

Executive Summary



Introduction

The Municipality of St.-Charles Strategic Plan was developed through a collaborative process involving municipal staff, key stakeholders, and industry partners, with funding support from FedNor. This 10-year plan serves as a living document to guide municipal decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation while remaining adaptable to evolving community needs.

Community Overview

Located in Northeastern Ontario's Sudbury District, St.-Charles is a rural community of approximately 1,300 residents characterized by its scenic natural landscapes, outdoor recreational opportunities, and bilingual heritage. First settled in 1890 by pioneers from Quebec and Eastern Ontario, the community maintains strong connections to its agricultural, forestry, and francophone roots. Strategically positioned between Sudbury and North Bay, St.-Charles combines accessibility with a peaceful rural atmosphere that attracts families, retirees, and outdoor enthusiasts.

Vision & Mission

Vision

St.-Charles is a safe, welcoming, and affordable community where residents of all ages support one another with a strong sense of shared commitment and community spirit. We honour our rich agricultural, forestry and francophone heritage while embracing a future driven by the skills, creativity, and aspirations of our people.

Mission

Rooted in our rural heritage, we cultivate a thriving community by prioritizing wellness, recreation, health, and education. With deep respect for our history of hard work, we empower our greatest asset—our people—to build a strong, vibrant, and prosperous future together.

Core Values

- Community Connection: Fostering inclusive environments and meaningful relationships
- Environmental Stewardship: Protecting natural surroundings and ensuring responsible development
- Rural Heritage: Honoring agricultural foundations and Franco-Ontarian cultural traditions
- Balanced Living & Accessibility: Maintaining rural character while ensuring access to modern amenities
- Active Living, Health & Wellness: Supporting physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices

Methodology

The strategic planning process employed a mixed-methodology approach using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The three-phase approach included:

1. Comprehensive documentation review and analysis of municipal best practices
2. Community engagement through surveys, interviews, and focus groups
3. Development of Internal/External Analysis, priorities, goals, and action plans

Key Findings

The engagement process identified several challenges and opportunities facing the municipality:

Challenges

- **Infrastructure & Access:** Road conditions, limited internet coverage, public water access issues
- **Facility Utilization:** Underutilized community spaces including the arena and community center
- **Housing:** Lack of senior and affordable housing options
- **Economic Development:** Limited industry and employment opportunities
- **Recreation & Community Life:** Declining volunteerism and limited youth activities
- **Communication:** Perceived gaps in municipal-community information sharing

Opportunities

- **Economic Growth:** Investment attraction, agri-tourism expansion, remote work trends
- **Housing Development:** Senior housing, affordable construction options, regional partnerships
- **Recreation Enhancement:** Expanded programming, facility upgrades, water access improvements
- **Infrastructure Expansion:** Sewage system expansion, internet service extension, trail development
- **Regional Collaboration:** Service sharing, transportation solutions, healthcare partnerships
- **Communication Improvements:** Modernized branding, enhanced promotion of community events

Strategic Priority Areas

Based on stakeholder engagement and analysis, five priority areas have been identified to guide municipal decision-making over the next decade



1. **Community Infrastructure & Housing Development:** Addressing critical infrastructure needs and expanding housing options to accommodate population growth and changing demographics



2. **Economic Vitality & Growth:** Leveraging remote work trends, agricultural innovation, and business development opportunities to strengthen the local economy



3. **Recreation, Leisure & Wellness:** Enhancing recreational facilities, expanding programming, and improving access to promote active living and community health



4. **Education & Youth Retention:** Supporting educational initiatives and creating opportunities that encourage young people to remain in or return to the community



5. **Community Inclusion & Connection:** Strengthening communication channels, supporting volunteerism, and fostering a welcoming environment for all residents

Implementation Approach

The Strategic Plan includes a detailed Implementation Plan with specific goals, actions, timeframes, and progress metrics for each priority area. Municipal staff across all departments are responsible for developing annual workplans aligned with these strategic priorities. Council commits to reviewing priorities once per term to ensure they remain relevant, realistic, and achievable.

Moving Forward

This Strategic Plan represents St.-Charles' roadmap for balanced growth and sustainable development over the next decade. By addressing identified priorities through concrete actions, the Municipality aims to enhance quality of life for current residents while attracting new families and businesses to the community. Through careful implementation and regular assessment, this plan will transform community aspirations into meaningful progress, ensuring St.-Charles continues to thrive as a vibrant rural municipality.