



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF SMITHS FALLS COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, March 17, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Council Chamber, Town Hall

LINKS TO LIVESTREAM:

Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/townofsmithsfalls/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIFXU6Sq9neiC5VU9QbmLtQ>

Chairperson: Councillor J Miller

Land Acknowledgement

On March 17, 2025 we acknowledge that this sacred land on which Smiths Falls is now located has been a site of human activity for over 10,000 years and is rich in Indigenous history. This land is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation. We are grateful to the Algonquin ancestors who cared for the land and water in order that we might meet here today. We are also grateful to the Algonquin People for their contribution in the making of the Rideau Canal which runs thru Smiths Falls. We are mindful of broken covenants and the need to reconcile with all our relations. Together, may we care for this land and each other, drawing on the strength of our mutual history of nation building through peace and friendship being mindful of generations to come.

Pages

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair J Miller to read the Land Acknowledgement.

2. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at ----PM

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Recommended Motion:

THAT the March 17, 2025 Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda be approved as circulated.

4. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND/OR CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6. DELEGATIONS

7.	CAO/DIRECTORS VERBAL REPORTS	
8.	COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CONSENT REPORTS	
9.	IN CAMERA/CLOSED SESSION	
10.	PRIORITY ISSUES/REPORTS	
10.1	BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy Report 2025-26 (J Crowder)	3
10.2	Official Plan Vision and Strategic Approaches Report 2025-012 (K Grenke)	50
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11.	COMMITTEE, BOARD AND EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION UPDATES	
12.	INFORMATION LISTING/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS	
13.	NOTICE OF MOTIONS	
14.	ADJOURNMENT	

Recommended Motion:

THAT the Committee adjourn its proceedings XXXX p.m. and stand so adjourned until the next duly called Committee meeting.



Report # 2025-26

To: Mayor and Council

From: Julia Crowder, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

Date: March 13, 2025

Special Committee of the Whole Date: March 17, 2025

Title: BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy

☐ For Direction

☐ For Information

☒ For Adoption

☒ Attachment (44pg)

Recommendation: THAT Council endorse the 2025-2030 Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) and Investment Attraction Strategic Plan

Purpose:

To provide Council with the final draft BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategic Plan for endorsement.

Background:

It is typical for municipalities to develop strategic plans to guide and support sustainable growth, improvements and service deliveries for their communities. In 2019(?), staff developed the 2019-2022 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy with key priorities to foster BR&E, Investment Attraction, Tourism, Marketing and Communication and Partnership Development. The thoughtful and ambitious plan included 63 individual action items, building the foundation and direction of the department, and with many programs remaining in place today.

In June 2024, a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain proposals from qualified consultants was released. The RFP closed on July 12th, 2024, and the contract was awarded to Optimus SBR.

The purpose of the new plan is to continue on with important main stay initiative from the 2019 plan, further build upon new areas of opportunity, and action Council priority 5.1 of the 2023-2026 Council Strategic Plan. The Plan provides direction, goals and outcomes that will guide the attraction of new and diverse businesses, as well as retaining and supporting expansion of current businesses and workforce.

Analysis and Options:

The preparation of the BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy included a robust background review and consultation process to engage with key local and regional stakeholders and the broader community to understand the current state and develop initiatives that were realistic and achievable. Goals and actions were developed based on current local and regional contexts which ultimately identified gaps and opportunities the plan should address.

The new 5-year strategy contains 4 overarching goals;

- **Create a high-function business support ecosystem** – align efforts of partners and stakeholders to foster stronger cooperation and collaboration and update/create policies which support an Open for Business climate.
- **Engage and support youth in the trades** – engage with youth and the trades sector to make connections and build local workforce opportunities and talent.
- **Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Business** – supporting local businesses to empower themselves to foster innovation and change by continued engagement and development/promotion of local and regional resources.
- **Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success** – develop targeted attraction tools and materials and incentives to attract new and diverse investments, products and services needed for continued growth and sustainability.

Each of the goals contains specific actions and measurement of success to achieve the overarching goals and are outlined in the action plan attached as Appendix A.

The Strategy, although focused on more traditional economic development initiatives, speaks to the importance of Tourism, Arts and Culture for Smiths Falls in building and supporting its economy. Because tourism and placemaking is a critical component, staff felt it warrants its own focused destination strategy, which will be undertaken in-house by staff this year.

This new strategy will ensure that economic development activities for the Town of Smiths Falls are in line current and future goals and objectives outlined in the Town's current corporate Strategic Plan.

Staff are providing the following options for Council's consideration:

- **Option 1 (Recommended)** – Council endorse the 2025-2030 BR&E Investment Attraction Strategic Plan as drafted.
- **Option 2** - Endorse the strategy with modifications or additions.
- **Option 3** - Council provide alternative direction.

Budget/Financial Implications:

Budget was allocated for this project as part of the 2024 annual budget. Costs to implement action items will be budgeted and funded through the operational budget.

Link to 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:

Priority 5.1 – New Business Attraction - Develop a business attraction and retention plan that will include targeting franchised hotels/restaurants and green industries (industries/businesses producing a product, service or initiatives that contributes to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of the environment).

Existing Policy: 2019-2022 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

Consultations:

- Members of Council and Staff

- Economic Development Partners
- Local Businesses
- Public at Large

Attachments:

- Appendix A - BR&E Investment Attraction Strategy, 2025-2030 (44 pgs)

Notes/Action (space for Council Member's notes):

Respectfully Submitted:

Original Copy Signed by _____
 Julia Crowder, Ec.D.
 Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

Approved for agenda by CAO:

Original Copy Signed by _____
 Malcom Morris, CMO.
 Chief Administrative Officer

2025-2030

BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy



SMITHS FALLS

RISE AT THE FALLS



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1. Introduction

Message from the Mayor

Hello, Smiths Falls.

Every morning, we all wake up with a unique responsibility to build a remarkable community. Whether you are building a career, a business, a family, a home, a vacation, or simply a better life. Smiths Falls is a place where people build things. It's a place people can afford and it's a place where people can work hard to get ahead.

Growth is imperative for our community, as it provides opportunities for our youth, new residents, our businesses and workforce, and new social and entrepreneurial ventures that build the fabric of our Town.

Our Councillors, business owners, community leaders, and next generation understand this imperative, as does our Economic Development and Tourism department. Over the past months, community stakeholders were engaged to talk about our past, present, and future – where we are and the opportunities ahead, and there are many.

The decade ahead will be defined by growth, innovation, youth engagement, prosperity, and pride but only if we work together as one community, one ecosystem, that is aligned by a unified vision and strategy which contains the actions and steps needed for success.

This economic development (investment, business retention and expansion) plan is our footprint. It is a plan that calls for a united effort towards five achievable goals and benefits that will echo for generations.

I am personally committed to bringing this plan to life with all of Smiths Falls. It is our collective responsibility to make Smiths Falls remarkable.

It's time to Rise at the Falls.

Mayor Shawn Pankow.

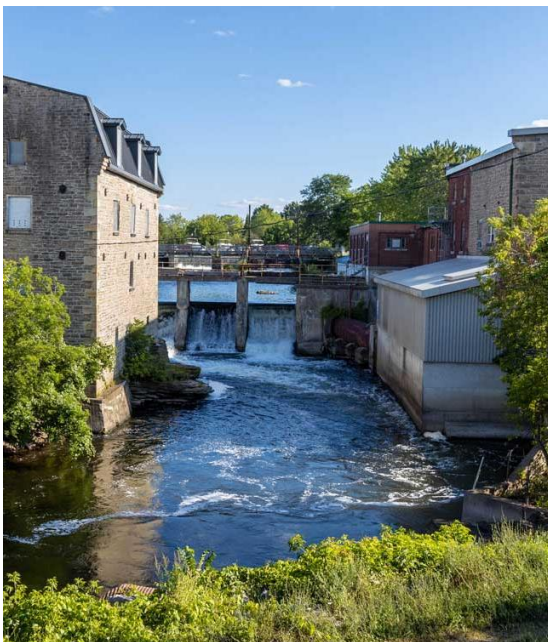
How the Plan Was Created

The following five-step approach was used to create the BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy.



Contents of this Document

The following elements form the foundation of a successful strategy and position Smiths Falls for long-term success.



- A **Strategic Framework** that sets actionable goals, directs business retention and investment attraction activities, and ensures strategic targeting for economic impact.
- An **Action Plan** that outlines the steps needed to make the strategic framework a reality, with expected timelines and assigned responsibilities. This provides a roadmap for achieving strategic goals.
- A **Summary of Insights** from the research and analysis phase of the project that help shaped the Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

Executive Summary

So much new potential awaits Smiths Falls, and it is important to continue the recent momentum and success by taking stock of the current economic climate and take new action to move forward. This is a chance to further capitalize on a story of renewal. How a town came together to redefine itself, its character, and its uniqueness.

Economic Development Mission: To build a thriving, self-sustainable community that is resident-focused, visitor-friendly and attractive to talent and investment. By fostering and supporting the growth and resiliency of the local economy and leveraging our unique human and natural assets, we will continue to grow a vibrant community that brings prosperity and pride to all.

This mission encompasses the following strategic goals:

1. Create a High-Functioning, Business Friendly Economic Development Ecosystem
2. Engage Youth by Leaning into the Trades
3. Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses
4. Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success

Achieving this mission requires a renewed commitment to economic development, rooted in collaboration, engagement, and a shared purpose.

To drive meaningful and sustainable economic growth, the strategic goals are aimed to ensure Smiths Falls focuses on key pillars that will serve as a roadmap for success:

- **Economic Development as a Team Sport:** Collaboration is key. By aligning the municipal council, partner organizations, businesses, and the community, Smiths Falls can harness the collective power of its stakeholders to drive impactful change.
- **Building a Strong Foundation:** Clearly defining and communicating the roles of organizations within the town's business support ecosystem helps the community understand where to turn for resources, guidance, and opportunities. A well-structured foundation ensures Smiths Falls can efficiently coordinate efforts, provide essential support, and respond to the evolving needs of local businesses and residents.
- **Seizing the Opportunity:** Smiths Falls is uniquely positioned to capitalize on significant opportunities to enhance its economic profile. These efforts will diversify the economy and strengthen local businesses.
- **Acting with Urgency:** The current economic landscape presents a time-sensitive window to attract investment and foster growth.

The Role of Strategy in Economic Development

An economic development strategy is the cornerstone of a thriving, resilient community. It provides a clear roadmap to unlock growth opportunities, ensuring all residents benefit from a vibrant local economy. While this document represents the Town's strategy it is important to consider the valued partner organizations the Town works with to promote a vibrant and sustainable economy in Smiths Falls. A well-crafted strategy drives

collaboration, aligns resources, and empowers businesses to succeed, creating jobs and attracting investments. By prioritizing strategic planning, Smiths Falls is not just preparing for the future, it is actively shaping it.

Economic Development Strategy



Strengthens Competitiveness and Municipal Branding: Leveraging our unique strengths allows us to stand out from competitors by showcasing our municipality's appeal as a top choice for living, working, and investing.



Fosters Ecosystem Coordination: A clear strategy aligns efforts across government, businesses, and the community to achieve shared economic goals.



Drives Effective Attraction Programs: With a strategic framework, we can implement targeted programs to attract businesses and skilled workers.



Unites the Community and Fosters Sustainable Growth: A unified plan inspires collaboration, rallying the entire community toward economic prosperity while establishing a resilient, inclusive economy that sets the stage for long-term success.



Measures Progress and Adapts: Tracking key metrics enables us to refine strategies, ensure growth, and achieve lasting impact.

2. Opportunities Ahead: Smiths Falls' Economic Growth Story

What We Heard in Smiths Falls and Trends Impacting Economic Growth

What We Heard

Smiths Falls is uniquely positioned to harness its strategic location, community strengths, and rich history. Situated within Ontario's thriving economic corridor, the town has the opportunity to become a key player in the region's growth by embracing emerging trends, fostering innovation, and building on its strong sense of community.

The insights gathered during the situational analysis reflect the perspectives, experiences, and priorities of Smiths Falls' residents, businesses, and stakeholders. These key themes highlight the strengths and challenges facing the community and have shaped a focused and impactful BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy.



Small Business Support and Economic Sustainability

There is an emphasis on creating a balanced, self-sustaining economy focused on small businesses, avoiding dependency on a single industry, sector or business.

Theme	Current State Findings	Implications for Economic Development Strategy
Continue Support for Service and Retail Sector	The service and retail sectors face challenges in competing with larger stores and markets, particularly in terms of visibility and attracting consistent customer traffic.	Continued approaches, such as targeted promotions, collaborative marketing, event-based retail opportunities and effort to attract new/diverse retail mix should continue to strengthen the downtown business environment.

Community-Focused Business Culture	Local businesses focus on relationship-building and mutual support, which creates a unique town character.	Leveraging this community-centric approach can strengthen local entrepreneurship and enhance collaboration, contributing to a resilient economy.
Strengthening Collaboration Among Local Business Organizations	Local business organizations each operate in alignment with their mandates and governance structures. While they pursue independent strategic goals, they have similar overarching objectives and a shared desire for economic success across Smiths Falls. This provides opportunities for collaboration on shared initiatives, placemaking, workforce development, investment attraction and promoting local offerings to maximize impact and efficiency.	While the BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy is a Town document, developing a strategic focus and effectively communicating goals and objectives with partner organizations and businesses will help to enhance collaboration, coordination and long-term planning.
Developing a Self-Sustaining Economy	There's an emphasis on creating a balanced, self-sustaining economy, focused on small and medium businesses, avoiding dependency on a single industry or sector.	Continuing to promote and support entrepreneurship and independent small business growth will diversify the economy and continue to achieve a more stable foundation for future development.



Housing and Accommodations

While rents are affordable compared to surrounding towns, there still remains an attainability issue. There is a lack of housing to support those ideal for retail employment as well as hotels and short-term accommodations to build extended tourism growth.

Theme	Current State Findings	Implications for Economic Development Strategy
Short-Term Accommodations	Town has a limited number of attractive hotel accommodations, which constrains its ability to host larger events and encourage extended tourist stays.	Increasing hotel and short-term accommodation options will boost tourism, support event hosting, and contribute to broader economic growth through investment in tourism infrastructure.



Youth Empowerment Through Trades

There is a strong desire to support and empower youth with pathways to enter trades and build successful careers locally.

Theme	Current State Findings	Implications for Economic Development Strategy
Trades Education and Opportunities	There is an increased interest in trades from the younger population in Smiths Falls, driven by school programs and co-op opportunities. There is a strong desire to support and empower youth with pathways to enter trades and build successful careers locally.	Supporting and promoting programs such as apprenticeship, co-op placements, and certifications will empower youth, build a skilled workforce, and support local industries.



Recreation and Culture

The Town has the potential to enhance recreation and cultural offerings by leveraging its recreational assets, activating the canal with multi-seasonal activities and continuing to enhance its arts and culture scene to enrich community life and attract visitors.

Theme	Current State Findings	Implications for Economic Development Strategy
Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Needs	The Town has two arenas that can be leveraged for hockey tournaments but lacks usage of summer indoor space for community/tourism events and other sports tourism activities. There's also interest in activating the canal and parks for winter activities like outdoor staking, snowshoeing and skiing.	Expanding year-round recreation options will attract visitors, support tourism, and enhance community engagement through diverse activities. The development of a separate Destination Plan will provide the mechanism to flush out these specific opportunities and action items.
Diversify Arts and Culture	The Town has a good arts and culture base which plays a role in enriching community life and attracting visitors.	Continuing to work together to support and strengthen the arts and culture scene through private investments and the newly developed Public Arts Master Plan will enhance the Town's attractiveness, boost tourism, and contribute to a vibrant local economy.



Infrastructure and Future Growth

There is limited buildings and shovel ready land for future industrial and employment park development, exacerbated by complicated site-specific challenges and restrictions of current stock.

Theme	Current State Findings	Implications for Economic Development Strategy
Regional Transportation and Rail Accessibility	<p>The Town is working with the County to investigate a regional transportation network and is currently working on a Transportation Master Plan as part of the Official Plan Project</p> <p>There is also hope for high-frequency rail stop (e.g., Via Rail) to enhance regular commuting, which could open doors for more residents to work in nearby cities and provide alternative faster and more frequent travel options for visitors.</p>	<p>Regional transportation networks and enhanced rail service will assist in attracting and retain a strong workforce by providing alternative methods of accessing educational and trade opportunities in nearby cities as well as bringing skilled worker from the large centres to Smiths Falls. Strengthened infrastructure will support local businesses by capitalizing on increased visitor traffic and commuter activity from major centres encouraging investment and tourism.</p>
Land Availability and Property Constraints	<p>The Town is nearing a shortage of land for future development. Key challenges include redesignating lands off Lorne Street for employment purposes, addressing infrastructure and ecological constraints on Walker Road, and resolving industrial operations in the Canal District to enable revitalization. Opportunities for post-secondary investment, particularly in skilled trades, remain crucial, with potential sites including the Gallipeau Centre and Ferrara Drive lands. Additionally, the Old Mill Road redevelopment presents significant potential for tourism, economic development, housing, accommodations, and convention spaces.</p>	<p>Resolving heritage, land ownership and other constraints could unlock development opportunities, supporting long-term growth and investment attractiveness.</p> <p>With the removal of the former water treatment plant building and related constraints, such as heritage designation, the Town could explore new investment opportunities, including issuing RFPs to attract visionary projects for this transformative area.</p>

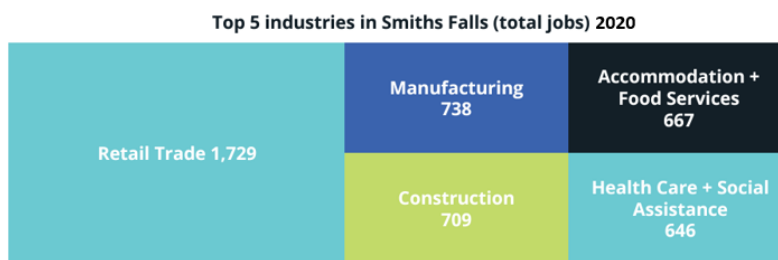
Trends Impacting Economic Growth

Smiths Falls' current landscape presents both challenges and opportunities that have shaped and driven the direction of its BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy.

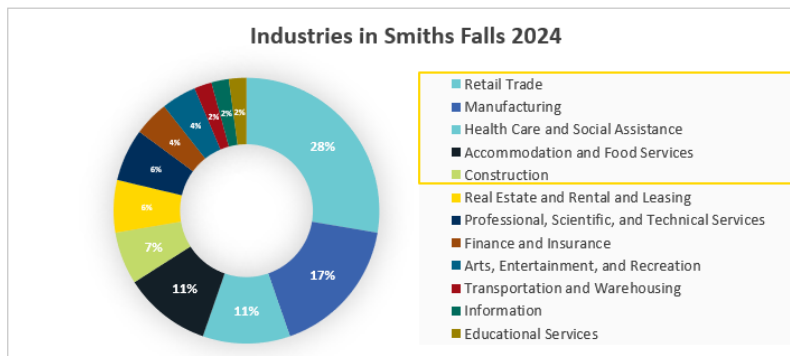
Limited Business Sector Diversity

Smiths Falls' top 5 industries have remained consistent from 2021 to 2024 (see **Figure 1**). This lack of sectorial diversification limits resilience to economic shifts, making the town vulnerable to market and industry-specific disruptions.

