



Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar 1: Infrastructure

Well-managed public infrastructure is vital to the prosperity and quality of life of communities. The Town's vision is to develop and maintain a comprehensive, progressive and sustainable infrastructure plan that meets the infrastructure needs of today and tomorrow. This will require the proactive management of assets while being flexible to respond to anticipated socio-economic changes by:

- Effectively delivering services through asset lifecycle management.
- Creating infrastructure sustainability by balancing service levels, citizen expectations, the cost-of-service delivery and the actual needs of existing and future assets.
- Supporting sustainable growth and economic development.
- Maintaining prudent financial planning and decision making.
- Engaging internal and external stakeholders in the infrastructure management process.

Strategic Area of Focus	Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements	Initiatives (Short-Term)	Initiatives (Mid-Term)	Initiatives (Long-Term)
Proactive Asset Management Plan	St Marys is committed to developing a progressive and sustainable infrastructure plan that meets the infrastructure needs of today and plans tomorrow. This will require a balance between building and regular maintenance. The Town will develop a proactive action plan to prioritize immediate and midterm infrastructure needs. Council and staff will keep this action plan at the forefront when developing current and future capital forecasts.	Identify immediate needs in the community. Adopt a mindset of ensuring an asset management project is truly "needed" rather than being a "want" or updating/replacing an asset based on its theoretical service life or cosmetic reasons. Ensure that the practice of asset management planning extends beyond traditional "hard infrastructure", including: "Hidden" infrastructure (i.e., IT, cyber, records, privacy, etc.), Equipment (i.e., Fire, Public Works, etc.), Facilities (i.e., PRC).	Ensure the 10-year capital plan is robust, predictable, and reflective of master servicing studies, condition reviews, etc. to eliminate year over year "surprise" projects. Work towards and ensure that the Town is compliant with all provincial AMP legislation. Develop AMP levels of service and implement a public engagement program to better inform residents of the Town's asset management strategies. Develop, implement, and regularly review a 40-year financial plan to plan pending capital expenditures and how they will be funded, with a goal of maintaining existing service levels.	Regularly review and update the Town's master servicing study, facility condition reviews, sidewalk master plans, etc to ensure there is ongoing infrastructure assessment and evaluation. Ensure the findings of these studies are built into the 10-year capital forecast.

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Waste Management Plan	With anticipated proactive measures for growth (residential, commercial, and industrial), there will need to have sustainable long term waste management services, but with a view to controlled costs and forward-thinking efficiencies.	Complete the review and study work necessary for an updated waste management strategy at the St. Marys Landfill site.	Implement renewed waste management approach on a phased-in approach.	Review the waste management strategy on regular and on-going basis with an eye to identifying savings and efficiencies.
Granting Readiness	Given the rising costs to deliver infrastructure, it will be vital that the Town be in a state of readiness to compete for much-needed infrastructure funding	Prepare an itinerary of planned projects that can be made shovel-ready in response to funding changes at the senior levels of government	Keep abreast of developing and evolving opportunities. Actively seek opportunities that align with municipal capacity and vision.	Review infrastructure plans on an on-going basis, seeking grant alignment.
Maintenance Prioritization	Given the large number of community heritage assets, a maintenance schedule needs to be agreed to by Council in prioritizing which of these assets will be the recipient of discretionary funding.	When reviewing priorities of needs for maintenance investments in community heritage assets, the following Town icons will be considered of most importance: ·Town Hall* ·Historic Water Tower* ·Mill Race Dam and Spillway* ·Carnegie Library* ·Museum* ·Water Street Bridge ·Church Street Bridge* ·Grand Trunk trail and Sarnia Bridge Properties with an * are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act		

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Downtown Parking	Peak periods of parking in the Downtown Core, new development, and a strategy to increase community events Downtown have caused a concern that the area lacks parking. Combined with the parking demands of a growing downtown Town workforce, the Town will actively review what solutions may exist to improve parking concerns that exist during peak periods.	Develop a communication plan to educate downtown stakeholders on the current parking situation, the Town's future forecasts of demand, and what is being done to resolve any potential issues. Complete a review of the 2024 Parking Study to determine what "low hanging fruit" recommendations exist that may help resolve this situation. Review and consider how to implement a proactive parking enforcement approach.	Review and identify what public and/or private land resources exist that can be leveraged to make improvements to parking supply and demand in and around the downtown for both the public and the Town's own internal parking needs. Establish engineering standards to include on street parking where appropriate for new developments, road reconstructions, Town assets etc. to improve parking in general.	Regularly update the Town's parking study on every 3-5 year basis.

