



# 10 Year Community Strategic Plan

2025-2035



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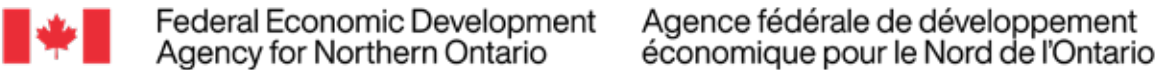
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# Acknowledgments

The Municipality of St.-Charles Strategic Plan was prepared in March 2025 for the Municipality of St.-Charles. The plan was made possible due to funding from FedNor.



This process was guided and supported by the municipal staff, key stakeholders and industry partners. The Strategic Plan reflects the thoughtful input and insightful recommendations of those who dedicated their time and effort to this initiative. Karen Jones Consulting Inc. was retained to facilitate the planning process, engage stakeholders and support the development of the Strategic Plan.



# 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.



# Municipality of St.-Charles

The Municipality of St. -Charles is a charming, small community located in Northeastern Ontario, within the Sudbury District. Part of the larger Municipality of St.-Charles, this rural area is home to approximately 1,300 residents and is renowned for its scenic beauty, featuring vast forests, lakes, and natural landscapes. The town is an ideal destination for outdoor enthusiasts and those seeking a peaceful, rural lifestyle. Offering a wide range of recreational opportunities, St.-Charles provides activities such as hiking, ATV riding, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

Beyond its appeal as a potential tourist destination, St.-Charles is an inviting place to call home. Conveniently located between Sudbury and North Bay, the community offers the perfect combination of accessibility and seclusion, creating a peaceful, small-town atmosphere. The local economy is primarily supported by agriculture, forestry, tourism, and small businesses, with the surrounding natural environment playing a key role in driving recreational activities. With affordable home and lot prices, St.-Charles is an attractive option for new families, retirees, and first-time homebuyers. Its growing population reflects its status as both a tranquil retreat and a welcoming place to settle.

Known as one of Northern Ontario's hidden gems, St.-Charles provides the ideal blend of natural beauty and community spirit. As a rural community, it places great value on preserving its natural environment while pursuing sustainable growth. Residents take pride in their heritage and traditions, which are often celebrated through local festivals, events, and volunteer initiatives. While St.-Charles faces common rural challenges, such as access to services and economic diversification, its resilience is evident in the commitment of its local government and engaged citizens, all working together to ensure a vibrant future.

St.-Charles, first settled in 1890 by pioneers from Quebec and Eastern Ontario, has grown into a rural community that cherishes its rich bilingual heritage. The Municipality's deep commitment to recreation, health, education, and rural traditions shapes its identity. These values will serve as cornerstones in the new Strategic Plan, integrating through every aspect of the community's future development. Today, the blend of French and English cultures continues to define St.-Charles, honouring the legacy of its founders while embracing opportunities for growth.



# Vision and Mission Statement

The Municipality of St.-Charles is guided by its vision, mission, values, strategic priorities and goals, which are embodied in its Strategic Plan.

**This Strategic Plan serves multiple essential functions:**

- Outlines priorities and objectives for the Municipality
- Communicates the overall community vision
- Facilitates Council policy development and decision making
- Guides Senior Management and Staff in developing and executing effective plans

As a living document, the 10-Year Strategic Plan provides direction for future planning while remaining adaptable to the evolving needs of both the Municipality and its community. Council commits to reviewing strategic priorities once per term to ensure they remain relevant, realistic and achievable.

Staff across all departments are responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating annual workplans that align with the Strategic Plan's priorities. Through ongoing assessment and review, the Municipality ensures that all priorities, goals and objectives consistently reflect its vision, mission and values while effectively moving the community forward.

## VISION STATEMENT

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 STATEMENT

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

We foster an inclusive environment where everyone belongs, nurturing meaningful relationships through shared experiences and active participation. We believe in the power of our close-knit community spirit to create supportive and inclusive networks, embrace diversity, and inspire civic engagement that strengthens our collective future.

## Environmental Stewardship

We treasure and protect our pristine natural surroundings, recognizing that our waterways, forests, and open spaces are both our legacy and our responsibility. We commit to sustainable practices that preserve our environmental assets, ensure responsible development of waterfront opportunities, and maintain the breathtaking beauty that defines our landscape for future generations.

## Rural Heritage

We honour the agricultural foundations and cultural traditions that have shaped our identity through generations. We proudly celebrate our Franco-Ontarian roots while embracing the values of hard work, self-reliance, and land stewardship that define our rural character. We commit to preserving these vital connections to our past as we build our future, ensuring that the unique wisdom of rural life continues to thrive in our evolving community.

## Balanced Living & Accessibility

We embrace the serenity of rural life while ensuring access to essential modern amenities that enhance quality of life for all residents. We are committed to maintaining affordable housing options for families and seniors alike, creating an inclusive community where everyone can experience the benefits of rural living without sacrificing convenience. We strive for thoughtful development that preserves our rural character while providing the infrastructure, services, and opportunities that allow all community members to thrive.

## Active Living, Health & Wellness

We champion a vibrant community where physical activity, mental wellbeing, and healthy lifestyle choices flourish through accessible recreation opportunities across all seasons. We believe that investing in the health of our residents strengthens our community's foundation and enhances quality of life for everyone.



# Demographic and Community Profile

## Demographics

- Population: 1,357
- Demographics:
  - 0-14 years: 11%
  - 15-64 years: 62%
  - 65+ years: 27%
- Language: 54% English, 41% French, 4% Other
- Population trend: 6.9% change from 2016-2021
- Seasonal residents

## Economic Indicators

- Major employers: Agricultural sector, small businesses, and public services
- Unemployment rate: 6.8%
- Key industries: Agriculture, retail services, and tourism
- Average after tax household income: \$68,500

## Municipal Infrastructure

- Road network: 100 kilometers of municipal roads
- Water system: Municipal wastewater lagoon system
- Recreation facilities: Community centre, arena, park, sports field, and public waterfront splash pad
- Municipal buildings: Municipal Office, Arena, Community Centre, Fire Department, Public Works Garage, Wellness Centre, Library

## Governance Structure

- Council composition: Mayor and 4 councillors
- 9 standing committee: Environmental Services, Finance, General Government, Health Services, Parks & Recreation, Planning & Development, Protection to Persons & Property Social & Family Services, Transportation Services Shared services agreement with neighbouring municipalities for Building and By-Law Services
- Active participation in Sudbury East Municipal Association (SEMA) and Sudbury East Planning Board (SEPB)

## Community Development

- Housing stock: 625 private dwellings
- Commercial properties: 49 businesses
- Agricultural operations: over 49 businesses
- Community services: Library, medical clinic (part-time), pharmacy
- Recreation programs: Youth sports, senior activities, cultural events

*Statistics Canada. (2021).  
Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population.*



# Project Overview

A comprehensive Community Strategic Plan for the Municipality of St.-Charles was developed through a collaborative, partnership-based approach. The project encompassed six key deliverables: a Situational Analysis reviewing existing plans and processes; a Community Profile Analysis examining demographics and assets; a multi-faceted Engagement Process involving Council, management, stakeholders, businesses, and residents; an updated SWOT Analysis to identify priorities; an Action-Oriented Strategic Plan providing a clear decision-making framework; and a Communications Strategy ensuring effective information dissemination. The aim of the plan was to create a realistic strategy that balanced short and long-term municipal needs while fostering open communication and stakeholder buy-in throughout the process.

## Methodology

The methodology of Municipality of St.-Charles strategic planning puts the emphasis on implementing a well-balanced and harmonized project, to enable the utilization of systems thinking, enhanced empirical research and applied exploratory thinking throughout the strategic planning process-cycle. For the development of a multi-year strategic plan, a mixed methodology approach was adopted utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods with the aim of understanding the complex nature of interactions in the municipality. Quantitative methods served in the strategic planning process as a sampling method, drawing on a set of 22 survey questions. Furthermore, in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted to facilitate qualitative responses. Utilizing a three-phase approach, the strategic planning process included the analysis of primary and secondary research. Data collected during the research phase allowed for development of a SWOT Analysis, followed by priorities, goals and actions to guide future growth.

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Review & Assessment Situational Analysis	Stakeholder Engagement	Strategic Plan Development



# Review and Assessment

Phase 1 of the Strategic Planning process focused on comprehensive documentation review and analysis of municipal best practices to establish a strong foundation and baseline for the development of the Strategic Plan.

## DOCUMENT REVIEW

The following key municipal documents were analyzed:

Strategic Plans – 2007, 2014-2019

St. -Charles Community Feedback Survey Report

Age-Friendly Community Action Plan

Financial Statements

Asset Management Plan

Website: [www.stcharlesontario.ca](http://www.stcharlesontario.ca)



## Business Development

- 49 businesses & organizations listed in directory but understanding that there are many home-based businesses that are not listed.

## Tourism

- Agri-tourism
- Sports tourism
- Aids (snowmobiling, fishing, hunting)

## Senior Services

- Social & recreational
- Health

## Housing

- Senior
- 25 new lots
- Affordable housing strategy

## Transportation

- Accessible van project
- Community carpool/Ride share programs
- Bike share programs

## Wayfinding, Signage & Lighting

- Street lighting
- Municipal map board
- MTO to improve signage along Trans Canada Trail
- Parking signage at eye level

## Accessibility

- Walkways
- Sidewalks





## BEST PRACTICE REVIEW

St.-Charles is uniquely positioned to implement strategic best practices that align with its rural character while promoting sustainable growth. A community-first approach is essential, focusing on engagement through regular town halls, digital feedback platforms, and formalized partnerships with key organizations such as the Workforce Planning Board, Community Future Development Corporation, Small Business Enterprise Centre, Employment Ontario, and Chamber of Commerce. These relationships will be crucial in developing workforce strategies and economic development opportunities.

