibility studies and business planning that often involve robust stakeholder engagement, economic analysis, and revenue development strategies. Recent examples include a feasibility study for a new performing arts centre in the **Town of Collingwood**, a cultural centre feasibility study for the **City of Kawartha Lakes**, and a strategic business plan for the **Britannia Heritage Shipyards National Historic Site** in the City of Richmond.

An important focus of our practice is working in **northern and rural communities**. In addition to the municipalities mentioned above, we have delivered strategic projects for the **Government of Yukon**, the **Government of Nunavut**, and the **Kativik Regional Government**. These experiences have given us a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities specific to smaller communities, such as

engagement fatigue, equitable representation, and sustainable growth in the face of demographic and economic changes.

Across all these areas, we maintain a consistent focus on community engagement, evidence-based analysis, and sustainable growth, ensuring our plans and strategies are both practical and forward-looking. Our diverse portfolio gives us a deep understanding of the inner workings of municipal governments, from small towns to large urban centres. Our experience in strategic planning has consistently integrated **community-building, cultural development, and economic growth** – areas that are particularly relevant to the future of St.-Charles. We are committed to applying this expertise to help the Municipality of St.-Charles achieve its vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous community over the next decade.

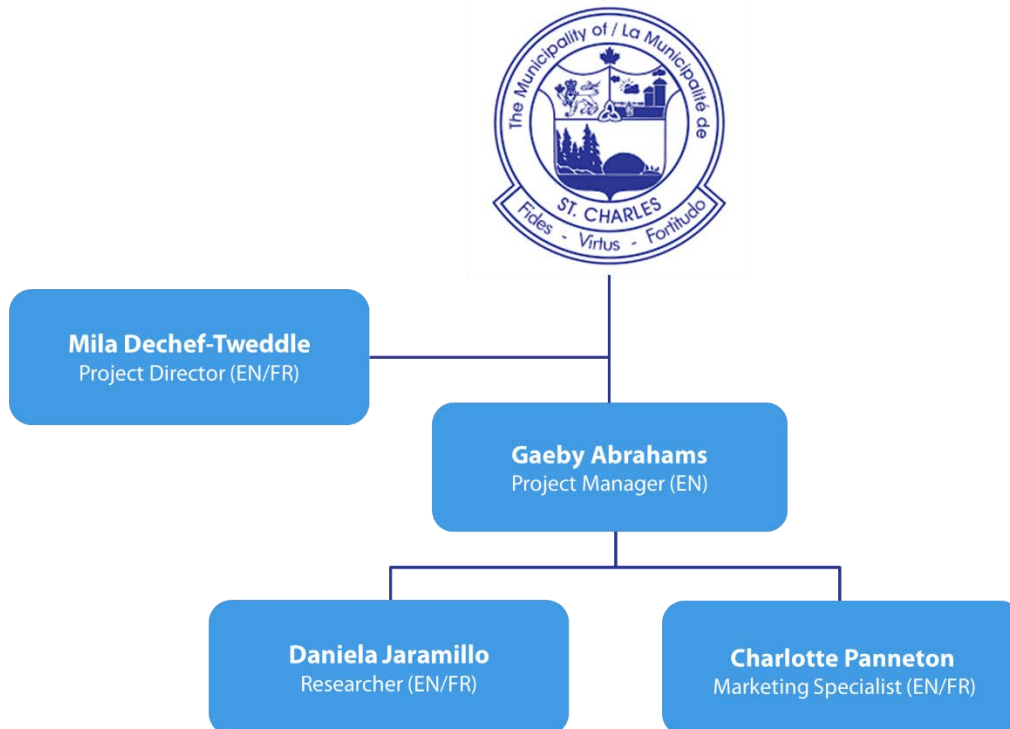
2.1 Project Team

We have assembled a team of seasoned professionals with deep expertise in strategic planning, community engagement, economic development, and municipal policy. Our multidisciplinary approach integrates strategic oversight, project management, research, facilitation, and marketing to ensure the strategic plan is both comprehensive and inclusive. With bilingual members fluent in English and French, our team is well-equipped to engage effectively across the community, fostering broad participation and a sense of shared ownership in the planning process.

By leveraging our diverse skill sets and understanding of rural community dynamics, we are well-positioned to deliver a strategic plan for St.-Charles that is both actionable and aligned with the community’s unique needs and aspirations.

The following organogram shows our proposed team structure. Below, we present information about each member’s experience and expertise as well as their key project responsibilities.

Figure 1 Project team structure





Mila Dechef-Twedde | Director

Project Role: Project Director

Key Project Responsibilities: Strategic oversight; quality assurance on all deliverables; co-facilitate strategic planning workshop

Mila holds a Master of Museum Studies from the University of Toronto and a B.A. (Honours) from Concordia University in Montreal. She is also a born-and-raised fully bilingual team member who can speak, read, and write fluently in both English and French.

Mila is an experienced consultant working primarily in the cultural and creative industries. Building from her background in Museums and Heritage, Mila has spent the past decade of her consulting career furthering her expertise in the arts and cultural sector in Canada. Her work in the sector has ranged from helping individual organizations with strategic planning or impact measurement to conducting policy analysis, sector strategy studies, cultural plans and other industry research with government and sector support organizations. More recently, Mila has been coming back to her roots, working with GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) on impact evaluation, strategic planning, and digital strategy and transformation.

Mila is also an experienced leader who has led dynamic teams through a variety of engagements. She has a proven track record of developing and implementing complex research and analysis methodologies and in leading effective community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of meaningful and actionable strategies and recommendations for her clients. Mila is an experienced facilitator skilled at helping her clients navigate the challenges inherent in strategic planning, helping to build consensus a buy-in from the ground up for a strong, actionable strategy.

Prior to beginning her consulting career at Nordicity, Mila worked for a number of cultural and heritage institutions. For example, she worked in collections management at the City of Toronto Museums and Heritage Services and the Canada Sports Hall of Fame. Mila also worked as an interpreter at the HMCS Haida National Historic Site and worked as a special project officer for Parks Canada where she developed a permanent exhibition for the ship's storied motor cutter and conducted an audit on the use and adoption of digital media technologies for audience engagement both on and off site across the organization's National Parks and National Historic Sites.

Some examples of Mila's recent work at Nordicity include:

- Leading and supporting the development of Municipal Culture Plans in a number of Ontario communities, including the **City of Thunder Bay** (ongoing), **City of Cambridge**, **Town of Ajax**, **City of St. Catharines**, **City of Brampton**, and **Town of Innisfil** – project management, project oversight, community and stakeholder engagement, quality assurance and recommendation development.
- Directing and facilitating the development of the 2024 Future Directions Plan for the **Mississauga Library** - project oversight and quality assurance, facilitator, GLAMs subject matter expert.
- Developing an integrated Economic Development and Culture Strategy for the City of Markham, in partnerships with Deloitte – oversight and quality assurance on culture and creative sector recommendations.
- Leading a Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment to inform the space programming for a new Arts Centre for the **City of Brampton** – project oversight and quality assurance.

- Directing and facilitating a strategic planning process for **TFO** (Ontario’s French-Language Public Broadcaster) (ongoing) – project oversight and quality assurance, facilitator, Francophone service delivery.
- Directing and facilitating a strategic planning process for the **Canadian Museum of Nature** (ongoing) – project oversight and quality assurance, facilitator, GLAMs subject matter expert.
- Directing the development of a strategic plan for the **Museums of Burlington** - project oversight and quality assurance, facilitator, GLAMs subject matter expert.
- Leading the development of a transformative strategic plan for the **New Brunswick Museum**, with an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion and decolonization - Project manager, facilitator, community and stakeholder engagement, GLAMs subject matter expert, strategy author.
- Developing a strategic plan for the **Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre**, which focused on building community affinity and expanding the presence of the Museum across the county - Project manager, community and stakeholder engagement, GLAMs subject matter expert, strategy author.



Gaebly Abrahams | Senior Consultant

Project Role: Project Manager

Key Project Responsibilities: Day-to-day project management; develop data map and engagement plan; support research; lead engagement; co-facilitate strategic planning workshop; lead analysis and reporting.

Gaebly holds a Master of Arts, Literatures of Modernity from Toronto Metropolitan University and a Bachelor of Arts, Combined Honours English and Contemporary Studies from the University of King’s College. She has also completed additional training in data analytics, fundraising, human-centered design and strategy, and board governance.

Gaebly is an inherently analytical thinker who readily identifies and implements improvements to systems, processes, and content. She is skilled at balancing big-picture, strategic objectives and day-to-day, operational details. She is equally comfortable developing high-level organizational messaging, designing operating processes, and delivering services. She is also a skilled facilitator with extensive community engagement experience.

Over more than a decade spent in the arts and culture sector, Gaebly’s work has covered project management, research, writing, marketing, communications, design and layout, program development, and event planning – often all at the same time. Prior to Nordicity, Gaebly worked at The Writers’ Union of Canada managing fund development, communications, program design and delivery, and various ongoing projects. She has also managed projects and communications for a number of cultural events including a book fair, literary series, and theatre prize, and has a strong background in research and data analysis.

Outside of Nordicity, she is currently Secretary of the Board of Directors of Times Change, a charitable community agency that provides free employment resources and counselling for women, where she brings her professional expertise to the Fundraising and Strategic Planning Committees.