Strategic Pillar 2: Communication and Marketing

There is a demand by residents and stakeholders to receive information in a timely manner with 24/7 access, in a fashion that is most convenient for the with the opportunity to provide input.

The Town is committed to being a transparent and proactive communicator and implementing a fully integrated communications plan, including a marketing and tourism plan. This will be achieved through strong, proactive, centralized and frequent communication through multiple channels that encourages engagement with stakeholders.

The vision for the Town of St. Marys communications is to be proactive, community-based, personable, and engaging with an encompassing feel achieved by:

- Aligning messaging and outreach efforts in support of key strategic goals.
- Developing and maintaining strong and positive presence for the Town.
- Engaging with and informing stakeholders on key decisions.

<i>Strategic Area of Focus</i>	<i>Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements</i>	<i>Initiatives (Short-Term)</i>	<i>Initiatives (Mid-Term)</i>	<i>Initiatives (Long-Term)</i>
Proactive Communications Plan	St. Marys is committed to developing and maintaining a proactive and transparent communications strategy that meets the needs of residents, newcomers, and tourists.	Actively engage with citizens through multiple online platforms, such as the website, eblasts, social media, etc. while being mindful that not all residents are online by providing core corporate information via a secondary traditional print stream. Ensure planning and tactical execution remain centralized as much as possible, while building a mindset that communications is a key responsibility for everyone involved on a program, project or campaign. Maintain effective relations with local media.	Maintain an interactive web presence that is easily accessible and navigable; a site in which residents can interact with the municipality on multiple levels. Refresh and redevelop the Town's Corporate Communication Plan to evaluate current tactics and to develop recommendations to respond to an ever-changing communications landscape. Review and develop strategies to increase participation in public engagement, surveys, etc. to collect a representative voice of the community.	Routinely evaluate and measure community engagement, continue to seek new communication mediums, keep policies updated, and meeting new channels of communication.

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Recreation and Leisure Marketing and Promotions	The Town has a large and diverse service profile for recreation and leisure services. Achieving scale-appropriateness will require proactive promotion of recreation and leisure programming and services; sourcing public feedback and input on additional needs and opportunities; and celebrating achievements and points of pride.	Complete communications audit to determine where gaps exist in current recreation and leisure communications approach. Communications and programming staff to meet annually and to develop an internal marketing and advertising plan for the upcoming budget year, with quarterly. Use a range of print and digital mediums to bring awareness to parks, recreation, and culture opportunities to encourage greater participation.	Explore opportunities for just-in-time communications to promote last-minute program availability and opportunities, promoting the use of non-prime time and shoulder hours in facilities, etc. Assess the need for a formalized, consultant-driven, marketing and promotions plan for recreation and leisure.	Regularly review and update communications audit on an annual basis to ensure all outlets are captured and to evaluate effectiveness of communications tactics.
Social Media Strategy	Developing a cohesive social media strategy will distinguishes tourism promotion from municipal communications, ensuring targeted and effective engagement with diverse audiences while maintaining clear, complementary messaging across all platforms.	Rebrand the current Instagram handle @townofstmarys to @discoverstmarys, aligning with the Town's tourism website. Create new tourism-exclusive accounts on social media, using the @discoverstmarys handle. Maintain existing social media accounts for corporate municipal communications and to amplify tourism content	Improve the consistency and design cohesion of the Town of St. Marys' Instagram feed to reinforce brand identity. Cross-share more curated content from Instagram on Facebook to increase promotion of events, contests, marketing campaigns.	Host social media contests to increase user engagement and followers on social media platforms Diversify the Town's social media presence by leveraging emerging platforms while maintaining a presence on platforms that have strong engagement metrics. Expand the reach of St. Marys' tourism campaigns by leveraging engaging, high-retention video content across multiple platforms. Utilize the Town's YouTube account for unique 'shorts' postings.

Strategic Area of Focus

Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements

Initiatives (Short-Term)

Initiatives (Mid-Term)

Initiatives (Long-Term)

Tourism Marketing and Branding

The Town is committed to building and promoting a strong, recognizable brand and identity for St. Marys.