Figure 1: Top 5 Industries in Smiths Falls 2020 vs 2024¹



Source: Town of Smiths Falls Investment Profile 2021



Source: Smiths Falls BR&E Survey - September 2024

Over the past 5-7 years, Smiths Falls has focused on rebuilding, revitalizing, and growing its economy. Between 2019 and today, the town has seen the opening of 94 new businesses, with only 45 closures (some retirements of business owners), resulting in a net gain of 49 businesses. Uncertainty post-pandemic, such as fluctuating government restrictions, economic downturns, and rising operational costs, has slowed momentum, however this year (to date) 9 new businesses have either opened or are in the process of opening, which signals Smiths Falls is a desirable place to do business. An added challenge for the downtown business community is the perception that existing businesses do not always

¹<https://www.smithsfalls.ca/en/business-and-development/resources/Documents/Economic-Development/InvestorProfile-2021-FINAL.pdf>

align with the needs of local shoppers. Some residents feel that downtown offerings are either priced for tourists or lack the variety of goods and services they are seeking, leading them to shop elsewhere. At the same time, there is a need to attract high-quality retail options to appeal to both residents and visitors. Addressing this challenge will require strategic efforts to attract new sectors, support entrepreneurship to value add or change product offering, and invest in infrastructure and workforce development to foster growth beyond the existing industries.

Rising Unemployment Signals Ongoing Labor Market Issues

The Town faces labor force challenges, with rising unemployment rates and declining participation, particularly among older workers, following major economic shifts such as the Hershey Plant closure in 2008 and Canopy Growth's scale-back in 2023, compounded by ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the need for strategies to attract, retain, and upskill a younger and more resilient working-age population.

Local Workforce Commutes Short Distance

Smiths Falls offers convenience and accessibility for the working population, with over 60% of the workforce travelling less than 15 minutes to work. This geographic advantage presents a key opportunity to attract businesses seeking easy access to a local labor pool. With 82 businesses in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector, Smiths Falls fosters innovation and attracts skilled professionals, further enhancing its workforce capabilities. The close proximity to employment hubs, combined with ongoing infrastructure investments, makes Smiths Falls an ideal destination for businesses looking to establish themselves in a location that supports quick and efficient commutes for employees.²



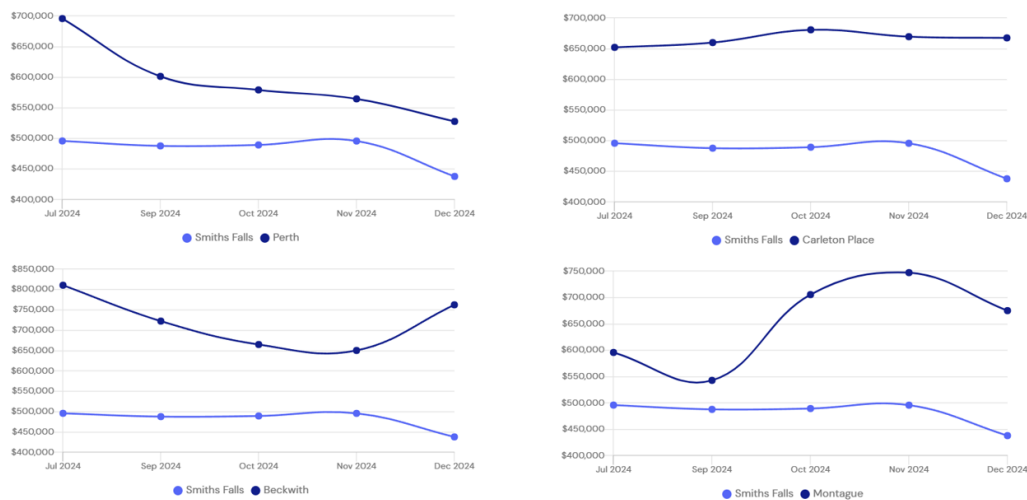
High Housing Prices Despite Affordable Comparisons

Population growth and affordability compared to neighboring towns has increased demand in the housing market, particularly for rentals and diverse housing options (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Smiths Falls Housing List Prices Compared to Nearby Cities

²<https://www.investlanarkcounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Community-Economic-Snapshot-Report-Smiths-Falls.pdf>

(5 Month Time Period)³

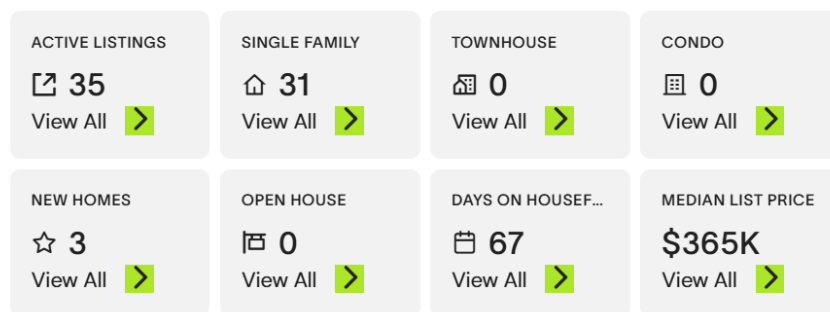


Source: OJHome Canada Ltd. ("Houseful")

However, the overall housing market remains constrained, with limited types of residential properties, predominantly single-family homes, making it harder for potential buyers to find affordable options (see **Figure 3**). This hinders the town's ability to attract and retain residents and workers unless action is taken to expand housing availability.

Figure 3: Smiths Falls Housing Market Trends⁴

SMITHS FALLS, ON REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS



Our Opportunity and the Need for Change

There is a fundamental change underway that will drive economic growth and prosperity for Smiths Falls.

In a world of increased costs, influx of immigration, housing shortfalls, low Canadian dollar, and service-oriented economies, Smiths Falls can continue to grow as an industrious small

³ <https://www.houseful.ca/market-trends/smiths-falls-on/>

⁴ <https://www.houseful.ca/market-trends/smiths-falls-on/>

town which benefits from quality of life and tourism offerings and where people embrace the trades, manufacture a diversity of products, raise families, enjoy recreational and cultural experience, and create homegrown prosperity.

This is authentically who we are, who we can be, and we need to own it.

Smiths Falls' economic opportunity can be built around youth, trades, entrepreneurs, and diverse industry, as well as an increasingly animated community filled with tourism, culture, and recreation. It's an industrious mindset blended with a cultural energy, and that is truly unique in Eastern Ontario.

Our success will require change, which is often not easy and requires a new level of engagement and coordination. The Town and business support partners are positioning to work together, mutually supporting one another, for the future prosperity of Smiths Falls.

The following Investment Attraction and Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) strategy outlines the path to prosperity. The steps needed to build upon the upward trajectory of Smiths Falls and to embrace an economic future that is within our reach.



While this BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy represents a Town document, there is clear recognition that many partner organizations are working towards a successful and vibrant Smiths Falls. To this end, the Town support activities that further promote and strengthen collective engagement across the entire ecosystem. There is awareness that our partner organizations and broad stakeholder base is a position of strength and will help us achieve success related to:

1. **Economic development requires an ecosystem:** Economic development thrives in a strong and connected ecosystem. Smiths Falls is well-positioned to support both existing and new businesses through our robust network of economic development agencies. To maximize impact, it is essential to promote an understanding of unified strategies and priorities, with clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for all. Strengthening alignment and reducing duplication of efforts will make it easier for businesses to access the support they need, fostering long-term economic growth and success.
2. **Success comes through the efforts of others:** Impact and scale can only be achieved through the engagement and work of a community aligned to a common vision, and their success will bring about the collective change desired.
3. **Effective economic development relies on coordination and shared vision:** The municipal economic development office serves as a facilitator and connector, helping to align efforts, drive initiatives, and create opportunities for collaboration where goals intersect.
4. **Celebrating wins fosters a culture of success:** Recognizing and communicating achievements boosts morale, strengthens engagement, and builds a thriving community. Success is contagious, and when shared, it inspires confidence, collaboration, and a commitment to achieving more together.
5. **Be the change you want to see in others:** Leadership comes through conduct and character – operating with pace, accountability, clear goals and objectives, and genuine cooperation creates a feeling of community, growth, trust, and unstoppableness – the very culture desired in other businesses and successful communities as a whole.



3. Economic Development Strategy

Smiths Falls' Path Forward

Smiths Falls' Economic Development Mission

Our mission for economic development is aligned to the Vision for Smiths Falls as outlined in the Municipal Strategic Plan. The mission for economic development serves as a guiding vision for the Town's future growth. It reflects a commitment to creating a community that balances growth with sustainability, celebrates its unique assets, and works for the prosperity for all.

Economic Development Mission

To build a **thriving, self-sustainable community** that is resident-focused, visitor-friendly, and **attractive to talent and investment**.

By fostering and supporting the growth and resiliency of the local economy and leveraging our unique human and natural assets, we will **continue to grow a vibrant community that brings prosperity and pride to all**.



The Need for Teamwork

During and coming out of COVID-19, business support organizations in Smiths Falls and across the region demonstrated resilience, collaboration, and commitment to the greater good. Recognized efforts from the Town of Smiths Falls, the Downtown Smiths Falls Business Association (DBA), and Smiths Falls & District Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), the Small Business Advisory Centre, and others such as the CFDC and employment centre, reflect the strength of this ecosystem. As the economy continues to shift and evolve, building on this strong foundation through a unified economic development strategy will help ensure continued success, inclusivity, and long-term growth. Aligning efforts under a unified economic development strategy requires teamwork built on shared values. These values need to be lived by every stakeholders supporting the mission of economic development in Smiths Falls. Each of the Strategic Goals and proposed initiatives contained in this strategy require a clear leader and shared commitment to the following values for success to be achieved:



Impactful – Driving meaningful, measurable results that make a difference for the community.



Supportive of One Another – Championing collaboration and mutual success across all stakeholders.



Respect and Community Focus – Valuing and acknowledging diverse perspectives and challenges while fostering open dialogue and seeking collaborative solutions while keeping the well-being of Smiths Falls residents at the heart of every decision.



Transparency – Ensuring open communication and trust in every step of the process.



Accountable – Taking responsibility for outcomes and following through on commitments.

Strategic Goals

This strategy is built around interconnected values and goals, each designed to create a thriving and prosperous community. It reflects the Town's commitment to fostering growth and resiliency, leveraging its unique human and natural assets, and building an economy that benefits residents, attracts visitors, and draws talent and investment. The developed goals outline a pathway to a vibrant and prosperous future for Smiths Falls.

Our 4 Strategic Goals

Strategic Actions

1	2	3	4
Create a High-Functioning, Business Friendly Economic Development Ecosystem	Engage Youth by Leaning into the Trades	Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses	Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success
<p>1.1 Re-establish a Unified Leadership Group for Economic Development.</p> <p>1.2 Create an annual engagement event and report to the community.</p> <p>1.3 Update policies/bylaws to support a business environment.</p> <p>1.4 Establish a community feedback cycle for by-law and policy updates.</p>	<p>2.1 Create a Youth Trades Council to provide input on programs, develop ideas for improving trade education, and serve as an advocacy group.</p> <p>2.2 Work with local businesses to increase the number of co-op placements for high school students.</p> <p>2.3 Partner with local trade businesses and partners to establish a fund or sponsorship for students pursuing trade-related certifications.</p> <p>2.4 Establish a formal mentorship program linking interested youth with experienced tradespeople, focusing on flexible, community-based mentorship opportunities that extend beyond formal education or co-op programs.</p>	<p>3.1 Develop and/or better promote educational toolkits and seminars for small business owners and hold meet-ups for idea exchange.</p> <p>3.2 Continue to create and partner with the Chamber and DBA in executing "Shop Local" initiatives.</p> <p>3.3 Celebrate local leaders and business achievements through recognition and storytelling initiatives.</p> <p>3.4 Initiate a "Pop-Up" program to temporarily transform vacant or underused spaces into venues for local arts, music, and small business pop-ups.</p> <p>3.5 Work with Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Local Employment Centre to develop and implement talent attraction and workforce development initiatives.</p>	<p>4.1 Embrace the industrial nature of Smith Falls' history, brand, and market positioning while others abandon.</p> <p>4.2 Review the mixed-use and smart density zoning and explore incentives to accelerate action in the downtown.</p> <p>4.3 Establish a municipal "Investment in Accommodation" program that incentivizes hotel developers.</p> <p>4.4 Bring new shovel-ready industrial business park to market.</p> <p>4.5 Engage neighbouring municipalities in early discussions to expand industrial land strategy through a regional approach.</p> <p>4.6 Develop sports tourism strategy around existing arena lands.</p>

Supporting the Arts Master Plan and Promotion of Smiths Falls as a Destination

A vibrant town is one where people gather, connect, and engage with local businesses, creating a dynamic and thriving community. When residents and visitors are actively present, whether for shopping, dining, or attending events, they contribute to the local economy, support small businesses, and enhance the town's overall appeal. Encouraging activity and engagement not only strengthens the business ecosystem but also fosters a sense of place, making the town a more attractive destination to live, work, and visit.

This strategy recognizes the importance that both community art and tourism or destination marketing have in economic development. These priorities will be addressed in standalone Town initiatives and strategies including the recently completed Arts Master Plan, annual tourism marketing plans and a new Destination Plan and so initiatives have not been duplicated in this strategy, however the importance of successfully implementing initiatives focused on the arts and tourism promotion are critical for continued economic growth across the community.

Smiths Falls' Arts Master Plan is a key driver in the Town's efforts to revitalize key areas of the community and support economic growth. Bold public art installations, such as murals and sculptures, have the potential to create vibrant community spaces, celebrate local talent, and attract both residents and visitors. "Pop-Up Downtown" programs to temporarily transform vacant or underused downtown spaces into venues for local arts, music, and small business pop-ups play an essential role in activating underutilized spaces and adding energy to the core. These efforts not only enhance the Town's cultural identity but also align with the broader goals of the BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy. The Arts Master Plan is an essential piece of the puzzle, serving as a significant enabler for the success of other initiatives outlined in this strategy. Commitment to the Arts Master Plan will be needed to promote a vibrant downtown that draws in local residents and visitors. Continued support in arts and culture is fundamental to achieving the shared vision of a thriving and vibrant Smiths Falls.



The Strategic Goals are briefly summarized below with additional details contained in Appendix A: Action Plan.

Strategic Goal 1.

Support a High-Functioning, Business Friendly Economic Development Ecosystem



This goal focuses on supporting a coordinated and collaborative framework for economic development. Smiths Falls is fortunate to have engaged and impactful business support organizations working across the community. With an objective of continual improvement and enhancement, key actions include working closely with these local business support organizations to promote a unified leadership group, clarifying roles among stakeholders, and developing mechanisms for ongoing engagement and feedback. By aligning efforts, streamlining processes, and fostering transparency, this goal ensures Smiths Falls has the structure and capacity to drive sustainable economic growth.

1

Create a High-Functioning, Business Friendly Economic Development Ecosystem

Our Why

Our efforts need to be aligned to foster economic growth and shift the spirit, engagement and trajectory of our community.

Enablers

- Unified economic development priorities, brand, voice and narrative for Smiths Falls.
- Clear mapping of roles, committee structures, meeting cadence, and project management.

Measures of Success

- Formalized roles and responsibilities
- Improved ecosystem coordination
- Culture of teamwork

Strategic Actions	Initiatives	Timeline	Cost	Key Players
1.1 Re-establish a Unified Leadership Group for Economic Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize the group's mandate and objectives including a term of reference that enables candid discussion. This should include identifying the best location for the group. • Identify and invite industrial leaders. • Set up bi-monthly meeting schedule. • Organize informational sessions. • Conduct surveys to identify overlapping roles and efficiencies. • Compile findings in a summary report. 	Year 1	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: Chamber • Partners: EcDev, DBA, Tourism, SBAC, Valley Heartland, Industry
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form workings groups and terms of reference. Emphasis should be on Project Management operating philosophy to be execution focused. • Provide orientation for each Working Group. • Set up quarterly milestones. 	Year 2-3		
1.2 Create an annual engagement event and report to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a "State of the Economy" event to inform stakeholders of trends, key achievements, and future objectives. • Utilize surveys during the event to collect feedback from participants, which will inform future economic development initiatives and strategy adjustments. 	Year 2-3	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, DBA, SBAC, Valley Heartland
1.3 Update policies/bylaws to support a business environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize mixed-use development. • Explore a reverse vacancy tax to activate vacant properties. • Ensure zoning by-laws allow flexibility for innovative projects. • Review and remove business licensing by-law. 	Year 1-3	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partners: Chamber, DBA, Business Owners and Community
1.4 Establish a community feedback cycle for by-law and policy updates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a regular schedule for reviewing key by-laws and policies, ensuring consistency and accountability. • Host public forums (including online engagement) or town halls to collect feedback on existing regulations and proposed changes. • Leverage existing working groups/committees to review and discuss proposed changes. • Publish a summary of community feedback and how it informs by-law and policy decisions to build trust and accountability. 	Year 3	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, DBA, Business Owners and Community

Strategic Goal 2.

Engage Youth by Leaning into the Trades

With a strong focus to capitalize on the existing manufacturing strength of Smiths Falls and to build a future ready workforce, this goal empowers local youth to pursue careers in the trades. Initiatives include engaging with youth, parents and schools to develop opportunities and address barriers faced by youth searching for employment. This may include building upon existing mentorship programs, increasing co-op placements, organizing job fairs, and providing sponsorship opportunities for certifications. These actions will build a skilled workforce, support the manufacturing sector, and provide young residents with meaningful career pathways.


2

Engage Youth by Leaning into the Trades

Our Why

With a growing interest in trades from youth, Smiths Falls aims to attract and build local talent to support the Town's future needs.