The municipality's commitment to sustainable development must balance three key elements: economic growth, environmental stewardship, and rural preservation. Operational success will require a structured approach to municipal management. This includes implementing clear performance metrics as it relates to the implementation of the strategic plan actions, conducting regular progress reviews, and ensuring strategic allocation of resources. Special attention should be given to critical infrastructure like the arena, where government funding opportunities can be actively pursued and linked to key programming. By adopting these practices, St.-Charles can continue offering a proactive approach to governance which results in a resilient and prosperous community.

The key to success lies in practical implementation such as setting achievable goals, maintaining consistent monitoring, and adjusting strategies based on community feedback and changing circumstances. This approach will help ensure that St.-Charles not only preserves its current strengths but builds upon them for future generations.





## BEST PRACTICE IDEAS

The following provides programs and initiatives that have been utilized in other communities to achieve results.

- “Kitchen Corner” meetings in local diners/restaurants to gather input from residents
- Bilingual engagement strategy using both in-person and online tools
- Quarterly scorecard system specifically designed for small municipal staff teams
- Integrated planning framework linking strategic priorities to annual budgeting
- Bi-annual community reporting system using both traditional and social media
- Development of a simplified strategic plan tracker shared at council meetings.

### Agricultural Innovation

- Agricultural mentorship program linking experienced farmers with newcomers
- Greenhouse initiative
- Tile drainage programs and incentives
- Reuse of crown land

### Tourism Development

- Four-season tourism strategy focusing on rural community-based tourism
- Snowmobile, cycling, hiking, equine trail network development
- Hosting sporting tournaments
- Winter festival development
- Ice fishing derby
- Collaborative marketing and regional partnerships

### Business Retention

- Home-based business support program
- Local business directory initiative
- Successful grant writing strategy workshops/application support
- Business development workshops
- Funding Forums
- Tradeshows
- Community partnership funding model

### Community & Regional Collaborations

- Shared municipal services
- Joint procurement initiative
- Winter wellness program
- Newcomer program

# Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement throughout the planning process was important and offered clear alignment between strategic objectives and operational plans.

The community session and survey were marketed broadly. This included communicating the information through social media posts, the municipal website and a direct mailout in tax bills. In addition to the surveys and community session, one-on-one interviews with stakeholders and a staff session were conducted. The following provides an overview about the results.

## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Engagement sessions occurred with 18 stakeholders throughout the strategic planning process. Many great ideas were put forward for consideration and concerns were raised about the current situation.

## CHALLENGES

The following challenges were identified.

### Infrastructure & Access Issues

- Roads in poor condition with drainage and sewage problems
- Limited internet and cell phone coverage, particularly outside the village
- Controversy over public water access (concerns about public camping, garbage, parking) while strong emphasis on need for public water access in the West Arm and Lake Nepewassi
- Park beside arena requires upgrades
- Red tape, access to capital and fragmentation hindering housing development
- Waste water issues

### Facility Utilization & Maintenance

- Arena maintenance and upgrades needed with underutilization concerns and no programming
- Two large community spaces (arena and community center) under used
- Debate over public boat launches versus private resort access
- Arena isn't used in the summer and staff are busy with grounds keeping in community

### Housing & Development

- No senior housing available
- Lack of affordable housing options
- Potential crown land opportunities
- Agricultural sector concerned about tax increases affecting structure development
- Increasing taxes cannot be the option
- Taxes are highest per capita – service delivery review

## Economic Development & Employment

- Limited industry and employment opportunities
- Restaurant closure impacting community
- Numerous home-based businesses not properly represented in business directory
- Concerns between volunteer-run initiatives and private sector businesses

## Recreation & Community Life

- Baseball and Hockey tournament perceived as exclusive to certain families of the community only
- Limited activities for teenagers
- Rising insurance costs and volunteer shortages affecting community events
- Reduced police presence raising safety concerns
- Access to health care is limited (Univi is only 4 days/week- part-time nurse practitioner)
- Volunteer burnout- can't rely on volunteers to keep community programs running
- Gym hours are not open during the day
- Arena has acoustic issues
- Increased rental fees at arena
- Ageing infrastructure at arena
- Kitchen rental rates too much for private business but interest was there
- Lack of full-service elevator at arena
- Level of service in arena is low- no heat in bleachers, touchless plumbing, dated

## Communication & Inclusion

- Perceived lack of municipal communication (request for newsletters, mail-outs, signboards)
- No English school in the community
- Some residents feel excluded
- Disagreement among residents about development priorities
- Volunteer recognition doesn't happen much
- Lack of community events – no volunteers, working parents, travel to Sudbury, not enough time to help
- Advertising needed for local businesses (e.g. bowling alley open to public)
- Need stronger government representation – advocating and lobbying at conferences and events with delegation





# Opportunities

The following opportunities were identified

## Economic Growth & Business Development

- Create investment attraction opportunities
- Develop an Industrial Park with commercial rental spaces
- Implement a Community Improvement Plan with incentives for local businesses and residential development
- Explore agri-tourism expansion (farm-to-table, alpacas, farm tours)
- Support for the agricultural sector
- Establish EV charging stations with 24/7 access to attract visitors
- Create collaborative commercial spaces for healthcare and professional services
- Leverage remote work trends to attract new residents
- Explore provincial and federal funding for projects and internship opportunities
- Use tourism as a driver for under-utilized facilities
- Identify tourism accommodation needs
- Develop new/revitalize past events and initiatives
- Encourage business collaborations, shared resources, etc.
- BR+E opportunity with businesses
- Develop strategy for accommodations with lodges, camps, partners, etc.
- Grow equine sector
- Consider unique attractions (Alpaca farming, Goat Yoga)
- Acquire land for property development
- Zone lots for industrial/commercial use
- Help businesses with new recycling program changes and create opportunities for growth

## Housing & Population Growth

- Create senior housing to facilitate transitions and free up family homes
- Develop affordable new construction with purchase and rental options
- Consider a regional Sudbury East Housing Corporation for cost-sharing with regional municipalities for senior housing project
- Offer construction incentives (tax reductions, permit fee credits)
- Focus on the West Arm area development
- Implement a new family recruitment strategy
- Market as a bedroom community
- Return to previous school population levels through addition of English-Catholic

## Recreation & Community Facilities

- Enhance arena utilization through regional tournaments and expanded programming
- Relocate and upgrade facilities (gym, library, playground)
- Develop water access points for recreation and fire safety (Beach and Boat Launch)
- Upgrade and add multi-use courts (basketball, pickleball, tennis)
- Create soccer, baseball leagues for all ages
- Revitalize community events to connect newcomers
- Promote wedding/special event hosting
- Year-round programming
- Address day care space issues for English speaking kids
- Develop business model for arena including canteen and utilization of upstairs kitchen
- Increase utilization of curling club
- Offer dance lessons at the arena
- Conduct survey to track gym usage
- Increase arena usage generally

## Infrastructure & Access

- Expand sewage system and water supply from municipal centre outward
- Complete West Arm access project
- Enhance parking, boat launches, and picnic areas at water access points
- Expand and enhance parks
- Extend Bell fiber internet service
- Develop crown land in partnership with MNR
- Create trail systems for hiking and equestrian activities
- Expand Fire Department services as population increases (water/ice rescues, etc.)
- Improve environmental services, particularly recycling programs
- Create strategic partnerships

## Regional Collaboration

- Establish transportation solutions between St.-Charles and Sudbury
- Partner with OFATV to develop a regional chapter
- Share services with neighbouring municipalities (recreation programs, EDO, fire, etc.)
- Team with Univi for physician partnerships and increased access to health care
- Coordinate with neighbouring municipal recreation departments
- Advocate for Catholic English/French Immersion school
- Foster partnerships with English and French Catholic School Boards

## Communication & Engagement

- Modernize branding and create new identity
- Develop strategies to inform residents about municipal services and costs
- Increase grant applications and advocacy at municipal conferences
- Enhance promotion of community events and activities
- Improve Facebook and online information accessibility
- Ensure Council and staff attendance at community events and fundraisers
- Create welcoming events for newcomers who currently feel like outsiders

These opportunities represent a comprehensive approach to community development that balances economic growth, infrastructure improvement, and quality of life enhancements while leveraging regional partnerships and addressing the unique needs of St.-Charles residents.

# Community Focus Group Session

During the Community Focus Group session held on Saturday February 1st, 2025 at the Community Centre, residents were guided through a facilitated session about their thoughts, ideas and concerns. While the session did not attract as many members of the community as hoped, the session revealed a community that deeply values its rural character and close relationships.

During the session participants were asked to rank their top priority areas. Two priorities were tied as equally important being Quality of Life and Economic Development. Infrastructure & Transportation ranked next followed by Fiscal Responsibility/Good Governance, Public Safety, Housing & Community Development and Environmental Sustainability.

The following summarizes the anecdotal information that came out of discussions.

## What Residents Love About St.-Charles

Residents deeply value St.-Charles for its small-town rural atmosphere, peaceful environment, safety, and strong sense of community. Many participants expressed appreciation for their neighbours, volunteers, the ability to enjoy open spaces, proximity to the West Arm of Lake Nipissing, ability to raise animals, access trails, and experience lower taxes compared to urban areas. Family connections and the opportunity to raise children in a close-knit community were frequently mentioned as important aspects of living in St.-Charles.