A clear and consistent brand identity will distinguish St. Marys from nearby destinations, will define the key messages St. Marys wants to share with the outside world, will support a sense of community with current resident, and reinforce the Town's unique charm, history, and outdoor offerings across digital and print platforms.

Establish a unified and recognizable tourism brand for St. Marys across all marketing platforms.

Create and implement dedicated tourism hashtag for St. Marys tourism, such as #DiscoverStMarys. Incorporate this hashtag into all marketing materials and social media contests.

Enhance marketing efforts with high-quality visual content that captures the essence of St. Marys and supports outreach to key stakeholders.

Enhance visibility and draw attention to St. Marys by placing impactful strategically located advertisements.

Expand outreach to new audiences by utilizing inexpensive yet impactful print materials to promote St. Marys.

Take a proactive role in supporting and promoting both corporate and community events.

Develop a Local Ambassadors Program to encourage residents to promote St. Marys using designated hashtags (e.g. #DiscoverStMarys).

Improve website design and SEO to increase discoverability.

Implement Google analytics, tags, and campaign tracking for data driven decision-making.

Launch targeted paid ads to reach specific visitor segments

Partner with nearby municipalities and organizations to co-promote events, create cross-regional campaigns, and share resources

Expand St. Marys' reach by tapping into influencer audiences to promote the town's unique offerings and drive visitor engagement.

Design and implement a targeted marketing campaign for reaching audiences who visit the Stratford Festival

Enhance event marketing & seasonal tourism campaigns.

Create a key messaging document and enhance communication cohesion and strengthen the Town's tourism brand with clear, consistent messaging.

Increase visibility and attract visitors by sharing compelling stories about St. Marys through various media channels.

Leverage brand sponsorships to increase visibility and attract visitors by aligning with established companies that share a focus on outdoor recreation and lifestyle.

Keep wayfinding approaches current with new opportunities, legislative requirements, and technologies.

Strategic Pillar 3: Community Building and Sense of Place

The Town has long prided itself as being “The Town Worth Living In” and is committed to adopting best practices to demonstrate its functions well as an independent municipality. To build a community, and to create a sense of place and belonging, the Town will need to ensure that it continues to make sensible and responsible investments into the necessary public services, supports, and programming to attract newcomers, retain youth and young families, and to accommodate a growing population. The Town will need to look beyond traditional “hard” infrastructure and will need to responsibly invest in the “social infrastructure” that creates a community.

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Social Infrastructure	The Town is a service organization and must invest in the necessary social infrastructure to create a sense of community to position itself as being attractive to both newcomers, and the existing population it wishes to retain. However, the Town must do so recognizing that it has finite resources and cannot be “all things to everyone”.	Employ robust processes to identify the social infrastructure that is required to meet the ever-changing needs of the community. As new requests for services are received, employ a business plan approach to review requests, and to develop a responsible plan for implementation prior to approval. Consider “Town Staff” as essential social infrastructure and take steps to be a strong and competitive employer.	Consider how the Town can leverage third-parties and other agencies to deliver required and needed services before directly delivering them using its own resources. Continue to provide, establish, and support local low to no-cost activities that are geographically distributed throughout the community.	To ensure the Town’s demography remains diverse, continually evaluate the service profile provided, and employ a balanced approach to providing public services, ensuring that no one demographic is overserved.

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Public Transit	A lack of public and private transit services in the community reduces access to services and creates a barrier within the community. Given the high cost of implementing public transportation, the Town will take a careful approach to implementing solutions, understanding that a traditional public transit system is outside the means of a small municipality.	Research and develop options to consider filling the current gaps in local transportation options. Continually seek out grants from upper levels of government to offset the costs of any public transportation initiatives.	Review and determine the feasibility of implementing the recommendations of the Town's Transportation Needs Assessment. Continue to focus on a partnership approach with neighboring municipalities.	Regularly review the PC Connect model for its effectiveness and value for service.
Social Services and Supports	Complex social issues have become a visible reality in small communities. The Town has been proactive in establishing a community wellness program, the Town needs to maintain a nimble approach to identify changing needs and assess its role in providing the necessary supports.	Actively participate regionally at the CSWB table to collaborate stay abreast of current trends in the industry, changing needs, and understand the role of service providers in addressing various issues. Increase resident knowledge and awareness of existing programs, services, and supports through improved communications. Increase Council and staff knowledge of social issues, response techniques, supports etc. to be ambassadors of the program.	Establish collaborative pathways between programs, services, and supports, so that service providers can work together more effectively and are better equipped to guide individuals and families to the social, health, economic, and education supports they need. Develop, promote, and organize innovative community engagement and public strategies/campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and promoting understanding regarding mental health, addiction, racism, and discrimination.	Continually review and assess the processes/policies/programs the Town can put in place to ensure that it can proactively deal with social issues as they arise and/or escalate. Regularly review the Town's financial subsidy programs and adjust as necessary to recognize the increasing cost of programs, services, and events. Continue to promote external subsidy programs. Continually review outreach programs to determine and define the Town's role in complex social issues.