Enablers

- School partnerships for trade program promotion
- Support from trade organizations for co -ops and job fairs

Measures of Success

- Increase in workforce population
- Increase in skilled trades working in Town

Strategic Actions	Initiatives	Timeline	Cost	Key Players
2.1 Create a Youth Trades Council to provide input on programs, develop ideas for improving trade education, and serve as an advocacy group.	Initial Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and distribute survey and conduct focus groups across schools and youth groups . • Share results with parents and students through school boards, community centers, and social media channels. • Engage with local schools to understand information currently distributed to youth and evaluate the effectiveness of existing job fair initiatives. Based on these insights, identify gaps and opportunities to create an information packet for parents that highlights trade career pathways, local resources, and actionable steps for supporting youth in pursuing trades. Council Establishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit youth representatives interested in trades. • Hold quarterly meetings for program input and advocacy. • Facilitate regular meetings with local businesses, educational institutions, and government bodies to discuss and implement the Council's recommendations. 	Year 1-3	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Local Businesses, Schools, Youth, Employment Centre
2.2 Work with local businesses to increase the number of co-op placements for high school students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with partners explore how co-op placements can be better utilized and supported, including developing resources and encouraging opportunities for students to gain both practical experience and essential workplace skills. • Meet with local businesses to assess co-op capacity. • Encourage businesses to adopt co-op agreements. • Help promote co-op opportunities in high schools. 	Year 1-3	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, DBA, Local Businesses, High School, Employment Centre
2.3 Partner with local trade businesses and partners to establish a fund or sponsorship for students pursuing trade-related certifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build partnerships to fund trade-related resources for students (e.g., toolkits, certification support). • Launch annual scholarship cycle. 	Year 2-3	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: Chamber • Partner: EcDev, Local Businesses, Schools, Trade System Organizations, Post Secondary
2.4 Establish a formal mentorship program linking interested youth with experienced tradespeople, focusing on flexible, community-based mentorship opportunities that extend beyond formal education or co-op programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify interested tradespeople for mentorship roles during BR&E visits. • Develop a mentorship matching system tailored to youth outside of formal education, such as those not participating in co-op or apprenticeship programs. • Support flexible mentorship opportunities that provide customized guidance for youth's career goals and interests. • Support an orientation for mentors and mentees. 	Year 3-5	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, local construction and manufacturing sector

Strategic Goal 3.

Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses



This goal strengthens Smiths Falls' entrepreneurial ecosystem by encouraging local businesses to empower themselves to foster innovation and change. Actions include continuing buy-local campaigns, and hosting events to celebrate business achievements. By offering well-promoted resources, enhanced collaboration in marketing, networking opportunities, and targeted support, this goal empowers both new and established business owners to succeed. In doing so, it fosters entrepreneurial growth and strengthens small businesses, building a resilient and diverse local economy.

3

Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Our Why

We are enhancing our engagement with the business community to foster partnerships, align efforts, and maximize the impact of our resources.

Enablers

- A unified economic brand, voice and narrative for Smiths Falls
- Ongoing stakeholder involvement
- Increased Ec Dev and Tourism capacity

Measures of Success

- Engaged businesses
- Completion of community-led projects
- High business satisfaction

Strategic Actions	Initiatives	Timeline	Cost	Key Players
3.1 Develop and/or better promote educational toolkits and seminars for small business owners and hold meet-ups for idea exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue offering and updating existing resources, such as the "New Business Welcome Guide" and support/promote current workshops/seminars hosted by the SBAC. • The Town will continue to engage with partner business support organization and business owners to identify needs and connect businesses with existing toolkits already developed by partner organizations including the SBAC, Valley Heartland CFDC, and other groups. • Expand sector-specific roundtable meetings to include retail and other key sectors in addition to local restaurants. • Organize sector-specific meet-ups to address unique challenges and opportunities. 	Year 1-2	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: SBAC, Valley Heartland, Industry Groups and Business Representatives, DBA, Chamber, Business Representatives
3.2 Continue to create and partner with the Chamber and DBA in executing "Shop Local" initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current "Stop & Shop" campaign and identify areas for improvement. • Expand the campaigns by incorporating storytelling that highlights the impact of local spending on the community. • Incorporate improvement opportunities to continue promoting local businesses via digital channels, social media, and community events. 	Year 1-5	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: Chamber/DBA • Partner: EcDev, Local Businesses
3.3 Celebrate local leaders and business achievements through recognition and storytelling initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Chamber with an annual event to award and recognize local leaders and business achievements. • Collaborate with the Chamber, DBA, and other stakeholders to highlight business achievements through profiles and success stories on the Town's website, social media channels, and events such as the annual Summit. • Build on existing business directories and the regional shop local website/campaign to promote local businesses, products, and services. • Involve local media to promote the event and draw in attendees. 	Year 1-5	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: Chamber • Partner: EcDev, DBA, Local Businesses
3.4 Initiate a "Pop-Up" program to temporarily transform vacant or underused spaces into venues for local arts, music, and small business pop-ups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop-up events and opportunities should align with other initiatives or events developed in support of the Arts Master Plan or other cultural/community building efforts. • Collaborate with local artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs to showcase talents and products. 	Year 2	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, Property Owners, Local Businesses, Artists
3.5 Work with Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Local Employment Centre to develop and implement talent attraction and workforce development initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect potential employees from larger urban communities to local trades and manufacturing employers looking for talent by offering workforce tours. • Develop multimedia materials highlighting housing, lifestyle, community services, and career opportunities to attract skilled workers and their families. • Collaborate with Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Local Employment Centre to enhance programs for attracting and integrating foreign workers, including resources such as language training and cultural orientation. • Offer targeted skill-upgrading workshops, training for trades and manufacturing, and initiatives to support underrepresented groups, such as women in trades. 	Year 4-5	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Valley Heartland, Local Immigration Partnership Group, Local Employment Centre, SBAC, Local Businesses

Strategic Goal 4.

Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success

Focusing on infrastructure, branding, and policy alignment, this goal positions Smiths Falls as a competitive destination for investment. Actions include bringing a new industrial business park to market, incentivizing hotel development, and utilizing key assets such as the Gallipeau Centre and vacant lands on Ferrara Drive. These efforts create opportunities for pop-ups and new businesses to expand into the market while addressing retail and service leakages by attracting businesses that meet local needs. By highlighting the Town's industrial heritage and embracing innovative approaches, this goal attracts new businesses, boosts tourism, and expands economic opportunities.



4

Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success

Our Why

We are preparing sites to attract sustainable investments and revitalize dormant lands, to position Smiths Falls as a place to do business.

Enablers

- A unified economic brand, voice and narrative for Smiths Falls
- Strategic infrastructure development
- Proactive government policies

Measures of Success

- Increased industrial development
- Increased land readiness and business investments
- Improved land utilization

Strategic Actions	Initiatives	Timeline	Cost	Key Players
4.1 Embrace the industrial nature of Smiths Falls' history, brand, and market positioning while others abandon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position Smiths Falls as an industrial hub, promoting the area's existing businesses and historical strengths. • Promote local success stories as proof of concept for industrial investment. As other actions in this strategy gain momentum, this should also include a focus on evolving Smiths Falls' image and reputation to start including an industrial startup community as part of its brand. • Update branding and PR strategy to highlight Smiths Falls as a startup-friendly community. 	Year 1	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Chamber, Local Businesses, Regional Marketing Agencies
4.2 Review the mixed-use and smart density zoning and explore incentives to accelerate action in the downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct zoning review with a focus on mixed-use and smart density. • Identify incentive options (e.g., tax rebates, grants) for developers. 	Year 2-3	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Developers, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
4.3 Establish a municipal "Investment in Accommodation" program that incentivizes hotel developers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for hotel developers to invest in Smiths Falls, including grants and support for infrastructure development. • Provide clear guidelines for hotel development and partner with developers to ensure alignment with Smiths Falls' growth strategy. • Focus on accommodation needs for tourists, business travelers, and future investors. 	Year 3-4	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Hotel Developers, Tourism Organizations, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
4.4 Bring new shovel-ready industrial business park to market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify underdeveloped industrial lands and remove barriers to make them shovel-ready (zoning adjustments, infrastructure upgrades, and environmental assessments). • Partner with private developers and investors to fund land preparation. 	Year 3-5	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Developers, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
4.5 Engage neighbouring municipalities in early discussions to expand industrial land strategy through a regional approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider land-sharing agreements, collaborative investment, and shared ROI models to bring unused or underused lands into development. • Develop investment attraction funding relationships with Invest Ontario and Invest in Canada to strategically pursue targeted sectors. • Investigate joint ventures between public and private sectors to enhance industrial development opportunities. 	Year 4-5	\$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Regional Municipalities and Partners, Developers
4.6 Develop sports tourism strategy around existing arena lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategy to expand usage of arena and nearby lands support increased capacity to host tournaments, positioning Smiths Falls as a regional hub for sports tourism. • Develop a training and tournament program that can attract teams and families year-round. • Collaborate with hotels and restaurants to create packages for visiting teams, building on the "Stay & Play" model to offer comprehensive visitor experiences. 	Year 4-5	\$ \$ \$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator: EcDev • Partner: Developers, Hockey Associations, Sports Tourism Experts, Hotels and Restaurants

4. Economic Development Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of the BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategic Plan depends on clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all partners. By focusing on our respective areas of expertise and aligning efforts, we can ensure resources are used effectively, duplication is minimized, and outcomes are maximized. Collaboration will be key, with each stakeholder contributing their strengths to achieve shared goals. This section outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of each partner, providing clarity to support streamlined efforts and drive the success of the plan.

Key Stakeholders	Roles	Responsibilities
Municipal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure alignment of the strategy with municipal goals and policies. Act as champions for economic development initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve and allocate adequate resources for economic development and tourism. Advocate for local needs with provincial and federal governments. Monitor and evaluate the progress of strategy implementation through regular reporting.
Economic Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the day-to-day execution of the economic development strategy. Act as the primary point of contact for economic development activities in the municipality. Foster partnerships with businesses, organizations, and regional stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement specific programs for business retention, expansion, and attraction. Facilitate investment readiness by preparing data and resources to attract investors. Track economic performance metrics and report to the municipal council and stakeholders. Organize stakeholder engagement events, including roundtables and consultations.
Local Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate and engage with partners in implementing business-focused elements of the strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the municipality and other stakeholders on initiatives like marketing campaigns, workforce development, or local events.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insights into market conditions and business needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer mentorship and support to new or growing businesses. • Provide feedback on municipal economic development policies and programs.
Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as an advocate for local businesses and a key partner in implementing the strategy. • Take an active lead in celebrating and promoting business successes. • Facilitate business networking and create connections between businesses in the wider community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead business-focused workshops and training programs in partnership with the municipality. • Advocate for policy changes that are beneficial to the business community. • Promote membership benefits and discounts, such as group insurance, gas discounts, and other small business perks. • Secure and distribute grants aimed at supporting small businesses.
Downtown Business Association (DBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as the key advocate for downtown businesses and a partner in implementing the strategy. • Focus on promoting and celebrating business successes within the downtown district. • Lead business-focused initiatives, workshops, and events specific to the downtown area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the improvement, beautification, and maintenance of municipally owned land, buildings, and structures in the area beyond what is provided at the expense of the municipality. • Promote the downtown area as a business and shopping destination for residents and visitors.
Small Business Advisory Centre (SBAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support entrepreneurs and small business owners through training and advisory services. • Act as a resource hub for business planning and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer tailored business support via consultations and established mandated programs for new businesses to help them launch and grow throughout Lanark County, Smiths Falls, and north Leeds Grenville. • Host workshops and events in alignment with businesses and municipalities throughout the catchment area as per our mandate. • Collaborate with all municipalities to identify gaps in services or support for local entrepreneurs.

Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) Valley Heartland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support through loans and other funding mechanisms for small businesses. • Encourage entrepreneurship and economic diversification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the municipality to align funding priorities with the strategy. • Support businesses with resources for expansion. • Share insights on regional economic trends and challenges.
Residents and Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as active participants in shaping and supporting the strategy. • Advocate for economic development initiatives that align with community values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on initiatives through consultations or surveys. • Support local businesses. • Contribute to grassroots initiatives that enhance the community's economic appeal.
Ontrac Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide FREE Employment Resource Services to job seekers and employers and is a continuing partner in employment services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local businesses. • Work closely with the municipality to create and implement workforce development initiatives. • Share insights on local and regional workforce trends.

5. Critical Enablers

Community Building is Key

Community building is a cornerstone of effective economic development, aligning social cohesion, inclusivity, and local identity with economic goals. This BR&E and Investment Attraction Strategy includes recommendations to enhance community building. The strategy will need to be embraced and implemented by the community. Embracing the Teamwork mentality and building our community is the only way we can succeed.

It is important for Smiths Falls moving forward to work towards an environment that continues to foster strong positive social networks and trust among residents, businesses, and organizations. These networks create social capital, which drives collaboration, collective action, and resilience in the face of economic challenges. Across the country, vibrant communities with a clear sense of identity and inclusivity are better positioned to attract talent, investment, and entrepreneurs, as well as retain residents by enhancing their quality of life.

This strategy also emphasises good practices that emphasis the value of place-based economic strategies which leverage a community's unique history, culture, and natural assets. Initiatives such as cultural events, public art, and recreational opportunities foster local pride, support small businesses, and reduce economic leakage.

For Smiths Falls, this will mean leaning into the heritage and history surrounding the canal and early railway/transportation; embracing an attitude and image as a community that builds, fixes and creates things with their hands; and capturing the attention of prospective entrepreneurs who may want to escape the constraints and expenses of big cities. By involving diverse voices in planning and decision-making, community building ensures equitable growth and stronger ownership of development initiatives. Ultimately, integrating community building into economic development creates an adaptable, inclusive, and thriving ecosystem that benefits all residents while achieving long-term economic sustainability.

6. Appendix A – Action Plan: Detailed Strategic Actions

Goal 1: Create a High-Functioning, Business Friendly Economic Development Ecosystem

Strategic Action:	1.1 Re-establish a Unified Leadership Group for Economic Development
Current State Challenges Addressed:	<p>To drive the successful implementation of the economic development strategy, it is essential to create a collaborative leadership group. Bringing together industrial leaders, business owners, and economic development partners, this group will address challenges, align efforts, and drive initiatives that support economic growth.</p> <p>By establishing a centralized forum that offers a private setting for candid discussions, this initiative promotes open problem-solving, strategic decision-making, and collaboration. It enables resource mobilization, drives innovation, and addresses complex challenges, all while maintaining confidentiality. At the same time, it upholds accountability through shared transparency and regular updates to stakeholders and the community.</p> <p>As part of the unified leadership group, focused working groups should be considered to support Youth & Trades, Startup Smiths Falls, Industrial Land Activation, and Community Vibrancy. Guided by clear terms of reference, project management principles, and quarterly milestones, these groups will ensure execution-focused progress, aligning stakeholders and resources to advance the Town's Economic Development strategy.</p>

Proposed Initiatives:	Year One:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Formalize the group's mandate and objectives including a term of reference that enables candid discussion. This should include identifying the best location for the groupIdentify and invite industrial leaders.Set up bi-monthly meeting schedule.Organize informational sessions.Conduct surveys to identify overlapping roles and efficiencies.Compile findings in a summary report.		
	Year Two-Three		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Form workings groups and terms of reference. Emphasis should be on Project Management operating philosophy to be execution focused.Provide orientation for each Working Group.Set up quarterly milestones.		
	The four working groups have been suggested based on alignment to current state finds and opportunities for the Town		
	Youth & Trades – There is a strong manufacturing and industrial base in Smiths Falls that is supported and enabled through trades professionals. This working group will ensure interest among local youth, address barriers, promote pathways, and build a skilled workforce.		
	Startup Smiths Falls – There is a need for enhanced support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. This working group will promote the establishment of a startup eco-system, highlighting innovation potential, collaboration spaces, and support for new businesses.		
	Industrial Land Activation – In Smiths Falls today there is limited developable land and an opportunity to position Smiths Falls as an industrial hub. This group will focus on making industrial lands shovel-ready and attracting investment.		
	Community Vibrancy – Through the development of the Economic Development Strategy, there was considerable emphasis heard on enhancing downtown spaces, arts, and recreation to attract tourism, boost local business, and improve quality of life. This working group will focus on making downtown Smiths Falls a year-round destination for existing residents and individuals from the local region.		
Timelines	Costs	Key Players	
Year 1	\$	Facilitator: Chamber Partners: EcDev, DBA, Tourism, SBAC, Valley Heartland, Industry	
Measuring Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation: Number of industrial leaders, business owners, and partners actively involved in the group.Initiatives Supported: Number of economic development initiatives successfully launched or advanced by the group.Clarity Achieved: Completion of a clear roles and responsibilities framework shared with stakeholders.Engagement: Number of businesses and committees participating in the process.			

- **Collaboration:** Evidence of improved coordination and alignment among stakeholders.
- **Community Impact:** Tangible outcomes from initiatives, such as business growth, investment attraction, or job creation.
- **Feedback:** Positive responses from stakeholders on the group's effectiveness in driving economic development.

Strategic Action:	1.2 Create an annual engagement event and report to the community		
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Establishing an annual “State of the Economy” event will create a platform to share key achievements, trends, and goals with stakeholders while fostering transparency and collaboration. By collecting feedback on activities, the event will help to promote community input and inform future initiatives. This action will strengthen the economic development ecosystem by aligning stakeholders, encouraging engagement, and driving continuous improvement in strategy execution.		
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize a “State of the Economy” event to inform stakeholders of trends, key achievements, and future objectives.• Utilize surveys during the event to collect feedback from participants, which will inform future economic development initiatives and strategy adjustments.		
Timelines		Costs	Key Players
Year 2-3		\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner Chamber, DBA, SBAC, Valley Heartland
Measuring Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Event Participation: Number of attendees at the “State of the Economy” event.• Stakeholder Engagement: Volume and quality of feedback collected through surveys.• Community Awareness: Increased understanding of economic trends and initiatives among stakeholders.• Strategy Impact: Evidence of strategy adjustments informed by feedback.• Positive Feedback: Stakeholder satisfaction with the event’s relevance and value.			