## Community Strengths

- Active volunteer groups (particularly the new Lions Club)
- Strategic central location with proximity to North Bay and Sudbury
- Community celebrations and clubs (Canada Day, seniors clubs)
- Youth sports programs including minor hockey
- Excellent healthcare services (preventative, acute)
- Emergency services
- Rural character with abundant open space
- Contributions from seasonal residents

## Challenges

- Education concerns (proximity of schools, limited English options, need to merge English and French)
- Communication from Municipality to community is limited
- Childcare limitations (lack of local English centres, limited French options)
- Declining volunteerism, especially among younger generations
- Employment limitations affecting community growth
- Lack of social services
- Housing shortages causing people to leave, especially seniors
- Inadequate senior support resources and information access
- Aging infrastructure, poor WiFi, and limited services to attract new residents





## Community Development Opportunities

- Recreational facilities (outdoor rink, multi-sports facility, indoor pool)
- Business development (seasonal shops, cafes, boutiques, restaurants, food truck alley)
- Youth and family activities for all seasons (sports, dances, geo-caching, picnics)
- Housing development, particularly for seniors and new families
- Community spaces (garden, enrichment center)
- Infrastructure improvements (waterfront, roads, boat launch access)
- Cultural activities and local markets (farmers market, craft vendors)
- Tourism initiatives – all year-round leveraging highway proximity (markets, llamas, small farms, art gallery, trail riding, atv, snowmobile, fishing/hunting tournaments)
- Attractions (midway)

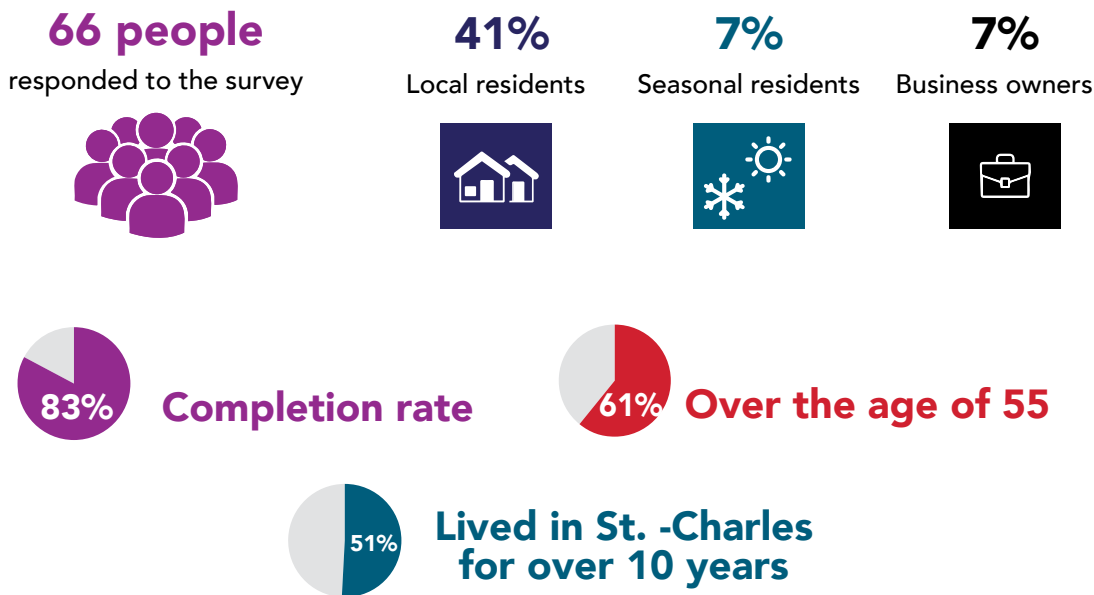
## Quality of Life Enhancements

- More community events and festivals (Octoberfest, St. Patrick's Day, Winter Carnival)
- Agricultural activities (petting zoo, fairs)
- Adult recreation (game nights, slow-pitch league, quad trails)
- Improved infrastructure (highway realignment)
- More health professionals
- Transportation services
- Temporary lodging options
- Affordable housing and groceries
- Arts promotion (music festivals, arts tours)
- Intergenerational programming
- Community branding (new logo for St.-Charles)
- Library accessibility
- Running/walking groups
- Enhance beautification on main artery (light standards, with seasonal décor)

# Community & Stakeholder Survey

A community survey was conducted electronically and distributed using Survey Monkey. The survey ran over the course of 4-weeks throughout January and February 2025. There were 66 respondents.

## Demographics

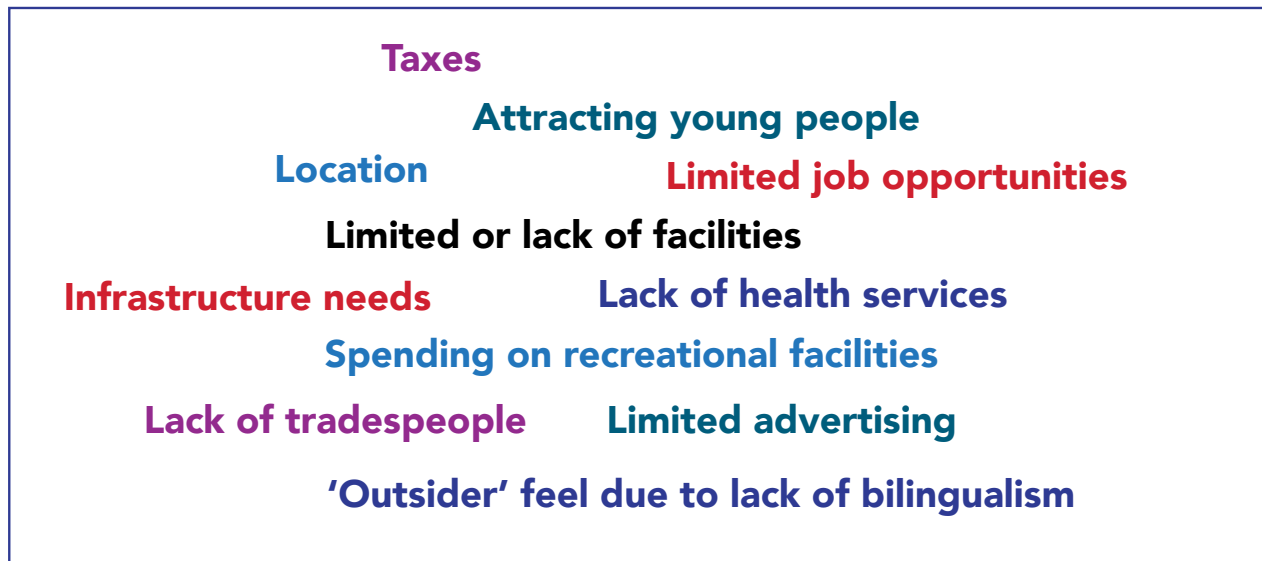


## Key Themes and Issues

- **Community Perception:** St. -Charles is seen as a friendly, charming, and naturally beautiful small town.
- **Quality of Life:** Residents rated the quality of life as average.
- **Community Engagement:** Community engagement was rated as average or below average.
- **Access to Services:** Access to services was rated as below average or average.
- **Business and Economic Activities:** Business and economic activities were rated as below average.
- **Growth Opportunities:** The biggest growth opportunities for St. -Charles in the next 10 years are seen as housing and tourism.
- **Economic Development Potential:** The top three sectors for potential economic development are small business development, tourism, and agriculture.
- **Desired New Programs/Services:** Residents would like to see new programs and services in economic & business development, infrastructure & public services, recreation & community engagement, housing & population growth, and accessibility & inclusivity.

# Biggest Challenges

The biggest challenges facing St. -Charles are:



## Addressing Challenges

Residents feel that the Municipality can address these challenges effectively by focusing on economic growth & business development, infrastructure & services, community engagement & inclusivity, housing & population growth, recreation and quality of life.

- **Promotion:** Key features to highlight when promoting St.-Charles to visitors or businesses include crown land access, community highlights, and potential for growth.
- **Marketing:** The platforms or methods recommended for marketing the Municipality include social media, local events/festivals, regional tourism organizations, and partnerships with businesses.
- **Overall:** The survey highlights that while St. -Charles has many positive attributes, such as its natural beauty and community spirit, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed, including limited job opportunities, lack of housing, and access to healthcare. Residents also desire more community engagement, better communication from the Municipality, and increased support for local businesses and tourism.
- **Communication:** Most respondents stay informed about municipal updates through social media, word of mouth, and the municipal website. Social media is also the preferred method for receiving updates.
- **Strengths:** Community's natural beauty, spaciousness, and outdoor opportunities.
- **Underutilized Assets:** Reallocating funds from the underused arena, improving public water access, supporting local businesses, and expanding essential services like healthcare and childcare.
- **Attractiveness:** Attractive place to live, work, or visit because of its strong sense of community, friendliness, willingness to help others, natural beauty, open spaces, and proximity to Sudbury.



# Internal & External Analysis

The following provides a synopsis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that have been identified throughout the engagement process.