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Childcare	Childcare services plan an important role in supporting St. Marys' long-term social and economic health of the community. Providing reliable, and accessible childcare enables working families to fully participate in the labour force, supports growth by attracting newcomers, retains young families and reinforced St. Marys' commitment to community building	Access to childcare remains a key priority of the Town. Understanding the high costs of operations, the Town's approach will be scale-appropriate and fiscally responsible. The Town will continue to operate at its current childcare service level but will be proactive and continually seek out ways to encourage the creation of new childcare spaces in the community. This approach will not be fully publicly driven and funded. The Town's approach includes being innovative and finding ways to encourage additional licensed and unlicensed child care spaces in the community provided by the private and at-home market. To implement the strategies above, the Town will be opportunistic and leverage grant funding when it is available.		

Strategic Pillar 4: Recreation and Leisure

Recreation and leisure services are an important part of providing positive visitor and resident experiences and supporting wellbeing. They contribute to community building, sense of place, and quality of life, offering significant social, economic, and environmental benefits by providing spaces, programs, and services for residents and visitors to gather and participate in meaningful activities and experiences. As a service organization, the Town is committed to providing these services in a scale-appropriate and cost-efficient manner.

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Recreation, Culture, and Leisure Master Planning	The Town will provide inclusive recreation and leisure spaces, programs, and services for all, regardless of age, ability (e.g., physical, social, mental), background, or orientation in a scale-appropriate and cost-efficient manner.	Routinely complete recreation master planning and create a priority order of the RCLMP recommendations that matches the need identified for the community. Provide a mix of affordable and accessible programs; activities for children, youth and older adults; expanding low to no cost outdoor recreation opportunities; and offering convenient and unstructured activities. Conduct feasibility studies and business plans prior to approving new services, programs, and/or recreation facilities and implementation to ensure that they align with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	Implement the key recommendations as required and ensure that they align with concurrent policies and plans. Explore new program offerings to maximize the use of indoor and outdoor community facilities, particularly in locations that are underutilized or have capacity for additional use. Expand/form new partnerships with others to provide programs before delivering them using Town resources. Engage community organizations regularly to understand their needs and challenges, ways to provide Town support, plan promote and coordinate initiatives.	Undertake a mid-cycle review and a detailed 10 to 15-year review. Timing may be adjusted based on pace of implementation and changes in population growth, trends, and other internal and external factors. Regularly review the Town's financial subsidy programs for households and community organizations and adjust as necessary. Continue to provide, establish, and support local low to no-cost activities. Continue to remove physical barriers from public facilities, programs and services to ensure that they are accessible for all residents, regardless of ability.

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Pyramid Recreation Centre	The Pyramid Recreation Centre will be a vibrant and exciting community hub that provides a variety of inclusive opportunities for all persons within a cost-efficient, service-oriented and well-maintained best in-class facility.	Adopt a Core Services Policy and tailor cost recovery philosophies and considerations for new programs consistent with this policy. Complete a condition assessment of the facility and develop a robust 10-year capital plan for known expenditures and lifecycle planning. Work with the primary users of the facility to co-ordinate blackout periods to ensure that it does not negatively impact playing schedules.	When and where possible, pursue partnerships and revenue sharing relationships with external providers to increase patronage to the building. Regularly review the life-cycle plan to ensure that the priority order of projects remains current, and to ensure the Town's AMP financing strategy captures known pending expenditures. Conduct a review of the Town's Ice Allocation Policy and regularly meet with user groups to understand ice time needs. Continue to develop initiatives encourage use of available un-sold ice. Explore opportunities to secure 1-2 additional trade shows, fairs etc. each year to be hosted at the PRC.	Enhance flow throughout facility to better connect the business units as one centre through upgraded signage and possible infrastructure upgrades to provide access from Arena to Friendship Centre Prepare pricing and concept drawings for an updated paint scheme for the facility. Explore opportunities to offer indoor walking program to all residents and expand walking routes. Consider providing the program on a year-round basis. Determine the need to renovate the main hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to be more gymnasium friendly to accommodate active recreation.