Strategic Action:	1.3 Update policies/bylaws to support a business environment		
Current State Challenges Addressed:	<p>Smiths Falls is committed to building an environment in which businesses can operate easily and have the ability to grow without unnecessary burdens or challenges. While there may not be any existing bylaws that represent significant barriers to the business community, the Town is nonetheless committed to continual improvements. The current policy and bylaw environment of the Town can be enhanced by addressing zoning regulations that may limit flexibility for emerging or hybrid business models, that could make it difficult to adapt to evolving market trends.</p> <p>Downtown animation and development are a priority of the Town, and vacant or underutilized properties in the downtown core reduce economic activity and detract from the vibrancy of the community. Smiths Falls has an opportunity to implement</p>		

	<p>innovative policies to promote the use of all downtown properties. Additionally, the need to incentivize mixed-use developments remains critical to aligning growth with the Town's vision for a vibrant and sustainable downtown.</p>	
Proposed Initiatives:	<p>Smiths Falls should explore opportunities to review and update bylaws related to:</p> <p>Incentivize Mixed-Use Development Implement tax rebates, development charge discounts, or fast-track approvals for mixed-use projects in key zones like the Downtown Core to encourage development and ensure alignment with community design standards. This is aligned to Strategic Action 4.2.</p> <p>Explore a Reverse Vacancy Tax to Activate Vacant Properties Explore the ability to implement a reverse vacancy tax program to incentivize property owners to activate vacant or underutilized spaces, particularly in the downtown core. By offering tax rebates or grants for leasing, redevelopment, or temporary uses, this initiative will reduce long-term vacancies, support economic revitalization, and align with Smiths Falls' goals of enhancing community vibrancy and economic growth.</p> <p>Ensure Zoning By-laws allow flexibility for innovative projects The Zoning By-law lists permitted uses within each zoning category, such as commercial, residential, or mixed-use zones. While this approach provides clarity, it may unintentionally exclude emerging or hybrid uses (e.g., co-working spaces with retail or makerspaces that combine light industrial and community activities). There may be opportunity to explore the inclusion of general categories (e.g., "flexible workspace" or "community hub") that can accommodate evolving business models and hybrid spaces. The Town could explore the creation of specific guidelines to facilitate adaptive reuse projects that maintain alignment with zoning goals.</p> <p>Review and Remove Business Licensing By-Law Review business licensing by-law to identify opportunities to simplify or remove requirements that may create barriers for entrepreneurs. This work should include consulting stakeholders to assess the by-law's impact and determine changes that balance oversight with fostering a more business-friendly environment.</p>	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 1-3	\$	<p>Facilitator: EcDev</p> <p>Partner: Chamber, DBA, Business Owners and Community</p>
<p>Measuring Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Changes Implemented: Number of policies or by-laws updated or introduced to support business growth. • Stakeholder Engagement: Feedback from businesses and stakeholders indicating improved processes or reduced barriers. • Business Growth: Increase in business openings, expansions, or investments following updates. • Vacancy Reduction: Decrease in the number of vacant or underutilized properties, particularly in key areas like the downtown core. • Economic Impact: Growth in tax revenue, employment, or other economic indicators tied to the updated policies. 		

Strategic Action:	1.4 Establish a community feedback cycle for by-law and policy updates		
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Integrate a regular review and feedback cycle into Smiths Falls' processes to gather community input on potential by-law and policy changes. This initiative ensures continuous alignment with local needs, fosters transparency, and supports proactive economic development through collaborative decision-making. This Action would build on Strategic Action 1.3 by establishing a culture of continual review and enhancement.		
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a regular schedule for reviewing key by-laws and policies, ensuring consistency and accountability.• Host public forums (including online engagement) or town halls to collect feedback on existing regulations and proposed changes.• Leverage existing working groups/committees to review and discuss proposed changes.• Publish a summary of community feedback and how it informs by-law and policy decisions to build trust and accountability.		
Timelines		Costs	Key Players
Year 3		\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Chamber, DBA, Business Owners and Community
Measuring Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation Rates: Number of residents, businesses, and stakeholders providing input• Feedback Utilization: Percentage of actionable suggestions integrated into by-law/policy updates.• Stakeholder Satisfaction: Positive feedback from participants on the process and outcomes.• Policy Outcomes: Improved alignment of by-laws and policies with community needs, demonstrated by fewer conflicts or amendments needed post-implementation.			

Goal 2: Engage Youth by Leaning into the Trades

Strategic Action:	2.1 Create a Youth Trades Council to provide input on programs, develop ideas for improving trade education, and serve as an advocacy group		
Current State Challenges Addressed:	<p>This action is positioned to directly address workforce sustainability and growth. Smiths Falls has an opportunity to capitalize on its strong trades and manufacturing sectors. To do this it is important to understand the current youth and trade ecosystem in Smiths Falls including resources and supports available.</p> <p>Young people should be engaged directly to help shape programs targeted towards them and focus engagement with businesses/employers and educational institutions. Establishing a Youth Trades Council would aim to push opportunities to strengthen trades education, align programs with industry needs, and further strengthen Smiths Falls trades workforce development.</p>		

	An initial activity to support the establishment of the Council should be to engage directly with Youth through surveys and focus groups. Through this the Town will gain valuable insights into youth interests, barriers in entering trades, and effectiveness of existing job fair work which will enable targeted strategies to attract young talent. Sharing results and creating informational materials will raise awareness among students and parents, fostering informed career decisions and reducing stigma around trades careers. By connecting youth with local resources and pathways, this action will help to continue building skilled workers, reinforcing the Town's economic resilience and supporting sectoral growth.		
Proposed Initiatives:	Initial survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and distribute survey and conduct focus groups across schools and youth groups.• Share results with parents and students through school boards, community centers, and social media channels.• Engage with local schools to understand information currently distributed to youth and evaluate the effectiveness of existing job fair initiatives. Based on these insights, identify gaps and opportunities to create an information packet for parents that highlights trade career pathways, local resources, and actionable steps for supporting youth in pursuing trades. Council Establishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruit youth representatives interested in trades.• Hold quarterly meetings for program input and advocacy.• Facilitate regular meetings with local businesses, educational institutions, and government bodies to discuss and implement the Council's recommendations.		
	Timelines	Costs	Key Players
	Year 1-3	\$\$	Facilitator: Ec Dev Partner: Local Businesses, Schools, Youth, Employment Centre
Measuring Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Participation: Number of youth representatives recruited and actively engaged.• Meeting Outcomes: Number of actionable recommendations developed and implemented.• Collaboration: Frequency of meetings with businesses, schools, and government bodies.			

Strategic Action:	2.2 Work with local businesses to increase the number of co-op placements for high school students
Current State Challenges Addressed:	By increasing co-op placements for high school students, Smiths Falls will build stronger connections between youth and local businesses in the trades and manufacturing sectors. Engaging businesses to adopt co-op agreements and promoting these opportunities in schools will create a clear pathway for students to gain hands-on experience and develop essential skills. This initiative ensures a steady talent pipeline, supports workforce development, and solidifies Smiths Falls' position as a hub for skilled trades and manufacturing.

Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with partners explore how co-op placements can be better utilized and supported, including developing resources and encouraging opportunities for students to gain both practical experience and essential workplace skills. Meet with local businesses to assess co-op capacity. Encourage businesses to adopt co-op agreements. Help promote co-op opportunities in high schools. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 1-3	\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Chamber, DBA, Local Businesses, High School, Employment Centre
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Engagement: Number of businesses participating in co-op programs. Co-op Opportunities: Increase in co-op placements available to high school students. Student Participation: Number of students taking part in co-op placements. Awareness: Reach and impact of co-op promotions in high schools. Long-Term Impact: Number of students pursuing trades careers or apprenticeships after co-op experiences. 		

Strategic Action:	2.3 Partner with local trade businesses and partners to establish a fund or sponsorship for students pursuing trade-related certifications	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Partnering with local businesses to fund scholarships and resources for students pursuing trades certifications will lower barriers to entry and work to attract more youth to skilled trades. This initiative strengthens workforce development, supports industry needs, and reinforces the Town's position related to trades and manufacturing.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build partnerships to fund trade-related resources for students (e.g., toolkits, certification support). Launch annual scholarship cycle. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 2-3	\$\$	Facilitator: Chamber Partner: EcDev, Local Businesses, Schools, Trade System Organizations, Post Secondary
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Secured: Total amount contributed by local businesses to the fund. Student Support: Number of students receiving scholarships or resources. Participation: Number of businesses sponsoring or contributing to the initiative. Career Outcomes: Increase in students completing certifications or entering trades careers. 		

Strategic Action:	2.4 Establish a formal mentorship program linking interested youth with experienced tradespeople, focusing on flexible, community-based mentorship opportunities that extend beyond formal education or co-op programs
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Current State Challenges Addressed:	Connecting youth with experienced tradespeople through mentorship fosters skill development and career pathways. This initiative strengthens the talent pipeline and promotes knowledge transfer, while targeting youth not engaged in formal co-op or apprenticeship programs. The program also focuses on real-world insights, career guidance, and community integration, ensuring effective mentorship beyond traditional school partnerships.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify interested tradespeople for mentorship roles during BR&E visits. • Develop a mentorship matching system tailored to youth outside of formal education, such as those not participating in co-op or apprenticeship programs. • Support flexible mentorship opportunities that provide customized guidance for youth's career goals and interests. • Support an orientation for mentors and mentees. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 3-5	\$	Facilitator: Ec Dev Partner: Chamber, DBA, Local Businesses, Manufacturing Plants
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation: Number of mentors and mentees involved in the program. • Engagement: Retention rates and feedback from mentors and mentees. • Impact: Number of mentees pursuing trades careers or apprenticeships. • Program Growth: Increase in mentorship matches year-over-year. 		

Goal 3: Build Stronger Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Strategic Action:	3.1 Develop and/or better promote educational toolkits and seminars for small business owners and hold meet-ups for idea exchange.
Current State Challenges Addressed:	This initiative equips entrepreneurs across sectors with practical resources and opportunities for collaboration. The Town has developed a New Business Welcome Guide which currently provides valuable information on resources available in the community and checklists for key activities. There is an opportunity to build on this valuable resource and provide small businesses with the tools or guidance needed to address key areas such as marketing, financial management, or leveraging government programs. Offering tailored toolkits and hosting meet-ups fosters skill development, idea exchange, and cross-sector partnerships. The focus is on strengthening Smiths Falls' entrepreneurial ecosystem and driving small business growth.
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue offering and updating existing resources, such as the "New Business Welcome Guide" and support/promote current workshops/seminars hosted by the SBAC • The Town will continue to engage with partner business support organization and business owners to identify needs and connect businesses with existing toolkits

	<p>already developed by partner organizations including the SBAC, Valley Heartland CFDC, and other groups. Examples of new resources that could be developed to support the business community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-Op and Internship Integration: A guide for businesses to establish partnerships with schools, develop co-op placements, and access youth employment programs. ○ Navigating Regulations: Expand on how to navigate permits and by-laws (e.g., signage, patio, and noise by-laws) with examples and FAQs to simplify understanding. An additional opportunity is to expand the development of toolkits and resources to provide support to more established businesses. This could include resources focused on: ○ Workforce Development and Retention: Strategies for attracting and retaining skilled employees, particularly in trades and manufacturing. Summary of information on training programs, apprenticeships, and local co-op opportunities. This could also include guidance on accessing provincial or federal workforce development grants. ○ Succession Planning and Business Transition: Step-by-step guidance for developing a succession plan. Identification resources for business valuation and preparing for sale or ownership transition. Introduction to the legal and financial considerations for smooth transitions. • Expand sector-specific roundtable meetings to include retail and other key sectors in addition to local restaurants. • Organize sector-specific meet-ups to address unique challenges and opportunities (e.g., "Innovating in Trades and Manufacturing," "Downtown Business Marketing," or "Boosting Tourism Through Collaboration"). 		
	Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 1-2		\$ \$	Facilitator: EcDev Partners: SBAC, Valley Heartland, Industry Groups and Business Representatives, DBA, Chamber, Business Representatives
Measuring Success			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit Reach: Number of toolkits distributed, with sector-specific breakdowns (trades, downtown businesses, tourism operators). • Participation: Attendance at sector-specific and cross-sector meet-ups and workshops. • Engagement: Feedback from participants on the relevance and usefulness of the toolkit and meet-ups. • Collaboration: Number of partnerships or cross-sector initiatives resulting from meet-ups. • Implementation Impact: Number of businesses implementing strategies or solutions from the guides (e.g., adopting digital marketing, securing grants). • Business Growth: Reports of improved practices, increased revenue, or other positive outcomes from participants across all sectors. • Resource Expansion: Requests for additional topics or detailed guides, indicating engagement and value. 			

Strategic Action:	3.2 Continue to create and partner with the Chamber and DBA in executing "Shop Local" initiatives	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Enhancing the "Stop & Shop" campaign will encourage local spending, reducing economic leakage and supporting Smiths Falls' small businesses, including local small business retailers, tourism providers, trades and manufacturers. This can also include targeted messaging to ensure that residents of Smiths Falls are fully aware of the local retail opportunities in their community, including those downtown and how to engage with them. By incorporating storytelling and expanding digital and community outreach, this action strengthens local economic sustainability and highlights the vital role of entrepreneurs and small businesses in the Town's economy.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current "Stop & Shop" campaign and identify areas for improvement. • Expand the campaigns by incorporating storytelling that highlights the impact of local spending on the community. • Incorporate improvement opportunities to continue promoting local businesses via digital channels, social media, and community events. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 1-5	\$\$	Facilitator: Chamber/DBA Partner: EcDev, Local Businesses
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign Reach: Increase in engagement on digital platforms and social media. • Community Participation: Attendance at events and participation in campaign activities. • Local Spending: Growth in sales reported by local businesses. • Awareness Impact: Positive feedback on campaign storytelling and educational materials. • Economic Retention: Reduction in economic leakage through increased local purchasing. 		

Strategic Action:	3.3 Celebrate local leaders and business achievements through recognition and storytelling initiatives	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Creating an annual event that recognizes local leaders and business achievements will highlight the contributions of entrepreneurs across trades, downtown businesses, and tourism. By showcasing products, sharing success stories, and involving local media, this initiative boosts community pride, fosters business visibility, and strengthens Smiths Falls' reputation as a vibrant hub for small business innovation and growth.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Chamber with an annual event to award and recognize local leaders and business achievements. • Collaborate with the Chamber, DBA, and other stakeholders to highlight business achievements through profiles and success stories on the Town's website, social media channels, and events such as the annual Summit. • Build on existing business directories and the regional shop local website/campaign to promote local businesses, products, and services. • Involve local media to promote the event and draw in attendees. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players

Year 1-5	\$\$	Facilitator: Chamber Partner: EcDev, DBA, Local Businesses
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance: Number of participants, including business owners and community members. • Recognition: Number of businesses or leaders awarded and showcased. • Media Reach: Coverage by local media and engagement on social media platforms. • Business Impact: Feedback from participants on the event's role in boosting visibility or connections. • Community Engagement: Increased interest in local businesses following the event. 		

Strategic Action:	3.4 Initiate a “Pop-Up” program to temporarily transform vacant or underused spaces into venues for local arts, music, and small business pop-ups.	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	The “Pop-Up” program to activate vacant spaces into venues for arts, music, and small business showcases supporting local talent and new or homebased businesses aligning with Smiths Falls’ Economic Development strategy to enhance tourism, culture, and small business growth.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop-up events and opportunities should align with other initiatives or events developed in support of the Arts Master Plan or other cultural/community building efforts. • Collaborate with local artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs to showcase talents and products. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 2	\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Chamber, Property Owners, Local Businesses, Artists
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Participation: Number of pop-up events, vendors, and attendees. • Local Engagement: Number of collaborations with local artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs. • Economic Impact: Increase in foot traffic and sales for downtown businesses. • Community Feedback: Positive responses from attendees and participants on the program’s impact. 		

Strategic Action:	3.5 Work with Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Local Employment Centre to develop and implement talent attraction and workforce development initiatives	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	This initiative will address talent attraction and retention challenges by targeting trades and manufacturing sectors, promoting workforce development, and creating synergies with existing immigration and workforce partnerships.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect potential employees from larger urban communities to local trades and manufacturing employers looking for talent by offering workforce tours. • Develop multimedia materials highlighting housing, lifestyle, community services, and career opportunities to attract skilled workers and their families. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Valley Heartland, the Local Immigration Partnership, and the Local Employment Centre to enhance programs for attracting and integrating foreign workers, including resources such as language training and cultural orientation. Offer targeted skill-upgrading workshops, training for trades and manufacturing, and initiatives to support underrepresented groups, such as women in trades. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 4-5	\$\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Valley Heartland, Local Immigration Partnership Group, Local Employment Centre, SBAC, Local Businesses
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation: Number of employers and workers attending tours, workshops, and programs. Talent Attraction: Number of new employees relocating to Smiths Falls. Business Outcomes: Increase in new business openings, expansions, or revenue growth among participants. 		

Goal 4: Position the Town for Investment Attraction Success

Strategic Action:	4.1 Embrace the industrial nature of Smith Falls' history, brand, and market positioning while others abandon	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	By embracing its industrial history and promoting success stories, Smiths Falls will position itself as a hub for industrial innovation and startups. Updating branding and PR to highlight its strengths and startup-friendly environment will attract new investments, support existing businesses, and solidify the Town's reputation as a key player in industrial growth.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position Smiths Falls as an industrial hub, promoting the area's existing businesses and historical strengths. Promote local success stories as proof of concept for industrial investment. As other actions in this strategy gain momentum, this should also include a focus on evolving Smiths Falls' image and reputation to start including an industrial startup community as part of its brand. Update branding and PR strategy to highlight Smiths Falls as a startup-friendly community. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 1	\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Chamber, Local Businesses, Regional Marketing Agencies
Measuring Success		

- **Brand Recognition:** Increased awareness of Smiths Falls as an industrial hub through media mentions and social media engagement.
- **Investment Growth:** Number of new industrial startups or investments attracted to the Town.
- **Business Expansion:** Growth or expansion of existing industrial businesses.
- **PR Effectiveness:** Positive feedback on updated branding and PR strategy.
- **Community Impact:** Increased local economic activity linked to industrial and startup growth.

Strategic Action:	4.2 Review the mixed-use and smart density zoning and explore incentives to accelerate action in the downtown	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Smart density focuses on creating vibrant, sustainable communities by promoting mixed-use developments, increased housing options, and efficient land use. By reviewing zoning policies and offering incentives like tax rebates or grants, this initiative will attract developers, stimulate downtown revitalization, and position Smiths Falls as an investment-ready, livable community that supports economic growth and diverse housing needs.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct zoning review with a focus on mixed-use and smart density. • Identify incentive options (e.g., tax rebates, grants) for developers. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 2-3	\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Developers, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning Updates: Completion of zoning reviews and adoption of smart density policies. • Incentives Utilized: Number and value of incentives accessed by developers. • Development Activity: Increase in mixed-use and smart density projects in the downtown. • Housing Options: Growth in diverse housing availability, including rentals and affordable units. • Economic Impact: Increase in downtown foot traffic, business openings, and property values. 		

Strategic Action:	4.3 Establish a municipal “Investment in Accommodation” program that incentivizes hotel developers	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	By establishing an “Investment in Accommodation” program, Smiths Falls will attract hotel developers through targeted incentives and infrastructure support. This initiative addresses the needs of tourists, business travelers, and investors, enhancing the Town’s appeal as a destination and strengthening its position for sustained economic growth.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create incentives for hotel developers to invest in Smiths Falls, including grants and support for infrastructure development. • Provide clear guidelines for hotel development and partner with developers to ensure alignment with Smiths Falls' growth strategy. • Focus on accommodation needs for tourists, business travelers, and future investors. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 3-4	\$\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev

		Partner: Hotel Developers, Tourism Organizations, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer Engagement: Number of hotel developers expressing interest or entering agreements. • Accommodations Built: Number of new hotels or accommodations developed. • Tourism Impact: Increase in overnight stays and visitor spending in Smiths Falls. • Economic Growth: Additional revenue generated from tourism and business travel. • Alignment: Positive feedback from developers on the program's clarity and alignment with the Town's strategy. 		