## Strengths

- Rural life with modern life conveniences
- Municipality’s close-knit community spirit
- Friendly people
- Strong civic engagement
- Stunning natural environment
- Rural and waterfront living opportunities
- Housing prices more affordable than urban centres
- Strategic location offers easy access to regional hubs (West Nipissing, Greater Sudbury and North Bay)
- Rich agricultural heritage
- Wealth of recreational activities throughout the seasons
- Natural beauty
- Attractive destination for those seeking rural lifestyle with modern amenities
- Strong Franco-Ontarian roots

## Weaknesses

- Limited local employment opportunities
- Lack of healthcare professionals creates barriers addressing medical services for families and seniors
- Lack of English-language schools
- Curb appeal needs enhancement
- Transportation limitations, particularly for seniors and youth
- Lack of retail and personal services, residents have to travel outside of community for basic needs
- Limited availability of youth programs and supports
- Limited control on planning matters causing red tape for potential land severance and development opportunities



# Opportunities

- Significant residential subdivision development poised to increase housing capacity by 2.5%
- Infrastructure improvements such as fiber optic network connectivity
- Natural gas expansion
- Increased remote work opportunities
- Growing interest in rural living
- Growing trend in rural and agri-tourism opens new doors for experiential attractions and farm-to table initiatives
- Agriculture sectors have potential for diversification into specialty crops and value-added products
- Strong volunteer spirit can create foundation for new initiatives and events
- New housing development will drive population growth and availability of land ready for development, Municipality poised for strategic expansion
- Franco-Ontarian roots provide a unique identity that can be leveraged for community development and tourism opportunities
- Existing recreational facilities and programs can be enhanced to serve residents and visitors including basketball courts, park spaces, water access amenities
- Attractions like the splash pad, community centre and the arena could create year-round engagement opportunities
- The existing facilities, though currently underutilized, present significant potential for tourism development, including the possibility of hosting events.
- New indoor and outdoor programs coupled with the fitness centre and wellness programs through Univi, demonstrate the municipality's commitment to growth
- Family-oriented programs like soccer position St.-Charles to enhance its appeal as a vibrant affordable community for residents, the region and visitors
- Partnership with YMCA
- Review pros and cons for Francophone Designation at Municipal level.

# Threats

- Aging infrastructure, demands substantial investment to maintain and upgrade essential services
- Infrastructure pressure is compounded by limited public transportation options, which particularly affects seniors and youth accessing services in neighbouring communities
- Municipality continues to experience youth outmigration as young people leave for education and employment opportunities, creating workforce gaps and impacting community vitality
- Business attraction and retention remain ongoing challenges, affecting both employment opportunities and local service availability
- Access to healthcare services presents a pressing concern, with residents often traveling to Sudbury for medical care, highlighting the need for improved local healthcare options
- An increase in a medical team is required as the nurse practitioner and physician are part time
- Volunteer burnout continues to be a struggle with declining community events and overall engagement



# Strategic Foundation

The Strategic Plan will chart St.-Charles' course for the next decade, establishing a robust framework that balances growth with sustainability. This roadmap will drive business development while responding to the dynamic needs of the growing population. Through careful identification of priorities and concrete goals, the plan will offer recommendations about municipal services, recreational offerings, economic development, quality of life and community involvement. Most importantly with timely implementation, it will transform community aspirations into achievable actions, ensuring St.-Charles continues to offer a welcoming home for current and future generations. St.-Charles is experiencing a pivotal shift in its economic landscape. Several key workforce and business development trends are reshaping the municipality's economic potential.

## Remote Work Evolution

The expansion of high-speed fiber optic infrastructure has positioned St.-Charles to capitalize on the growing remote work phenomenon. This trend is particularly significant as it enables residents to maintain professional careers while enjoying rural quality of life, potentially attracting young professionals and families seeking to escape urban centers.

## Agricultural Sector Innovation

The agricultural sector, traditionally a cornerstone of St.-Charles' economy, is showing signs of diversification and modernization. Local farms are increasingly adopting digital technologies and exploring value-added production. The pending natural gas expansion will provide opportunities for greenhouse operations and year-round growing capabilities, potentially creating new employment opportunities and strengthening the local food supply chain.

## Business Development Opportunities

The anticipated 2.5% increase in residential dwellings through the new subdivision development creates significant opportunities for business growth. Areas of consideration may include, but not limited to:

- Professional services (accounting, legal, consulting)
- Personal services (healthcare, wellness, personal care)
- Retail expansion, particularly in daily necessities
- Home-based business support services
- Construction and trade services

## Changing Workforce Demographics

The municipality is experiencing a dual demographic trend: an aging workforce transitioning to retirement and an emerging younger workforce seeking rural lifestyle opportunities. This transition creates both challenges and opportunities including:

- Knowledge transfer needs in traditional industries
- Growing demand for digital infrastructure and services
- Increased interest in entrepreneurship among younger residents
- Potential for new business models combining traditional and digital services

# Strategic Plan Priority Areas

The priority areas and recommended actions presented in this plan emerged from comprehensive research into best practices and extensive consultations with key stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensured that all insights gathered throughout the process directly informed the identification of strategic priorities and corresponding actions.

These carefully developed recommendations are specifically designed to address the unique opportunities and challenges facing St.-Charles. By implementing these targeted strategies, the Municipality will strengthen its organizational foundation, foster sustainable economic growth, and ensure long-term community viability.

## MUNICIPAL PRIORITY AREAS

Based on the engagement, five strategic priority areas have been identified to guide the Municipality's trajectory over the next decade. These priorities will serve as cornerstones for decision-making processes and form the foundation of all long-term planning initiatives.

While day-to-day municipal operations will continue as needed, these identified priority areas must be the driving force behind sustainable growth and forward-thinking development. Each priority area contains specific goals with corresponding actions to support implementation.

The Implementation Plan serves as a detailed roadmap for advancing these goals within defined timeframes, complete with metrics to effectively track and measure progress. This structured approach ensures accountability and allows for strategic adjustments as the Municipality evolves over the next ten years.



### 1. Community Infrastructure & Housing Development



### 2. Economic Vitality & Growth



### 3. Recreation, Leisure & Wellness



### 4. Education & Youth Retention



### 5. Community Inclusion & Connection

# Implementation Plan

Based on the priority areas identified above, the following Implementation Plan provides a deeper understanding about how to work within each of the five priorities and what goals should be addressed to respond to the needs.



## 1. Community Infrastructure & Housing Development

Focus on developing essential infrastructure to support community growth, including diverse housing options for families, seniors, and newcomers. Address aging infrastructure needs while ensuring development maintains the rural character that residents value.

### Goal 1: Housing Diversity

St.-Charles will expand housing options by encouraging the development of new units annually with dedicated senior and family options through strategic partnerships and provincial grants, ensuring the community can accommodate residents at every life stage.

### Goal 2: Water Access Development

St.-Charles will complete the West Arm access project by summer 2026, creating public recreational facilities including a boat launch, expanded parking, and picnic areas that balance accessibility needs with environmental stewardship. Ongoing discussions are required before finalizing a decision about public access on Lake Nepewassi.

### Goal 3: Infrastructure Mapping & Assessment

By the end of 2035, St.-Charles will implement a comprehensive infrastructure asset management plan documenting all municipal assets, their condition, and replacement schedules to enable strategic, fiscally responsible maintenance and capital planning.

### Goal 4: Road Improvement Plan

St.-Charles will establish and execute a five-year road improvement strategy beginning in 2026 that prioritizes safety, accessibility, and durability while systematically addressing high-traffic areas and critical maintenance needs.

### Goal 5: Internet & Cellular Coverage

By 2035, St.-Charles will achieve 90% high-speed internet coverage through strategic partnerships with service providers and government funding programs, supporting economic growth and quality of life while maintaining the rural character.





## 2. Economic Vitality & Growth

Stimulate sustainable business development, support existing businesses, and create local employment opportunities to retain youth and attract newcomers. Leverage the strategic location between regional hubs to foster tourism, a bedroom community, and seasonal revenue streams.

### **Goal 1: Small Business Development & Growth**

By 2027, St.-Charles will establish a comprehensive Business Retention & Expansion program that systematically engages all local businesses, identifies growth opportunities, addresses common challenges, and maintains a 80% business retention rate while fostering sustainable expansion.

### **Goal 2: Tourism Development Strategy**

St.-Charles will establish itself as a distinctive tourism destination by 2035 through implementing a strategic tourism development plan that creates unique visitor experiences, leverages the location between regional hubs, and generates sustainable seasonal revenue streams.

### **Goal 3: Agri-Tourism Expansion**

By 2035, St.-Charles will establish itself as a regional agri-tourism destination by developing at least three new agricultural experiences, creating an annual signature event, and increasing agricultural business revenue by 15% while preserving the rural heritage.

### **Goal 4: Industrial/Commercial Development**

St.-Charles will develop a serviced industrial/commercial park by 2035 that provides infrastructure and space for 5 new businesses, diversifying the municipal tax base while creating local employment opportunities in alignment with the community character. (based on identified need).

### **Goal 5: Youth Entrepreneurship Program**

By 2028, St.-Charles will launch a youth entrepreneurship initiative providing mentorship, micro-funding, and workspace for at least 5 youth-led businesses annually, creating meaningful local career paths that support youth retention and community vitality.



### 3. Recreation, Leisure & Wellness

Enhance community quality of life through expanded recreation facilities, leisure programming, and health services that serve residents of all ages. Develop multi-season activities that promote active living and community connection.

#### **Goal 1: Multi-Season Recreation Programming**

By 2035, St.-Charles will implement a comprehensive, year-round recreation program serving all age groups with at least 12 accessible activities distributed across all seasons, creating ongoing opportunities for physical activity, skill development, and community connection.

#### **Goal 2: Arena Revitalization**

St.-Charles will transform the arena into a vibrant community hub by 2035 through strategic facility improvements, expanded programming, and regional partnerships that increase usage by 40% while establishing the venue as a destination for tournaments and community gatherings.

#### **Goal 3: Outdoor Recreation Development**

By 2035, St.-Charles will enhance its outdoor recreational infrastructure by developing a connected trail system, modernizing playgrounds, and creating multi-use sports fields that showcase the natural environment while promoting active living for residents of all ages.

#### **Goal 4: Community Health Services Expansion**

St.-Charles will improve healthcare accessibility by 2035 through strategic practitioner recruitment, expanded service hours, and new preventative health programs that support the wellbeing of families and seniors while reducing travel to larger centers for routine care.

#### **Goal 5: Community Events & Participation**

By 2035, St.-Charles will establish a vibrant community events calendar featuring quarterly signature events and regular activities that foster intergenerational connections, celebrate local culture, and create meaningful opportunities for resident engagement and newcomer integration.



## 4. Education & Youth Retention

### **Goal 1: Educational and Childcare Improvement**

By 2035, St.-Charles will enhance local educational opportunities for both English and French-speaking students through strategic partnerships with school boards and educational institutions, reducing student out-migration by 30% while ensuring quality learning options within the community.

### **Goal 2: Youth Leadership Program**

St.-Charles will establish a comprehensive youth leadership development program by 2035 that annually engages at least 15 young people in mentorship, skill-building, and community project implementation, creating pathways for meaningful youth contribution and connection.

### **Goal 3: After-School and Summer Programming**

By 2035, St.-Charles will offer robust after-school and summer programming that serves at least 30% of local youth, providing enrichment activities, skill development, and supervised recreation that support working families while fostering youth engagement in the community.

### **Goal 4: Digital Learning Hub**

St.-Charles will create a technology-enabled learning center by 2035 that supports distance education, skills training, and digital literacy, expanding educational access while building essential competencies for the modern economy regardless of proximity to traditional institutions.

### **Goal 5: Youth Advisory Council**

By spring 2026, St.-Charles will establish a Youth Advisory Council that provides young residents with authentic representation in municipal planning and community development, empowering youth voice while creating leadership opportunities that strengthen youth connection to the community.



## 5. Community Inclusion & Connection

Foster an inclusive community that welcomes newcomers, supports seniors aging in place, and creates opportunities for intergenerational connection. Strengthen volunteerism, improve information accessibility, and celebrate the community's diverse cultural heritage through the implementation of a Communications Plan.

### **Goal 1: Newcomer Welcome Program**

By 2035, St.-Charles will implement a comprehensive welcome program that connects with 100% of new residents, providing essential information, community connections, and integration support that helps newcomers quickly feel at home and become active community members.

### **Goal 2: Senior Support Network**

St.-Charles will establish a coordinated senior support network by 2035 that addresses key needs in transportation, home maintenance, social connection, health support, and information access, enabling valued senior residents to age comfortably and safely within the community they helped build.

### **Goal 3: Intergenerational Programming**

By 2035, St.-Charles will create a vibrant calendar of intergenerational programs that meaningfully connect residents across age groups through shared activities, knowledge exchange, and relationship building, strengthening community bonds while preserving local wisdom and traditions.

### **Goal 4: Volunteer Development Strategy**

St.-Charles will implement a structured volunteer development strategy by the end of 2035 that increases active volunteer participation by 25% through effective recruitment, training, and recognition, creating a sustainable foundation for community initiatives and events.

### **Goal 5: Cultural Celebration Series**

By 2035, St.-Charles will establish an annual Cultural Celebration Series featuring at least three signature events that honour the community's diverse heritage, celebrate the Franco-Ontarian roots, and create opportunities for cultural sharing that strengthen community identity and belonging.





# Actions

## Existing Municipal Staff Capacity Concerns

Before proceeding with the implementation of the actions outlined below, it is essential to acknowledge that current staff capacity remains a challenge. The existing workload does not allow for the additional tasks identified. To address this limitation and ensure the successful execution of the Strategic Plan, the following recommendations are proposed with varying financial costs and implications to the budget. They may be implemented as stand-alone recommendations or a hybrid of several.

### Leadership & Staffing

#### **Hire a Full-Time Economic Development Officer**

Bring on a dedicated employee/contractor/consultant to lead and manage the implementation of the Strategic Plan, ensuring sustained progress and accountability. This role could look after economic development initiatives, recreation programming, community development, partnerships, outreach and marketing communications. This individual would be seasoned and able to work with minimal supervision and direction.

#### **Recruit an Intern for Professional Development Training**

Consider hiring an intern for a one-year mentorship program under Senior Management. This initiative would provide hands-on learning in the implementation process and develop future leadership potential for a full-time role. This individual would need assistance and training and would require daily support and direction.

#### **Leverage Specialized Consultants**

Outsource specific tasks to industry experts/consultants under the direction of Senior Management. Contracts should include defined project budgets, deliverables, and clear start and end dates to maintain efficiency and accountability.

## Community & Collaboration

### Empower Volunteers & Committees

Engage volunteers to lead committees and oversee key aspects of the implementation process. This approach fosters community involvement while supplementing internal capacity. Pair volunteers with staff and/or Council.

Committees should include:

1. Beautification & Community Connection Committee
2. Age-Friendly Committee
3. Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee
4. Youth Advisory Council

### Regional Collaborations

Partner with regional municipalities to share resources and services in areas such as recreation, economic development and youth retention. A cooperative approach can enhance efficiency and maximize impact. The following actions align with the goals and priorities in each area of the Strategic Plan. The timeline for implementation spans over a 10-year span from 2025-2035, however the plan should be reviewed and updated against Council's priorities every term. The implementation of the identified actions will be based on budgetary constraints, available human resources, volunteer commitment, Council direction and current political/economic trends. Many of the actions listed may become ongoing deliverables.

## Timeline:

**Short - Medium Term = 1-5 years**

**Medium - Long Term = 6-10 years**

# 1: Community Infrastructure & Housing Development



## Goal 1: Housing Diversity

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Planner, EDO, Private Developers, Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Work with Sudbury East Planning Board to proactively encourage and reduce red tape around land severance opportunities to stimulate housing development. Designate a St.-Charles Planner through a contract position to assist residents and businesses liaise with the Planning Board.
- Encourage the development of basement apartments, rental options, and infill housing for short- and long-term purposes.
- Work with organizations that focus on accessible and age-friendly housing development and long-term living centres.
- Create a housing development strategy that offers cost-effective opportunities for sub-development roads without putting upfront capital costs on private developers. Look at a municipal cost-recovery model through development fees.
- Ensure proper planning occurs to account for increased housing and emergency service capacity requirements.

### Medium - Long Term

- Develop a housing attraction plan that creates a healthy mix of affordable rentals, starter-homes, senior housing, seasonal residents and estate homes to create a diverse mix of tax base. Identify housing targets and attraction strategy to keep residents within the community and attract a mix of new residents based on attracting potential employees from regional industrial/commercial growth opportunities, bedroom community markets and Southern Ontario audiences looking for remote work with a rural lifestyle.
- Ensure proper planning occurs to account for increased housing and emergency service capacity requirements.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of new units
- # of new residents
- implementation of strategy
- Emergency service preparedness

## Goal 2: Water Access Development

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Beautification & Community Connection Committee, MNR

### West Arm Public Water Access

#### Short - Medium Term

- Complete the West Arm Access Project by finalizing environmental impact assessments, engineering, site planning and accessibility to accommodate diverse mobility needs.
- Work with MNR on phased construction with minimal disruption to the surrounding environment. (e.g. erosion control and shoreline protection measures, wildlife protection etc.).
- Finalize for the boat launch, walking trails, parking expansion, and picnic areas
- Install accessible amenities such as paved pathways, dock accessibility ramps, and shaded picnic areas.
- Ensure safety measures, including proper signage, lighting, and portable washroom facilities.
- Showcase new public waterfront assets by developing marketing collateral around new municipal assets to promote within the community to residents and businesses while incorporating it into regional tourism marketing efforts. Organize an official opening event to highlight community involvement.

#### Medium - Long Term

- Collaborate with local tourism businesses and organizations to create synergies with existing service offerings and new municipal assets.
- Apply for provincial and federal grants related to recreation, tourism, and environmental sustainability to establish new experiences and encourage small business development (e.g. fishing guides, canoe/kayak touring, foraging/guided hikes, etc.).
- Explore partnerships with local businesses for sponsorship or in-kind contributions.
- Develop tourism and recreation marketing materials to attract visitors.
- Establish a long-term maintenance plan for facility upkeep and environmental monitoring.

#### Indicators of Success:



## **Lake Nepewassi Public Water Access**

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

#### **Short - Medium Term**

- Engage Planner to conduct community engagement & stakeholder consultations to gather more insight about Lake Nepewassi potential public water access opportunities. Ensure ongoing communication with stakeholders to ensure transparency and address any concerns.
- Organize meetings with property owners, cottagers, and local businesses to understand concerns and opportunities.
- Understand and recognize residents needs and identify opportunities that limit residential disruption while creating opportunities for public to access crown land.
- Engage MNR and environmental agencies to assess potential impacts of increased public access.
- Study potential locations for access points that minimize environmental disruption.
- Assess infrastructure needs such as parking, waste management, and emergency access

#### **Medium - Long Term**

- Evaluate funding sources and municipal resources required for development.
- Review findings from consultations and assessments to determine feasibility.
- Develop clear policies regarding public access, including regulations for usage and conservation efforts.
- If approved, develop an action plan for phased implementation of public access

### **Indicators of Success:**

- Consultations with property owners
- Creation of safe and use-able public water access
- On going community support and use
- New tourism and recreational asset for promotion
- Level of activity of use

## Goal 3: Infrastructure Mapping & Assessment

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Complete the Asset Management Plan including identifying and documenting all municipal infrastructure assets, including roads, bridges, water/sewer systems, buildings, parks, and fleet equipment.
- Perform inspections and evaluations to determine the physical condition, expected lifespan, and risk factors for each asset.
- Implement an asset management software or spreadsheet system to store and update asset data.
- Ensure the system allows for real-time updates and integration with financial and maintenance planning tools.
- Establish short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years) replacement plans.
- Ensure the municipality's financial plan accounts for lifecycle costs of assets.
- Provide regular reports to council on asset conditions and investment needs.
- Engage residents and stakeholders in infrastructure planning to align with community priorities.
- Conduct annual reviews and update asset data to reflect new developments or asset deterioration.
- Adjust priorities based on new funding opportunities, climate impacts, or emerging technologies.

### Medium - Long Term

- Use Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to visually track asset locations and conditions.
- Utilize standardized rating systems (e.g., Pavement Condition Index for roads, Facility Condition Index for buildings).
- Integrate capital planning with budget cycles to ensure sustainable funding.
- Explore funding options, including grants, reserve funds, and cost-sharing opportunities with higher levels of government.
- Develop routine maintenance schedules to extend asset lifespan and reduce emergency repairs.
- Create dedicated reserve funds for future infrastructure needs.

### Indicators of Success:

- Development of asset management plan
- Schedule and implementation for capital planning
- Council delegations at provincial and federal conferences (AMO, FONOM, etc.)



## Goal 4: Road Improvement Plan

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Engage residents in decision-making about road priorities and communicate upgrade plans broadly to community.
- Conduct Traffic Flow Optimization study to identify high-need areas for upgrades, enhancement and OPP presence. Install better signage, continue with speed reduction measures, and rural road lighting.
- Prioritize roads that support local businesses and farms. Ensure roads can handle heavy truck traffic for industries such as agriculture, construction and forestry.

### Medium - Long Term

- Resurface or convert gravel roads to paved surfaces in residential, rural areas to stimulate housing development.
- Audit current road capacity and safety for heavy vehicles and identify industrial/commercial areas where ½ load restrictions could cause business disruption.

### Indicators of Success:

- Development of strategy
- Road and infrastructure improvements
- Business friendly policy development
- Lobbying provincial and federal governments
- Council delegations at conferences (Ontario Good Roads, etc.)



## Goal 5: Internet & Cellular Coverage

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Conduct a Broadband Coverage & Needs Assessment to map current internet coverage and identify underserved or unserved areas.

### Medium - Long Term

- Engage Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for Feasibility Studies and to explore potential infrastructure expansion options.
- Support initiatives that balance technology advancement with rural lifestyle preservation.

### Indicators of Success:

- 90% high speed coverage
- Lobbying provincial and federal governments and agencies





## 2: Economic Vitality & Growth



### Goal 1: Small Business Development & Growth

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, EDO, Business Organizations (e.g. SBEC, CFDC)

#### Short - Medium Term

- Apply for funding to develop a formalized Business Retention + Expansion Program
  - Form a committee with municipal leaders, business owners, and economic development representatives.
  - Assign a dedicated BR+E Coordinator to oversee the program.
  - Develop and distribute a survey to understand local business challenges, needs, and expansion potential.
  - Hold one-on-one meetings with business owners.
  - Create a BR&E Strategy & Action Plan.
  - Schedule regular check-ins with local businesses to discuss growth opportunities and challenges.
  - Establish a confidential business support email for immediate assistance.
  - Maintain a database to monitor business retention and expansion progress.
  - Conduct annual reviews of the BR&E program and adjust strategies as needed.
  - Track & Measure Business Retention Rates
- Update the business directory with all commercial operations and home-based businesses to promote local support.
- Connect businesses with provincial and federal grant programs.
- Help businesses explore new markets, including online sales and export opportunities.
- Promote apprenticeships and internships to retain young talent in St.-Charles.
- Recognize local business achievements through awards, media spotlights, municipal promotions.
- Share success stories to inspire entrepreneurship and economic confidence.
- Develop an Investment Attraction & Retention Strategy to encourage existing businesses to expand and attract new start-ups in key sectors such as culinary, agriculture and tourism.
- Host training workshops for small business owners on digital marketing, product development/customer experience design, and customer service. (e.g. restaurant in town).

## Medium - Long Term

- Create an online and in-person resource centre space in collaboration with partners with funding opportunities, workforce support, and regulatory guidance.
- Offer ready-made toolkits for business expansion, digital marketing, and workforce attraction.
- Consider Community Improvement Plan to assist with tax incentives or municipal incentives to support expansion and investment (e.g. agri-tourism opportunities).
- Identify for commercial and industrial zoning improvements to accommodate growth.
- Host business networking events and trade shows to connect local businesses.
- Identify opportunities to improve local transportation, zoning challenges, internet connectivity, and utilities to support business operations.
- Offer grants or incentives for local businesses developing new tourism services.

## Indicators of Success:

- Strong business network
- # of partnerships
- Financial incentives for businesses
- Strong business retention rate
- # of new start ups and expansions



## Goal 2: Tourism Development Strategy

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff Council, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee, Tourism organizations (Destination Northern Ontario, Northeastern Ontario Tourism, NOTO)

### Short - Medium Term

- Create a new brand for the Municipality including logo and tag line that reflects community needs while appealing to visitors and newcomers.
- Create a Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee to guide development efforts.
- Increase signage through highway billboards with a strong call-to-action.
- Develop a new website that is modern, visually appealing and offers a tourism component.
- Identify unique selling points and businesses of St.-Charles (e.g., walking trails, events, splash pad, local businesses, cultural experiences, etc.).
- Create a tourism marketing materials in collaboration with regional tourism partners.
- Develop partnerships with regional tourism organizations such as Northeastern Ontario Tourism to cross-promote St.-Charles.
- Improve access to natural sites, hiking trails, cycling routes, and water-based activities (e.g., boat launches, fishing areas, campgrounds).
- Support the development of agri-tourism experiences like farm stays, local food tours, and interactions with farm animals.
- Develop guidelines for short-term rentals to ensure quality visitor experiences.
- Build upon existing family-style events (hockey, baseball to encourage more regional families to participate)
- Re-establish seasonal events and create new such as the winter carnival, summer outdoor adventure weekends, and fall harvest celebrations.
- Use exiting community assets to market regional opportunities (sports tourism, community centre, pickle ball, curling, hockey, etc.)
- Support local entrepreneurs in developing unique visitor experiences (e.g., farm-to-table dinners, Indigenous or Francophone cultural experiences).
- Implement a targeted marketing campaign inclusive of digital marketing efforts targeting nature lovers, adventure seekers, and cultural tourists.
- Improve directional signage to key municipal assets
- Develop responsible tourism guidelines to protect natural areas and wildlife and encourage businesses to participate in eco-friendly practices.
- Re-introduce Spring ATV mud-run and integrate event within tourism strategy
- Review funding opportunities for EV Charging Stations

## Medium - Long Term

- Develop a digital presence showcasing attractions, itineraries, and visitor information.
- Develop interpretive signage and self-guided tour apps to highlight local history, Indigenous heritage, and environmental significance.
- Partner with artists and artisans to create public art installations and cultural experiences.
- Encourage investment in accommodations such as cabins, boutique lodges, and seasonal rentals.
- Partner with local businesses to create themed weekend experiences (e.g., “Outdoor Adventure Getaway” or “Culinary & Culture Retreat”).
- Collaborate with local businesses to promote eco-tourism and nature-based events like guided kayaking trips, wildlife watching, and star-gazing nights.
- Enhance winter tourism offerings with snowshoeing trails, snowmobiling, and winter camping options.
- Expand water-based tourism (e.g., kayak rentals, guided fishing tours, sunset cruises).
- Develop influencer and travel blogger partnerships to increase destination awareness.
- Place advertisements in regional and provincial tourism publications.
- Continue building regional tourism partnerships to enhance visitor reach and investment opportunities.

## Indicators of Success:

- Creation and implementation of new brand
- New partnerships with tourism organizations
- Start up or expansion of new tourism businesses





## Goal 3: Agri-Tourism Expansion

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, EDO, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee

### Short - Medium Term

- Encourage agri-tourism entrepreneurs to launch farm-to-table dining experiences or guided agricultural tours with an emphasis on the equine industry. (farm stays, u-pick operations, horseback riding, etc.)
- Identify opportunities to attract local restaurateurs to enhance culinary experiences.
- Support the development of interactive workshops such as cheese-making, beekeeping, or organic gardening.
- Partner with regional tourism organizations to cross-promote St.-Charles' agricultural experiences.

### Medium - Long Term

- Establish a festival celebrating local agriculture, such as a "Harvest Festival" or "Farm-to-Feast Weekend."
- Feature farm tours, local food tastings, artisan markets, and live demonstrations.
- Promote the event regionally to attract visitors and boost local business revenue.
- Develop a local agri-tourism marketing campaign, including maps, itineraries, and digital promotions.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of new agri-tourism experiences
- # of new events & workshops
- # of new partnerships



## Goal 4: Industrial/Commercial Development Opportunities

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, EDO, Planner

### Short - Medium Term

- Conduct a feasibility study to determine need for Industrial/Commercial Park rather than positioning the community as a bedroom community and placing efforts on a housing strategy that aligns residents, seniors, newcomers and developers.

### Medium - Long Term

- Based on outcome the following action may apply:
- Acquire or designate municipal land for industrial/commercial development.
- Attract & support Business Investment by developing incentive packages (e.g. Community Improvement Plans, tax breaks, etc.) to attract businesses.
- Identify potential anchor tenants through recruitment and referral efforts.
- Seek provincial and federal infrastructure funding to support development.
- Collaborate with economic development agencies to attract targeted industries.
- Implement business-friendly policies that encourage expansion within the park.
- Create marketing strategy designed to appeal to specific industries, sectors and associations.