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Recreation and Leisure Facilities	The Town is committed to providing welcoming, attractive, affordable, safe, and inclusive recreation and leisure spaces that meet the needs of all ages and ability (physical, financial, etc.)	Continue to engage youth and older adults to make St. Marys' age friendly. Review consideration given to enhancements to the Youth Centre and Friendship Centre, and other indoor and outdoor spaces. Work with the St. Marys Public Library to ensure that the Library is positioned to serve current and future residents.	Explore opportunities to use the Lind Sportsplex, St. Marys Museum and Archives, and facilities in the downtown area to strengthen the distribution of where youth and older adult programming opportunities are offered. Continue to collaborate with partners to provide spaces for youth and older adults, including St. Marys YMCA, Library, and school boards.	Should need and patronage dictate, engage the Avon Maitland District School Board to investigate opportunities to partner in expanding the small gymnasium at St. Marys DCVI to improve public access for gym-based uses.
Recreation Trails	St. Marys' provides a strong network of trails that are not only attractive to residents, but visitors as well. The Town is committed to investing and improving the trail network to encourage and promote low impact physical activity; connectivity throughout the Town; and enhancing the cultural profile of St Marys.	Develop and Active Transportation Master Plan to explore opportunities to strengthen the existing recreational trail network. Development of a recreational trail classification system to define the design standards for different types of trails, including width, surface type, trail amenities service level for winter maintenance, and other details.	Establish recreational trails within future residential areas with an emphasis on linking the north and west ends of St. Marys with the existing network. Design new and redeveloped parks with designated circulation pathways to guide users through parks and public spaces, and to connect to on-site amenities and the existing trail network.	Work with non-municipal landowners to ensure the development of a continuous active transportation network. Where feasible, explore opportunities to acquire land for active transportation infrastructure, including through the development process or alternative Strategies.

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Parks	St Marys' parks are prized natural gathering places. The Town is committed to ensuring its parks remain welcoming and inviting spaces, and to developing and renewing parks with a focus on inclusivity and maximizing their ability of enhancing the cultural profile of St Marys. The Town will strategically plan for and design Town Parks in a flexible manner to accommodate recreation, special events and festivals, consistent with the standards of the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Master Plan.	Preserve Cadzow Park as a quiet, residential, family-oriented park. Methodically implement the Milt Dunnell Revitalization Plan, and position the park as the central focus for community events to host cultural events, such as festivals, "gathering on the green", art exhibits, performances, etc. Engage the landowners of East Ward Park to establish ownership of the park and implement the compliance plan required for this property.	Actively include the parks in marketing and promotion. Undertake enhancements to the Junction Station Dog Park such as creating an area to separate large and small dogs, adding additional shade through tree plantings or a built structure, and lighting to provide extended hours of use during the evenings. Work in partnership with other corporate departments and community organizations and implement strategies to enhance and promote environmental sustainability initiatives and strategic naturalization of parks and open spaces.	Continue to seek opportunities to add to the profile of all St. Marys' parks. profile. Evaluate opportunities to provide a small-scale all wheel park in the north or west end of St. Marys that features limited skate components such as a ramp, curb and/or rail, and potentially complementary to a basketball court Evaluate opportunities to construct two outdoor basketball courts in a park setting. Evaluate opportunities to acquire or create new parkland and provide playgrounds to reconcile gap areas (East Ward, North side of Queen Street West, west of the Thames River North of the Grand Trunk Trail, west of James Street North).