Strategic Action:	4.4 Bring new shovel-ready industrial business park to market	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Bringing a new industrial business park to market will position Smiths Falls as an attractive destination for industrial investment. By preparing underdeveloped lands through zoning adjustments, infrastructure upgrades, and partnerships with private investors, this initiative enhances the Town's readiness for economic growth and industrial expansion.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify underdeveloped industrial lands and remove barriers to make them shovel-ready (zoning adjustments, infrastructure upgrades, and environmental assessments). • Partner with private developers and investors to fund land preparation. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 3-5	\$\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Developers, Site Selectors and Regional/Provincial IA Partners
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Preparation: Amount of industrial land made shovel-ready (e.g., acres prepared). • Partnerships Secured: Number of private developers and investors engaged in funding land preparation. • Business Attraction: Number of businesses that establish operations in the industrial park. • Economic Impact: Increase in local jobs and industrial output linked to the park. • Project Milestones: Completion of zoning, infrastructure, and environmental assessments. 		

Strategic Action:	4.5 Engage neighbouring municipalities in early discussions to expand industrial land strategy through a regional approach	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Smiths Falls can unlock unused or underused lands through partnerships and joint ventures. Collaborative investments and shared ROI models could enhance industrial development opportunities, positioning the Town as a forward-thinking, investment-ready destination.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider land-sharing agreements, collaborative investment, and shared ROI models to bring unused or underused lands into development. • Develop investment attraction funding relationships with Invest Ontario and Invest in Canada to strategically pursue targeted sectors. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate joint ventures between public and private sectors to enhance industrial development opportunities. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 4-5	\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Regional Municipalities and Partners, Developers
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Development: Amount of unused or underused land brought into industrial development. Investment Attracted: Number and value of investments secured for industrial projects. Regional Impact: Shared ROI and economic benefits realized through the regional approach. Project Milestones: Progress on joint ventures and industrial development initiatives. 		

Strategic Action:	4.6 Develop sports tourism strategy around existing arena lands	
Current State Challenges Addressed:	Developing a sports tourism strategy around existing arena lands will expand facility usage, attract tournaments, and establish Smiths Falls as a regional destination for youth sports. By creating training programs and collaborating with hotels and restaurants for visitor packages, this initiative boosts tourism and support local businesses.	
Proposed Initiatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategy to expand usage of arena and nearby lands support increased capacity to host tournaments, positioning Smiths Falls as a regional hub for sports tourism. Develop a training and tournament program that can attract teams and families year-round. Collaborate with hotels and restaurants to create packages for visiting teams, building on the “Stay & Play” model to offer comprehensive visitor experiences. 	
Timelines	Costs	Key Players
Year 4-5	\$\$\$	Facilitator: EcDev Partner: Developers, Hockey Associations, Sports Tourism Experts, Hotels and Restaurants
Measuring Success		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Hosting: Number of tournaments and training programs held at the arena. Visitor Impact: Increase in teams, athletes, and families visiting Smiths Falls. Economic Activity: Growth in revenue for local hotels, restaurants, and businesses. Partnerships: Number of collaborations with hotels, restaurants, and sports organizations. Feedback: Positive feedback from teams, visitors, and stakeholders on the sports tourism experience. 		

7. Appendix B – Project Context and Engagement

Project Context

For this engagement, Optimus SBR has defined the Project Mission and what constitutes Project Success.

The **Project Mission** is:

- To develop a comprehensive 5-year Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) and Investment Attraction Plan for the Town of Smiths Falls that will engage the community and provide direction, goals and outcomes for a successful implementation.

Project Success will entail:

- A clear understanding of broad stakeholder perspectives.
- Confidence and buy-in from key stakeholders, especially the development community.
- Determination of economic development strategic priorities and actions that leverage the Smiths Falls competitive assets to attract talent and investment.
- Council and Town Leadership confidence in the Economic Development Strategy.

Situational Analysis Inputs

A situational analysis of the Town's current state was conducted to inform the strategy. The inputs are as follows:

- **Community Tour:** A guided community tour to better understand the local context and identify opportunities and challenges.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ten (10) interviews/focus groups with several stakeholders including Council, the Economic Development Committee, the business community, and real estate agents.
- **Past Strategies, Plans, and Reports:** A review of the Town's past economic development and planning documents to ensure alignment with all areas of the BR&E and Investment Attraction Plan.
- **External Scan:** A high-level scan of economic trends that may impact Smiths Falls' economy in the years to come. This was used to understand trends happening around, but outside of Smiths Falls.

Engagement Process

Stakeholder insights have been the cornerstone of developing this strategy, ensuring it aligns with local priorities and reflects the needs of the community.

Stakeholders Involved in the Process

- CAO (Malcolm Morris)
- Manager of Development Services (Karl Grenke)
- Director of Community Services (Stephanie Clark)
- Mayor and Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Business Association
- Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) Valley Heartland
- Business Owners
- Community
- Developers
- MEDJCT (Susan Fournier)
- Small Business Advisory Centre (Cindy James)

Methods of Engagement

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Roundtables



To: Mayor and Council
From: Karl Grenke, Manager of Development Services
Date: March 13, 2025
Committee of the Whole Date: March 17, 2025
Title: Official Plan Vision and Strategic Approaches

☒ For Direction
☐ For Information
☐ For Adoption
☐ Attachments: N/A

Recommendation:

THAT Council supports the vision and strategic approaches for the new Official Plan, as outlined in report # 2025-021.

Purpose: This report seeks Council's endorsement of a Vision Statement for the new Official Plan and Strategic Directions to carry forward the five key themes identified previously through consultation. This will inform and guide the writing of the new Official Plan.

Background: In May 2024, Council awarded a contract to Dillon Consulting Limited to guide the development of the Town's new Official Plan. The new Official Plan would repeal and replace the 2014 Official Plan and position the Town to accommodate an additional 1,400 new residential units as well as new employment lands, as forecast in the 2023 Land Needs Study. The new Plan would identify where that growth would occur, as well as how, so that it would make the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and support the principles of social, economic, environmental sustainability.

The framework for the scope of the Official Plan project was defined by Council on October 2, 2023 - see Report 2023-116. Council decided that the Plan would build around a 25-year growth horizon, consistent with the Land Needs Study, the project would include several integral components:

Five key consultation themes to guide the re-write, identified through an initial public visioning process:

- 1) **Downtown revitalization** to support the core as the Town's social, cultural and economic heart;
- 2) **Housing** that is sufficient in supply and meets the changing needs of the community;
- 3) **Sustainability** that ensures resilience in a changing world;
- 4) **Transportation and connections**, including multi-modal transportation;
- 5) **Community spaces** to enhance quality of life in both the public and private realm.

Four opportunity areas that are underutilized and warrant strategic attention to leverage intensification:

- 1) **Ferguson and Ferrara area**
- 2) **Cornelia and Mazie corridor**
- 3) **Lorne Street extension lands**
- 4) **Gallipeau Centre lands**

Supporting technical work to complement the background work already done and fill in knowledge gaps to support the development of the Plan:

- Transportation Master Plan
- Commercial Sector Analysis
- Housing Needs Study.

The Housing Needs Study was presented to Council on February 10th, 2025 and subsequently supported. Several recommendations arising from that study can be carried forward and implemented in the new Official Plan. The Commercial Sector Analysis updated the 2021 Commercial Land Needs Assessment and also proposed a number of policy and strategic recommendations that can be incorporated into the Official Plan. The work on the Transportation Master Plan is ongoing. With the receipt of all remaining traffic data, the gap analysis to inform the policy development as well as right-of-way classifications is underway and will be presented to Council in draft in the coming months.

On October 10, 2024, the Planning Division and Dillon Consultants hosted an open house at the Smiths Falls Youth Arena, where approximately 30 residents provided their feedback and ideas related to the five consultation themes. The facilitated sessions allowed participants to focus on up to three of the five themes that were of most interest to them, which allowed for a focused exchange of ideas and generated very helpful information on what is important to the community. A summary of this meeting has been posted on the Town website and has also informed us of the vision and strategic approaches of the Plan, which is the focus of this report.

On November 21, 2024, the consulting team facilitated a two-hour collaborative workshop with Planning staff and the Management Team to help craft the planning vision for the Town. The purpose of this workshop was to identify pressing challenges facing the local context, assess potential solutions and refine strategic directions across the five key themes. The successful implementation of the strategic vision of the Official Plan relies on the collaboration of the entire management team as this Plan will be relevant in some manner to each department.

Through a review of background information, public and staff engagement, critical issues have been identified that challenge us relating to each of the five key themes, as well as solutions where the Town has the ability to drive positive change.

Theme	Main Challenges Identified	Potential Solutions
Downtown Revitalization	Quality and supply of housing stock and financial challenges in restoring commercial spaces	Funding supports to strategically improve conditions and to support design guidelines and streetscape enhancements. Align zoning and

	to make them attractive. Desire for more accessible services.	property standards with the broader objectives.
Housing	Servicing and capacity constraints with our existing water and sewer systems, rising construction costs and challenges in securing funding to support affordable housing. Availability of land and need for diverse housing types also identified.	Updating planning policy to support more flexibility and securing funding to study and upgrade water and sewer capacity to support growth. Municipal support through financial incentives (including Community Improvement Plan) as well as the strategic provision of Town owned land.
Sustainability	Need for long-term predictable funding, effective asset management and the practical and financial realities of balancing the four pillars of sustainability to achieve tangible outcomes.	Educating residents on their roles and promoting sustainability. Develop an enduring commitment to sustainability that supersedes council terms. Creating more integrated neighbourhoods would all promote community sustainability and resilience.
Transportation	Some gaps in a broad multi-modal network, including absence of commuter rail, lack of improved active transportation connections and need to alleviate traffic congestion on Lombard Street.	TMP and future work to assess capacity improvements as well as the ongoing implementation of the 2021 Active Transportation Plan. Assess synergies with potential expansion of the Lanark County Transportation services.
Community Spaces	The need to adapt to evolving community needs, address existing budget and resource constraints and the tension between dense development and the availability of green space.	Ensure that the requirement for greenspace and quality of life enhancements are meaningfully embedded in planning policy. Ongoing and strategic revitalization of existing greenspaces, including efforts to modernize, green them, and align them to meet with current and evolving community needs.

This work has informed a draft vision and strategic direction relating to the five key themes, which Council is being asked to endorse.

Analysis and Options: As it relates to the Official Plan, a vision statement sets out the Town's desired future, which is then articulated through a set of guiding principles or theme or topic specific strategic directions. Together, these provide focus for the Town's long term land use, growth and development plans, which are carried out in individual policies and mapping. In short, this aspirational text conveys Council's intent, which is relied upon in interpreting the policies of the Plan and carrying out future work. Presently, the Official Plan does not contain a single guiding vision, but rather visions and objectives related to the following themes: Thriving community (economy), environment, liveability, safety and

wellness, parks and culture, informed and involved community and transportation. These visions align broadly with Council's current Strategic Plan and still resonate today, however in the 10 years since the current Plan's approval, community needs have evolved along with the Town.

The following draft vision statement posits what Council wishes Smiths Falls to be at the end of the 25-year planning horizon. The vision would be included in the new Official Plan to serve as a guiding beacon for the Town's future development and strategic initiatives.

In 25 years, Smiths Falls will be a dynamic, inclusive, and thriving community that meets the needs of its growing population. Smiths Falls will be a hub for diverse housing, strong social supports, and vibrant neighbourhoods with local employment opportunities. Our Town will be sustainable and well-connected, with an attractive downtown and mobility options for everyone. Smiths Falls will be a place where all residents can live, work, and play, celebrating our unique cultural, natural and economic features.

It is proposed that overall vision of the Official Plan will be underpinned by five strategic directions that are based on the previously noted consultation themes. Council's endorsement of the five strategic directions will guide the preparation of the Official Plan. The order in which these are presented do not imply order of importance.

- 1. Downtown Revitalization: The Town of Smiths Falls will keep advancing downtown towards a vibrant, inclusive centre that is powered by enhanced services, recognized heritage assets, additional residents, community partnerships, and strategic funding to develop a strong sense of place.***
- 2. Housing: The Town of Smiths Falls will create a diverse and inclusive community with sufficient supply where all residents have access to an adequate and affordable range of housing types.***
- 3. Sustainability: The Town of Smiths Falls will harness the four pillars of sustainability – economic vitality, social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and cultural vibrancy – to foster resiliency and create enduring positive outcomes for our community.***
- 4. Transportation: The Town of Smiths Falls will develop accessible and efficient travel options aligned to evolving transportation needs and shifting demographics, including linkages within the Town and regionally.***
- 5. Community Spaces: The Town of Smiths Falls will foster dynamic public and privately owned community spaces that reflect their diverse users, with upgraded parks, innovative redesigns, and citizen engagement to keep them accessible and vibrant for all.***

At this time, work has begun on drafting the text of the new Official Plan. The proposed vision and strategic directions outlined above are generally consistent with the policy framework outlined in the current Official Plan, however results in a natural evolution of focus that reflects the changes to the Town's economic and demographic structure since 2014. The vision and strategic directions will be incorporated verbatim into the Official Plan to help set the tone for the years ahead. As part of the on-going review of the plan, policies will be refined as appropriate to align to the strategic directions. At this point, it is expected that a first draft of the new Official Plan will be made available for public feedback and comment in May, where opportunities for in-person and online engagement will be organized.

Options for Council's consideration:

1. Endorse the vision and strategic directions as outlined in this report. (recommended)
2. Amend the vision and/or strategic directions to better align with Council's expectations for the new Official Plan (as directed by Council).

Budget/Financial Implications: N/A

Link to Strategic Plan: The Official Plan project relates to initiatives in all six Strategic Priorities identified in Council's 2023-26 Strategic Plan.

Existing Policy: Official Plan 2034; Provincial Planning Statement

Consultations: Project Consultants (Dillon); Project Steering Committee; Management Team

Attachments: N/A

Notes/Action (space for Council Member's notes):

Respectfully Submitted:

Original Signed By:

Karl Grenke RPP, MCIP
Manager of Development Services

Approved for agenda by CAO:

Original Signed By:

Malcolm Morris, CMO
Chief Administrative Officer



To: Mayor and Council

From: Karl Grenke, Manager of Development Services

Date: March 13, 2025

Committee of the Whole Date: March 17, 2025

Title: Settlement Area Boundary Expansion and Strategic Opportunity Areas

☒ For Direction

☐ For Information

☐ For Adoption

☒ Attachments: 30 Pages

Recommendation: THAT Council give in-principle support to the settlement area boundary expansion framework and preliminary land use planning framework for the four strategic opportunity areas, as indicated in the attached technical brief.

Purpose: This report presents and seeks Council's direction on a preliminary approach to expanding the Town's urban settlement area to accommodate anticipated growth as well as a planning framework for the four strategic opportunity areas being assessed as part of the Official Plan project.

Background: In May 2024, Council awarded a contract to Dillon Consulting Limited to guide the development of the Town's new Official Plan. The new Official Plan would repeal and replace the 2014 Official Plan and position the Town to accommodate an additional 1,400 new residential units as well as new employment lands, as forecast in the 2023 Land Needs Study. Taking into account that existing designated land would absorb some of this growth through intensification, the Study determined that the Town still needs to identify and designate new greenfield land to accommodate development over a 25-year period:

- 37 gross hectares (93 acres) for residential development
- 13.7 gross hectares (33 acres) for institutional development.
- 3-13 gross hectares (13-32 acres) for employment (industrial) development, depending on the anticipated intensity of the use.

Ample land already exists to meet anticipated commercial development needs over the planning horizon and as such we do not need to designate new land for that purpose.

The new Official Plan will define where this growth will go, and what it will look like.

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) includes changes that allow some flexibility in terms of long-range growth forecasting, which may allow for final mapping that does not exactly match the numbers above.

While the scope of the Official Plan will look at all lands currently within the municipal boundaries of the Town of Smiths Falls, some lands at the south end of the Town are within

"development reserves" which would not be developed until the lands are needed. In short, this is to ensure that development first makes use of existing infrastructure, is well planned, and minimizes sprawl into natural areas or prime agricultural lands. Within the meaning of the PPS, these development reserves are outside of the Town's "Settlement Area" boundary, and the PPS identifies several land use criteria that need to be satisfied in order to support an expansion of that boundary. The development of a new Official Plan presents an opportunity to do this.

While the Town of Smiths Falls has a limited number of directions to grow its settlement area boundary within its municipal borders, a technical assessment of the available options will objectively inform Council's ultimate decisions and facilitate Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approval of the Plan.

This report presents an initial recommendation on the expansion of the Town's settlement area boundary to accommodate new residential and employment development at the far end of Lorne Street and on part of the Gallipeau Centre lands. In coming to these recommendations, the report assesses surrounding land uses (both in Smiths Falls and Montague), functional barriers such as the Hydro corridor, the potential for future transportation connections, logical phasing and providing opportunity for further growth beyond this horizon. Concurrently, the report also presents a preliminary land use framework for the four strategic opportunity areas that are a topic of focus in the new Official Plan, which include these areas as well as two other underdeveloped sites within the current settlement boundary - Mazie and Cornelia corridor and Ferguson and Ferrara open space.

The framework presented in the attached report was informed by an assessment of updated mapping from review and partner agencies, servicing mapping from the Town, preliminary consideration of transportation in conjunction with the Transportation Master Plan and consultation with Town staff. Dillon and Town staff have also spoken to property owners within the opportunity areas advising of this work to seek information and feedback. The attached report also considers feedback received from a small number of property owners within these areas.

Analysis and Options: Staff recommend that Council accepts the recommendations contained in the attached technical brief to serve as a baseline, which will facilitate the technical work moving forward. The land use framework and proposed policy approach are high level at this time and will be subject to further refinement and potential change as the OP process unfolds. It may also be adjusted as further feedback is received from property owners within the opportunity areas. While there will be formal in-person consultation events upcoming in the spring and the fall as the draft Official Plan takes shape, staff anticipate and welcome input on an ongoing basis.

Once complete and approved, the Official Plan will articulate Council's vision for how the Town will incorporate the forecasted growth, and it is anticipated that a very large proportion of this growth will occur in the four strategic opportunity areas. The Plan will identify the appropriate land use(s) for each of those areas, articulate their relationship and connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods and may include area-specific policies to guide a thoughtful and well planned development.

At this stage, work is underway on a first draft of the Official Plan and it is anticipated that this will be made available for public comment in mid-spring. Town staff and the consulting

team have also engaged the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and will continue to do so at key touchpoints of this project in order to ensure alignment with Provincial interests, which will enable faster Ministry approval when the time comes. Once Council's direction is received regarding the settlement area boundary expansion and the strategic opportunity areas, the staff reports and accompanying information will be shared with Ministry staff for feedback.

Options for Council's consideration:

- 1. Endorse the settlement area boundary expansion framework and preliminary land use planning framework for the four strategic opportunity areas, as indicated in the attached technical brief. (recommended)**
- 2. Amend the settlement area boundary framework and/or preliminary land use planning framework for the opportunity areas to better align with Council's expectations for the new Official Plan (as directed by Council).**

Budget/Financial Implications: N/A

Link to Strategic Plan: The Official Plan project relates to initiatives in all six Strategic Priorities identified in Council's 2023-26 Strategic Plan.