### Indicators of Success:

- Decision on long-term plans for park
- # of new businesses/tenants attracted
- Implementation of successful marketing strategy



## Goal 5: Establish a Youth Entrepreneurship Program

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Youth Advisory Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Work with regional Small Business Enterprise Centre, CFDC, Futurepreneurs to develop a structured program offering mentorship, business training, and funding opportunities for local youth.
- Partner with local schools, business leaders, and economic development organizations to support young entrepreneurs.
- Promote existing programs including small startup grants/loans to help youth launch their businesses.
- Match young entrepreneurs with experienced business owners for one-on-one mentorship.
- Feature success stories in municipal newsletters, social media, and regional media.

### Medium - Long Term

- Designate space within the library/community centre for youth entrepreneurs co-working opportunities.
- Organize an annual “Youth Business Showcase” to highlight and support new ventures in the community.
- Connect young entrepreneurs with local business networks to encourage collaboration and growth.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of active young entrepreneurs
- # of partnerships
- # of programs



### 3: Recreation, Leisure & Wellness

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#### Goal 1: Multi-Season Recreation Programming

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee, Partners (e.g. School Boards, YMCA)

##### Short - Medium Term

- Map out a balanced schedule of recreation programs for youth, adults and seniors, across all seasons based on community interests.
- Partner with local schools, businesses, and organizations to maximize resources.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusivity by designing programs that cater to all age groups (seniors, youth, and families).
- Improve infrastructure to support accessibility, such as paved trails and adaptive equipment.
- Offer low-cost or subsidized options to ensure financial accessibility for all residents.
- Apply for provincial and federal recreation grants.
- Collaborate with regional tourism organizations and work at the committee level to promote recreation as an economic driver.



## Medium - Long Term

- Establish Seasonal Activities that align with recreation plan.
- Spring/Summer: hiking clubs, kayaking lessons, outdoor yoga, and community sports leagues.
- Fall/Winter: snowshoeing groups, skating, ice fishing events, cross-country skiing trails, and winter markets.
- Year-Round: arts, music, fitness, and wellness programs in municipal or indoor spaces.
- Host seasonal workshops and skill-building events (e.g., survival skills, photography, local craft-making).
- Train local volunteers and instructors to help lead programs.
- Develop intergenerational programs that connect youth with seniors through shared activities.
- Seek sponsorships from local businesses to support programming and events.
- Improve infrastructure to support accessibility, such as paved trails and adaptive equipment.
- Offer low-cost or subsidized options to ensure financial accessibility for all residents.
- Host seasonal workshops and skill-building events (e.g., survival skills, photography, local craft-making).
- Train local volunteers and instructors to help lead programs.
- Develop intergenerational programs that connect youth with seniors through shared activities.
- Apply for provincial and federal recreation grants.
- Collaborate with regional tourism boards to promote recreation as an economic driver.
- Seek sponsorships from local businesses to support programming and events.

## Indicators of Success:

- # of partnerships
- # of new programs/season
- # of participants

## Goal 2: Arena Revitalization

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee

### Short - Medium Term

- Establish a Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee to oversee long-term planning including ongoing improvements, programming, warming centre designation, etc.
- While undertaking studies and review, expand programming to increase usage and test market.
- Assign staff members to manage programs. Introduce new multi-purpose activities such as drop-in sports, fitness classes, and youth programs.
- Offer off-season programming (e.g., indoor markets, local bands/concerts, retro min putt system, summer sports camps).
- Host themed community events such as "Family Skate Nights" and "Seniors Active Living Days."
- Develop a marketing strategy targeting regional leagues for hockey, ringette, curling, etc. to increase use. Increase fees for non-community groups.
- Identify opportunities to utilize second floor for food services, programming, etc.
- Create a community rental program to attract small weddings, corporate events, and trade shows.
- Collaborate with nearby municipalities and sports organizations to co-host events.

### Medium - Long Term

- Identify necessary upgrades and costs to upgrade arena. (e.g., seating, lighting, heating, water flow, ice resurfacing equipment, HVAC improvements, elevator, etc.).
- Conduct a Feasibility Assessment for the Facility to determine highest and best use.
- Hire a consultant in Recreation Master Planning to identify options of use. This includes cost -estimates for long-term capital upgrades and operational expense to keep the Arena going.
- Measure these costs against the option of transitioning the facility into a multi-use sports complex and removing ice surface.
- Consider re-locating the gym to the second floor to create a recreational hub for the community. Identify options to include library and foster a community space.
- Involve regional municipalities to ensure long-term plan aligns with regional needs and usage.
- Apply for provincial and federal recreation grants to support planned long-term approach. (e.g. elevator, infrastructure, acoustic upgrades) or to fund the transition to a multi-use facility.
- Seek sponsorships and naming rights partnerships from local businesses.

### Indicators of Success:

- % of use age
- # of new programs
- Revenue generation from programs & services

## Goal 3: Outdoor Recreation Development



**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee

### Short - Medium Term

- Identify and map existing trails, potential expansion routes, and key access points for new walking trails.
- Install wayfinding signage, rest areas, and interpretive panels showcasing local nature and history.
- Upgrade playgrounds with modern, inclusive equipment for children of all abilities and improve safety with soft-surface materials and shade structures.
- Incorporate natural play elements that reflect St.-Charles' rural character.
- Upgrade sports fields that support soccer, baseball, and other recreational activities.
- Implement environmentally sustainable practices in outdoor facility development.

### Medium - Long Term

- Develop opportunities for trails to accommodate multiple activities, including walking, biking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing.
- Explore opportunities for outdoor fitness stations and community-use courts (e.g., pickleball, basketball, outdoor rink).
- Organize seasonal outdoor events like trail runs, outdoor yoga, and family adventure days.
- Partner with schools and community groups to offer nature-based learning programs in future walking trail area.
- Develop a digital map and promotional campaign to encourage local and visitor participation.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of new assets and/or upgrades
- # of active participants
- # of new programs

## Goal 4: Community Health Services Expansion



**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Age Friendly Committee, Univi

### Short - Medium Term

- Promote St.-Charles as an attractive location for healthcare professionals through targeted outreach and recruitment campaigns to ensure full-service healthcare operations.
- Liaise with Univi about increasing coverage and services by extending clinic hours (e.g. 5 days/week, evenings or weekend availability) to meet growing demand.

### Medium - Long Term

- Advocate for increased telemedicine services to reduce the need for travel to larger centers.
- Explore the feasibility of a community shuttle service for medical appointments in larger centers. Consider a formalized volunteer network to support this initiative.

### Indicators of Success:

- Increased services for health care
- Increased hours of operation

## Goal 5: Community Events & Participation

## **Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Beautification & Community Connection Committee

### **Short - Medium Term**

- Create an online and print-accessible calendar featuring all municipal and community-led events.
- Ensure the calendar is updated regularly and accessible via the municipal website, social media, community spaces, and local businesses.
- Offer an easy submission process for local businesses/organizations and residents to add their events.
- Host regular intergenerational events such as game nights, storytelling sessions, and cultural exchange evenings.
- Work with local businesses, schools, and community groups to co-host and sponsor events.
- Establish a community volunteer program to support event planning and execution.
- Engage youth and seniors in event organizing to encourage cross-generational participation.
- Utilize social media, local media outlets, and digital newsletters to promote upcoming events.
- Develop bilingual event materials to ensure inclusivity and newcomer engagement.
- Discuss Francophone designation with Council to determine potential opportunities.

### **Medium - Long Term**

- Develop monthly wellness events, including yoga in the park, guided nature walks, and fitness challenges.
- Gather feedback after events to improve future programming and ensure long-term success.

### **Indicators of Success:**

- # of events
- # of participants
- # of businesses/organizations participating
- # of partnerships





## 4: Education & Youth Retention



### Goal 1: Educational and Childcare Improvement

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council

#### Short - Medium Term

- Strengthen partnerships with School Boards and discuss ways to expand programming and create educational opportunities for English speaking and French Immersion children.
- Support the development of an English daycare to accommodate growing demand.
- Continue to strengthen relationships with Francophone educational partners to meet needs of school and daycare.
- Conduct a highest and best use review for library while recognizing annual costs associated with current location.

#### Medium - Long Term

- Work with library and community centre space to provide tutoring, literacy, and enrichment programs for all ages.
- Create new educational and childcare opportunities to retain families and attract new residents.

#### Indicators of Success:

- New English Public or Catholic School
- Increased day care spots in English & French
- # new programs
- % decrease in student outmigration



## Goal 2: Youth Leadership Development Program

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Youth Advisory Council, Local businesses & organizations

### Short - Medium Term

- Offer workshops on public speaking, teamwork, problem-solving, and civic engagement.
- Provide real-world leadership experiences through event planning, volunteer work, and municipal involvement.
- Highlight youth spotlights and successes through social media, newsletters, and media outlets.

### Medium - Long Term

- Develop a structured program focusing on mentorship, leadership training, and hands-on community projects.
- Partner with schools, local businesses, and community organizations to provide diverse learning opportunities.
- Establish an annual intake process to engage at least 15 youth participants.
- Pair youth with mentors from various fields, including business, government, and community leadership.
- Apply for provincial and federal grants to support leadership training and project funding.
- Engage local businesses and sponsors to provide financial or in-kind support.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of new programs
- # of active programs

## Goal 3: After-School and Summer Programming

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Tourism & Recreation Advisory Committee, Partner organizations. (e.g. School Board, YMCA, Library)

### Medium - Long Term

- Develop and launch a structured after-school & summer program using a variety of programs focusing on sports, recreation, arts, STEM, and life skills. Consider a pilot project to test market.
- Ensure programs cater to different age groups and interests, with inclusive and accessible options.
- Partner with local school, library, arena and/or community centres to use existing spaces.
- Launch a marketing campaign targeting parents and youth to encourage participation from the region.
- Establish feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, focus groups) to improve programming.
- Track enrollment and impact data to ensure the program meets the participation goal.
- Goal 4: Digital Learning Hub

### Medium - Long Term

- Consider development of digital learning hub for all ages in collaboration with the library or municipal programming.
- Utilize established Beautification & Community Connection Committee to ensure programming aligns with local needs.
- Secure high-speed internet, computers, and technology necessary for digital learning.
- Ensure the space is accessible and equipped for various learning needs, including assistive technology.
- Partner with post-secondary to provide online micro credential courses and certification programs.
- Facilitate remote learning by offering quiet study areas and digital classrooms.
- Offer workshops on basic and advanced digital skills.
- Develop programs for seniors and newcomers to improve confidence in using technology.
- Provide financial literacy and e-commerce training to support local entrepreneurs.
- Launch a public awareness campaign to inform residents about available learning opportunities.
- Develop flexible scheduling options, including evening and weekend access.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of new programs
- # of participants
- # of families



## Goal 5: Youth Advisory Council

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Youth Advisory Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Establish a Youth Advisory Council.
- Promote council opportunities through schools, social media, and community organizations.
- Host an information session to engage and encourage youth participation.
- Implement an application and selection process that is inclusive and youth friendly.
- Offer workshops on municipal governance, public speaking, and project management.
- Encourage youth-led initiatives by providing resources and guidance.
- Assign members to attend municipal meetings and provide youth perspectives.

### Medium - Long Term

- Pair youth members with mentors from local government, business, and community organizations.
- Allow the Youth Advisory Council to propose community projects and initiatives.
- Involve youth in planning recreational, cultural, and economic development activities.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of youth involved
- # of events/programs
- # of active business & organizations

## 5: Community Inclusion & Connection



### Goal 1: Newcomer Welcome Program & Initiatives

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, EDO, Beautification & Community Connection Committee, Partner organizations (e.g. Multicultural Centre)

#### Short - Medium Term

- Develop a comprehensive welcome package that includes a printed and digital guide with essential information (e.g., local services, school, healthcare, recreation, and business resources).
- Include a welcome letter from the Mayor and a directory of key contacts.
- Provide details on cultural and social groups, volunteer opportunities, and local events.
- Implement a system to track and connect with all new residents upon arrival.
- Designate a community ambassador or volunteer group to welcome newcomers.
- Organize quarterly “Newcomer Meet & Greet” events to foster social connections.
- Encourage participation in local boards, committees, and volunteer opportunities.
- Feature newcomer success stories in newsletters and social media to inspire engagement.

#### Medium - Long Term

- Offer in-person or virtual welcome sessions to introduce municipal services and community programs.
- Create themed networking opportunities (e.g., cultural celebrations, business networking, family-friendly activities).
- Develop a mentorship program where long-term residents guide newcomers.
- Offer language support resources for non-English or non-French speakers.
- Connect newcomers with employment, housing, and educational resources.

#### Indicators of Success:

- # of newcomers connected
- # of events
- # of participants
- # of new resources developed





## Goal 2: Senior Support Network

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Council, Age-Friendly Committee, Local Organizations (e.g. Connect 55, Lion's Club)

### Short - Medium Term

- Identify key senior needs through surveys, town halls, and consultations.
- Develop a centralized resource hub for senior services and support programs.

### Medium - Long Term

- Explore the feasibility of a senior shuttle service for medical appointments, shopping, and social outings and link this service with one for the community at large for healthcare needs.
- Establish a home maintenance & aging-in-place support program such as offering subsidized services for snow removal, yard work, and minor repairs.
- Partner with local businesses and volunteers to provide affordable home safety modifications, (e.g., ramps, grab bars), rental options and senior housing residences.

### Indicators of Success:

- Establishment of strong network
- # of resources
- # of participants

## Goal 3: Intergenerational Programming

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, Age Friendly Committee,  
Local Organizations (e.g. Connect 55, Lion's Club)

### Short - Medium Term

- Organize knowledge exchange workshops where older residents share local history, cultural traditions, and life experiences.
- Develop cross-generational projects such as community art installations, oral history recordings, or cooking classes in the community centre.
- Host game nights or trivia competitions to encourage friendly interactions and teamwork across generations in the community centre.
- Establish book clubs or discussion groups that encourage conversations between generations on common interests.
- Use social media and regional media to highlight intergenerational events and success stories.
- Partner with schools, senior clubs, and local businesses to spread awareness of upcoming programs.

### Medium - Long Term

- Organize intergenerational programs connecting seniors with youth through mentorship and storytelling.
- Pair youth and seniors in mentorship relationships focused on skill-building (e.g., seniors teaching traditional skills, youth helping with technology) or shared learning opportunities where residents of all ages can teach and learn from each other (e.g., gardening, technology, art).
- Develop volunteer programs where youth and seniors work together on community service projects, such as park clean-ups or charity drives.
- Develop cultural exchange programs to help preserve and pass on local traditions, languages, and folklore.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of workshops, events
- # of participants
- # of partnerships



## Goal 4: Volunteer Development Strategy

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, EDO, Beautification & Community Connection Committee, Youth Advisory Council

### Short - Medium Term

- Enhance Volunteer Recruitment by launching a community-wide volunteer drive with targeted outreach to different age groups.
- Develop a centralized volunteer database where residents can sign up for opportunities.
- Offer orientation sessions and skill-building workshops for new volunteers.
- Match volunteers with roles based on their skills, interests, and availability.
- Establish an annual volunteer appreciation event to celebrate contributions.
- Offer certificates, awards, and incentives to recognize outstanding volunteers.
- Highlight volunteer success stories in newsletters, social media, and local media.

### Medium - Long Term

- Provide leadership training to develop future volunteer coordinators and work with Youth Advisory Council on initiatives.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of volunteers
- # of incentive/ recognition programs
- % of volunteer retention

## Goal 5: Cultural Celebration Series

**Roles & Responsibilities:** Municipal Staff, EDO, Beautification & Community Connection Committee

### Short - Medium Term

- Expand Beautification Committee to include Beautification & Community Connection
- Ensure diverse committee members including youth, seniors, new residents, long-term residents, municipal representation, etc. to plan and oversee annual events.
- Partner with Indigenous, Francophone, and multicultural organizations to co-create events.
- Encourage local artists, musicians, and performers to showcase their work.
- Provide opportunities for youth and seniors to share cultural knowledge and traditions.

### Medium - Long Term

- Organize an annual Franco-Ontarian Festival with music, food, and storytelling.
- Host a local Heritage Day with exhibits, historical tours, and artisan markets.
- Develop a marketing campaign using social media, local media, outreach and partnerships.

### Indicators of Success:

- # of events
- # of partners
- # of participants

# Communications Plan

Audience	Communication Objective	Key Message	Channels
<b>Residents</b>	Community needs, services, etc.	The Municipality of St.-Charles is dedicated to maintaining a high quality of life through effective municipal services, community programs, and infrastructure investments.	Municipal website & weekly municipal newsletter
<b>Businesses</b>	Business Growth & Attraction	St.-Charles supports local businesses through economic development initiatives, grants, and networking	Business roundtables and networking events
<b>Provincial &amp; Federal Government Representatives</b>	More support for community	St.-Charles seeks support and collaboration for infrastructure projects, economic development, and community programs.	Formal proposals and grant applications
<b>Regional Municipal Partners</b>	Working together to share resources	St.-Charles values collaboration with regional partners to address shared challenges and opportunities.	Regional municipal conferences (Rural Ontario Municipal Association, Northern Ontario Municipal Association) and working groups
<b>Regional Partner Organizations, Tourism Associations</b>	Aligning service offerings to meet St.-Charles needs	St.-Charles is a premier destination for outdoor recreation, cultural heritage, and local agri-tourism experiences.	Collaborative marketing campaigns with regional tourism boards (Northeastern Ontario Tourism/NeOnt, Destination Northern Ontario)

## Implementation & Evaluation

- Regularly review communication strategies to ensure effectiveness and adaptability.
- Use surveys (via survey monkey) and public feedback to refine messaging and engagement approaches.
- Monitor social media and website analytics to gauge public interaction and reach.



# Communication Channels and Tactics

## Digital Presence

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### 1. Municipal Website Enhancement

- Redesign for improved user experience and mobile responsiveness
- Develop content strategy focusing on economic development successes
- Implement SEO best practices for improved discovery
- Create interactive tools (permit applications, bill payment, business resource finder)

### 2. Social Media Strategy

- Platform-specific content calendars (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Scheduled posting of economic development wins and opportunities
- Community spotlights and success stories
- Video content highlighting business climate advantages
- User-generated content campaigns

### 3. Email Marketing

- Monthly resident newsletter
- Quarterly business update
- Targeted email campaigns for specific economic initiatives
- Event announcements and follow-ups

## Traditional Media

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### 1. Print Materials

- Economic development brochure and fact sheets
- Annual municipal report highlighting business successes
- Direct mail campaigns for targeted initiatives
- Community bulletin board postings

### 2. Media Relations

- Press release calendar aligned with major initiatives
- Media kit with municipal economic data and success stories
- Regular editorial board meetings
- Op-ed placement strategy for municipal leadership

## Face-to-Face Engagement

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### 1. Community Events

- Quarterly town halls
- Annual State of the Municipality address
- Business appreciation events
- Ribbon cuttings and milestone celebrations

### 2. Trade Shows and Conferences

- Regional economic development conferences
- Industry-specific trade shows aligned with target sectors
- Speaking opportunities for municipal leadership