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Outdoor Playing Surfaces	Patronage to the Town's outdoor playing surfaces is increasing, along with user expectations for the availability and quality of these playing surfaces. The Town will strategically plan for its outdoor playing surfaces to accommodate both organized and unstructured recreation, using a scale-appropriate and cost-effective mindset, focusing on implementing strategies to optimize what exists today before considering large-scale expansions.	Work with users (soccer, baseball, racket sports) to maximize the use and availability of existing locations through various strategies, including increasing efficiency in scheduling (including encouraging weekend use as applicable), minor expansions, etc. Make the necessary immediate upgrades to the ball diamonds at Milt Dunnell Field to relocate play from East Ward Park.	Engage the Avon Maitland District School Board and St. Marys DCVI to evaluate the potential to establish additional rectangular fields. Work with the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board and Holy Name of Mary School to investigate the feasibility of using the rectangular field. Prepare a capital reinvestment plan for the ball diamonds at Milt Dunnell Field and Solis Park to enhance the user and spectator experience with consideration given to infield and outfield quality, fencing, lighting, backstop, physical accessibility, supporting amenities, and more.	Should there continue to be a demand for additional field capacity, explore opportunities to increase the supply of rectangular fields including re-establishing soccer fields at Southvale Park. Explore the feasibility of developing lands for the purpose of addressing needs for soccer fields, ball diamonds, and racket courts with supporting amenities
Water Street South Corridor	The St. Marys Swimming Quarry is a popular destination that draws visitors from all over. The Lind Sportsplex, surrounding green areas, fishing Quarry, and other features increase the potential of the Water Street South corridor. The Town will actively work to increase the tourism potential of this area, while balancing the need for passive and unstructured recreation amenities.	Investigating the feasibility of creating a drop-off area on the west side of the Lind Sportsplex to alleviate parking constraints. Consider formalizing linkages from overflow parking locations to the Lind Sportsplex. Develop a business plan for the Non-Swimming Quarry focusing on a plan to clean it up, reduce liabilities, and increase opportunities for passive and/or active public uses of the Facility.	Review and explore additional amenities, programs, events and modifications to maximize the tourism potential of the swimming quarry location. Implement the Non-swimming Quarry plan per its approved schedule. As part of the plan, promote the use of the west quarry for passive, low impact uses such as nature enjoyment, hiking, and bird watching.	Review and identify options to make improvements to parking supply and demand in the Water Street South Corridor

Strategic Pillar 5: Culture, Tourism & Economic Development

Municipalities play a critical role in small business success by creating a supportive environment and creating the right conditions to attract visitors to the community. The Town's strategy will be targeted and unique to the community with a view that culture and tourism are economic drivers. This is complemented by an understanding that the Town plays a key role in implementing "retention focused" economic development through tactics in areas of business support, incentives and grants, streamlined regulations, infrastructure investment, and marketing and promotions.

Strategic Area of Focus	Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements	Initiatives (Short-Term)	Initiatives (Mid-Term)	Initiatives (Long-Term)
Culture and Tourism	A core philosophy of the Town's Economic Development Strategy is to position culture, heritage and tourism as key economic drivers of the Town. A key goal is to create reasons for visitors to stay longer and engage with the culture, heritage, and leisure offerings.	Undertake a cultural mapping exercise to create an inventory of community-based arts and culture providers and explore future collaborative opportunities. Promote the Town's unique events, businesses, characteristics and niches. Develop strategies to encourage Quarry visitors to explore and engage with the broader offerings of St. Marys. Host bi-annual tourism and events department "Town Halls" to address emerging issues, gather ideas, share updates, and engage stakeholders for feedback.	Explore opportunities to enhance public art in the community. Collaborative opportunities with the Station Gallery, arts and cultural groups, and schools are encouraged. Enhance St. Marys' appeal to day trippers and cultural tourists by offering unique, interactive, and memorable experiences that highlight the Town's heritage and culture. Work with out-of-Town hotels and attractions to market St. Marys to attract tourists who visit nearby attractions. Incorporate the waterfront in the cultural life of the Town, including the prospect of tying it with recurring signature festivals.	Support businesses in creating tourism experiences that reflect St. Marys values of community and heritage. Develop municipal policies that encourage the responsible development of infrastructure that supports increased tourism. Review and investigate potential options for increased and new accommodations that align with the Town's identity. Ensure that marketing and promotion remains a key driver in future economic development strategies.

Strategic Area of Focus

Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements

Initiatives (Short-Term)

Initiatives (Mid-Term)

Initiatives (Long-Term)

**Vibrant
Downtown
Space**

The Downtown should be perceived as a safe, central, and culturally vibrant gathering area.