Existing Policy: Official Plan; Provincial Planning Statement

Consultations: Project Consultants (Dillon); Project Steering Committee

Attachments: Smiths Falls Boundary Expansion Technical Brief

Notes/Action (space for Council Member's notes):

Respectfully Submitted:

Original Signed By:

Karl Grenke RPP, MCIP
Manager of Development Services

Approved for agenda by CAO:

Original Signed By:

Malcolm Morris, CMO
Chief Administrative Officer

Memo



To: Karl Grenke, Smiths Falls
From: Rory Baksh, MCIP, RPP; Kadence Bunke
Date: March 6, 2025
Subject: Smiths Falls Boundary Expansion Technical Brief
Our File: 24-8444

1.0

Introduction and Background

In response to the evolving needs of the community and building on our previous work in Land Needs Assessment, this technical brief outlines our approach to identifying recommended changes to the urban boundary to accommodate forecasted growth. Guided by the Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024), the boundary expansion must meet the “policy tests” listed below and consider logical parcel and lot fabric. Our process involves collaboration with municipal staff to confirm the revised urban boundaries through detailed mapping and visual verification. This brief provides an analysis of the reshaping of the settlement boundary, the land uses to be accommodated, and an assessment of the merits against the policy tests.

The Land Needs Analysis completed for Smiths Falls by Dillon Consulting in 2023 detailed the following:

- Residential – forecast exceeds the current vacant unit supply potential amounting to the need for approximately **37 gross hectares or 93 acres of additional land**.
- Institutional – forecast growth exceeds the amount of vacant land available amounting to the need for approximately **13.7 gross hectares or 33 acres of land**.
- Employment (Industrial) – the forecast growth exceeds the current vacant land supply (which is extremely limited) amounting to a need for between **3 and 13 gross hectares of land** depending upon the density applied to the analysis. In any event, the current serviced land supply will struggle to accommodate demand over the forecast horizon.

The Commercial Land needs analysis conducted by UrbanMetrics indicated that there is an ample supply of lands to accommodate commercial future growth, including a significant amount of vacant space that is in relatively poor condition.

1.1

Planning Act

The Planning Act in Ontario provides a framework for land use planning and development, including the expansion of settlement area boundaries within municipalities. While the Act itself does not detail specific criteria for boundary expansions, it establishes the authority and process for municipalities to amend their official plans, which may include changes to settlement area boundaries.

Key aspects related to boundary expansions typically involve:

1. **Official Plan Amendments:** Municipalities must amend their official plans to expand settlement area boundaries. This process requires public consultation and must be consistent with provincial policies and plans.
2. **Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024):** see below.
3. **Approval Process:** Boundary expansions typically require approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, depending on the local governance structure.

2.0 Policy Tests for the Boundary Expansion

2.1 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024)

The policies for settlement areas emphasize focusing growth and development within these areas, particularly in strategic growth areas like major transit stations¹. Land use should promote efficient use of land and resources, optimize infrastructure, support active and transit-friendly transportation, and accommodate freight. Planning authorities are tasked with encouraging intensification and redevelopment to create complete communities by offering diverse housing options and prioritizing infrastructure investment. They should set minimum intensification targets and are encouraged to establish density targets. Additionally, phasing policies should be implemented to ensure orderly development aligned with infrastructure provision.

The 2024 PPS policy tests for settlement area boundary expansions are as follows:

"2.3.2 New Settlement Areas and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

1. In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:

- a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;*
- b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities; c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;*
- d) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;*
- e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;*
- f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and*

¹ The VIA Rail Station located in Smiths Falls is considered a Major Transit Station Area in this context.

g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.”

2.2 Smiths Falls Current Official Plan

The Official Plan’s policy tests for settlement area boundary expansions are as follows:

Fiscally Sustainable Land Use (FS-3.4) Maintain the urban settlement area boundaries where services and facilities provided by the Town and other public agencies are generally available, and where urban development requiring such services should be located. Expansion should only be allowed at the time of a comprehensive review in accordance with Section 1.1.3.8 of the PPS 2014².

Land Use Compatibility (LU-9.1) Encourage industrial suppliers/service business retention and expansion in appropriate areas of the Town.

3.0 Boundary Expansion Options

As discussed in further detail in the 2023 Lands Needs Assessment, Smiths Falls has many hectares of land already designated for development. Additionally, it should be noted that the municipality is constrained due to the extent of its municipal boundary and lands already designated, leaving only a few logical options to consider for new greenfield residential and non-residential development. These options are:

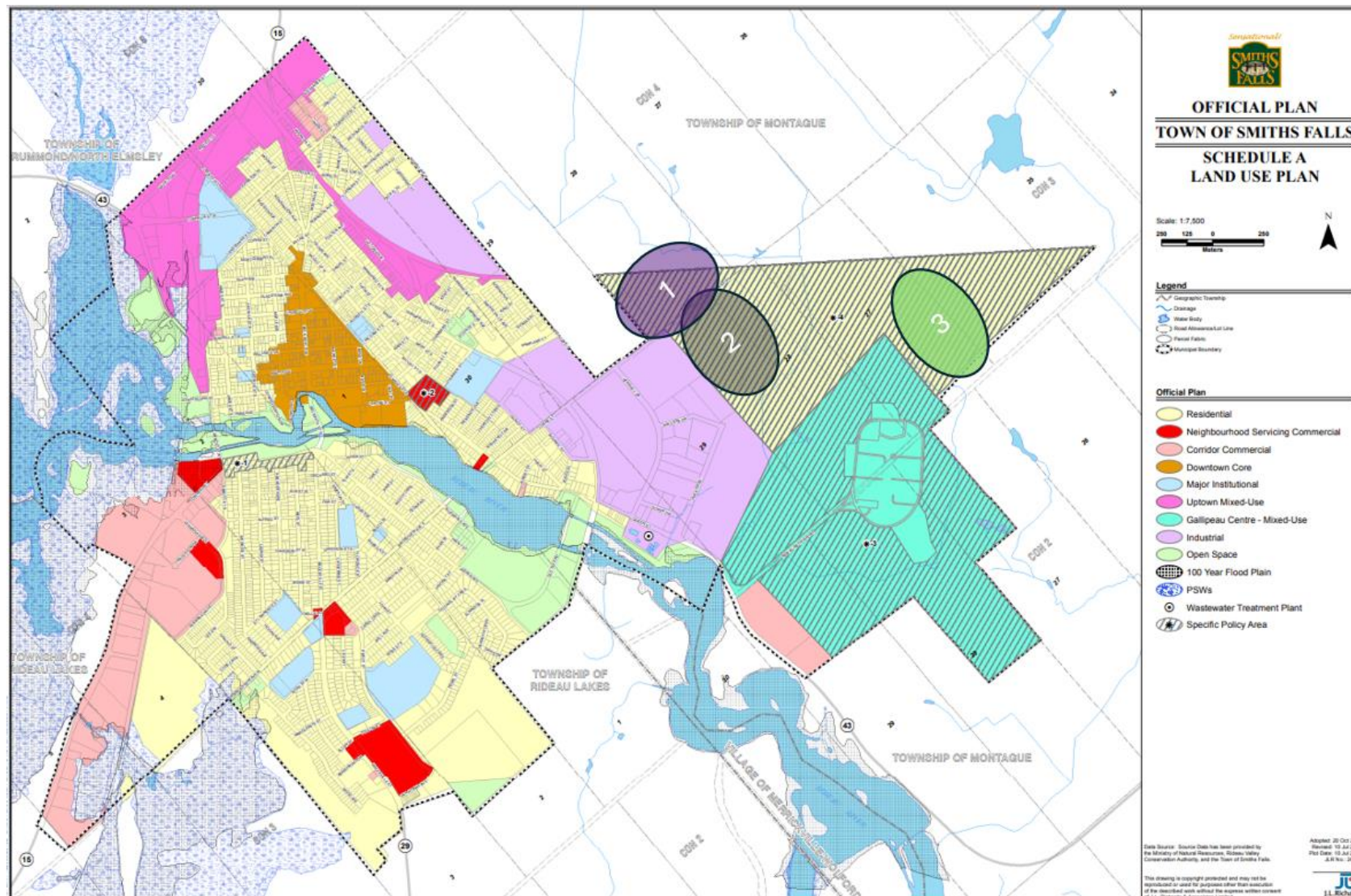
- **Option 1: Lands North of Lorne; or,**
- **Option 2: Lands South of Lorne; and/or**
- **Option 3: Lands South of Lorne, North of Gallipeau Centre.**

These options are illustrated on the following **Figure 1**, characterized/analyzed in the following subsections of this Technical Brief, and then recommendations are made in **Section 4.1 and Section 4.2**.

In addition to these options, there is a separate **phasing-in option for the Gallipeau Centre** lands that is handled separately in this Technical Brief; please refer to **Section 4.3**.

² As this is an existing policy in the current Official Plan to be updated through this process; PPS 2024 policy 2.3.2.1 indicated above is applicable.

Figure 1: Map of Boundary Expansion Options



Characterization of Option 1: Lands North of Lorne

Characterization	Commentary
Location and Adjacent Roadways	Bounded by the rail line, Lorne Street, and the municipal boundary lying one block east of Lila Street.
Land Area	Approximately 12 ha
Existing Uses	This area is vacant, except for 3 small developments accessed from the north side of Lorne Street. Urban cross sections missing on Lorne Street.
Adjacent OP and Zoning	Adjacent to Township of Montague to the North, East, and West. Official Plan: Residential, Special Policy Area, Industrial Zoning: Residential Type 1, Light Industrial
Adjacent Uses	Rail to the North/East, Industrial/Rural to the South, Residential to the East
Natural Heritage Features	Within the RVCA Catchment, no natural features present.
Potential Uses	Employment or Residential
Development Type and Potential	<p>Given the proximity to the rail line, which may be a nuisance to residential uses but compatible with employment uses, the lands may be suitable for employment uses.</p> <p>There is potential to encourage low and medium density residential in this area as an extension of the residential enclave that is within Montague Township; this would facilitate pedestrian connections with the existing residential development.</p>
Servicing Potential	Connections for both municipal sanitary and water directly east of the site along Lorne Street.

Characterization of Option 2: Lands South of Lorne

Characterization	Commentary
Location and Adjacent Roadways	Bound by Lorne to the North, hydro corridor to the South, industrial lands to the East.
Site Size	Not specific – can be sized to suit
Existing Uses	Predominately vacant
Adjacent OP and Zoning	Official Plan: Industrial, Gallipeau Centre - Mixed-Use Zoning: Light Industrial, General Industrial, Residential Type 1, Future Development
Adjacent Uses	Industrial to the East, Gallipeau Centre lands to the South
Natural Heritage Features	Within RVCA Catchment, Significant Ecological Area and Significant Woodland located directly to the West of the site.
Potential Uses	Employment or Residential
Development Type and Potential	<p>These lands are well-suited to employment development, as these lands are directly abutting existing industrial lands. The existing industrial uses may be a nuisance for residential development, and adding residential uses in the immediate vicinity could deter future industrial development.</p> <p>The Town's location options for residential development are limited and residential could be developed in this location to somewhat complement the existing residential in Montague Township on the north side of Lorne Street.</p>
Servicing Potential	Connections for both sanitary and water directly east of the site, from the current industrial lands.

Characterization of Option 3: Lands South of Lorne, North of Gallipeau Centre

Characterization	Commentary
Location and Adjacent Roadways	Municipal Boundary to the North and South, vacant residential lands (special policy area) to the East and West.
Site Size	Not specific – can be sized to suit
Existing Uses	Vacant land and agricultural.
Adjacent OP and Zoning	Adjacent to Township of Montague to the North and South. Official Plan: Residential Zoning: Residential Type 1
Adjacent Uses	Predominantly surrounded by vacant land, with some agricultural uses.
Natural Heritage Features	Within RVCA Catchment, Significant Ecological Area and Significant Wetland contained within the site.
Potential Uses	Residential
Development Type and Potential	To avoid nuisance from nearby existing industrial, and to allow space for industrial uses to expand, a new residential area could be accommodated at the far east end of Lorne Street. Development could extend southwards, but then crossings would be required through the hydro corridor for development to continue in a southerly direction. If future development is to occur on the Gallipeau Centre lands, there may be the potential for more detailed/coordinated planning of both areas simultaneously.
Servicing Potential	Sanitary and Water connections would need to be extended from the industrial lands to the East.

Analysis of Boundary Expansion Options against the Policy Tests³

Policy Tests	Option 1: North of Lorne	Option 2: South of Lorne	Option 3: South of Lorne
Provincial Policy Statement, Section 2.3.2.1 In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:			
a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;	Land need is justified through the preceding Land Needs Assessment (2023)	Land need is justified through the preceding Land Needs Assessment (2023)	Land need is justified through the preceding Land Needs Assessment (2023)
b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;	Infrastructure connections within close proximity	Infrastructure connections within close proximity	Infrastructure connections would need to be extended to reach the site
c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;	No specialty crop areas identified	No specialty crop areas identified	No specialty crop areas identified
d) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;	No Prime Agricultural Areas identified	No Prime Agricultural Areas identified	No Prime Agricultural Areas identified
e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;	Not applicable as there are no immediate identified livestock facilities (based on desktop analysis)	Not applicable as there are no immediate identified livestock facilities (based on desktop analysis)	Not applicable as there are no immediate identified livestock facilities (based on desktop analysis)

³ Subject to revision in the future. For the time-being, the Gallipeau Centre lands have not been included in this boundary expansion test because they are already developed and fall under the PPS definition of “intensification”.

Policy Tests	Option 1: North of Lorne	Option 2: South of Lorne	Option 3: South of Lorne
f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and,	Not applicable as it is not currently Prime Agricultural land.	Not applicable as it is not currently Prime Agricultural land.	Not applicable as it is not currently Prime Agricultural land.
g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴
Official Plan			
Fiscally Sustainable Land Use (FS-3.4): Maintain the urban settlement area boundaries where services and facilities provided by the Town and other public agencies are generally available, and where urban development requiring such services should be located.	Location has merit based on proximity to servicing connections along Lorne Street.	Location has merit based on proximity to servicing connections in proximity to Walker Road.	Servicing would need to be extended from Lorne Street or Walker Road.
Land Use Compatibility (LU-9.1): Encourage industrial suppliers/service business retention and expansion in appropriate areas of the Town.	Although there are light industrial uses to the south, employment uses here could conflict with residential to the west, which might deter development of these lands for employment uses.	Employment uses here would fit with the existing industrial uses to the east.	Possible for either employment or residential. These lands are not located adjacent to existing employment uses, so nuisances can be avoided; this makes them better suited for residential development.

⁴ The answer is a “yes” when the Gallipeau Centre lands are treated as “intensification” as defined by the PPS.

Discussion and Recommended Boundary Options

Recommended Boundary Option for Residential Expansion

There are benefits and constraints to considering each of the three options for residential expansion. Option 1 could serve as an extension of the residential enclave within the Township of Montague. There is the potential to encourage low and medium density residential in this area, and it would facilitate pedestrian connections with the existing residential development. Conversely, this parcel, at approximately 12 hectares, is too small for the identified need of 37 gross hectares of residential land but is a near perfect fit for the employment land needs. Additionally, the proximity to the rail line may be a nuisance for residential purposes. However, residential development, if it were to take place on Option 1 lands, would be on the other side of the street from employment uses, so the street would act as a de facto buffer.

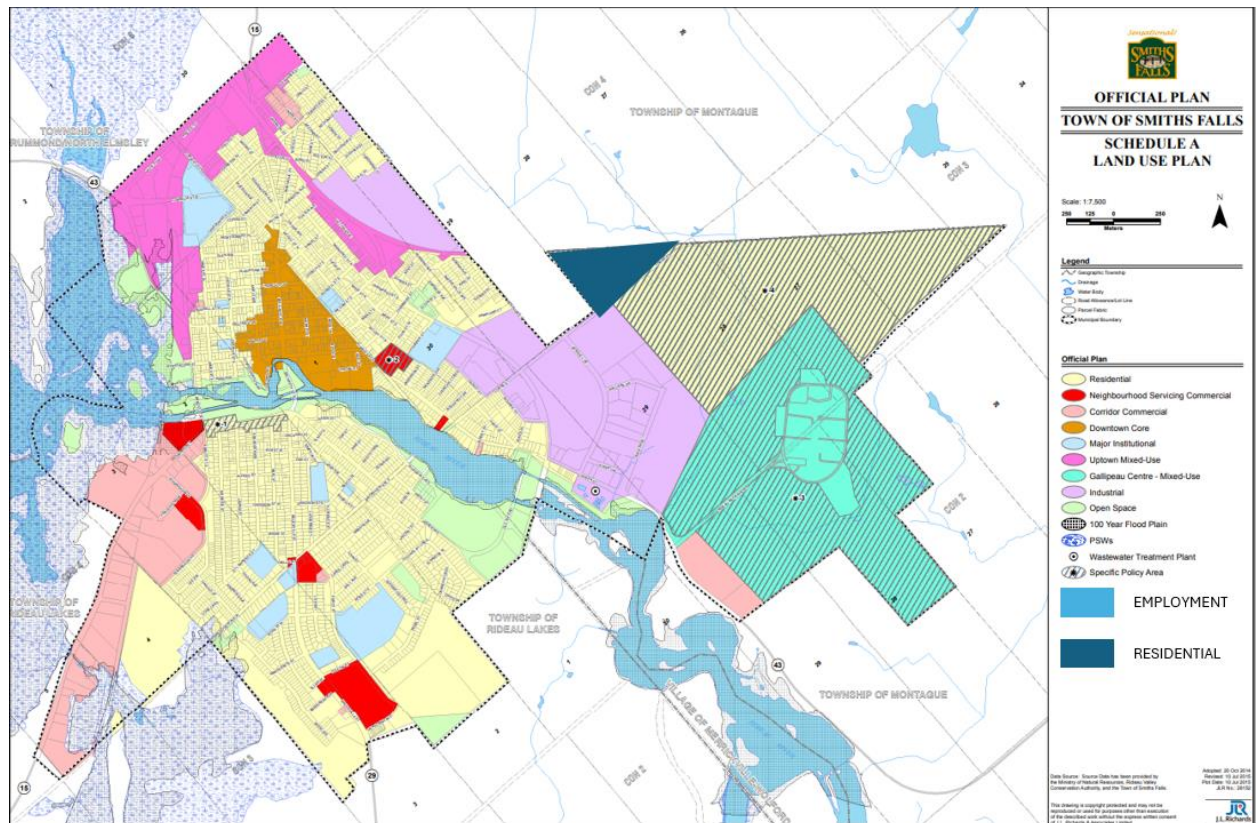
Option 2 can be more appropriately sized to accommodate the identified residential needs. Pragmatically, the hydro corridor will serve as the southern boundary for any residential development, until it becomes necessary to extend roads/servicing through the corridor which is costly. The concern still exists about nuisance to residential from abutting industrial development, and conversely, residential development deterring the ability of existing industrial uses to expand (and/or new industrial uses to locate nearby).