A sampling of Gaebly’s project experience at Nordicity includes:

- **Culture Plan and Museum Strategic Plan (Town of Fort Frances)** (ongoing) – Gaeby is the project manager for this joint initiative to develop the inaugural Culture Plan and an updated Museum & Cultural Centre Strategic Plan for the Town of Fort Frances. She designed a tailored approach to maximize community engagement and leverage limited Town resources in the development of these complementary plans. At time of writing, research and engagement have been completed and Gaeby is the development of strategic frameworks and designing a three-part virtual strategic planning series.
- **Culture Plan (City of St. Catharines)** – Gaeby designed and executed a robust engagement program that included internal stakeholders, Indigenous partners, sector stakeholders, and the general public. Diverse and innovative engagement activities ensured the final culture plan is grounded in and responds to community need. Gaeby also supported creation of the final Culture Plan and developed the Implementation Plan.
- **Cultural Funding Review (Regional District of Fraser-Fort George)** – Gaeby was the project manager for this engagement to evaluate the Regional District’s funding of eight cultural sites. The evaluation was grounded in an assessment of each site’s cultural mandate, activities and programming, operational efficiency, and key needs.
- **2024 Future Directions Library Plan (City of Mississauga)** – Gaeby led this engagement, which included an in-depth strategic assessment of the Library’s operating context and an extensive stakeholder and public engagement program. Gaeby collaborated closely with Library leadership to develop capital and service recommendations to guide the Library’s next five years. As a follow-on to this project, Gaeby worked with Mississauga Library to fulfill one of the plan’s recommendations to update the Library’s vision, mission, and values.
- **Collingwood Performing Arts Centre Fundraising Framework (Town of Collingwood)** – Gaeby was the project manager for this engagement to develop a feasible fundraising framework, with targets and development strategies, for a proposed Performing Arts Centre for the Town of Collingwood. This scope of work was subcontracted to Nordicity as part of Colliers’ engagement to develop a business case for the Arts Centre, building on the earlier phases of the Collingwood Arts Centre feasibility study completed by Nordicity and Giaimo.
- **Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment (City of Brampton)** – Gaeby was the project manager for this engagement which validated and prioritized facility needs for creators and audiences in Brampton. The findings will inform the design of a new cultural facility.
- **Artists as Stewards of the Breathing Lands (Mushkegowuk Council)** – Gaeby is the co-project lead for this engagement which explores ways to empower Indigenous artists as stewards of their culture and their homelands. In the first phase of the project, Gaeby developed a funding strategy and supported a successful funding application for \$250,000. Gaeby is now involved in the development of an evaluation framework, data collection tools, and pilot program development to support the long-term success of this initiative.
- **Strategic Plan (Niagara Grape & Wine Festival)** – Gaeby, in partnership with Trajectory, developed a strategic plan for North America’s oldest wine festival, which attracts over 150,000 people annually. Gaeby designed and led facilitation for a three-part strategic planning series, which included digital and in-person sessions.
- **Innovate Digital Revenue and Leverage South Asian Arts Patrons Initiative (Pratibha Arts)** – Gaeby was the project manager for this digital strategy engagement which resulted in an audience development action plan.
- **Governance Review (The Writers’ Union of Canada)** – Gaeby led a review of the Writers’ Union’s governance structure. The review process was grounded in an internal document review and member consultations. It examined current structures and processes, and

explored additional ways for the organization to support equity, diversity, and inclusion through governance processes.

- **Indigenous Arts Distribution (Mawi'Art: Wabanaki Artist Collective)** – Gaeby led a digital needs assessment and supported the development of pilot project ideas for this engagement aimed at boosting the discoverability of Indigenous art, particularly for artists from areas in Canada that are lesser known to wider audiences (e.g., those from the Atlantic provinces and non-Inuit areas of the North).



Daniella Jaramillo | Analyst

Project Role: Researcher

Key Project Responsibilities: Lead desk research; develop community profile; support engagement; support analysis and reporting.

Daniela holds a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences from Quest University Canada with study abroad terms at the University of Amsterdam. Daniela is multilingual (English, Spanish, Portuguese and French).

Daniela is a multilingual Analyst at Nordicity with a strong background in Sociology, Economics, and Gender Studies. With extensive experience in non-profit work, grant application development and reporting, community outreach, and workshop facilitation, Daniela brings a broad set of skills to Nordicity. She is a talented researcher with experience in policy analysis and developing policy recommendations. Additionally, she has in-depth knowledge of labour and immigration in Canada, and industry-specific insights into the food sector.

Before joining Nordicity, Daniela was a dedicated advocate for migrant workers' rights, particularly farm workers, working as a settlement worker in Vancouver. She collaborated closely with farmers and agricultural systems across Canada, gaining a deep understanding of the socio-economic dynamics of both local and global food systems. Daniela is currently involved in a sustainable farming initiative in her hometown in Colombia, where she specializes in commercialization and food sovereignty.

Her recent relevant project experience includes:

- **Racial Equity Media Collective (REMC) (ongoing):** Leading the desk research for the Annual Report on Racial Equity in the Canadian Film and Television Industry.
- **Disability Screen Office (DSO) (ongoing):** Providing research support for the Best Practices Guide for Disability Engagement.
- **Town of Fort Frances (ongoing):** Leading the research of the Town's Cultural Plan and the Museum's Strategic Plan.
- **IATSE 891 (ongoing):** Providing engagement and research support for IATSE's Sexual Victimization and Abuse of Power project.
- **Canadian Publishers Council:** Leading the research for a communications campaign related to Open Education Resources, including surveying, interviewing, data visualization, analysis, and reporting.
- **Regional District of Fraser Fort George (RDFFG):** Supporting research for the RDFFG Cultural Funding Review.

- **City of Nanaimo:** Providing qualitative and quantitative analysis support for Nanaimo’s Future Art Gallery Realization.
- **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC):** Leading the research and translation efforts for analyzing public funding in Spanish broadcasting.
- **IATSE 891 (ongoing):** Providing engagement and research support for IATSE’s Sexual Victimization and Abuse of Power project.
- **Invest Vancouver:** Leading the research for a Digital Media Sector Profile including a comparative analysis.
- **Ontario Book Publishers Organization (OBPO):** Provided research support for an environmental scan of the book publishing industry in Ontario.
- **Canadian Museum of History (CMH):** Conducted a report on digital trends in museums, focusing on AR/VR technologies.
- **Canada Media Fund (CMF):** Led the research and reporting efforts to construct a database for Below the Line training for film and TV crew members across the country.



Charlotte Panneton | Analyst

Project Role: Marketing Specialist

Key Project Responsibilities: Develop marketing and promotions plan; develop marketing and promotions assets/materials.

Charlotte holds a DEC in International Social Sciences from CÉGEP Champlain-St. Lawrence, a Joint B.Soc.Sc. in Communication and Sociology from the University of Ottawa, a M.A. in Media Studies from the University of Western Ontario, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Marketing Management from Fanshawe College.

Charlotte is an Analyst in Nordicity’s Toronto office, with expertise in the interactive digital media sector and in community media. Prior to Nordicity, Charlotte worked concurrently as a graduate researcher and instructor at the University of Western Ontario and as a freelance digital marketing specialist focusing on local retail businesses. Spanning her academic and professional career, Charlotte has cultivated an affinity for strategic analysis, qualitative research approaches, knowledge mobilization, and stakeholder engagement.

In her time at Nordicity, Charlotte has worked on:

- **Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESAC)** – Led interviews with various games-oriented companies and project leaders and develop case studies for ESAC’s Beyond Entertainment report on transformative uses of video games in non-game sectors.
- **Canada Media Fund (CMF)** – Conducted interviews, desk research, and reporting for a study mandated by the CMF on the state of inclusive gaming in Canada. Also developed related presentation materials to share report findings in conference settings.
- **City of Windsor** – Conducted interviews and supported data collection, reporting, and stakeholder engagement aligned with the Windsor Film Study, assessing the prospect and development of film office to attract film production to the region.

- **Bureau du cinema et de la television du Québec** – Provided translation, design, and support work related to an added-value assessment of the Quebec audiovisual industry.
- **New Media Manitoba** – Supported reporting and positioning work for NMM’s Interactive Digital Media Industry 2022 Census. Includes the development of a dedicated marketing and branding guide to make Census findings actionable.
- **Foundation for Canadian Comedy** – Provided translation, data analysis and reporting support following the Foundation’s professional development symposium.
- **Department of Canadian Heritage** – Managed survey administration and stakeholder communications, and supported data analysis for the study of on-screen diversity in Canadian television.

3. Our Approach

At Nordicity, we approach community strategic planning as a deeply collaborative and creative process, tailored to the unique needs and challenges of each organization. For St.-Charles, our strategy will be guided by five core principles: **pragmatism, feasibility, integration, nuance, and collaboration**. These principles will ensure that the Community Strategic Plan is both practical and forward-looking, addressing the unique context of St.-Charles.

Figure 2 Nordicity's approach to community strategic planning



Guiding Principles

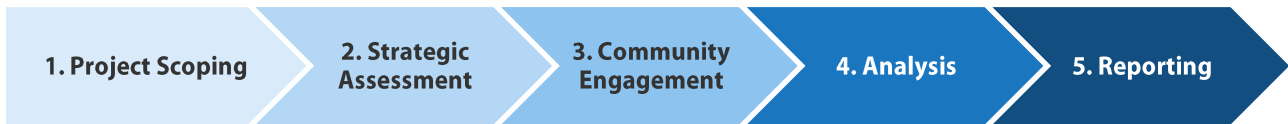
- **Pragmatism:** Our strategy will be grounded in the realities of rural community development in St.-Charles. We understand the unique local challenges – such as a limited industrial base, reliance on residential property taxes, and the complexities of maintaining municipal services in a rural setting. Our approach will be crafted with these specific challenges in mind, ensuring that the strategic plan provides clear, achievable steps toward sustainable growth, economic diversification, and community resilience.
- **Feasibility:** We are committed to developing a strategic plan that is both actionable and achievable within the specific context of St.-Charles. This includes aligning the plan with the municipality’s available resources, administrative capacity, and community appetite for change. We will work closely with St.-Charles’ leadership and stakeholders throughout the planning process to ensure that the plan’s recommendations are realistic, clearly prioritized, and supported by those who will implement them.
- **Integration:** St.-Charles’ future success will depend on its ability to navigate a range of external factors, from regional economic trends to infrastructure development opportunities. Our strategic plan will be designed to integrate seamlessly with existing municipal initiatives, regional strategies, and broader policy frameworks. This approach ensures that the plan leverages existing strengths and positions St.-Charles to capitalize on new opportunities, such as broadband expansion and potential natural gas access.
- **Nuance:** The unique character of St.-Charles requires a strategy that is both specific and adaptable. Our experience with rural communities equips us to develop a nuanced plan that reflects local values, such as preserving the community’s rural charm while encouraging growth. The plan will allow flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, including demographic shifts and emerging opportunities in sectors like agri-tourism and local entrepreneurship.
- **Collaboration:** We believe that the most effective strategic plans are created through inclusive, collaborative processes. For St.-Charles, this means engaging a broad range of voices across the community – from English and French-speaking residents to local Indigenous communities, youth, seniors, business owners, and service providers. By fostering meaningful participation and dialogue, we will ensure that the plan reflects the collective vision of the community and generates broad-based support and shared ownership.

By adhering to these principles, we aim to deliver a strategic plan for St.-Charles that is both ambitious and grounded in the community’s unique realities, setting a clear path for a sustainable and prosperous future.

3.1 Proposed Work Plan

Our approach to the St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan is designed to be thorough, inclusive, and responsive to the unique needs and priorities of the municipality and its residents. The work plan is organized into distinct phases, with some phases running concurrently to maximize efficiency and ensure timely completion. Each phase is anchored by specific milestones and deliverables, ensuring that the project remains on track, progress is measurable, and all interested parties are aligned throughout the process.

Figure 3 Overview of project phases



We will work closely with the Municipality of St.-Charles, Council, and community participants to ensure the strategic plan is rooted in local realities, reflects a broad range of perspectives, and is positioned for successful implementation. Public engagement will be embedded throughout the process to foster community ownership and support for the final plan.

Phase 1: Project Scoping

The Project Scoping phase sets the foundation for the strategic planning process by ensuring that Nordicity and the Municipality of St.-Charles are fully aligned on project objectives, timelines, and key deliverables. This phase will establish the expectations for data collection, community engagement, and marketing activities, ensuring a streamlined and cohesive approach to the development of the strategic plan.

Kick-Off Meeting

We will begin with a virtual kick-off meeting involving key representatives from the Municipality of St.-Charles. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Confirm the project scope, success criteria, and desired outcomes;
- Review and, if necessary, refine the work plan and timeline;
- Discuss the local context, recent developments, and existing priorities relevant to this project;
- Define the roles, responsibilities, and points of contact for both Nordicity and the Municipality;
- Establish the format and frequency of project updates and reporting;
- Confirm deliverable formats and contracting details.

At this session, we will also share an overview of the key components of community strategic planning to ensure all participants understand the planning process and their roles within it.

If any adjustments to the work plan are identified during the meeting, Nordicity will revise the plan accordingly and provide a final version to the Municipality for approval.

Data Map

Following the kick-off meeting, Nordicity we will lay out the key research questions and objectives of this Community Strategic Planning project in a data map. The data map will list the key research questions, data to be collected, the sources of this data, methods of collecting it, and the deliverables the data will feed into. The data map will be shared with the Municipality's team for validation before our team proceeds. Once completed, this map will direct our research and data gathering efforts in subsequent phases of this project.

Engagement Plan

To ensure we can move quickly, the engagement plan will also be developed during this initial planning phase of the project. Nordicity will work with the Municipality to finalize an effective strategy that will prepare us to consult with a diverse cross-section of the community in versatile,

innovative, and meaningful ways. The engagement plan will map out all engagement activities and will include the following components:

- A list of internal and external stakeholders to be engaged in this process and by what means
- Plans for how, where, and when different engagement activities will be implemented (e.g., internal and external stakeholder roundtables, community survey, in-person public engagement)

We expect the Municipality's project team will collaborate with Nordicity in developing this plan, primarily by providing suggestions around project messaging, identifying effective distribution strategies for surveys (e.g., local newsletters, social media) and identifying key internal and external stakeholders to engage. (Additional detail regarding the engagement activities proposed by Nordicity can be found under Phase 3 below).

Marketing and Promotions Plan

To complement the engagement plan, we will also create a marketing and promotions plan that identifies opportunities and channels to promote the strategic planning process and engagement activities across the St.-Charles community. This plan will outline key messaging, required assets (e.g., posters, social media content, flyers), and a timeline for marketing efforts. It will also include strategies for reaching diverse audiences and maximizing participation, including leveraging local media, community networks, and digital platforms. Additionally, the plan will indicate which marketing and promotional material may require translation to French. (Note: Translation is assumed to be provided by the Municipality – whether internally or through a third-party paid for by the Municipality.)

By the end of Phase 1, Nordicity and the Municipality of St.-Charles will have a finalized work plan, data map, engagement plan, and a marketing and promotions plan, ensuring a strong start to the strategic planning process.

Phase 1 Roles & Responsibilities:

- Municipality of St.-Charles: Responsible for attending the kick-off meeting, providing relevant documents and data, collaborating on the development of the engagement and marketing plans, and coordinating internal communication and logistics for engagement activities.
- Nordicity: Responsible for leading the kick-off meeting, developing and refining the work plan, data map, engagement plan, and marketing and promotions plan.

Phase 2: Strategic Assessment

The Strategic Assessment phase is designed to deepen our team's understanding of St.-Charles' current context and existing priorities. This phase includes a detailed review of existing documents and data, supplemented by an external scan and community profile, to ensure that the strategic plan is grounded in a robust understanding of the Municipality's unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities.

Background Document Review

Nordicity will review key documents and resources provided by the Municipality of St.-Charles to gain insights into the existing operational context, strategic priorities, and resource allocation. This review will encompass a wide range of materials, which may include (but not be limited to):

- The Municipality's previous Strategic Plan (2014-2019) and any related reports or evaluations;
- Municipal budgets, financial statements, and relevant funding reports;

- Existing planning documents, such as the Sudbury East Official Plan and any St.-Charles department-specific plans (e.g., parks, recreation, infrastructure);
- Any relevant community studies and surveys, including those addressing economic development, tourism, and community services;
- Any available data on community demographics, socio-economic trends, and housing needs.

As our team includes bilingual members, we can include any relevant French-language documents as part of this review.

This review may also include relevant provincial plans and policies (e.g., Rural Economic Development program, Growth Plan for Northern Ontario). The document list will be confirmed during the project initiation phase.

External Scan of Community Strategic Plans

To complement the internal document review, we will conduct an external scan of community strategic plans from comparable municipalities. This scan will focus on identifying common practices and innovative approaches for putting community needs at the forefront of municipal strategy. By understanding how other municipalities have successfully navigated similar contexts, we can draw lessons and best practices that may be applicable to St.-Charles. This analysis will support the development of a tailored strategic plan that leverages proven strategies while addressing the unique needs and aspirations of the St.-Charles community.

Community Profile

The purpose of the community profile is to inform an understanding of the current and future socio-demographic community context in St.-Charles. Nordicity's Project Team will draw on data and documents to be provided by the Municipality to review existing demographic and socio-economic data. We may also draw on additional data from Statistics Canada (providing that the necessary data is publicly available). We will conduct a trends analysis to understand how the Municipality's population has changed over the last five years in order to build assumptions about how the community may continue to change in the next five to ten years (both in demographics and in terms of growth patterns). This analysis may be bolstered by internal population projections included in some of the documents reviewed as part of the background document review as well as relevant provincial plans.

The community profile is a key step in Nordicity's approach for the St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan as it allows us to plan for both current needs and future conditions.

By the end of Phase 2, we will have a thorough understanding of St.-Charles' current strategic context, a picture of external best practices, and a community profile that will guide the development of the strategic plan. This phase helps lay the groundwork for the analysis phase, ensuring plan development is informed by thorough and relevant research.

Phase 2 Roles & Responsibilities:

- Municipality of St.-Charles: Responsible for providing access to all relevant documents and data, and offering insights into comparable municipalities of interest.
- Nordicity: Responsible for conducting the document review, external scan, and community profile analysis.

Phase 3: Community Engagement

The engagement phase is essential to developing a community strategic plan that genuinely reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of St.-Charles residents, municipal staff, and key interested parties. Our engagement strategy is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and adaptable, combining various activities to reach diverse segments of the community. While we are proposing the following engagement activities, we remain flexible and open to refining this plan in collaboration with the Municipality of St.-Charles based on your knowledge of the community.

Develop and Launch Marketing and Promotional Material

To effectively promote the engagement activities, we will develop and launch marketing and promotional materials as outlined in the Marketing and Promotions Plan. This may include creating content for social media, ads for local newspapers, copy for community newsletters, posters, and flyers to raise awareness about upcoming engagement opportunities. The goal is to ensure broad visibility and encourage participation from all segments of the community.

Internal Focus Groups

Nordicity will facilitate a series of three virtual focus groups with key internal stakeholders. These sessions are designed to gather input in line with the key research questions identified in the data map, and to delve deeper into specific areas of interest or concern. While we will look to the St.-Charles project team to advise on the most appropriate group configurations, we propose this step engages representatives from the following groups:

- **Municipal Staff:** Focused on understanding internal perspectives, priorities, and capacity considerations.
- **Government and Other Support Agencies:** Bringing together representatives from relevant local, regional, and provincial agencies to discuss mutual priorities and opportunities for collaboration (e.g., Sudbury East Planning Board, Community Futures Northeastern Ontario, Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin).

Our team is prepared to host one or more of these sessions in a **bilingual or fully French-language** format for those participants who prefer to engage in French.

To ensure a thorough understanding of Council's perspectives, we recommend that individual 1:1 sessions be conducted with Council members (and led by municipal staff). This approach allows for more candid and open discussions, which can sometimes be limited in a formal public meeting setting. For budget efficiency, we propose that these interviews be carried out by key municipal staff rather than by Nordicity. To facilitate this process, Nordicity will develop a tailored interview guide and provide practical guidance and tips for municipal staff to lead these conversations. This method ensures that meaningful input is gathered while maximizing efficiency and maintaining flexibility.

Community Survey

Nordicity will develop and administer an online survey designed to engage the broader St.-Charles community. The survey will be designed to capture input from a wide cross-section of residents on their priorities, needs, and aspirations. We anticipate the survey will be available in both English and French to maximize accessibility and inclusivity. (Translation to be provided by the Municipality as required.)

We anticipate that Nordicity will develop the survey on our survey platform, Voxco. However, if the Municipality has a preferred in-house survey platform, we can develop the questionnaire for municipal staff to load into its platform.

The survey will be distributed by the Municipality through relevant newsletters, social media, and community forums (guidance and support to be provided through the Marketing and Promotions Plan). In general, we recommend sharing a variety of ways to access the survey – e.g., direct links from digital channels, short links and QR codes in promotional posters/postcards, promotion of the survey (with link and/or QR code) during public events – to allow people to access it from their preferred device. Additionally, we will work with the Municipality to try engage distribution partners and community ambassadors to help promote the survey within under-served and/or under-engaged communities.

The survey will be out in the field for a period of three weeks. To ensure maximum uptake, we will make the survey as succinct as possible to reduce the time burden and risk of engagement fatigue for participants.

Nordicity Survey Tool: Voxco Acuity 4 Survey

Nordicity will use [Voxco](#), an online Canadian-based data collection instrument, to administer the online data collection process. Nordicity is proficient with this particular e-survey software, having used it for our large and small projects. The data compilation, analysis, and report generation functionalities are well-suited to delivering the data needed for this project. Furthermore, the software's flexibility allows the administrator to design a wide array of question types, formatting styles, and advanced logic functions to provide a logical sequence of questions (e.g., directing certain questions only to a certain type of respondent based on previous responses) and can manage the complexities of potential answers.

It is Nordicity's standard practice to ensure that all our survey questionnaires are optimized for **smartphone and tablet access**. The platform is fully **WCAG 2.0 AA compliant** and mobile-friendly to allow for multiple types of interaction with respondents.

It is also standard practice to ensure the **security and confidentiality** of the information collected about individuals. The platform is based in Canada and uses TSL 1.1 (or higher) encryption protocols to maintain data security.

Community Site Visits

Nordicity's team will conduct a series of community site visits over approximately 4 days to gain a deeper understanding of St.-Charles' local context. These visits will enable the team to engage directly with residents, business owners, and local organizations in their environments, capturing a broad range of perspectives and experiences. We anticipate including at least one bilingual team member for this visit who can directly engage with Francophone residents.

Site visits may include (but not be limited to) some of the following:

- **Visits to key community facilities:** such as the St.-Charles Community Centre, arena, library, senior services, and local schools, to observe how these spaces are used and discuss their role in community life.
- **Meetings with local businesses and service providers:** to understand their needs, challenges, and opportunities for growth.
- **Informal discussions at community gathering places:** such as parks, cafes, and recreational areas, to engage with residents in a comfortable and familiar setting.

These site visits will allow us to experience the local dynamics firsthand and provide valuable qualitative data to supplement other engagement methods.

Public Pop-Up or Open House

As part of our in-person engagement program, we propose hosting either a community pop-up or an open house event. The purpose of this engagement is to reach the broader St.-Charles community in an accessible and inclusive manner. We will work closely with the Municipality to determine the most effective approach based on past experiences and any planned initiatives. For example, if there are existing events likely to attract a crowd, pop-ups could be a strategic choice to engage an existing audience. Alternatively, if recent open house formats have been successful, we could adopt that approach.

An overview of each approach is provided below, and we will confirm the best option with the Municipality during the project initiation phase:

- **Pop-Up Concept:** This approach involves bringing the engagement to the community, rather than asking community members to come to a specific event. By placing facilitators in high-traffic locations where residents are already going about their daily activities, such as the local farmers' market, public library, or recreation facilities, we can engage a broader and more diverse selection of community members. This "push" approach reduces common barriers to participation found in more traditional formats (e.g., transportation, time constraints, or conflicting responsibilities). Pop-ups are designed for short, impactful interactions, encouraging quick input on key questions and open feedback from community members. Potential locations for pop-ups include local events or festivals, parks, public squares, the library, and other community hubs. The pop-up will also serve to promote the community survey and encourage responses from those who have not yet participated.
- **Open House Event:** An open house event would provide a more structured opportunity for residents to learn about the strategic planning process and share their perspectives. The event could start with an overview of the strategic planning objectives and the key questions guiding our process, ensuring everyone attending has a shared understanding as a foundation for further discussion. Nordicity will employ a mix of engagement methods to cater to different comfort levels and preferences for participation. These methods may include:
 - **"Consultants' Corner" Discussions:** Informal, intercept-style conversations where attendees can speak with Nordicity team members about their thoughts and ideas.
 - **Interactive Stations:** Gamified posters or engagement boards set up around the venue, where attendees can provide input using sticker dots, post-it notes, or other interactive methods.
 - **Survey Kiosks:** Tablets pre-loaded with the community survey, allowing attendees to complete the questionnaire on-site if they haven't already done so.

Regardless of the chosen format, the event will focus on gathering broad community input on the future of St.-Charles, touching on areas such as economic development, infrastructure, cultural and social services, and quality of life. This approach ensures that a wide range of community voices and perspectives are captured, providing a robust foundation for the strategic plan.

Specific resources required from the Municipality will include support securing the location for the pop-up or open house; attendance and participation (for an open house – to support transparency); support coordinating printing of engagement materials (e.g., foam core posters, postcards with QR codes); providing a table, tablecloths, and some branded materials (e.g., banner). Note: If there is interest in hosting the pop-up or open house as a bilingual event, we may require additional support from the Municipality (e.g., staff facilitator to join Nordicity).

Community Leaders & Change-Makers Workshop

As part of the in-person engagement program, we propose facilitating a workshop designed for community leaders, change-makers, and key partners, including representatives from local community groups, service organizations, and business associations. While we will look to the Municipality to advise on appropriate participants, examples might include (but not be limited to) the Beautification Advisory Committee, Club Alidor, St.-Charles Minor Hockey Association, St.-Charles Public Library Board, St.-Charles Play Centre, local faith-based organizations, Sudbury East Chamber of Commerce, St.-Charles Firefighters Association, and the Veuve River Snowmobile Club.

This workshop will create a dynamic and inclusive environment for participants to explore strategic priorities, identify collaboration opportunities, and brainstorm potential initiatives that align with the community's vision. By bringing together a diverse range of voices, we aim to ensure that the workshop captures the full spectrum of community perspectives and builds consensus around critical ideas for the strategic plan.

The workshop will employ techniques tailored for medium to large groups, fostering an open dialogue that encourages active participation and co-creation of ideas. This approach will help build buy-in from community stakeholders and generate innovative solutions that are vital to the strategic planning process.

We welcome municipal staff participation to support this session by guiding participants through different phases of the activity or simply listening in on discussions to gain direct insights. However, our team is fully equipped to facilitate this session independently if staff involvement is not required. Note: If there is interest in hosting this as a bilingual session, we may require additional support from the Municipality (e.g., staff facilitator to join Nordicity).

Indigenous Community Engagement

To ensure the perspectives of local Indigenous communities are meaningfully integrated into the strategic plan, we propose hosting a dedicated engagement session. While Indigenous participation will be encouraged throughout all engagement activities, we also recommend a dedicated session with Indigenous community members to create a safe and welcoming space where participants can openly share their priorities, challenges, and opportunities related to the future of St.-Charles.

We propose that the Municipality offers to host a lunch or morning/afternoon tea break at a location that is convenient and comfortable for Indigenous participants, such as a regional Friendship Centre, or an appropriate gathering place recommended by local Indigenous leaders. While we anticipate a group of 10–15 participants, we are open to adjusting this based on guidance from the host organization or venue, as well as any feedback from the community about the preferred format.

Nordicity will facilitate a discussion with a relaxed, conversational approach – while still focusing on the key research questions – over the shared meal or tea break. We will provide opportunities for participants to contribute to discussions about community needs and priorities, and to offer input on the strategic vision for St.-Charles, ensuring that sites, programs, and initiatives of Indigenous cultural significance are considered in development of the plan. In addition to informing the Community Strategic Plan, this engagement is intended to help support ongoing dialogue and collaboration moving forward.

Specific resources required from the Municipality for this activity will include assistance connecting with the host organization (e.g., introductory email), catering costs, and attendance at the session (to support relationship building).

While this proposed approach draws on Nordicity's extensive experience working with diverse Indigenous communities, we remain flexible and open to adapting the session format to best meet the needs of local Indigenous organizations and community members in or around St.-Charles.

By the end of Phase 3, we will have collected qualitative and quantitative data from diverse community members across St.-Charles, including internal and external stakeholders as well as the broader public. This data will inform the analysis and strategic priorities in the next phase.

Phase 3 Roles & Responsibilities:

- Municipality of St.-Charles: Responsible for supporting the promotion of engagement activities, providing logistical support for in-person events, and facilitating introductions to key stakeholders.
- Nordicity: Responsible for developing promotional materials, supporting distribution of promotional materials, and facilitating all virtual and in-person engagement activities.

Phase 4: Analysis

The purpose of this phase is to synthesize the research and engagement findings from the previous phases. It includes developing a strategic framework for the next decade, and refining that framework in collaboration with the Municipality.

Analyze All Inputs and Develop Strategic Framework

Nordicity will conduct a thorough analysis of all qualitative and quantitative data gathered during the strategic assessment and engagement phases. This process will involve analyzing results of the community survey, analyzing feedback from virtual roundtables and in-person sessions, and synthesizing insights from the background document review and external scan. Our team will identify common and critical themes, key needs, opportunities, and priorities that have emerged from the research.

Nordicity will then develop a draft strategic framework for the Municipality of St.-Charles. This framework will be organized around several **strategic pillars** (broad, high-level aim we are working toward) that reflect the core themes identified through analysis. Each pillar will house key objectives (tied to the outcomes we want to achieve; more specific intended results) and specific actions (what we can do to help achieve our objectives).

Prepare Interim Report

Nordicity will prepare an interim report that presents the key findings from the analysis phase and outlines the preliminary strategic direction. This document will provide a foundation for discussion during the upcoming strategic planning workshop, ensuring all participants have a shared understanding of the key learnings gleaned through the earlier planning phases.

Facilitate Strategic Planning Workshop

Nordicity will facilitate a virtual strategic planning workshop with the Municipality's project team, members of Council, and other key stakeholders. This two-hour session will be an interactive and collaborative discussion to refine the draft strategic framework, including strategic pillars, objectives, and potential actions. The workshop will also explore implementation considerations, such as resource requirements, potential partnerships, and timelines.

We will use a mix of facilitation techniques, such as breakout discussions, prioritization exercises, and collaborative idea generation, to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to contribute their perspectives. The goal of the workshop is to refine and validate the strategic direction and develop a shared sense of ownership and commitment to the plan.

Our team has extensive experience facilitating virtual strategic planning workshops and is well equipped to design a tailored session for St.-Charles.

Following the workshop, Nordicity will incorporate the feedback received into a revised version of the strategic framework. This revision will refine the strategic pillars, objectives, and actions to reflect the input gathered during the workshop, ensuring the plan aligns with municipal and community priorities.

By the end of Phase 4, we will have a final draft of the strategic framework that has been iterated through multiple layers of engagement and feedback, setting the stage for the final reporting phase.

Phase 4 Roles & Responsibilities:

- Municipality of St.-Charles: Responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on the key findings and strategic framework, and coordinating participation in the strategic planning workshop.
- Nordicity: Responsible for analyzing all research and engagement inputs, preparing the interim report, developing the draft and revised strategic framework, and facilitating the strategic planning workshop.

Phase 5: Reporting

The final phase focuses on developing the final Community Strategic Plan for the Municipality of St.-Charles. This plan will serve as a guiding document for the next decade, aligning the community's vision, objectives, and priorities with actionable strategies and implementation considerations.

Develop Draft Community Strategic Plan

Nordicity will develop a draft Community Strategic Plan that reflects the input, analysis, and findings from all previous phases. We anticipate key components of the Community Strategic Plan will include:

- **Vision:** A clear articulation of the community's vision for its future, grounded in the values and aspirations identified through community engagement.
- **Strategic Pillars and Objectives:** A series of overarching strategic pillars that frame the direction of the Municipality over the coming decade, each supported by specific objectives aligned with community needs and priorities.
- **Action Plan:** Detailed action plan that outlines the shorter-term initiatives to be undertaken to achieve each objective, including timelines, responsibilities, resource considerations, and potential partners or collaborators.

The draft plan will be shared with the Municipality's project team for review and feedback. During this period, Nordicity can host a meeting with the Municipality to address any questions and discuss feedback. It is expected that all written feedback will be consolidated by the Municipality before being shared with Nordicity, to ensure a clear and efficient process.

Based on the feedback, Nordicity will make any required revisions before submitting the final St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan to the Municipality. If needed, Nordicity will be available to virtually deliver a presentation and address any questions at a Council meeting or other public forum at the conclusion of this project.

By the end of Phase 5, the Municipality of St.-Charles will have a complete Community Strategic Plan that is ready for approval and implementation, ensuring that the community's vision, priorities, and goals are realized over the coming decade.

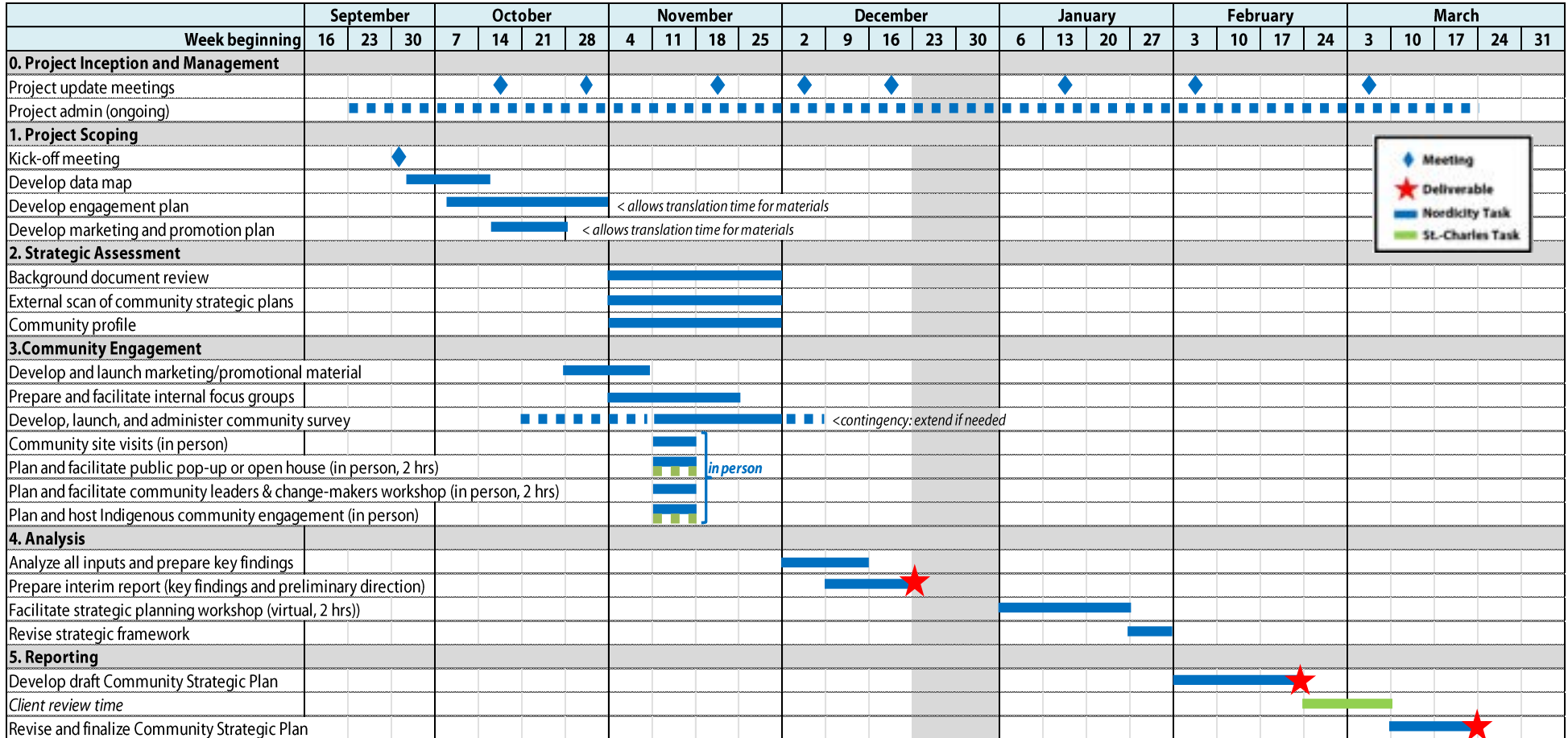
Phase 5 Roles & Responsibilities

- Municipality of St.-Charles: Responsible for reviewing the draft plan, providing feedback, and coordinating internal discussions and approvals as needed.
- Nordicity: Responsible for developing the draft and final versions of the plan.

3.2 Project Timeline

The Gantt schedule below outlines the proposed timeline to develop the St.-Charles Community Strategic Plan. This timeline positions us to complete the project slightly ahead of the March 28, 2025, deadline indicated in the RFP.

Figure 4 Proposed project timeline



3.3 Project Fees

The following table shows a detailed breakdown of the project costs by phase as well as key expenses. These costs reflect the approach outlined in the proposed work plan above, and we are open to discussing and adjusting the scope to best meet the Municipality of St.-Charles' needs and priorities.

Note: Event marketing and promotion costs are captured in our consulting fees as we anticipate coordination and production of marketing assets will be handled in-house. If the Municipality has a preferred external marketing partner, we are happy to adjust our proposed approach and fees accordingly.

Figure 5 Proposed project fees

Phase	Fees
0. Project Admin	\$7,980
<i>Project update meetings</i>	
<i>Project management (ongoing)</i>	
1. Project Scoping	\$5,900
<i>Kick-off meeting</i>	
<i>Develop data map</i>	
<i>Develop engagement plan</i>	
<i>Develop marketing and promotion plan</i>	
2. Strategic Assessment	\$5,690
<i>Background document review</i>	
<i>External scan of community strategic plans</i>	
<i>Community profile</i>	
3. Community Engagement	\$16,520
<i>Develop and launch marketing/promotional material</i>	
<i>Prepare and facilitate internal focus groups</i>	
<i>Develop, launch, and administer community survey</i>	
<i>Travel time</i>	
<i>Community site visits (in person)</i>	
<i>Plan and facilitate public pop-up or open house (in person, 2 hrs)</i>	
<i>Plan and facilitate community leaders & change-makers workshop (in person, 2 hrs)</i>	
<i>Plan and host Indigenous community engagement (in person)</i>	
4. Analysis	\$11,780
<i>Analyze all inputs and prepare key findings</i>	
<i>Develop draft strategic framework</i>	
<i>Prepare interim report (key findings and preliminary direction)</i>	
<i>Prepare materials for strategic planning workshop</i>	
<i>Facilitate strategic planning workshop (virtual, 2 hrs)</i>	
<i>Revise strategic framework</i>	
5. Reporting	\$7,640
<i>Develop draft Community Strategic Plan</i>	
<i>Revise and finalize Community Strategic Plan</i>	
Subtotal	\$55,510
Travel	\$4,400
Total Fees & Expenses	\$59,910
HST	\$7,788

4. Relevant Experience

This section describes Nordicity's relevant experience, spanning municipal strategic planning, economic development, workforce development, and tourism analysis. Our approach combines best practices from diverse sectors, a commitment to community engagement, and a strong background in policy development and economic impact analysis. This breadth of expertise positions us well to support the Municipality of St.-Charles in developing a strategic plan tailored to its unique needs and future opportunities.

4.1 Municipal Strategy and Policy Development

Nordicity has a proven track record in developing strategic plans and policies for municipalities across Canada. Our work focuses on fostering community engagement, enhancing local services, and driving economic and cultural development. For the Municipality of St.-Charles, our experience with diverse communities, from large cities to smaller towns, demonstrates our ability to create tailored, actionable strategies that reflect local needs, build consensus among stakeholders, and align with broader municipal objectives. The following examples illustrate our capacity to deliver strategic planning initiatives that balance growth with sustainability, support long-term community resilience, and promote a high quality of life.

- **Town of Fort Frances – Culture Plan and Museum Strategic Plan (ongoing):** Nordicity has been engaged for this initiative to develop the inaugural Culture Plan and an updated Museum & Cultural Centre Strategic Plan for the Town of Fort Frances. The approach includes tailored community engagement and leveraging limited Town resources for effective plan development.
- **City of Thunder Bay – Cultural Plan (ongoing):** Nordicity is developing a Cultural Plan that includes a facilities and service review looking into three key city assets: the Trunk Portal, Baggage Building Arts Centre, and Community Programming and Events.
- **City of Abbotsford – Culture Strategic Plan and Cultural Services Inventory, Delivery, and Governance Review (ongoing):** The City of Abbotsford has engaged Nordicity to conduct a Cultural Services Inventory and Delivery Model Assessment and Governance Review. The project involves developing an inventory, a comparative review to benchmark the City against municipalities of similar sizes, interviews, an evaluation of cultural services, and a review of fee-for-service agreements with core cultural service providers.
- **Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) – Strategic Regional Cultural Plan and Cultural Funding Review:** Nordicity developed a five-year Regional Cultural Plan for the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, engaging with eight regionally funded cultural sites and key stakeholders to sustain and enhance the region's cultural landscape. Following this, Nordicity conducted a Cultural Funding Review in 2024 to evaluate and align funding with the evolving needs of these sites, providing tailored recommendations to maximize regional impact.
- **City of Markham – Economic Development and Culture Strategy:** Nordicity, in partnership with Deloitte, was commissioned to develop a 2023-2027 Economic Development and Culture Strategy for the City of Markham. The final strategic goals and recommendations developed were created to help guide major economic development and culture decisions and initiatives in Markham.
- **City of St. Catharines – Cultural Plan Update:** Nordicity developed a 5-year culture plan for the City (2024-2029). The Plan was informed by inputs from secondary research, document and policy review, and engagement with City staff, community arts organizations, institutions and groups, artists, culture participants, residents, and tourists. Various creative

approaches were employed during the engagement phase of the project, including a poetry and movement workshop facilitated by local artists, community pop-ups, and sector roundtable discussions. The plan also included specific recommendations to evaluate and grow the City's cultural funding program.

- **City of Cambridge – Arts and Culture Master Plan:** Nordicity was engaged to develop a comprehensive Arts and Culture Master Plan to help enhance the City's cultural services, facilities, programming, and events, which will guide the Culture Division for the coming ten years. Our approach utilized five phases, including internal and external consultations and extensive public engagement.
- **Innisfil IdeaLab and Public Library – Culture Master Plan:** Nordicity was engaged by the Innisfil IdeaLab to develop a Culture Master Plan for the Town of Innisfil, situating the library as the centre of engagement, connections, and innovation for the Town. The project involved extensive public and stakeholder consultation and made use of a digital engagement and facilitation platform to support the integration of the various consultation activities.
- **City of Pitt Meadows – Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC) Master Plan:** Nordicity (in partnership with RC Strategies+PERC) was engaged by the City of Pitt Meadows, BC, to develop its 2020 Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC) Master Plan. The Nordicity team led consultation and engagement work with cultural stakeholders, conducted a high-level trends and practices review, and supported the development of arts and cultural recommendations and strategies.
- **City of Yellowknife – Arts and Culture Master Plan:** Nordicity was engaged, in association with local artist Sarah Swan, by the City of Yellowknife to develop an Arts and Culture Master Plan. The plan was developed through extensive consultations, both with the City and external stakeholders. Community consultation included a survey, roundtable discussions, and an open house. The resulting strategy set Yellowknife up to effectively support and grow arts and culture in the city.
- **City of Victoria – Arts and Culture Master Plan:** Nordicity developed the Arts and Culture Master Plan, which included the design and distribution of a stakeholder survey and economic impact analysis (EIA), as well as the development of an inventory of City-owned and community-run arts and culture facilities, and assets based on previous cultural mapping data. Recently, the Create Victoria culture plan won the Creative Cities Network Canada's (CCNC) **Award of Excellence in Cultural Planning** in 2018.
- **City of Maple Ridge – Culture Plan:** Nordicity, alongside Patricia Huntsman, was commissioned to develop the City of Maple Ridge's Cultural Plan Update 2017-2027 – a framework for the City's future vision, policy, and action plan for arts and culture for the next ten years. The planning process resulted in a public engagement process to facilitate community dialogue, from which to form initiatives, priorities, timelines, evaluation, and metrics to guide the City's arts and culture services. The plan won the 2019 **Award of Excellence in Cultural Planning** from the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC).
- **City of Brampton – Cultural Master Plan and Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment:** Nordicity and Lord Cultural Resources partnered to develop a Cultural Master Plan for the City of Brampton. The project included an assessment of the state of culture in Brampton as well as an extensive public and stakeholder engagement process, the results of which were combined to develop the final vision, strategies, goals, key objectives, key recommendations and implementation plan for the City's Cultural Master Plan. Additionally, Nordicity was engaged by the City of Brampton to conduct a needs assessment to identify and validate key needs and use cases for a new dedicated arts and culture facility and inform the

development of a user-centred functional program. Desk research was conducted to review existing data and review existing spaces available for arts and culture in Brampton. Additionally, a mixture of workshops, pop-ups and a survey with stakeholders were used to validate and prioritize the preliminary needs and use cases, including a session with Indigenous artists to discuss culturally specific and artistic practice needs. The final report provided space programming recommendations designed to balance specific needs while allowing for the continued growth of the arts center and cultural community.

- **Tri-Municipal Region (City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain, and Parkland County) – Cultural Strategy:** Nordicity was commissioned (in partnership with RC Strategies+PERC) to develop a sustainable, cost-effective, and comprehensive Cultural Strategy on behalf of the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain, and Parkland County (the Tri-Municipal Region). The Project Team utilized a five-phase methodology that combines desk research, internal consultation with municipal representatives, analysis, recommendations, and an implementation plan.
- **City of Jasper – Culture and Recreation Services and Facilities Review:** In the City of Jasper, Nordicity worked again alongside RC Strategies+PERC to deliver a Culture and Recreation Services and Facilities Review. The project team developed a multi-faceted and data-driven approach to prioritizing future investment into recreation and culture services and facilities that was reflective of community perspectives, while also taking into account capital and operating cost impacts, service delivery approaches, etc.
- **City of Oshawa – Feasibility Study for a Cultural Hub:** Nordicity was engaged to conduct a feasibility study for a cultural hub. This was achieved through consultations with eight not-for-profit cultural organizations and five facilitation sessions, as well as an online survey of the public via Connect Oshawa.

4.2 Economic Development and Innovation Ecosystems

Nordicity has extensive experience in supporting municipalities and organizations across Canada to drive economic growth and foster innovation ecosystems. Our expertise includes developing economic strategies, business plans, digital media strategies, and sector profiles that stimulate local economies and attract investment. For the Municipality of St.-Charles, our track record in economic development demonstrates our ability to create actionable plans that enhance financial sustainability, leverage local assets, and position communities for future opportunities in a rapidly changing economic landscape. The following examples highlight our experience in crafting strategies that encourage innovation, optimize resources, and support vibrant, diversified local economies.

- **Vancouver Island Economic Development Association (VICEDA) – VICEDA Tech Strategy:** Nordicity was commissioned by VICEDA to develop the Vancouver Island Technology Attraction Strategy for seven participating communities. The strategy included an in-depth inventory of the sector, the identification of its factors for growth, relevant practices in comparable regions, key value propositions, and partnerships and investment tools by which it can advance.
- **Town of Collingwood – Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study and Fundraising Framework:** Nordicity, in partnership with Giaimo Architects, conducted a feasibility study for the development of a performing arts centre in Collingwood. The study included a market assessment and extensive community consultations to align the project with local culture and economic development goals. In 2024, Nordicity was re-engaged to develop a fundraising framework, including targets and development strategies, to support the realization of the proposed performing arts centre.

- **City of Kawartha Lakes – Feasibility Study of a Cultural Centre(s):** The City of Kawartha Lakes commissioned Nordicity and Giaimo Architects to undertake a feasibility study around developing one or more cultural centres in the municipality. The work was undertaken using a 4-phase approach that included conducting desk research, public consultation through an online survey, interviews, and roundtables, developing an operations model that included a service levels standards plan, and a final report and recommendations. As a result of the vast geographic landscape to cover, the hub-and-spoke option was seen to ultimately serve the most needs.
- **Calgary Economic Development (CED) – Creative Economy Strategy and Digital Media Strategy:** Calgary Economic Development engaged Nordicity to develop a comprehensive Creative Economy Strategy aimed at fostering economic growth within all subsectors of the creative industries. This strategy involved infrastructure planning, business expansion, and training opportunities to position Calgary as a leader in the creative sector. In a related engagement, Nordicity also developed a Digital Media Strategy for Calgary, which included an analysis of the size and scope of the digital media sector in the region, identification of investment targets, and recommendations for designating Calgary as a North American digital media hub. This strategy also addressed connectivity needs and the economic impact of new fiber infrastructure, as well as the necessary steps for labor force redeployment.
- **City of Richmond – Richmond Shipyards National Historic Site Business Plan:** Nordicity was engaged to provide consulting services to develop a Strategic Business Plan for the Britannia Heritage Shipyards National Historic Site. The multi-year Strategic Business Plan included an overview of the facility, identification of key business activities, a market analysis, an operating plan, and a financial analysis.
- **City of Toronto – Interactive Digital Media (IDM) Strategy:** Nordicity was engaged by the City of Toronto’s Interactive Digital Media Office to assist in the development of an IDM strategy. To do so, Nordicity conducted a series of consultations with local industry stakeholders and experts and developed a framework for IDM sector development.
- **City of Courtenay – Business Plan for Cultural Organizations:** Nordicity, in partnership with Patricia Huntsman Culture & Communication, was commissioned by the City of Courtenay Recreation & Cultural Services Department to provide business plan development services to City-designated cultural organizations. The scope of work included a literature review, interviews with City staff and cultural partners, benchmarking of cultural services, financial management and performance analysis, and a cross-jurisdictional funding comparison analysis.
- **Town of Gravenhurst – Opera House Strategic Business Plan:** Nordicity, alongside Colliers and Global Philanthropic, developed a strategic business plan for the Town of Gravenhurst’s Opera House. The plan included project planning, case study development, funding and approval strategies, risk management and delivery strategies, and drafting and finalizing a feasibility report.
- **City of Red Deer – Culture Facility Needs Assessment Study:** Nordicity, in partnership with RC Strategies+PERC, was commissioned to conduct a cultural facilities needs assessment. The study consisted of a seven-phase methodology that combined desk research on local and regional planning and policy, demographic trends, and industry best practices, alongside extensive public participation (e.g., interviews, round table discussions, community open houses).
- **Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation (CEPCO) – Creative Industry, New Media, Animation, and High-Tech Strategy:** Nordicity was engaged to study how Chilliwack could position itself in light of the changing nature of the creative and screen-based media

industries – film, television, digital media and mobile. Nordicity examined creative industry opportunities, guiding CEPCO’s understanding of Chilliwack’s short and long-term focus areas. Nordicity facilitated industry roundtables with local business leaders and stakeholders, conducted key informant interviews, and deployed a web-based survey targeted at business owners, designed to identify their strengths and challenges.

- **City of Stratford – Digital Media Strategy:** Nordicity worked with economic development partners in the culturally-rich city of Stratford, Ontario, to develop and deliver a municipal digital media strategy. A key tenet of this engagement was that digital media is not an industry in itself, but something which underpins all industries, including Arts and Culture. The Stratford Festival was a key stakeholder and steering committee member in this process, which included mapping Stratford’s digital media assets, interviewing key stakeholders, and holding an open forum event to engage with both the community and the industry (hosted at the University of Waterloo-Stratford).
- **Communities Economic Development Fund (CEDF) – Assessment of Interactive Digital Media (IDM) in Northern Manitoba:** CEDF engaged Nordicity and New Media to complete an assessment of – and strategy to harness – the potential of interactive digital media (IDM) in Northern Manitoba.
- **Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA)** engaged Nordicity to demonstrate the contributions and impacts stimulated by Toronto’s live music venues. More precisely, this project examined two distinct, yet related, types of impact: the economic impact of music venues as well as the role that venues play in attracting tourists; and the 'music industry impact,' that is, the role that music venues play in the development of a healthy music ecosystem, supporting artist development and fostering the creation of uniquely Canadian music

4.3 Labour Market and Workforce Development

Nordicity has extensive experience in labour market analysis and workforce development, working with governments, municipalities, and organizations to understand and respond to evolving workforce needs. Our work includes identifying future skills requirements, developing workforce strategies, and conducting economic impact assessments. For the Municipality of St.-Charles, our expertise in labour market research will help ensure the Community Strategic Plan is grounded in a realistic understanding of local economic conditions, workforce capabilities, and future employment opportunities. The following examples illustrate our ability to deliver insights and recommendations that support community resilience, skills development, and sustainable economic growth.

- **Invest Vancouver – Can Export Sector Profile (ongoing):** Nordicity was engaged by Invest Vancouver to conduct a sector profiling of the digital media and entertainment industries, including XR/AR/VR, video games, and VFX and animation, in order to benchmark the city’s industry development and bolster investment.
- **University of Yukon – Future Skills Research for Yukon Economy:** Nordicity was engaged by Yukon University to conduct research and extensive engagement into future skills required to future-proof the Yukon Economy. This involved developing a conceptual framework and conducting community engagement to identify key challenges and opportunities for innovation-led growth, enabling Yukoners to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic through sustainable, resilient economic development.
- **SaskInteractive – Saskatchewan Technology Labour Market and Economic Impact Initiative:** SaskInteractive engaged Nordicity to perform a first-of-its-kind study of Saskatchewan’s technology sector, which developed a generalized Framework for

Technology Sector Statistics (FTSS) that would be both bespoke and responsive to the growing integration of technical skills in all economic sectors, and to any jurisdiction.

- **Calgary Economic Development (CED) – Digital Media Strategy:** As part of a broader strategy, Nordicity developed a Digital Media Strategy for Calgary that included steps for labor force redeployment. This involved an analysis of the connectivity needs, economic impact of new fiber infrastructure, and recommendations for upskilling and reskilling the workforce to align with Calgary’s ambition to become a North American digital media hub.

4.4 Additional Tourism Experience

Nordicity also has unique expertise in tourism and quantitative research and analysis, bolstered by in-depth knowledge and understanding of the contributions of the arts and culture sector in Ontario and beyond. As a leader in designing methodologies and using evidence-based approaches, the firm is well-positioned to develop a strategic plan leveraging this expertise.

- **Experience in Economic Impact Analysis:** Nordicity has over four decades of experience conducting economic impact analyses at the national, provincial/territorial, regional, municipal, and organizational levels. The firm has been at the forefront of developing new methodologies to **measure the economic and social impacts** of cultural and creative products, experiences, organizations, and industries. This expertise has established Nordicity as Canada’s leading firm for arts, culture, heritage, and creative/digital industry impact measurement.
- **Tourism Components in Impact Assessments:** Nordicity's economic impact assessments frequently include a tourism component, with extensive experience using Ontario's Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM). We have applied TREIM in impact studies for a variety of clients, including the **Toronto Outdoor Art Fair, Bata Shoe Museum, Canadian Live Music Association, the City of Hamilton, the Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thompson Hall, Folk Music Ontario, Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto (MOCA), and Tirgan Festival.**
- **National and International Expertise:** Beyond Ontario, Nordicity has conducted economic impact studies within Canada for the **Banff World Media Festival, Vancouver International Jazz Festival, and Whistler Film Festival.** Internationally, the firm has completed studies for the **British Film Institute (UK), Galway City Council (Ireland), and London Design Festival (UK),** as well as analyzing the economic impact of **Iraq’s creative economy** and the **design economy of the Philippines.**

4.5 References

The following table presents three references for this project.

Reference	Project
<p>Client: Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Contact: Hilary Erasmus Manager of Communications and Culture Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (778) 349-8475 hilary.erasmus@rdffg.bc.ca</p>	<p>Strategic Regional Cultural Plan (2021) and Cultural Funding Review (2024) Nordicity developed a five-year Regional Cultural Plan for the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, engaging with eight regionally funded cultural sites and key stakeholders. Nordicity subsequently conducted a Cultural Funding Review to evaluate and align funding with the evolving needs of these sites.</p>
<p>Client: Vancouver Island Economic Development Association (VICEDA) Contact: Rose Klukas Director of Economic Development & Indigenous Relations City of Campbell River (250) 286-5738 / (250) 895-0667 rose.klukas@campbellriver.ca</p>	<p>VICEDA Tech Strategy (2018) Nordicity was commissioned by VICEDA to develop the Vancouver Island Technology Attraction Strategy for seven participating communities. The strategy included an in-depth inventory of the sector, the identification of its factors for growth, relevant practice in comparable regions, key value propositions, and partnerships and investment tools by which it can advance.</p>
<p>Client: Town of Collingwood Contact: Karen Cubitt Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture Town of Collingwood (705) 444-2500 ext. 3711 kcubitt@collingwood.ca</p>	<p>Performing Arts Centre Feasibility Study (2022) and Fundraising Framework (2024) Nordicity, in partnership with Giaimo Architects, conducted a feasibility study for a performing arts centre in Collingwood, including a market assessment and extensive community consultations to align the project with local culture and economic development goals. The study provided clear options and operating models tailored to the community's needs. Nordicity also developed a feasible fundraising framework for the project.</p>

5. Supporting Information

This section presents supporting information relevant to our proposal, including areas in which our team can add value for the Municipality of St.-Charles' strategic planning process beyond the scope of services outlined in the RFP.

5.1 Innovative and Inclusive Approaches

We don't do cookie-cutter consultations.

Nordicity views engagement as a two-way process. We design bespoke engagement approaches for each project that include multiple channels and invite numerous opportunities to explore and refine our findings. All activities are designed to solicit open, frank feedback from stakeholders and the broader public while remaining focused on the key research questions integral to the project at hand.

Innovative Stakeholder Engagement

Our team has proven expertise in developing engagement plans to effectively engage with **diverse communities**. Our consultants operate in both virtual and in-person environments to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative feedback from stakeholders and distill this data to gather useful insights. We have experience using tools and methods such as roundtables, interviews, town halls, open houses, online surveys, and pop-up consultations. We also have experience engaging with Indigenous communities in Indigenous circles.

Throughout our work, we employ **innovative and creative consultation methods** designed to serve the unique needs for each project. For instance, we worked with our client to turn an open house conducted for the Nanaimo Art Gallery into a community event, complete with live music and other attractions to encourage turn-out and promote the art gallery as a key cultural landmark in Nanaimo.

Figure 6 Engagement activities at the Nanaimo Art Gallery Open House



Similarly, we turned an open house conducted for the City of Kingston into a community event that doubled as a networking event and promoted the City as a hotbed of talent with a thriving local music economy. Most recently, we paired community pop-ups across St. Catharines with an **artist-facilitated collaging activity**, which raised the profile of the pop-ups and resulted in residents staying engaged for longer periods of time while creating artistic interpretations of what culture in their community means to them.

Nordicity's extensive experience conducting **online surveys** for both small and large-scale engagements extends from national surveys to municipal polls. Recently, we have developed online community surveys in the context of mandates in **municipal culture planning, cultural facilities**

development, museum and gallery strategic planning projects library planning, festivals and events planning, and impact evaluation.

Our consultants regularly draw on a growing **portfolio of digital engagement practices** to address remote working needs. While many are familiar with Microsoft Teams, Skype, or Zoom (including the ability for breakout groups), other technologies provide further levels of collaboration and interaction. We regularly employ platforms such as **Google Jamboard** or **Miro** for data collection by seeding and sorting new ideas. Miro’s digital templates for collaboration are well suited for planning projects and distilling information. **Polling tools** via **Zoom** or **Mentimeter** offer simple, user-friendly options for participation and audience interaction by generating real-time responses to questions or activities.

Our team’s in-depth experience in hosting both in-person and virtual engagement events will ensure that, as needed, we can successfully facilitate the participation of key community members who are unable/unavailable to participate in a particular format. We effectively leverage all forms of engagement to create a fulsome experience for all.

It should also be noted that effort will be invested into ensuring those without adequate access to the above-mentioned digital platforms have opportunities to be involved in this project – for example, we can provide residents the option to fill out the online survey on-the-spot at in-person engagements

Inclusive Research Practices

Our team is committed to inclusive research practices and approaches consultations mindfully. Part of this process includes ensuring that we purposefully seek diverse representation from equity-deserving groups. We also have experience creating accessible consultation processes, such as employing tools like closed captioning (e.g., Otter.ai), engaging ASL interpreters, and provided supporting materials in accessible formats.

We place **Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism** at the forefront of our work, beginning all engagements with an inclusively designed approach. Our engagement plans are designed to advance accessibility and encompass diversity of ability, language, culture, gender, and age.

Inclusive design recognizes that we are not all the same and that **design must be usable, flexible, and customizable**, among other qualities, to be truly inclusive.

Considering innovative approaches and effective solutions also requires an awareness and application of the following key concepts:

- **Listening:** Above all, our consulting teams begin with a strong predisposition to listen and try to park stereotypes at the door. We recognize that a deeper understanding requires the ability to listen actively, and that listening relies on creating a safe atmosphere that will enable interlocutors to in turn to communicate what they have to say more effectively.
- **Diversity Iceberg:** A common metaphor in Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism work is the iceberg. What we see above the waterline is only about 10% of the iceberg; everything else is below the waterline. Considering what is beneath the waterline – what we cannot see

Figure 7 Nordicity led a bespoke engagement approach for our Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of Indigenous Tourism and Cultural Sectors in Yukon, Canada.



– regarding the experiences and cultures of equity-deserving groups is an important consideration.

- **Choosing Curiosity Over Judgment:** Curiosity is a superpower in this work. Rather than making assumptions and placing judgment on a person or a group, stepping into curiosity and questioning can help shift from problem to solution.
- **Unconscious Bias:** A foundational element of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism work is unconscious or implicit bias. Everyone has bias and it is not possible to eliminate it entirely. Understanding why we have bias (and how it is shaped by culture and lived experience), how it can be helpful at times, when it gets in the way of inclusion, and how to disrupt bias helps to move individuals, organizations, and communities towards true inclusion.
- **Privilege:** Privilege is not just about socioeconomic status. Privilege is a nuanced topic that requires an ability to see past our own situations and be willing to explore another person’s lived experience. Exploring this topic by seeking equity-deserving groups’ feedback, being curious, and listening without bias is essential when identifying systemic discrimination.
- **Trust:** Building trust with stakeholder groups is a critical success factor to Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism work. Frequently, trust must be built quickly as in the case with focus groups. Taking time at the beginning of meetings and conversations to establish rapport, provide context, and explain the process and purpose of the work helps stakeholders feel a level of safety and trust.
- **Futureproofing:** To ensure the sustainability of a Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism framework, attention must be paid to both structural and behavioral inclusion. Ensuring that changes are applied and implemented to the structure of an organization – the policies and procedures – with behavior changes – learning opportunities, tools, and reinforcement of learning – are integral to sustainable inclusion.

In addition, we are committed to ensuring inclusive **Indigenous engagement** and working with Indigenous partners to ensure communities can be reached in an appropriate and culturally safe manner. When working with Indigenous partners, clients, and community members, Nordicity takes an approach that acknowledges the unique status, histories, experiences, cultural protocols, and worldviews of Indigenous peoples and their right to self-determination.

5.2 Digitally-Driven Solutions

Nordicity is at the forefront of digital innovation and strategy in the cultural and creative sectors. In addition to supporting municipalities and individual organizations in building their strategic plans, Nordicity works with organizations of all sizes to integrate “digital” into their infrastructure through the development of digital transformation strategies. Such digital strategies can help municipalities capitalize on the potentials of the digital world to improve community engagement, operational efficiencies, and development, among other benefits. Nordicity’s broad understanding of digital transformation provides us with an edge that will bring new ideas and opportunities to the Municipality of St.-Charles.

Nordicity is a data-driven firm that uses a range of digital tools for tracking and performance measurement. Our digital strategies showcase not only our aptitude for strategy development but also our understanding of the digital environment – an imperative consideration for any post-pandemic strategic planning endeavour. We will apply a digital lens throughout the development of this Community Strategic Plan to understand how digital can strengthen the Municipality’s operations, service delivery, and community-building efforts.

5.3 Quality Assurance

Nordicity's approach to quality assurance is multi-faceted and will be applied at each stage of the strategic planning process. This approach will be adapted to St.-Charles' specific needs, and we have summarized its core elements below.

Evidenced-based systematic approach: Nordicity's research and data-integrity processes have been refined through more than 40 years of conducting research. These processes include:

- **Extensive initial scan:** To locate existing data and information, and determine what gaps need to be filled through primary research (e.g., engagement and consultation).
- **Early identification of data gaps:** If there are significant gaps in the data available, they will be identified early and solutions will be sought through alternative sources (e.g., external research).

Effective project management: Nordicity has undertaken hundreds of projects for a range of public agencies globally. We are accustomed to working closely with clients to meet their expectations in terms of quality products, delivery, and timeliness. Our various approaches include:

- **Regular updates:** Regular status updates every 2–4 weeks will provide an opportunity for the Project Manager and the client to identify risks as early as possible. This approach ensures that difficulties can be identified well in advance of impacting the project's timeline – and can be handled appropriately in a collaborative manner.
- **Task-related and deliverable review meetings:** We believe in early warning and early course correction. If issues arise, we will ask for a specific meeting with the Town about related tasks. This approach ensures that our Project Team is on the right path and enables the client to provide feedback throughout the process.
- **Timeline changes based on mutual agreement:** While we work to ensure that our projects are delivered on schedule, we recognize that factors outside of the control of the client or Nordicity (e.g., a global health crisis) may intercede to change the timeline of delivery. In this event, Nordicity would work with the Municipality to revise the schedule and agree on new deadlines for any/all fixed deliverables.
- **Internal review and quality assurance:** Nordicity employs a robust internal review and quality assurance process to ensure all deliverables meet our high quality standards and address the client's and the project's needs.

Research principles: As a firm that specializes in the collection, analysis, and communication of information, Nordicity adheres to the following principles:

- **Practicality:** Nordicity's in-depth experience working with municipal clients lends us a clear understanding of what can be practically collected from individuals and organizations operating in those disciplines.
- **Transparency:** When collecting data, it is critical to ensure that participants clearly understand why the data is being collected and what it is to be used for.
- **Evidence-based:** Any recommendations made and/or best practices suggested by Nordicity are firmly rooted in a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence.
- **Diversity:** Whenever Nordicity seeks to understand a broad landscape, we ensure that data is collected from a diverse set of sources – and that we use a variety of research tools to ensure that individuals and organizations can participate meaningfully.

- **Relevance:** While no research is “future proof,” Nordicity always seeks to balance the research on the present with a view to trends creating change in the environment.
- **Accessibility:** In the end, any research created must be communicated. As such, Nordicity is committed to ensuring that the language and imagery used to depict our research is accessible – both in terms of its complexity and its readability. This commitment is supported by Trajectory’s expertise in brand storytelling and visual communications.

The Project Team’s experience conducting municipal analysis and strategic planning based on primary and secondary research is a clear advantage: our team’s expertise will allow us to **identify methodological limits early in the process and propose mitigating strategies to manage difficulties**. These include adapting to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 recovery environment; the management of expectations for deliverables, timelines, and data limitations; and a mitigation plan to prevent cost overruns and possible change orders. Good communication (including frequent progress meetings) and early identification of any issues will ensure that a re-allocation of responsibilities or resources can be planned if necessary. Any changes would be documented and approved by the client.