The Town's view to "Downtown Revitalization" will be simplified and will be defined as taking actions to increase patronage to the core. Increased patronage will create an increased focus on the Downtown and will naturally lead to improvements to this important cultural area of the community.

Promote St. Marys' downtown core as the Town's cultural hub. Recognize key assets, including the Town Hall, Public Library, Lind Park, as well as the St. Marys Station Gallery. Encourage arts and culture-related programs and gatherings within these spaces.

Facilitate regular informal collaboration sessions with representatives from the BIA, local businesses, and key stakeholders.

Ensure that the Town and the BIA are aligned as partners in fostering tourism growth.

Provide an attractive and well-functioning streetscape in the downtown core.

Using the Downtown Beautification Plan as a guide, work and partner with the BIA to beautify the downtown area to attract visitors, support local businesses, and foster pride among residents.

Complete a review of the current rules and regulatory tools available to the Town to establish and enforce standards for vacant storefronts.

Promote local theatre and arts in the core. Consider a partnership with the Stratford Festival and other local theatre entities to develop an increased theatre presence in the downtown core.

Take on a leadership role to strengthen collaboration among local businesses and affiliates. Efforts will focus on fostering cohesive business environment and enhancing visitor facing infrastructure.

Explore the possibility of hosting a monthly local goods/farmer's market event at the quarry or as close to the Quarry as possible with a goal of motivating patrons to come into Downtown.

Take a lead role in local business collaboration to discuss consistent and predictable operating hours across businesses.

Encourage businesses to align business hours and seasonally increase hours, especially on weekends.

Consider implementing policies, by-laws or rules that discourage vacant storefronts downtown.

Leverage the downtown architecture, in particular the alleyways, to enhance the cultural experience in the downtown core.

Investigate opportunities to invest in space in the core to further promote and expand local arts, culture, and theatre.

Create seamless linkages between the downtown and waterfront.

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Comprehensive Events Strategy	The Town is committed to leveraging and diversifying St. Marys' community-driven events, festivals, and experiential tourism to opportunities to attract visitors year-round to showcase St. Marys' unique charm and appeal.	Create a comprehensive events strategy that encompasses both events for hosting and events to attend and sponsor. Strengthen relationships with community partners, such as local service clubs and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, and work to support and elevate the efforts of groups already organizing large-scale events. Expand on signature events like the Heritage Festival and WinterLights. Introduce more frequent, small-medium events and experiential tourism throughout the year to attract visitors year-round by diversifying tourism offerings and reducing seasonal concentration.	Promote and provide unique experiential tourism and immersive experiences that showcase the town's local culture, history, and outdoor activities. Collaborate with local businesses and event organizers to create immersive, story driven experiences that bring repeat visitors. Review and implement the feasible Marketing Campaign Ideas contained within the Town's 2025 Tourism and Marketing Strategy.	Monitor and assess ongoing event success. Be prepared to add/change/delete given feedback. Create a municipal policy to support third party partnerships, delivery, and introduction of new events. Continue to support cultural space operators, program and service providers, and creative industries including promotion and awareness. Regularly engage groups to understand short-term plans, challenges, and where greater support is required.

Strategic Area of Focus	Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements	Initiatives (Short-Term)	Initiatives (Mid-Term)	Initiatives (Long-Term)
Business Support, Retention, and Expansion	A key to growth is to ensure a vibrant and sustainable commercial sector. While traditional business attraction strategies are important, the Town's strategy needs to be primarily a "retention focused" mindset with resources spent to ensure business feels supported, which can lead to retention and expansion.	Assign dedicated municipal staff to act as a business "concierge" to assist business leaders with understanding their needs, navigating municipal rules, grant programs, etc. Connect with local businesses through a Business Visitation Program (confidential meetings with businesses to discuss successes, challenges, issues, questions). Keep an inventory of vacant spaces in the community that can host business, commercial activities, and entrepreneurs. Collaborate with chambers of commerce and regional economic development organizations to align services and share market intelligence. Continually develop, update and promote a business inventory for the community, promoting local shops through official municipal websites and social media channels. Assess available industrial land with a view to zoning and development (both publicly funded and/or through private investment).	Partner with local colleges or organizations to offer free workshops and seminars for local business on topics like marketing, budgeting, and digital adoption. Develop and support programs that offer mentorship, connecting new business owners with experienced mentors in their field. Continue to allow for the flexible use of public space, allowing for sidewalk sales, expanded patios etc. Invest in commercial areas to create a "business-ready" environment (i.e. parking facilities, streetscaping, lighting, signage, and seasonal decorations). Develop marketing initiatives, such as Shop Local campaigns, to increase awareness and consumer patronage of local vendors. Develop a shovel-ready project to develop a small to medium industrial commercial park.	Complete a review of the Towns regulatory and permitting system through the lens of local business to determine how to streamline processes and reduce red tape. Complete a review of existing Town granting programs through a business lens to identify lessons learned, areas for improvement, and if Town grants need to be revised or expanded to include programs that support economic diversification, capacity building, adopting digital tools, creating an online presence, improve e-commerce capabilities, etc. Develop an inventory of "urban amenities" such as parks, libraries, public transit, road networks, walking and cycling paths, connectivity, etc. and use this inventory to develop a community profile and marketing campaigns to position St. Marys as an ideal place for business. Complete a readiness assessment, and develop industrial commercial lands when conditions are right.

Strategic Pillar 6: Housing

St. Marys has a long history of being an affordable and desirable place to reside. This is now challenged by a housing market with few available housing options, driving a supply gap and high housing rates. Complex problems like the ones being experienced across the housing sector require meaningful solutions. St. Marys will embrace all creative and innovative ideas and initiatives to create housing. This will involve using the permissions, authorities, incentives, and controls available to it as a municipality. The goal to increase the stock available through wide range of housing options. This will include housing priced at the market and housing that is affordable and attainable to those living, working, playing, or attracted to being part of the St. Marys community.

Strategic Area of Focus	Strategic Issue/Outcome Statements	Initiatives (Short-Term)	Initiatives (Mid-Term)	Initiatives (Long-Term)
Municipal Policies and Bylaws Supporting Attainable Housing	The Town is committed to continually reviewing and updating policies and bylaws as part of its efforts to increase housing stock, retain rental units and encourage the building/development of a wide-range of built housing forms.	Create a Municipal Facilities Capital By-law for to provide for incentives and negotiations related to an exchange for units considered as “municipal facilities” based on local needs. Draft an affordable and attainable housing Contribution Agreement template.	Update the surplus land policy to provide a greater range of options and directions related to surplus, strategic, or held lands with development potential. Complete a review of policies geared to helping retain current affordable units in use and in occupancy in St. Marys.	Continually review best Practices, and hold discussions with other municipalities specifically related to tools to advance affordability Ensure procurement practices allow for strategic and innovative initiatives including those related to municipal lands.
Municipal Programs and Incentives Supporting Attainable Housing	The Town is committed to reviewing and implementing incentive and grant programs to advance attainable housing goals.	Review existing tools and incentives (permissions and incentives etc.) provided by St. Marys to advance attainable housing using a builder/developer lens.	Adjust incentive programs and the CIP as necessary to respond to emerging trends. Monetize municipal services and expedited approval practices in exchange for attainable housing.	Continually engage with CMHC to promote projects including those that take advantage of deep affordability and increasing units.

**Strategic Area of
Focus**

Municipal Land
Plans
Supporting
Attainable
Housing

**Strategic Issue/Outcome
Statements**

The Town will use land to create housing through two key approaches: using land it currently owns – or could acquire in the future – as space for affordable housing; and working with developers to explore options for adding more attainable units on their land.

**Initiatives
(Short-Term)**

Develop a short-list of essential versus non-essential surplus municipally owned lands and potential for alternative use.

Engage developers with underutilized land use plans and/or delayed developments. Explore plans to determine if Town assistance can expedite development, increase units, or create mixed-use development.

**Initiatives
(Mid-Term)**

Develop a strategic land plan for Town owned land to explore options for those assets deemed non-essential (sale, lease, partnerships, etc.).

Develop a short-list of privately held lands considered to be strategic lands that may have attainable housing potential.

Establish an interest-bearing reserve fund to support potential strategic land acquisition or assembly.

**Initiatives
(Long-Term)**

Land divestment and/or acquisition of small strategic parcels that can support increased land use opportunity

Explore policies to hold lands in trust, use strategic partnerships, land leases and other approaches to advance development by leveraging land holdings.