Option 3 can also be sized as appropriate to suit the scale of future growth. At the far east end of Lorne Street, residential uses would not experience nuisances from industrial development, nor would they deter future industrial development. Residential would have to be made compatible if in proximity to the rail line. The most substantial constraint is servicing – because the Option 3 area is not in close proximity to servicing, therefore costly sanitary and water line extensions would need to be reach this location and enable development.

Of the three options identified, Option 1 at 12 gross hectares is the most suitable for residential expansion due to its proximity to the existing residential development in the Township of Montague, and the ease of servicing the site. Please see Figure 2 illustrating this recommendation.

As this area alone does not meet the residential land requirements, it is recommended that long-term residential development be located on the Gallipeau Centre Lands; refer to Section 4.3 for further discussion.

Figure 2: Map of Recommended Boundary Expansion – Residential Land Use



4.2

Recommended Boundary Option for Employment Expansion

Options 1 and 2 both have characteristics that make them suitable to become employment lands, as they are either adjacent to potential nuisance uses (the rail line) or existing industrial lands.

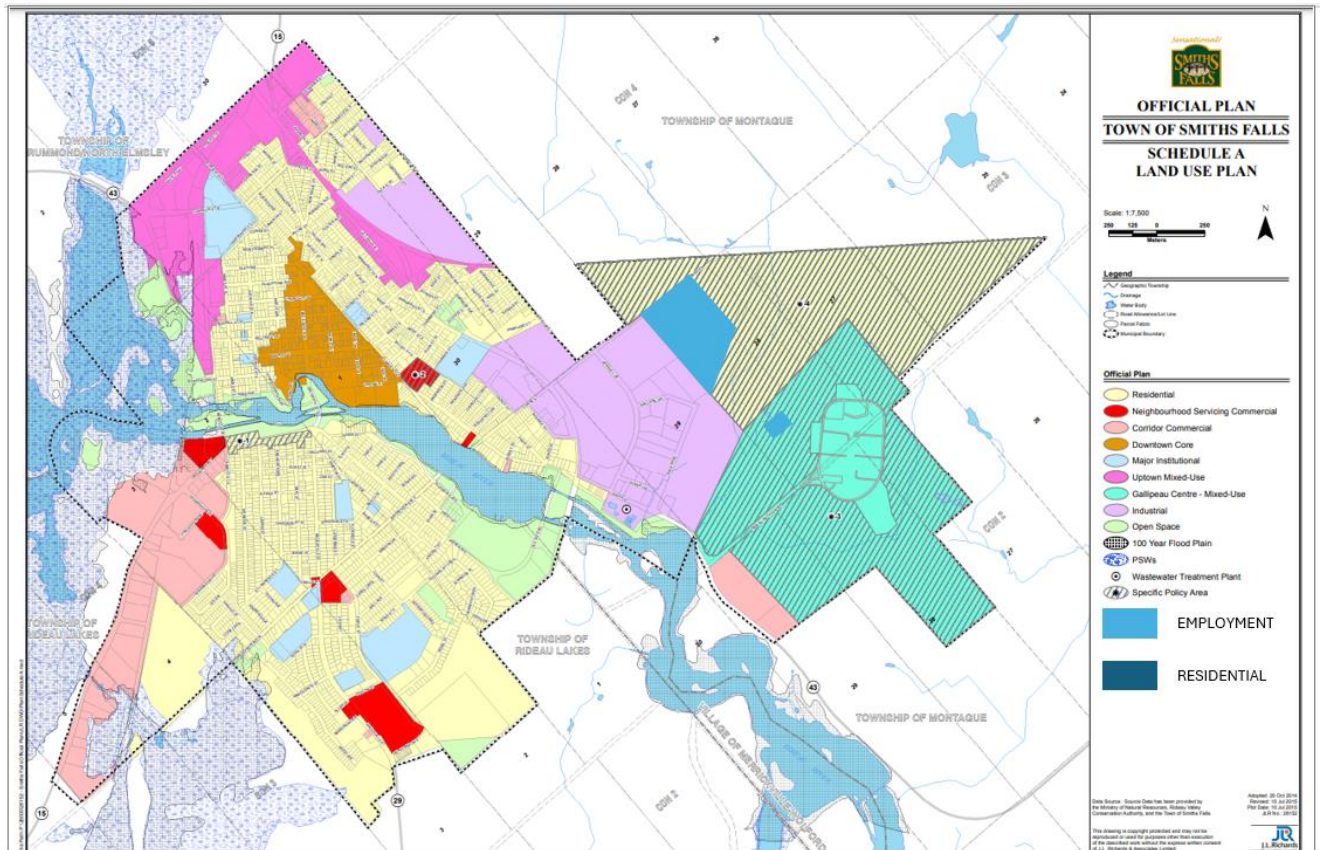
Option 1 is the necessary size to meet employment land needs and is adjacent to existing employment lands. However, the proximity to the Township of Montague residential lands might present a conflict between land uses, depending on the nature of the future employment use. This proximity also means this site is well-positioned to partially meet the identified residential land needs.

Option 2 is located directly beside existing industrial lands, including the former Hershey factory/Canopy operation. The size of the site would more than accommodate the identified employment land needs, and the existing sanitary sewer and water connections off Walker Road could be extended to service the site. There is a contiguous wooded area to the east of the Canopy operation; however, it is not identified as significant in the existing Official Plan mapping, nor in the Province's Natural Heritage Feature mapping, so the area is understood to be unconstrained for development in terms of natural heritage.

Option 3's distance from the existing industrial / employment lands, as well as the lack of servicing, do not make it an ideal site for employment expansion.

Based on this analysis, Option 2 is the recommended area for employment expansion. 13 gross hectares of employment land, in accordance with the recommendation of the Land Needs Assessment, is accommodated in this location. Please see Figure 3 illustrating this recommendation.

Figure 3: Map of Recommended Boundary Expansion – Employment



4.3

Additional Phasing-In Option for the Gallipeau Centre Lands

Additional lands are needed to accommodate all the required residential and institutional land noted in the Land Needs Assessment that cannot otherwise be accommodated by Option 1. For many years, we understand there has been a desire to further develop the Gallipeau Centre Lands. However, the lands currently have a heritage conservation easement on them which is granted to the Ontario Heritage Trust. Development of the Gallipeau Centre Lands is therefore restricted until the Ontario Heritage Trust relaxes or removes the easement or is satisfied that a proposed development is fully compatible.

In the fall of 2024, Council passed a resolution asking the Province to remove the conservation easement from the property. We understand that Council's resolution has been forwarded to the Ministry; however, the timing for any change to the heritage easement is uncertain.

Also, a hindrance to development is a unique municipal tax arrangement for these lands. We understand that municipal taxes are collected by Smiths Falls, then 50% of that revenue is remitted to

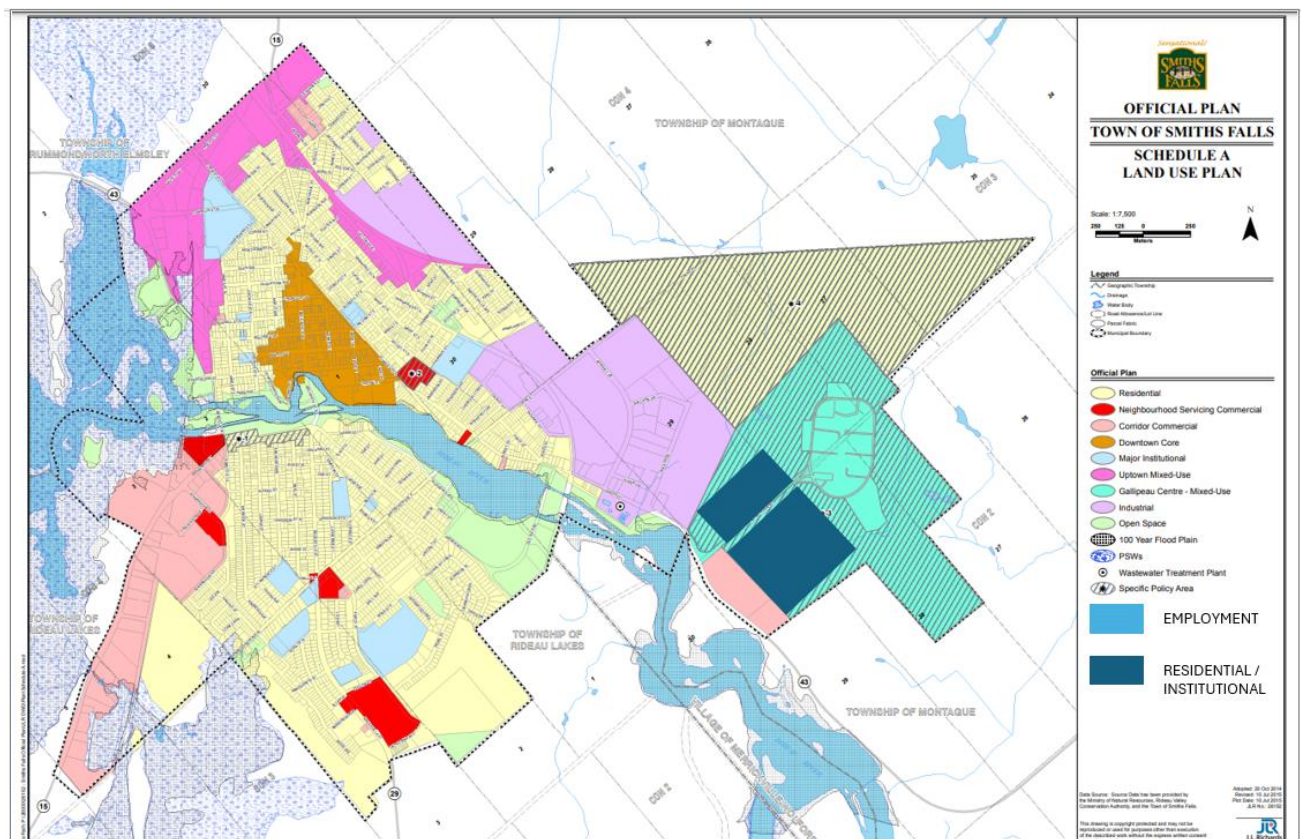
Montague Township. If the lands are developed, the Town needs the property tax revenue to pay for service delivery, so this tax arrangement also needs to be sorted out.

We do believe that development of the Gallipeau Centre lands is possible – it is simply not possible in the short-term but could occur at some other point in the New Official Plan’s planning horizon.

It is recommended that the Gallipeau Centre lands be designated for the remaining 25 gross hectares of residential land not accommodated through Option 1, and the 13.7 gross hectares of institutional land needed (for a total of 38.7 gross hectares). This intensification should proceed as soon as the heritage constraint on these lands can be relieved. The extent of this Additional Phasing-In Option for the Gallipeau Centre Lands is shown in Figure 4.

It is further recommended that policy in the Official Plan guide the Town to reconsider the designation at the next interval for reviewing/updating the Official Plan. If it appears that further development of the Gallipeau Centre is unlikely at that review interval, then the Town can designate other lands to facilitate its continued growth and prosperity.

Figure 4: Conceptual Map of Recommended Boundary Expansion – Gallipeau Centre Residential and Institutional



Next Steps

The Town needs to strategically plan how and where residential, employment, and institutional growth will take place to the planning horizon year of 2046. This helps ensure that the Town can accommodate evolving needs and address its growth pressures.

Next steps following from the recommendations in this Technical Brief include:

- Obtaining Council's endorsement of the recommended growth options;
- Updating of the Official Plan / preparation of a New Official Plan; and,
- Consultation with stakeholders and liaison with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Appendix A

Opportunity Areas

1. Mazie and Cornelia Corridor



Total Area: 22.5 hectares (55.6 acres)

Current OP Designation: Uptown Mixed Use (small area Open Space)

Current Land Use: Mix of vacant parcels, industrial properties (business park), commercial and residential uses.

1.1 Existing Conditions

This 22.5-hectare area includes various commercial, service, and residential properties, including medical clinics, government services, and small businesses. It is adjacent to the Rideau River, local hospital, and Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario.

1.2 Constraints

Environmental Hazards: Several properties within this area are located adjacent to environmental features, such as non-PSW wetlands and the Swale Wetland, a designated Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW). Parts of the corridor also include floodplain areas, specifically along William St. W. These features require buffer zones and may limit certain types of development.

Regulated Conservation Areas: The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) regulates portions of this area, which falls within the Middle Rideau River watershed. Development near sensitive natural features may face restrictions, such as limits on altering landscapes and requirements for environmental impact assessments.

Traffic and Access: This area (if not already) has the potential to be a busy corridor with a mix of uses, which could be a constraint to expanding pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure - there is a special need to ensure safety and traffic flow. The Town's separate Transportation Master Plan will provide recommendations for future traffic operations planning.

1.3 Development Potential

In theory, this corridor has the potential to become developed into a vibrant, mixed-use area that integrates commercial, residential, and service uses, building on its existing infrastructure and proximity to healthcare, government services, and recreational sites. The presence of bike paths and the Rideau Trail make it suitable for development that prioritizes pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, creating a more accessible and cohesive community hub. Further, the corridor's location near the hospital and various community services makes it an ideal location for housing options that cater to different demographics, including seniors and young professionals. Design elements can include both higher density development and lower density development that foster transition in massing/scale of development.

The natural heritage features of this area are to be appropriately identified and further studied before any kind of development can occur, including appropriate buffers to protect features as needed.

1.4 Policy Directions

The area is already designated "Uptown Mixed Use" and this mixed use approach should be maintained. Stronger messaging on development leveraging the waterfront to encourage a "live-work-play" environment would be beneficial. Given that the waterfront in this location is made up of Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW), there is the opportunity to add residential development with a buffer for the PSW, with small active amenities for residents located beside the buffer area. This would respect the conservation function of the PSW designation while creating an interface with new development. Along William Street West, for example, there are developable areas that could accommodate street-facing walk-up apartments or townhomes that could have programmed landscaping in the rear. This helps to meet the goal of medium-density housing, and there is an opportunity to foster this type of housing alongside/mixed in with commercial spaces, while incentivizing street-level commercial and retail services to enhance walkability.

and “sense of place”. Enhanced streetscapes (strong attention to design), pedestrian-friendly infrastructure (accessibility considerations, benches, etc.), and landscape elements tying in nature can also help strengthen neighbourhood character.

1.5 Input from Property Owners

A nearby property owner commented that this area has often been neglected when it comes to municipal attention and development interest. They noted that the lack of piped services and the odd parcel fabric on Mazie make large-scale development challenging, but that if development is to occur, an intensification of the existing commercial and small-scale industrial pattern would be most suitable.

2. Lorne St. Extension Development Reserve



Total Area: 111 hectares (275 acres)

Current OP Designation: Residential (Development Reserve)

Current Land Use: Rural landscape including low density residential and agricultural uses. Partially forested. Bisected by 500 kV hydro lines.

2.1 Existing Conditions

Covering 111 hectares, the area currently includes greenfield sites and limited development. The site adjoins the Rideau Regional Centre to the south, with residential and industrial developments nearby.

2.2 Constraints

Lack of Municipal Services: This area lacks full municipal water and sanitary services, particularly in the northern sections. Limited or nonexistent services constrain immediate large-scale development, requiring significant infrastructure investments or phasing of development based on the extension of municipal services.

Environmental Features and Conservation Requirements: While much of the land is outside flood regulated areas, some sections include woodlands, non-PSW wetlands, and a stream cutting through the southern portion of the site. Additionally, the presence of significant woodlands identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) may limit development in certain sections (especially if further fieldwork pinpoints areas with identified wildlife concentration points and habitat considerations).

Utility Corridor Restrictions: A 500 kilovolt utility corridor with easements runs through the middle of the site, limiting the type and location of development. Utility requirements include a minimum 6 metre wide access path for maintenance, a 15 metre setback from transmission structures for development, and restrictions on constructing certain facilities within the corridor.

Transportation and Connectivity Challenges: The lack of an existing street network within the area could make development costly and delayed. Plans to create a north-south collector road to connect Rideau Regional Road may face challenges due to topography, environmental protection needs, and the need for phased infrastructure.

2.3 Development Potential

The Lorne St. area offers a substantial opportunity for new development, particularly for residential expansion connecting to an existing neighbourhood (Alice Street / Lila Street). To the south of Lorne, there is potential to continue supporting the development of employment uses to form a larger business park environment. The size and location of this area also make it suitable for new community amenities, parks, and schools, etc. This area also, however, has compatibility challenges for new residential development due to the proximity to rail lines and industrial development.

2.4 Policy Directions

Please refer to the discussion in the body of this Technical Brief for further details, where we recommend specific areas of this opportunity site to be fully designated for development.

2.5 Input from Property Owners

A nearby property owner commented that, due to the existing adjacent uses, industrial or commercial development might be the most appropriate step for the future. They noted that these sorts of developments typically do not need basements, which would be beneficial due to the high bedrock in the area.

3. Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands



Total Area: 139 hectares (343 acres)

Current OP Designation: Gallipeau Centre Mixed Use (existing built up area), Corridor Commercial (part of Queen St. frontage) and Gallipeau Centre Mixed Use Development Reserve (frame lands)

Current Land Use: Gallipeau Centre complex at centre of property. Remainder is vacant and mix of woodlands, wetlands and fields.

3.1 Existing Conditions

This 139-hectare mixed-use area includes small commercial spaces within the former Rideau Regional Centre, OPP offices, residential units, and undeveloped greenfield land. It is bordered by industrial/business park-type uses.

3.2 Constraints

Environmental Hazards and Conservation: The area contains woodlands, including both significant and non-significant areas. High fire hazard zones are present throughout, with one location categorized as an extreme fire hazard area adjacent to the existing buildings. Additionally, several water bodies, wetlands, and a 100-year floodplain event zone along portions of the site restrict development.

Historical and Cultural Heritage Considerations: The Gallipeau Centre, part of the former Rideau Regional Centre, has historical buildings and cultural heritage features that would benefit from preservation or adaptive reuse; however, this can present challenges to development if policies are too restrictive. Council is in liaison with the Province on an approach that would facilitate development of the Gallipeau Centre; however, the timing is unknown, and development may likely occur well into the future.

Limited Existing Infrastructure: While there is some municipal water and sanitary servicing along Rideau Regional Road, these services do not extend to the entirety of the area, requiring new infrastructure investment for large-scale redevelopment.

Topography and Land Use Complexity: The varied terrain, combined with numerous small commercial and institutional units, creates a patchwork of land uses. This variation adds complexity to planning and may require a phased approach to redevelopment to allow for a cohesive land use strategy that aligns with both commercial and residential objectives.

3.3 Development Potential

The Gallipeau Centre, with its mix of open space and existing institutional buildings, offers unique redevelopment potential that could create a dynamic addition to the Smiths Falls community.

Please refer to the discussion in the body of this Technical Brief for further details.

3.4 Policy Directions

A secondary plan for this area would be required to better delineate specific uses, identify connectivity with surrounding areas, promote conservation of green space to balance development, and devise the servicing approach. Of course, as one of the largest greenfield development areas in Smiths Falls, the other policies of the Official Plan would continue to provide direction on housing, community amenities, transportation, connectivity, environmental

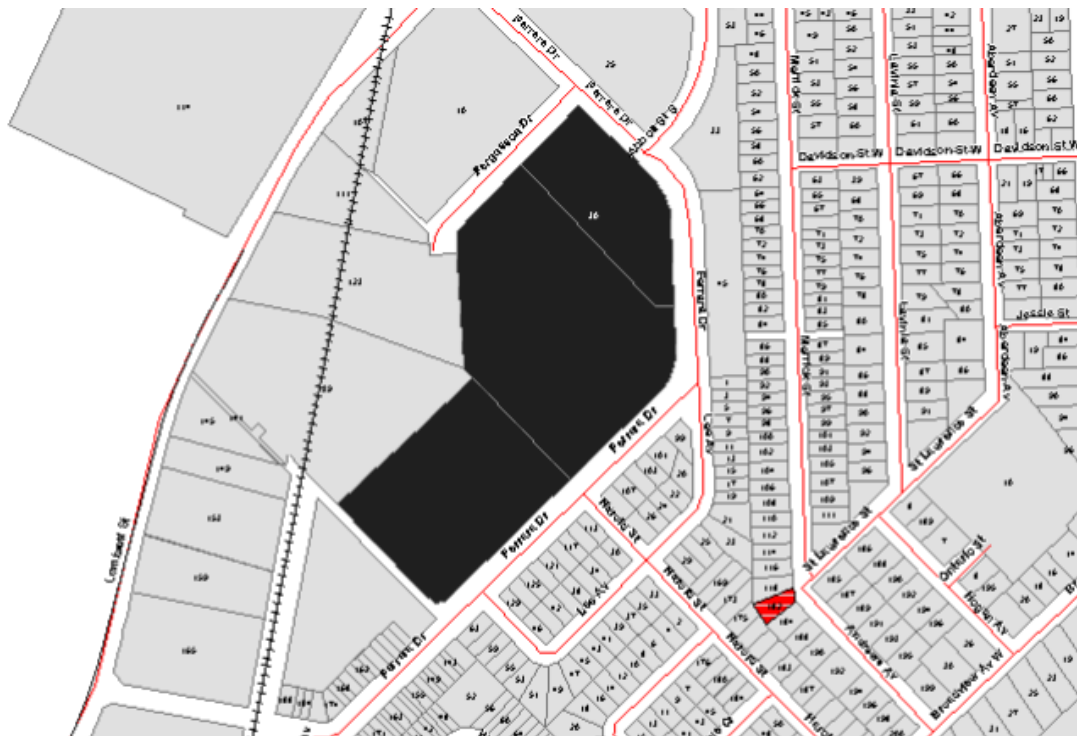
conservation, servicing. Some policy direction is likely needed to address localized phasing matters for infrastructure. Additional policies could encourage the creation of affordable housing units (i.e., below market prices) and promote green building standards to support a new neighbourhood that is inclusive and sustainable.

Please refer to the discussion in the body of this Technical Brief for further details, where we recommend a portion of the Gallipeau Centre lands be fully designated for development.

3.5 Input from Property Owners

A property owner commented that a road connection to the Gallipeau Centre ring road would be logical for creating a second path of egress. Transport trucks appear to not be aware that Lorne Street is a dead end and have to back up down the street.

4. Ferrara and Ferguson Area



Total Area: 7.4 hectares (18.3 acres)

Current OP Designation: Neighbourhood Servicing Commercial and Corridor Commercial

Current Land Use: Vacant (Mostly forested)

4.1 Existing Conditions

This 7.4-hectare area consists primarily of vacant land near commercial establishments such as Canadian Tire and the LCBO, and near residential areas along Trailside Square. The lands are designated Corridor Commercial and Neighbourhood Service Commercial in the Official Plan.

4.2 Constraints

Environmental Sensitivity: This area contains a wooded area and some areas identified as non-PSW wetlands, which would require buffers or restrictions on nearby development. The southern portion falls within an IPZ (Intake Protection Zone) with a high score (8), limiting certain types of land uses that may be permitted in this area.

Proximity to High-Traffic Commercial Uses: While nearby commercial amenities (e.g., Canadian Tire, LCBO, and fast-food chains) are an asset, they also create high vehicular traffic, which could create a nuisance if future development on these lands inadvertently creates a “cut-through” opportunity without appropriate traffic management / traffic calming.

Transportation and Access Constraints: With the Cataraqui Trail basically surrounding the area (aligned with Ferrara Drive), connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is excellent; however, the need to preserve trail access will limit vehicle access points directly to Ferrara Drive. Development may need to incorporate traffic-calming measures and pedestrian safety features to manage potential conflicts between any future vehicular access points at Ferrara Drive and trail users. Alternatively, we understand that the trail route could be relocated by the Town if it will allow for a better development outcome, by either having it run along Ferguson Road to the south, or as a boundary between a residential development oriented to Ferrara Drive and a commercial development oriented towards Ferguson.

4.3 Development Potential

This area is strategically located near established commercial nodes and is bordered by both residential areas and the Cataraqui Trail. As such, it would be advantageous for the site to have a special mixed zoning to provide the Town with options for either residential or commercial future development, depending on future needs and/or development interest. The intention of the mixed zoning approach is not to turn the area into a mixed-use main street format, but to allow for options of solely residential, solely commercial, or a combination of residential and commercial. The vacant, forested land could complement both residential or non-residential development facing Ferrara Drive and Ferguson Drive. The proximity to retailers and fast-food establishments could be leveraged by adding supporting amenities such as cafes, local retail, or small office spaces, creating a neighborhood-serving commercial strip. Residential development would benefit from the Cataraqui Trail amenity, offering housing with views of green spaces or trail access.

It should be noted that two of the parcels in this area are owned by the Town.

4.4 Policy Directions

Policies for this area should promote a mixed zoning approach allowing any combination of commercial and/or residential uses to support complementary development along Ferrara and Ferguson, with specific guidelines for preserving tree cover and integrating green spaces. Development standards for a mixed use building could encourage small-scale retail or community facilities on the ground floor, with residential units above. Furthermore, to support active transportation, policies could require enhanced pedestrian pathways that link to the Trans-Canada Trail, creating a seamless transition from the commercial hub to residential areas. Sustainable development guidelines here could emphasize low-impact designs that protect woodland areas and incorporate eco-friendly stormwater solutions. For residential development, there is an opportunity to integrate urban design elements to make this corner stand out among the newer homes positioned around the site.

4.5 Input from Property Owners

We reached out to property owners, and Town staff also reached out; no feedback has been received.

Appendix to the Opportunity Sites: Research Chart

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
Area Size	22.5 ha	111 ha	139 ha	7.4 ha
Official Plan	Uptown Mixed Use/ Open Space	Residential (Development Reserve)	Gallipeau Centre Mixed Use, Corridor Commercial, Gallipeau Centre Mixed Use Development Reserve	Neighbourhood Servicing Commercial and Corridor Commercial
Existing Land Use	Rural FASD, Howling Designs, Lanark Vet Clinic, Service Ontario, Westbourne Electrical, Macula Clinic, Cornelia Court Family Medicine, Service Canada, Life Labs, Beyond the Falls Wellness, Smiths Falls Optometrists, Guy Samure and Sons Construction, Garden Market, Ts Chips and More, Two Guys for Lunch, various residential along Mazie	Vacant Greenfield, Brown Construction, various residential	Various small commercial units within Rideau Regional Centre, OPP Detachment, some residential, and vacant greenfield	Vacant Forest land
Adjacent Land Use	Rideau River to the west, Lanark County Mental Health to the north-east, Smiths Falls Hospital and Area to the East, Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario to the South	Rideau Regional Centre to the South, Cannabis Clinic, industrial buildings and various residential	Generally vacant land with industrial/ business park uses extending further north-west	Canadian Tire, Tim Hortons, Pops Cannabis, LCBO, Pet Valu, Wendys, Cataraqui Trail, Trailside Square (Residential), Independent Grocer, Mcdonalds. Dairy Queen, Various residential networks

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
# of properties within the boundaries and ownership status	15	14 (one town owned)	2	3 (two town owned)
Conservation Authority	RVCA	RVCA	RVCA	RVCA
Sub Watershed/ Catchment Area	Middle Rideau River/ Rideau-Smith Falls Catchment	Middle Rideau River/ Rideau-Smith Falls Catchment	Middle Rideau River/ Rideau Burritts Rapids	Middle Rideau River/ Rideau-Smith Falls Catchment

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
Official Plan Natural Heritage Features identified	<p>For properties identified on Mazie St. W, all are outside the regulated area.</p> <p>3 and 21 Mazie St. W is completely wooded. 23 and 25 Mazie St. W are adjacent to wooded areas.</p> <p>Beyond the front of 29 Mazie St. W is a non-PSW wetland. Beyond this is The Swale Wetland which is a PSW.</p> <p>115 William St. W is within the regulated area and contains a floodplain. The Southern portion of 115 William St. W is partially wooded and located in a non-PSW and a PSW.</p> <p>89 William St. W is within the regulated area and includes a flood plain, wooded area, and a PSW.</p> <p>91 Cornelia St. W is located within the regulated area. Beyond the commercial buildings to the south is a floodplain, PSW and wooded areas.</p>	<p>All properties within this area are outside the regulated area.</p> <p>110 and 88 Lorne St contains woodlands.</p> <p>Properties to the south of Lorne St. include wooded areas and non-PSW wetlands.</p> <p>One of the properties south of the hydro lines contain significant woodlands as indicated by the MNRF as well as a non-PSW.</p> <p>There is a stream that cuts through the southern portion of the site to the south of the hydro lines.</p>	<p>361 Queen St. W includes a waterbody through the north of the site surrounding by non-PSW. There are small pockets of significant woodlands throughout this area as well as non-significant woodlands.</p> <p>The remainder of the site is largely the same with a larger portion of significant woodlands to the southern portion. The RVCA Catchment runs right through the site at the southern portion along lot 28 concession 2.</p> <p>Larger waterbody pockets to the eastern southern corner of the study area surrounding by non PSW and non-significant woodlands connecting streams.</p>	<p>30 Ferrara Drive is the only property with no delineated hazards.</p> <p>The other two properties consist of woodland.</p>

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
Conservation Authority Hazards Identified	115 William St W is within a 100 year floodplain event area. The remainder of features located at 91 Cornelia St. is consistent with RCVA Mapping.	The OP delineates similar features to the above mapping. This includes WHPA-C Scored 8.	The OP delineates similar features to the above with high fire hazards located throughout the area with one extreme fire hazard located adjacent to the centre. Significant woodlands make up most of the site as well as non-PSW.	Non-PSW located along 30 Ferrara St. into the middle property. Portion of the site to the south located in a IPZ zone Scored 8.
Street Network	Mazie St. W is a collector road that contains on road bike facilities. Cornelia St W is an Arterial Road with on road bike facilities, the Cataraqui Trail runs along William St W, the Rideau Trail runs through the intersection of Mazie, William and Cornelia cutting through 91 Cornelia St. W to Lansdowne St. onwards. William St W is an arterial road with on road bike facilities. A multi-use path is available beyond Lansdowne moving south along William St. W beyond the limits of the study area.	As of right, the OP shows that there are proposed collector roads along Rideau Ave S, along Lorne St. with a north south connection to Rideau Regional Rd. through the center of the site.	Proposed collector road connecting to Lorne St. as indicated in the previous column.	The Trans Canada Trail surrounds the site on all sides. Ferrara Drive is identified as a collector road with on road bike facilities located along Ferrara Drive running N-S and connecting through Ferguson.
Utility lines bisecting the site	N/A	Utility Line through the middle of the site, subject to easement 55kvt	N/A	N/A

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
Utility setbacks	n/a	An unhindered, minimum 6-metre wide access path to facilities on the corridor must be provided for maintenance vehicles. A 15-metre clear working radius around transmission structures is required in order to maintain access for vehicles carrying out routine maintenance. A 3-metre radius around each tower footing must be left unpaved for access to the footing. SWM ponds under 500 kV transmission lines cannot exceed one-third of the corridor width. Parking facilities are not permitted under 500 kV ROWs.	n/a	N/A
Municipal Infrastructure	Municipal Water and Sanitary lines running down Cornelia St. W	Municipal Water and Sanitary lines running along the western portion of the site boundaries south of Lorne St. No present municipal servicing within the study area	Municipal Water and Sanitary present at the northern half of Rideau Regional Road.	Municipal Water and Sanitary present surrounding the site.
Species at Risk (SAR)	20 potential SAR; 2 wildlife concentration areas	4 potential SAR; 4 wildlife concentration areas	8 potential SAR; 3 wildlife concentration areas	14 potential SAR; 1 wildlife concentration area

	Mazie and Cornelia Corridor	Lorne St Extension Development Reserve	Gallipeau Centre and Frame Lands	Ferrara and Ferguson Area
Other Current Official Plan Considerations	Within a Targeted Growth Ares	<p>Section IN1.2.3: The north-eastern part of the Town (Lorne Street East) is not serviced by municipal water and sanitary sewer services. Limited development on the basis of private services may be provided in order to allow for infilling and minor rounding out of existing development provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts</p> <p>Special Policy Area 4 - vision to develop a MP to develop integrated neighbourhoods which promote high quality of life for all residents of the plan area.¹</p>	<p>Special Policy Area 3 permitted uses include those from the Uptown Mixed-Use designation which include a full range of residential and non-residential uses. Considering the history to the property and the potential re-use of certain buildings and structures, permitted uses in the Major Institutional designation will also be permitted.</p> <p>It is recognized that the Queen Street frontage of the property is also well suited to Corridor Commercial development.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to the heritage easement on the lands, held by the Ontario Heritage Trust.</p>	No Special Considerations

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- No servicing. A portion of these lands is subject to policies for development concerning WHPA. Anything other than residential is subject to EC-3.7.
- Minor non-res uses permitted here if it meets the needs or neighborhood.



To: Mayor and Council

From: Paul Dowber, Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

Date: March 13, 2025

Committee of the Whole Date: March 17, 2025

Title: 2024 Statement of Remuneration and Expenses Report

☐

For Direction

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For Information

☒

For Adoption

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Attachment 1 Page

Recommendation: THAT Council of the Corporation of the Town of Smiths Falls receive the 2024 Statement of Remuneration and Expenses Report.

Purpose: To provide Council with the 2024 expenses and remuneration for all Council and Committee/Board members in the Town of Smiths Falls.

Background: Section 284 (1) of The Municipal Act, as amended, states that the Treasurer of a municipality shall in each year on or before March 31 provide to the council of the municipality an itemized statement on remuneration and expenses paid in the previous year to:

(a) each member of council in respect of his or her services as a member of the council or any other body, including a local board, to which the member has been appointed by council or on which the member holds office by virtue of being a member of council;

(b) each member of council in respect of his or her services as an officer or employee of the municipality or other body described in clause (a); and

(c) each person, other than a member of council, appointed by the municipality to serve as a member of any body, including a local board, in respect of his or her services as a member of the body.

Furthermore, section 284 (2) requires that the statement shall identify the by-law under which the remuneration or expenses were authorized to be paid.

The Town of Smiths Falls By-law 8048-2007, as amended, provides the authority and sets out the provisions respecting payments of all expenses paid to Council and Committee/Board members.

Analysis and Options:

The attached summary provides the submitted expenses (such as registration and travel costs to attend training workshops and conferences on behalf of the municipality) and remuneration of Council and Committee/Board members for the year 2024.

The report also details all figures provided to Council representatives from Committees and Boards outside of the Corporation, that have a Council representative (s) on their committee. These expenses would include mileage to attend meetings on behalf of the municipality and any remuneration or expenses that were paid to the Council or Committee/Board Member from the organization.

Attachment: Appendix A - 2024 Statement of Remuneration and Expenses

Budget/Financial Implications:

All 2024 expenses and remuneration figures were allocated in the 2024 budget.

Link to Strategic Plan: None

Existing Policy:

By-law 5543-89 - Bylaw /Police Service Board Remuneration

By-law 8048-2007, as amended – Expenses By-law

By-law 8396-2011 – By-law / Remuneration paid to Council Members

By-law 8900-2016 – By-law / Remuneration paid to Planning Advisory Members

Consultations:

Brandii Phillips, Payroll Clerk

Jenna Thompson, Accounts Payable Clerk

Christian Illman, Deputy Treasurer

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Notes/Action (space for Council Member's notes):

Respectfully submitted by:

Original signed by:

Paul Dowber

Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer

Approved for agenda by CAO:

Original signed by:

Malcolm Morris, CMO

Chief Administrative Officer



TREASURER'S REPORT REMUNERATION & EXPENSES – 2024

In accordance with the provisions Municipal Act (Section 284) herewith is the Treasurer's Report of the remuneration and expenses paid to each member of Smiths Falls Town Council and to each person appointed by the municipality to serve as a member of any body for the year 2023.

Payments have been made in accordance with By-law 7683-2002 / Resolution 2004-05-134 (Council Remuneration), By-law 8048-2007, as amended (Expenses), By-law 7850-2005 (Honorarium), and By-law 5543-89 (Police Service Board Remuneration). Payment made by outside bodies, such as the Health Unit or Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has been done in accordance with their governing documents.

	Remuneration (including Per Diem)	Expenses
Council Members		
Shawn Pankow	39,092.64	3,273.26
Jay Brennan	19,405.56	930.45
Chris McGuire	19,000.56	
Peter McKenna	19,000.56	3,718.91
Jennifer Miller	19,450.56	2,961.81
Dawn Quinn	19,000.56	1,309.17
Stephen Robinson	19,000.56	899.60
County Council Representatives		
Shawn Pankow	1,100.00	281.60
Peter McKenna	1,100.00	
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Representative		
Shawn Pankow	420.00	56.00
Health Unit Representative		
Peter McKenna	7,846.42	2,459.70
Planning Advisory Committee		
MDiepietro	50.00	
Jaclyn Grimes	175.00	
John Wanless	225.00	
Stephen McGuire	100.00	
Yvonne Robert	225.00	
Mary Remming	50.00	16.81
Police Board Services		
Shawn Pankow	4,750.20	-
Jennifer Auger-Ritchie	4,750.20	-
Christopher McGuire	4,750.20	-
Robert Dopson	4,750.20	-
Christopher Saumure	4,750.20	-
Library Board		
Christopher Cummings		291.59

Submitted by,
Paul Dowber
Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer