

Grand Plan **MADAWASKA**

Shaping the Next Decade

Strategic Plan for Madawaska 2018 – 2028

Prepared by CultureWorth and ONE Group
for the Town of Madawaska, Maine

December 2017

A MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Dear Madawaska Residents,

Nothing can be more exciting for a town manager than working for a community that is ready and committed for change.

In 2015 after a long period of stagnation, the Municipal Officials of the Town of Madawaska took bold, progressive steps to initiate change, which started with the simple yet critical recognition of the issues facing Madawaska, and the subsequent realization that if change could ever occur, it would have to begin at the municipal government level.

From that very point, municipal officials implemented an aggressive intervention by improving government services, streamlining code enforcement, and installing progressive leadership that could deliver progress.

Born out of this recognition, intervention, and leadership change was Grand Plan Madawaska. It is a bold, strategic, multifaceted planning project that speaks to the people of Madawaska. Their concerns have been heard and documented as to what is most important to them in their vision for a new and successful Madawaska Region.

In our hands today is a plan for a successful future; but success may only be achieved by brave and thoughtful implementation and a constant discipline to keep Grand Plan Madawaska alive.

This strategic plan will be the Madawaska region's vehicle for moving forward and making progress. Continuity shall be maintained through a sustained commitment of resources and a disciplined governance committee comprised of town officials, members of the business community, and our citizens.

Madawaska has two obvious choices for what its future holds: be regressive and attain nothing, or be progressive and achieve something. The Municipal Officials of Madawaska choose to embrace the latter. Grand Plan Madawaska's success also hinges on buy-in from the business community and the citizens of the Madawaska region.

It's my belief that we all share a vision for a prosperous community. That prosperity however, will never be delivered; it can only be achieved from within.

Always looking forward,



Gary M. Picard
Madawaska Town Manager



Acknowledgments

Grand Plan Madawaska is the result of a year-long team effort with the Town of Madawaska, strategic planning consultants, a volunteer planning committee, and many others who gave of their time and talent to help realize this major milestone for Madawaska.

Immense appreciation goes to Gary Picard, Town Manager, and the Select Board, for their generous support and commitment. Sincere thanks to Andrew Dubé and Suzie Paradis for their invaluable help, along with Natalie Morneau, Amy Ouellette, Dana Gendreau, and all town office staff.

We thank everyone who was so generous with their time and insight in interviews, focus groups, surveys, and community gatherings. To the residents of Madawaska, we are especially grateful for their support and enthusiasm. Much gratitude goes to Ryan D. Pelletier, County Administrator and former town manager of Madawaska, for Grand Plan Madawaska would not have come to fruition without his visionary leadership. And finally, many thanks to everyone who supported and participated in the creation of the Concept Paper created in 2016, which laid the foundation for Grand Plan Madawaska.

A thoughtful plan such as this cannot overlook the people it is designed to represent. The bilingual name of this strategy, Grand Plan Madawaska, was intentionally created to reflect the French cultural heritage of the Madawaska region. Its name is dedicated to the image it connotes.

Sheila Jans, CultureWorth
Jim Haguewood, ONE Group

Download Grand Plan Madawaska at www.townofmadawaska.net

For more information, contact the Madawaska Town Office
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Table of Contents

Message from the Town Manager	2
Acknowledgments	3
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
What We Learned	9
Guiding Statements	12
Vision, Values, Mission	
Key Performance Indicators	14
Strategic Roadmap	16
Goal 1 – Strong Culture and Place	17
Goal 2 – Vibrant and Attractive Community	19
Goal 3 – Diverse and Thriving Economy	23
Goal 4 – Effective and Exceptional Government	27
Implementation Roadmap	32
Steps for Implementation	33
Implementation Overviews	34
Action Priorities	38
Appendices	
Project Support	39
Public Consultation	40
Strategic Planning Process	41

Executive Summary

This is a time for optimism. Madawaska, a town at the northernmost point of Maine, is home to 4,000 people with a rich history, abundant cultural and natural assets, and a spirit of entrepreneurship. Situated along the St. John River, it is the largest of twenty towns and townships in the St. John Valley region. Settled in 1785 by Acadians and French-Canadians, Madawaska continues to be a community predominately of French heritage. This distinct culture, the beautiful landscape, four-season outdoor recreation, along with its anchor industries, community spirit, and geographic location next to Canada, contribute to a strong sense of identity and place. They also form the foundation for enormous potential.

As with many small towns across rural North America, however, Madawaska faces significant headwinds, such as an undiversified economy, diminishing and aging population, and demands on scarce resources. These challenges, as well as external pressures of a rapidly changing world, can undermine the path toward a more vibrant future.

Ignoring our numerous challenges *and* abundant assets is not an option. Grand Plan Madawaska, a community and economic development strategy, responds to this universal interplay between strengths and challenges, and the quest for balance and resiliency. It is call to action for transformative change that points to a simple idea: to create a great place to live. Driving the strategy's planning process was to learn from the wisdom of the community, imagine what is possible, and plant a seed to redefine what rural means.

From March to July 2017, a planning leadership team composed of consultants, town staff, and a volunteer planning committee, conducted research and engaged in broad community engagement with over 450 people. We explored strengths and weaknesses, what is desired for the future, opportunities and priorities, and how to galvanize and mobilize toward vibrancy. We identified the importance of creating conditions for diversity, cooperation, a positive mindset, and new ideas to flourish. We learned that we must work together to maximize the potential for Madawaska, build wealth from within, and create a resilient community and local economy. Ultimately, we affirmed the uncomplicated truth that shaping our destiny starts with us.

Emerging from this planning process, seven key elements were identified as critically important to the future of Madawaska: Culture and Place, Local Economy, Youth and Population, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Collaboration, and Mindset. These elements form the foundation for Grand Plan Madawaska's four strategic goals. These, along with their 12 strategies and 44 actions, will be the Town of Madawaska's primary focus over the next five to ten years.

FOUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1. **Strong Culture and Place**
2. **Vibrant and Attractive Community**
3. **Diverse and Thriving Local Economy**
4. **Efficient and Exceptional Government**

These goals, strategies, and actions speak to Madawaska's vision to become a vibrant center of opportunity where the French culture, nature's abundance, and an international bond make Madawaska a great place to live, work, and visit. They were inspired by hundreds of people who shared their concerns, ideas, and aspirations.

Practical directions and big ideas emerged. Community insight helped to create actions such as mapping of culture, nature, and business assets, revitalizing Main Street and the downtown district, stewarding the French language and making it more visible, investing in digital literacy, organizing a St. John Valley Regional Summit, designing a Welcome Home Campaign, and creating an entrepreneurial hub and Maker Space.

Grand Plan Madawaska is a strategy to shape the next decade. We recognize, however, that implementing a 10-year strategy can be a challenge due to changing administrations, budgetary fluctuations, and innumerable external influences. Since implementation is a continual process, it is recommended that annual review and evaluation takes place. By late 2022/early 2023, an in-depth assessment can be conducted and readjustments made where necessary.

The first of its kind for Madawaska, this strategy provides the opportunity for unprecedented private, public, and nonprofit sector collaboration. Though designed for the town of Madawaska, this strategy sets a course for increased connection with communities in the St. John Valley and our Canadian neighbors.

The hope is that Grand Plan Madawaska inspires, galvanizes, and guides everyone – residents, town staff, elected officials, businesses, nonprofits, and institutions – to move forward together to achieve success. Municipal government, however, cannot do this work alone. It will require patience and commitment, proactive and robust action, sustained investment, and celebration of successes along the way. Very importantly, implementing Grand Plan Madawaska will require a team effort with an effective action group for change and many partners in cooperative collaboration. We are all part of shaping a strong and vibrant future for Madawaska.



Introduction

It Starts With Us

During the early spring of 2016, discussions began to explore directions for shaping a vision and strategic plan for the town of Madawaska. After a few months of public consultations and research, a concept paper entitled “Charting a Course for a Vision and Strategy for Madawaska,” shed light on areas to focus on, planning steps to follow, and practical tools and resources to consider.¹

The concept paper oriented us to think about expansive concepts like what it means to build a great place to live, creative ways to plan and find solutions, and the value of intention and a spirit of cooperation. This was the beginning of an exciting conversation about imagining what is possible for the future of our small town. The concept paper identified key focus areas that formed the foundation for planning efforts that followed.

Grand Plan Madawaska | Shaping the Next Decade

By March of 2017, work began in earnest with a planning leadership team of professional consultants, town staff, and a volunteer planning committee. We set out to create a strategy – *Grand Plan Madawaska* – as a way to shape a vibrant and thriving future for our town.

Grand Plan Madawaska offers four goals with 12 strategies, 44 actions, and an implementation roadmap with a timeframe, responsibilities, and priorities. It also includes a vision, guiding values, a mission, and performance metrics to assess progress. Though this strategy is about shaping the next decade (2018-2028), we recognize that implementing a 10-year strategy can be a challenge due to changing administrations and elected officials, external impacts, and a rapidly changing world. Given that, we recommend annual review and evaluation, and by late 2022/early 2023, a more in-depth assessment and update.

Planning Approach

The strategic planning process for Grand Plan Madawaska was grounded by several guiding notions:

- Build a strong planning team;
- Learn from and respect the perspectives and wisdom of the community;
- Gain insight from sound research and best practices near and far, and
- Plant a seed to reinvent, redefine, and help create new possibilities for the future of Madawaska.

Mindful of the many challenges facing Madawaska, the ultimate goal in planning was to create a strategic plan that is relevant, measurable, and motivating. Our approach was guided by embracing *all* aspects of what makes Madawaska distinct, competitive, and unique.

¹ Written by Sheila Jans, available at the Town office or online at <http://www.townofmadawaska.net>.

With on-the-ground help by town staff and guidance from a 12-member planning committee, strategy consultants were able to achieve many tasks. Two studies were conducted: *Internal Organizational Review* to understand capacity and opportunities in municipal government, and a *Situation Review*, a snapshot of important elements that shape and impact Madawaska.²

Critical to the process was broad community engagement with residents of Madawaska and nearby communities, town employees, the private and public sector, and stakeholders within the region, county, and state. Over 450 people shared perspectives and passionate ideas about what they envision for the future of Madawaska. We came together in planning meetings, focus groups, interviews, surveys, community gatherings, and many conversations. We listened to and learned from people of all ages and backgrounds, especially to young people, who were instrumental in shaping this strategy.³



Student conversation at Madawaska Middle-High School

Moving Forward Together

For the town of Madawaska with a population of 4,000, community development is economic development. We share many challenges faced by other small, rural towns throughout Maine and North America, such as loss of population, struggle to attract and retain youth, prolonged economic decline, and global pressures on traditional economic drivers.

Yet, alongside these challenges, are assets and opportunities in rich and plentiful abundance: our geographic location in the St. John Valley and international area, local knowledge and wisdom, the French culture and language, beautiful landscape and fertile soil, anchor industries, and people who care passionately about their home. Though designed for the town of Madawaska, Grand Plan Madawaska is a road map stretching beyond town limits to the St. John Valley region and our Canadian neighbors.

Grand Plan Madawaska is an ambitious strategy with a simple idea: to create a great place to live. Our hope is that this strategy inspires, galvanizes, and guides everyone – residents, Town staff, elected officials, businesses, nonprofits, institutions – to move forward together. Municipal government cannot do this work alone. It will require patience and commitment, robust action, sustained investment, and very importantly, a team effort with a capable action group for change, and many partners in *cooperative collaboration*.

Ignoring our numerous challenges and abundant assets is not an option. To maximize the potential for Madawaska, build wealth from within, and create a resilient community and local economy, we must all work together. It starts with us. That means moving forward with a shared vision, being intentional, proactive, and future-oriented. It means to be more daring and willing to take calculated risks. It also means understanding our assets and opportunities and how to leverage and capitalize on them. We are all part of building a strong and vibrant future for Madawaska.

² Both documents are available for reference at the Town office.

³ We also benefited from an online survey conducted with MMHS students in 2016 for the Concept Paper. See appendix for more details about community engagement process. Public opinion results are available for reference at the Town office.

What We Learned

Shaping Grand Plan Madawaska involved extensive research and direct engagement with the community on a number of levels. Community engagement was an especially critical part of the strategic planning process. Its intent was to:

- Generate awareness about Grand Plan Madawaska;
- Listen, learn, understand, and gain participation in the development of the plan;
- Create public support for the outcomes of the plan; and
- Build public awareness and support for the Town's efforts in generating prosperity.

Connecting with over 450 people over several months produced a wealth of perspectives and ideas that were pivotal in informing the strategy. Our approach was to seek out the *best of what is*, and ignite the collective imagination of *what might be*. Though the priority was to reach out to local residents, engagement included adjacent communities, the St. John Valley region, and Edmundston, New Brunswick. Plus, survey responses were received from former residents who currently live elsewhere in Maine or beyond the state.

Engagement was framed around understanding: **Where are we now** (strengths and assets, concerns and pressing issues); **What matters the most** (what is important, opportunities and priorities); **Vision for the future** (imagine what is possible, what is desired); and **How can we get there** (what is needed to achieve success).

As a result of pivotal work done in the concept paper and subsequent research and extensive community engagement, seven key elements emerged as critically important to the future for Madawaska. Ultimately, they are foundational community pillars that must be impacted synergistically as we move forward in community and economic development efforts. These key elements are:

MADAWASKA'S COMMUNITY PILLARS

1. ***Culture and Place***
2. ***Local Economy***
3. ***Youth and Population***
4. ***Infrastructure***
5. ***Quality of Life***
6. ***Collaboration***
7. ***Mindset***



"Music in the Park" at Bicentennial Park

Community Feedback

Below is a small glimpse of the substantial amount of feedback gathered from extensive community engagement. This is a summary of their key messages that informed the directions for this strategy.⁴

“I love this town I call home.”

WHERE ARE WE NOW

- **Assets and Strengths** – Culture and community, traditions, French culture and language, family, international setting, St. John River, four seasons, landscape, affordable, good education, low crime rate, clean, abundant natural resources.
- **Challenges and Obstacles** – Decaying Main Street, poor parking, dependent on resource extraction, not making enough things, not enough for youth/young families, lack of grocery stores/specialty retail, too far from major centers, negative attitudes, lack of strong Town leadership/inadequate communication, border is overly regulated and obstructive.

“It's time to be serious, because we can't afford not to be.”

WHAT MATTERS MOST

- **Youth and Population** – Retention and attraction, strong education.
- **Culture** – Welcome diversity; support French culture and language (Acadian and French-Canadian).
- **Quality of Life/Place** – Livability, positive mindset, age-friendly, safety, housing, health services, arts/ nature, open skies, green technologies, better parking, swimming pool.
- **Economy** – Main Street revitalization, workforce development, digital literacy, leverage arts, culture, place assets (traditions, trades, agriculture, fabrication), toolkit for new/expanding businesses; marketing/distribution networks, remote workers, more retail, speciality services, French language related businesses, businesses for seniors.
- **Regionalization and Canada** – School consolidation, interlocal agreements, partners in county and cross-border, international bridge, signage on TransCanada Highway.
- **Tourism** – Trail systems, bundle experiences, Madawaska Lake Region, late ski season.
- **Town** – Charter, zoning/ordinances, strong leadership, GPM oversight committee, communications.

⁴ Quotes are anonymous, from a public opinion survey. Full results of the survey are available for reference at the Town office.

“I want a future for my children to find a good paying job here.”

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- **Epicenter** – Madawaska as the epicenter and destination for the region that brings people together for a range of experiences: outdoors, linguistic, cultural, specialty retail and dining, swimming pool, “cool hang out places” for youth, remote workers, digital literacy, repurpose Mid-town shopping plaza as a gathering place.
- **Madawaska Makes** – Stable, diverse, reliable economic growth, more jobs with higher wages, become a town that makes things, increase in cross-border commerce, services/products unique to here; curricula for workforce, diversification of farming.
- **Open and Collaborative** – Increase cooperation and partnerships, get new voices at the table, Act Local/Think Global, increase cross-border activities and communication.

“Get strong first, then share our discoveries and energy with the region.”

HOW CAN WE GET THERE

- **Town Leadership** – Lead, invest, collaborate, galvanize, and support.
- **Collaboration** – Internal/external private, public, nonprofit sectors, new voices, youth involvement
- **Mindset** – Open, positive, commit, intentional, welcome new ideas, celebrate success.
- **Resources** – Funding, expertise, volunteers.

“We start with what we have – that’s a raw material.”



The St. John River

Guiding Statements

Hundreds of people contributed to shaping the guiding statements for the town of Madawaska. Their thoughts and perspectives enriched the resulting value, vision, and mission statements. Values and guiding principles represent what we as a community cherish, our deeply held beliefs, and highest priorities. A vision is an image of our shared desirable and preferred future. The mission describes the primary purpose for town government and provides an important framework for planning. The statements below are intended to guide town government and residents of Madawaska in the work that lies ahead.

VISION *We are a vibrant center of opportunity where the French culture, nature’s abundance, and an international bond make Madawaska a great place to live, work, and visit.*

MISSION *The Town of Madawaska provides exceptional services to all residents and cultivates an environment for growth, a thriving local economy, and strong quality of life.*

VALUES *We cherish and respect the diversity of the people of Madawaska, our French culture and language, international location, and beautiful land. We believe that we all contribute to creating the conditions for openness, talent, and new ideas to flourish. We are committed to being proactive and improving continuously, working together with a positive attitude, and taking care of this place we call home.*

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- ***Respectful***

We value and respect our neighbors, town employees, partners, and volunteers. We recognize the value of local knowledge and believe that being kind and respectful to one another contributes to a higher quality of life for everyone.

- ***Progressive***

We believe in the value of embracing new technologies and that innovation, creativity, self-reliance, and a solid education are essential ingredients for our town's resiliency. We are dedicated to being proactive, nimble, and inclusive in our thinking and actions.

- ***Excellence***

We are committed to providing exceptional services and the highest level of professionalism and skill in all that we do. We believe that responsiveness, follow-through, and effective communications are essential to our success.

- ***Stewardship***

We cherish our heritage, natural environment, and connection with our neighbors in Canada. We welcome diversity while recognizing the importance of our French culture and language. We are dedicated to the well-being of our residents and careful use of our land.

- ***Collaborative***

We believe that Madawaska will achieve great success if we cooperate together. We are committed to ensuring a safe and fulfilling work environment, and are dedicated to cultivating respectful and productive relationships with entities and other communities.

- ***Accountable***

We are committed to transparency, the efficient use of fiscal and organizational resources, and the sustainability of our town.

Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators are a set of measurable points that provide a monitoring framework over time for Madawaska's community and local economy. Those selected align with Grand Plan Madawaska's goals, strategies, and actions.

The figures in the charts below are from federal, state, and municipal sources.⁵ Many other indicators would be useful, but data were not available for those items. For example, additional economic and community indicators could be eventually included, such as employee and resident satisfaction, visitation, and number of businesses related to farming, forestry, technology, nature and creative/knowledge economy.

Most indicators include figures from 2015 unless otherwise noted. Projections are based on a five-year period from Grand Plan Madawaska's begin date of 2018. The ultimate goal is to reasonably attain positive growth and progress by late 2022/early 2023, though in some cases, such as in school enrollment, the data points to a reverse trend (we chose to include direct data provided by the school administration). The indicators and projections are a starting point, and should be reviewed by the municipal government within five years to determine progress, trends, and direction. For some, annual review is recommended.

MADAWASKA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Measure Within Five Years from 2018

Town of Madawaska	Source	2015	2022
Population	ACS, S0101	3,930	4,100
Average age	ACS	53.7	53
Percentage of population 20-44 yrs old	ACS, S0101	20.2% (794)	20% (820)
School enrollment	MSD	446	325
French speaking residents	US Census	2,330	2,400
Median home price	MSHA	\$98,500	\$113,000
Median household income	ACS, S2503	\$36,212	\$41,500
Retail sales	State of Maine	\$42M	\$45M
Average wage	ACS, S2001	\$25,238	\$29,000
Poverty, all people	ACS, 1701	12.9%	13%
Bachelor degrees or higher (25 yrs old and over)	ACS, S1501	27.2%	27%

LEGEND: ACS – American Community Survey • MSD – Madawaska School District • MSHA – Maine State Housing Authority • State of Maine – Office of Policy and Management

Population – Estimate based on: 1. Population diminishing with estimates of State of Maine at 3,829 by 2024, and 2. Realistic slight growth is impacted by decline, primarily deaths (a shift in 271 people from a down trend to an up trend is significant and may be a challenge to achieve). Allow for adjustment as population is getting older. Population estimate for 2034 by the State, OPM is 3,738 (-4.8%).

School enrollment – Projections for enrollment at all levels 1996-2026 = 59.2%. By 2026 total = 199.

⁵ Figures from state and federal sources generally lag year, but those generated locally can be accessed relatively quickly. Valuation increases (retail sales, median income, etc.) are based on 2% compounded annual growth rate (CAGR). See *Situation Review* for more data on Madawaska's demographic, economic, social, and community indicators.

MADAWASKA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Measure Annually from 2018

Town of Madawaska	Source	2015-2017	2022
Total businesses	MTO	165	185
Number of building permits	MTO	129	129-140
Value of building permits	MTO	\$3,706,756	\$4.8 M
Commercial unit vacancies on Main Street	MTO	26	16-18
Border crossings	US Transport	557,824	560,000
Total jobs	US Census	1,727	1,900
Canadian currency exchange rate	US Treasury	1.2970	---
Cooperative agreements	MTO	13	15

LEGEND: MTO – Madawaska Town Office

Businesses – As of 2017, an estimate based on town records (146), chamber membership, allowing for unregistered businesses. Within five years, a comprehensive inventory of businesses should be done.

Number and value of building permits – From 2015-16, based on permits to enlarge structure footprint or exceeds \$15,000, not including projects less than \$15,000.

Commercial vacancies – A 2017 estimate based on store fronts from Gagnon Road to 26th Avenue in 2017.

Border crossings – From 2016 records, represents vehicles, trucks and pedestrian crossing.

Cooperative agreements – *Ambulance*: St. Agatha, Frenchville; *Fire mutual aid*: Edmundston, Grand Isle, Frenchville, St. Agatha, Fort Kent; *Code enforcement*: St. Agatha, Eagle Lake; *Economic development*: St. Agatha, Eagle Lake; Valley Recycling Facility and Northern Aroostook Regional Airport.

Exchange rate – Based on 2017 figures. Though the exchange rate cannot be projected, it is advisable to track rates since they impact travel across the border and retail sales.

Strategic Roadmap

The strategic roadmap in the following pages will help guide town government and residents of Madawaska on a journey of reinvention by understanding:

- *Goals – What we want*
- *Strategies – What we do to get there*
- *Actions – How we do it*
- *Implementation – Who does it and when*

The implementation roadmap provides a timeline, leadership, potential partners, and prioritized actions. Four strategic goals, also considered priorities, emerged from what we heard and learned through research and extensive community engagement.

FOUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1 *Strong Culture and Place*

Stewardship of French language and culture; protection of natural environment.

2 *Vibrant and Attractive Community*

Enhancement of visual environment; activation of arts, outdoors, and visitation; livability.

3 *Diverse and Thriving Local Economy*

Environment that supports business, generates jobs, and stimulates economic growth.

4 *Efficient and Exceptional Government*

Municipal services and leadership; fiscal sustainability; progressive management.

Written to express the *result* rather than a course of action, these goals point to what is desired and intended to occur when their strategies and actions are implemented successfully. They will be the Town of Madawaska's primary focus over the next five to ten years. To achieve success, sustained collaboration will be essential between town government, an effective oversight and action committee (GPM Action Council), and productive partnerships with private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

GOAL 1 *Strong Culture and Place*

The Town of Madawaska will be a leader in the stewardship and promotion of the French culture and language, and the responsible use and protection of the natural environment. By valuing and taking care of culture and nature, we strengthen our sense of identity and quality of life and place.

This goal points to stewarding what distinguishes Madawaska – the predominant Acadian and French-Canadian culture and language, geographic location, and natural and built environment. A specific focus on the French culture and language is not to disregard the importance of diversity and other cultures. It speaks to safeguarding an indigenous culture essential to the ecosystem of our community. Two strategies support this goal: 1. Develop ways to steward and promote the inherent asset of the French culture and language for Madawaska, and 2. Protect the natural environment, improve and expand green spaces, and integrate green technologies. Efforts to attain this goal present a significant opportunity that will not only benefit Madawaska, but also the entire St. John Valley and international region.

STRATEGY 1.A

With partners, set the foundation to become a cultural and linguistic center by stewarding and promoting the local French culture and language to ensure vitality now and for future generations.

ACTIONS

1.A.1 Conduct asset and resource mapping

Conduct extensive asset mapping of cultural assets and resources of Madawaska area (e.g., groups, events, experiences, social and human capital; built environment, historic sites). Use data for planning, tourism, promotion, business, preservation (aligns with 1.A.3).

1.A.2 Increase connection and support

With partners, organize roundtable discussion with local, regional, and international groups to understand needs and role Town can play to support resources and increase impact of culture. Assess current funding levels and technical assistance support to nonprofits and cultural events. Consider creating a grant fund with private/public partners to support culture.

1.A.3 Shape an authentic message about culture and language

Shape a genuine and authentic narrative about French culture and language in Madawaska and regional/international context. Ensure correct historical facts and information about local Acadians and French Canadians. Use to inform planning, promotions, and communications. Integrate with intergovernmental departments, such as SJV Chamber of Commerce (aligns with 4.C.1).

1.A.4 Focus on preservation and promotion

Review and improve policies and zoning for protection and preservation of historic architecture, sites, and districts (e.g., historic zone next to industrial zone in St. David). Create a description of Town's role in preservation and promotion of French culture, heritage, and language. Recognize the importance of cultural amenities and its role in community and economic development; focus on programs, codes, and standards to preserve character and integrity of history and culture of Madawaska. Determine a use of the French language policy sensitive to residents. Promote local culture in Town programs. Collaborate with Canada where necessary (aligns with 2.A.2, 4.A.2).

1.A.5 Make French more visible and integrated

With partners, raise and encourage visibility, awareness, and use of French language:

- Whenever possible, integrate French into municipal departments, such as signage on buildings and town streets, in communications and promotions (e.g., website, social media, print and promotional material). Link with Main Street revitalization.
- Identify innovative ways to create an environment in Madawaska that is conducive for living, visiting, and conducting business in French.
- Collaborate with Madawaska School Department (MSD) to expand language education in innovative ways and with other partners.
- Develop art/musical/folk activities that showcase the French culture and language.

STRATEGY 1.B

Establish progressive policies to protect the natural environment, improve green spaces, and integrate green technologies for a healthy and sustainable community.

ACTIONS

1.B.1 Conduct asset and resource mapping

With partners, conduct asset mapping of natural assets and resources of Madawaska area (e.g., parks, green spaces, arable land, eco-recreation, waterways, woodland, significant landscape features, green technologies/programs). Use information for planning, tourism, promotion, business development, and conservation.

1.B.2 Increase connection and support

With partners, organize a roundtable discussion with agricultural, forest, outdoor recreation, nature groups, individuals, and institutions, to understand needs and role Town government can play to support conservation, recreation, land use, and green technologies. Review and identify funding allocation/technical assistance to other nonprofits (consider creating grant fund with private/public partners).

1.B.3 Shape an authentic message about the natural environment

Shape a narrative about land and natural environment of Madawaska area, and in regional context. Use to inform planning, promotions, and communications. Integrate with intergovernmental departments, such as SJV Chamber of Commerce (aligns with 4.C.1).

1.B.4 Focus on protection and promotion

Meet or excel environmental standards. Focus on planning, programs, codes, and standards to preserve character and integrity of Madawaska's natural environment (e.g., land use, parks/green spaces, waterways, recycling, agricultural/wood lands, wildlife, and the value of open spaces, clear skies, northern lights, being able to see/access the St. John River). Promote nature in Town programs and encourage responsible use of nature/natural resources. Collaborate with Canada where necessary (e.g., St. John River watershed).

1.B.5 Improve and increase green spaces and green technology

Identify opportunities, encourage, and implement where possible: integration of green technologies (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.); improvement/increase number of green spaces/parks in Madawaska, trees on Main Street, and potential of community forest (aligns with 2.A.1, 2.B.1).

GOAL 2 *Vibrant and Attractive Community*

Beginning in 2018, the Town of Madawaska will set a course to build a vibrant and a attractive community through revitalization of the Main Street corridor and downtown district; activation of arts, nature, and visitation; and fostering growth in population. By late 2022/early 2023, Madawaska sees population at 4,100, retail sales of \$45M, and a 15% increase for median home prices.⁶

This goal speaks to making Madawaska a desirable place to live, work, and visit. It focuses on three strategies: 1. Revitalization of Main Street, the downtown district, and overall visual environment, 2. Develop and support a robust arts and outdoor/nature sector that enriches life and encourages visitation, and 3. Grow the population with a focus on attracting youth, young families, and professionals.

STRATEGY 2.A

Improve the town's visual environment with a focus on revitalization and enhancement of the Main Street corridor, downtown district, and other key areas where business takes place and community comes together.⁷

⁶ Projections for all goals are based on data from the Key Performance Indicators section in this strategy.

⁷ Close to 92% of public survey respondents are moderately to not at all satisfied with Madawaska's Main Street (based on 207 responses from public survey conducted during planning GPM, June 2017).

ACTIONS

2.A.1 Revitalize and develop Main Street corridor and downtown district

With partners and GPM committee, focus on:

- Impact and *experience* of Main Street and distinct downtown district: façade improvement with design standards; improve streetscapes and town entrances (e.g., east/west Main Street and at border), public/green spaces, plant trees; campaign to rent/sell commercial buildings; increased French/bilingual street signs.⁸ Focus on specific areas and make visible changes in short term to inspire and motivate. Engage professionals for placemaking, design and standards. Improve look of Town tax acquired properties. Work with lending institutions to find solutions to beautify their tax/default acquired properties. Continue efforts with Maine Downtown Network.
- Address parking and safety issues: parking alignment, parking options, enforcement, slowing traffic on all of Main Street. Continue efforts with MDOT.
- Encourage and implement attractive, pedestrian-friendly design: assess sidewalk conditions, lighting (including stop or caution lights).

2.A.2 Focus on responsible urban planning

- Conduct an inventory of Main Street and relevant nearby streets for precise number and condition of buildings, homes, commercial properties, and community gathering/green spaces.
- Establish proactive and effective code enforcement processes. Maintain effective ordinances. Guide growth with appropriate planning, land use, and development review processes. Align all efforts with GPM.
- Review and improve rules and regulations for signage, unsightly/unsafe properties, and zoning in downtown district. Be proactive to address phasing out residential use for street front commercial buildings – specifically between Tim Horton's and Midtown Shopping Center (aligns with 2.A.1, 4.A.2).

2.A.3 Explore reinvention and potential of priority and growth areas

Explore repurposing Midtown Shopping Center as gathering place for multi-pronged experiences, niche/specialty retail, dining, services, and entrepreneurial hub. Build upon Farmer's Pavillion (consider concerts in parking lot). Identify and determine potential of areas beyond Main Street with a concentration of economic and community activity (e.g., Marden's shopping area, Industrial Park, Bicentennial Park, Multi-Purpose Building).

⁸ Making French language more visible supports creating a distinct destination for visitation and is practical wayfinding for French-speaking residents and visitors.

STRATEGY 2.B

Be a proactive leader in developing and supporting a robust and thriving arts and outdoor/nature sector to enrich the lives of residents and encourage visitation.

ACTIONS

2.B.1 Increase quality and number of arts and outdoor experiences

- Identify areas for arts and outdoor/nature activities. Determine capacity, areas of improvement, and affinity relationships/exchanges within town, region, county, and cross-border (NB and QC). Aligns with 1.A.2 and 2.A.2.
- Become an “Arts Hub.” Recognize the importance of arts and cultural amenities and actively pursue cultural economic development with partners. Make art and culture more visible and accessible through activation of local cuisine, traditions, French language, public art, exhibitions, and performances.⁹ Host and sponsor high quality art experiences from near and far. Collaborate with venues and activities in adjacent communities. Create an annual town event to showcase local talent and encourage growth of the arts. Consider: public library as active arts/cultural center; collaborate with MSD to expand arts education with creative programming.
- Become a “Nature Hub.” Increase access to natural amenities such as scenic vistas, trails and parks. Continue and expand efforts to create a “St. John River Walk”; improve road and water access to boat landing; link nature and art experiences. Consider: Four Seasons Trails for community forest and development of the “Madawaska Lake Region” as major destination (e.g., campgrounds at Long Lake, leveraging golf course, specialty retail).

2.B.2 Create a strategy for visitation and destination development

Develop a strategy for visitation to position Madawaska as a primary destination and Gateway to Canada *and* the United States. Look to product development and curation of experience, French culture and language, artists/artisans, business travel, family-friendly, nature/outdoor recreation, agri-tourism, and proximity to Canada. BikeMaine 2018 event could be catalyst to launch planning. Since no data exist for visitation in Madawaska or the St. John Valley, work with partners to create ways to measure visitation at major sites and events (e.g., numbers of visitors and revenues generated). Ensure that affiliate and intergovernment departments are in alignment with efforts.

⁹ This action speaks to building economically viable arts hubs through creative placemaking. “*You need the arts in rural America so that the next generation wants to come there and live.*” Charles Fluharty, president and CEO of Rural Policy Research Institute.

STRATEGY 2.C

Direct and guide growth in population by creating a livable, age-friendly community with a focus on attracting youth, young families, and professionals.

ACTIONS

2.C.1 Focus on access and livability that enrich quality of life

- Identify areas of improvement for amenities (e.g., grocery stores, retail, dining, specialized services, etc.). Aligns with 1.A.1, 2.A.2, 3.B.1.
- Ensure quality public safety and policing services (safe streets, public spaces).
- Promote health and wellness; walkability, bicycling, transportation; identify ways to improve housing options; understand senior citizens needs; enhance places for young people to experience multi-layered activities – “cool places to hang out” (e.g., expanding offer at Multi-Purpose Building, and/or identifying downtown location); address issues of poverty, priority human service needs.
- In anticipation of school consolidation, begin planning for a conference/community/recreation center for MMHS (a priority property).
- Increase access to digital technology and inclusion. Investigate engagement with Axiom Education and Training Center, National Digital Equity Program to increase use and benefit of online and digital technology (aligns with 3.B.4).

2.C.2 Engage young people directly and consistently

Collaborate with students of MMHS to create a youth advisory group composed of students at all levels. Its purpose is to ensure direct and sustained engagement with the Town about issues important to young people and to play a role in shaping Madawaska’s future. Ensure its sustainability regardless of administrative changes in school and town government. Identify other ways to engage youth and support leadership. Consider social media platform (#LoveMadawaska) and collaborations (WOWL). Aligns with 4.A.1.

2.C.3 Develop an in-migration strategy

- Create a “Welcome Home Campaign” to build and maintain connection with former residents of Madawaska and St. John Valley (esp. ages 22-44), to encourage them to live/work in Madawaska. Use Town website, social media, e-newsletters, and direct mailings, to share details about jobs, real estate, events and activities. Design annual Welcome Home/*Bienvenue Chez Nous* summer event for expatriates. Partner with St. Agatha for “Lake Region” (aligns with 1.A.3, 2.B.2, 4.C.1 & 2).
- Develop an initiative to attract people, esp. millennials and urbanites, who seek to live and work in smaller communities by leveraging our qualities and resources (“Madawaska Magnet”). Explore with UMFK how to engage with, attract/retain students. Showcase Madawaska at trade shows within state and elsewhere and through social media platforms (aligns with actions 1.A.3, 1.B.3, 2.B.2, 4.C.1).

GOAL 3 *Diverse and Thriving Local Economy*

Starting in 2018, the Town of Madawaska will actively engage with partners in developing the environment for a robust entrepreneurial climate that supports business, generates jobs, and stimulates economic growth. As a result of these efforts, by late 2022/early 2023, Madawaska will see retail sales of \$45M, 185 local businesses, and the value of building permits at \$4.8M.

This goal points to Madawaska being a leader in shaping an environment – an *ecosystem* – for constructive risk-taking, progressive initiatives, and a dynamic entrepreneurial spirit. As with the other strategies in Grand Plan Madawaska, the three strategies in this goal require a high level of collaboration: 1. Deliver programs that serve entrepreneurs and enhance Madawaska’s reputation as a great place for business, 2. Become an epicenter for diverse entrepreneurship and opportunity, and 3. Harness and support talent and great ideas, and cultivate an environment for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

STRATEGY 3.A

Commit to being a town with an entrepreneurial spirit. With partners, deliver programs that serve entrepreneurs, recognize and encourage local creativity and innovation, and enhance Madawaska’s reputation as a great place for business.

ACTIONS

3.A.1 Adopt entrepreneurship as central tenet

- Adopt entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation as central tenets of the town. Acknowledge that the public and private sector, nonprofits, and institutions, are all part of building a stronger economy for Madawaska.
- Review special economic zones (e.g., Foreign Trade Zone), industrial park area, and amend codes and regulations that inhibit economic growth.
- Align economic development with revitalization and enhancement of the Main Street corridor and downtown district.
- Work proactively with the State to provide economic development incentives that support business growth. Capitalize on Business-Friendly certification.

3.A.2 Conduct asset and resource mapping

Conduct an inventory and map key assets and resources that can stimulate business growth (e.g., available/arable land, wood lots, sewer capacity, social capital, real estate, etc.).

3.A.3 Identify partnerships and increase connection

Establish a list of primary partnerships and membership with regional, county, state, and national entities and private enterprises (including cross-border) that can support the efforts of the goals and actions of Grand Plan Madawaska. Identify ways that the private sector can become more involved in collaboration and investment (aligns with 3.A.2).

3.A.4 **Create comprehensive business toolkits**

With partners, develop comprehensive “toolkits” for new entrepreneurs, and current and expanding businesses. Toolkits can contain information on zoning and other regulations, required licenses, financing options and resources, marketing, demographics, retail opportunities, workforce, real estate, utilities, technology, data on Madawaska, and essential information relating to cross-border business. Link with counseling from NMDC, SBDC, New Ventures Maine, and other agencies.

3.A.5 **Support innovation and entrepreneurship**

With partners, design award/competition programs to support and encourage creativity, innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship (aligns with 3.C.3):

- *“Madawaska Entrepreneur Youth Challenge”* – For middle-high school students, design an entrepreneurial competition with a financial award. Its purpose: Provide business proposal for startup venture or new concept/expansion with significant change for an existing business/nonprofit. Pair high potential entrepreneurs with mentors for networking, guidance, and technical assistance.
- *“Innovation Award”* – Design a financial award to recognize youth, individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and institutions that exhibit an exemplary level of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship in any field and profession.

3.A.6 **Seek ways to increase capital support**

To encourage creativity and combat out-migration, explore initiatives with partners (e.g., NMDC, financial institutions) such as: 1. A microloan delivery system with low-interest loans for targeted entrepreneurial activities,¹⁰ and 2. A dedicated fund to support activities of innovation and business development through grants, awards, or low-interest loans.

STRATEGY 3.B

With partners, set the foundations to become an epicenter for diverse entrepreneurship and opportunity by investing in business support, retention, expansion, and creation.

ACTIONS

3.B.1 **Shape Madawaska into a maker community and hub for entrepreneurship**

With partners, explore the possibility for a “Business/Start-Up Zone/Maker Space” on Main Street – a gathering place with work/office space for co-working, training, meeting/conference spaces for start-ups, pop-ups, or existing businesses. Encourage creating and making (manufacturing) and value-added products/services. This could also include an entrepreneurial network (“Madawaska Makes” or “Madawaska Makers Network”) for marketing, distribution, and connection (could grow region/county-wide). Expand Farmers Pavilion as a venue for diverse handmade products.

¹⁰ An initiative of Project Cultivate, designed by S. Jans, CultureWorth.

3.B.2 **Identify priority sectors, gaps, and trends to catalyze and accelerate**

Become a catalyst and accelerator for business growth. Develop strategies to support businesses and encourage growth in products and services that are essential and distinctly unique to the area such as (aligns with 3.A.2):

- *Field to Table* – Local food and culinary development (growing, distribution, expanding/adapting traditional foods for retail and experience/visitation).
- *Industrial Park* – Review current zoning and potential for development.
- *Lake Region* – Explore development opportunities for Long Lake area.
- *Farming* – Look at indigenous plants/nontraditional crops; attract millennials.
- *Green Technologies* – Solar, wind, water, biomass, geothermal.
- *French* – French-speaking market in NB and QC; translation and immersion services to Maine and US; business with French-speaking countries.
- *Grocery Stores* – Explore new models, such as cooperatives.
- *Creative and Knowledge Economy*: Art, artisans, foods, microbreweries, traditional occupations, boutique furniture, specialty and niche products, services.
- *Retirement and Senior Care* – Services and products for older demographic.
- *Remote Access/Telecommuting* – Focus on attracting professionals who thrive in small, rural towns (capitalize on major increase in telecommuting in New England).
- *Border Businesses* – Leverage proximity to Canada for business development.

3.B.3 **Recognize and support significant sectors in Madawaska**

Identify entities and sectors with significant presence and impact on the viability of Madawaska (e.g., Twin Rivers Paper Company and other major businesses and institutions). Recognize their cultural and economic impact, their interdependent relationship with town government and community, and the global competitive nature in which they operate. Consider ways to help them succeed. Play a role in government affairs and advocate where necessary. Identify opportunities for how their investment can serve as a catalyst for other private and public investments.

3.B.4 **Invest in digital literacy**

Reliable broadband services are integral to Madawaska to attract businesses, support economic vitality, quality of life, and governmental operations. Review current access and identify needs. Consider a program with the nonprofit Axiom Education and Training Center (AETC) with its National Digital Equity Program to identify ways to raise awareness of the benefits of digital literacy and inclusion (aligns with 2.C.1).

3.B.5 **Create mechanisms to promote opportunities**

Develop an “Opportunity Madawaska” section on the Town website for job postings (There’s a job for you! *Embauche!*), businesses for sale, real estate, and other essential information for starting a business in Madawaska (aligns with 2.C.3).

STRATEGY 3.C

With partners, build a foundation that harnesses and supports talent and ideas as valuable collateral, strengthens the local workforce, and cultivates an environment for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

ACTIONS

3C.1 Reinvent and redefine what rural means

With partners, create a “Redefining Rural Think Tank”. Madawaska is a valuable player in the regional economy. In a public and private collaboration, supported by financial institutions, nonprofits, and educational institutions, create an endowed Think Tank to generate new ideas and new ways of thinking for rural community economic development and population growth for Madawaska and St. John Valley (aligns with 3.A.3 & 5, 4.D.1.).

3C.2 Support the creation of relevant curriculum

With partners, support the design of school curriculum around relevant subjects that strengthen the workforce (e.g., digital literacy, technology, agriculture, trades, forestry, Maine Guide). Expand to adult education and other learning platforms. Consider creation of a specialty training center in downtown district (aligns with 3.B.1).

3C.3 Support the delivery of a Creative and Entrepreneurial Series

To address retention and attraction of youth, tackle negative attitudes, and nurture creative abilities, great ideas, and positive mindset (aligns with 3.A.5):

- Support the delivery of an educational series to middle-high school level as workshops/presentations about principles of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurialism.¹¹ Aim for eventual integration with K-12 education (can also be offered through adult education).
- With partners, consider developing a series that offers mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, and incubation for youth, entrepreneurs, and people of all ages to strengthen their capabilities and to take a creative idea, vision, or interest to the next level (such as being able to refine a product or penetrate larger markets). Look to Foster Student Innovation Center at University of Maine and other innovation and entrepreneurship programs.

¹¹ An initiative of Project Cultivate, designed by S. Jans, CultureWorth.

GOAL 4 *Efficient and Exceptional Government*

Starting in 2018, the Town of Madawaska will commit to creating the conditions for prosperity by providing exceptional municipal services and leadership, fiscal sustainability and transparency, and a progressive and collaborative approach to management. As a result of these efforts, by late 2022/early 2023, building permits at close to 140 per year, median household income at \$41,500, and retail sales of \$45M.

This goal points to the essential role that an effective and inclusive town government plays in strengthening community and creating greater capacity. It has four strategies: 1) Provide exceptional municipal services and implement progressive policies, 2) Use Grand Plan Madawaska to guide resources, attention, performance, and progress, 3) Establish and maintain strong, effective, and cohesive communications and brand identity, and 4) Strengthen collaborative internal and external partnerships.

STRATEGY 4.A

Improve and excel in productivity and customer service in all areas of municipal administration. Focus on understanding and responding to residents' needs and implementing insightful and progressive policies.

ACTIONS

4.A.1 Improve how to share information, serve, and connect with citizens¹²

- Collaborate with MMHS students to create youth advisory group (see 2.C.2). Make resolution to ensure sustainability regardless of administrative/ leadership changes.
- Hold regular community conversations where all voices are valued, to learn about issues, opportunities, and encourage involvement. Seek creative approaches to strengthen community engagement and resident involvement. Complement with a needs assessment online/print survey and other feedback gathering mechanisms.
- Improve services to encourage business creation, expansion, and retention; maintain service in French when possible.
- Continue and optimize use of technology: Create Town App for transactions, updates, and general information.
- Ensure representation of Town administration and leadership at community events and activities whenever possible.

4.A.2 Implement progressive policies, zoning, and regulations

- Implement progressive policies through constructive community participation, and proactive and capable leadership. Review and evaluate all policies relating to permits, zoning and relevant regulations; improve, update, amend where needed to capitalize on changing trends and new opportunities.

¹² Close to 62% of public survey respondents are only moderately or slightly satisfied with town government (based on 203 responses from public survey conducted during planning of GPM, June 2017).

- By 2020, update urban zoning map, review commercial zoning, and rewrite 1977 land use code.
- Ensure policies reflect Town vision, mission, and values. Create MOU's with municipally funded partners/intergovernmental departments (e.g., library, chamber, etc.) to reflect directions of Grand Plan Madawaska.

STRATEGY 4.B

Use Grand Plan Madawaska as a planning and prioritization guide to direct resources, focus attention, and evaluate performance and progress.

ACTIONS

4.B.1 Ensure implementation of Grand Plan Madawaska

Administration and elected officials must be aligned with Grand Plan Madawaska:

- Create oversight committee ("Grand Plan Madawaska Action Council") empowered to support, promote, and champion GPM and be ambassadors for community and economic development. Ensure effective, capable, and representative members. They will partner with the Town to implement GPM and provide oversight, including annual review of progress with staff/board and have authority to issue recommendations. Consider calling the campaign: "Ignite Madawaska." Create sub-committees as required (aligns with 2.C.2, 4.A.1).
- Establish governance and create safeguards to ensure GPM's implementation regardless of changing administration, elected officials, and budgets.
- Prepare an annual GPM work plan that identifies key actions and roles of Town departments, GPM Action Council, Select Board, and community partners.
- Establish a capital budget with a goal of \$5M by 2022/2023 from state, federal, and private sources over the term of GPM for community infrastructure.
- Leverage major projects for capital; new international bridge, Twin River investments, road and river projects. Consider: economic development bond, TIF, specified local sales tax, community fund, private benefactors.
- Be deliberate in learning from setbacks and celebrating successes. Identify partners and external resources that can provide help and expertise; be open to ideas and best practices from other communities near and far.

4.B.2 Strengthen and continuously improve Town staff efficiency and effectiveness

- Conduct a professional development needs and skill assessment across all departments to understand current levels of skills, training needs, and areas for progression of positions.
- To ensure capable and high-caliber employees, strive for continuous improvement with training and upgrading of skills specific to departments.
- Ensure employees have knowledge of the Town's vision, mission, and values and an understanding of key GPM and general policy directives.

4.B.3 Strengthen and continuously improve Town governance process and skills

- Evaluate the benefits of implementing a charter as a way to redesign town government and enable greater responsiveness and flexibility.
- Evaluate Town procedures and processes for appointing and electing officials on Select Board, other boards and committees. Improve and amend as required.
- Commit to recruiting and encouraging skilled candidates for elected leadership and volunteer committees. Improve conduct and effectiveness by strengthening capacity in: informed decision-making, conflict resolution, Roberts Rules of Order, fiscal management, community and economic development, public engagement, and performance metrics.
- Ensure Select Board/all committees and boards have knowledge of Town's vision, mission, and values and an understanding of key GPM directives.

4.B.4 Strengthen and upgrade Town infrastructure

To achieve organizational sustainability, be attentive to municipal buildings, operations, and equipment:

- Identify areas of infrastructure that require upgrading, including equipment. Ensure they are at or exceed levels required for efficiency and effectiveness. Continue efforts to consolidate municipal buildings.
- Support Tri-district regional efforts for school consolidation.
- Invest in IT to improve productivity and customer service. Focus on areas that drive the greatest improvement and results.
- Explore including green technologies and electricity generation for Town use.
- Improve and beautify Town tax acquired properties as part of GPM revitalization efforts (can be private/public collaboration).

STRATEGY 4.C

Establish and maintain strong and cohesive communications and brand identity that are inclusive of all residents and support the goals, vision, mission, and values of Grand Plan Madawaska.

ACTIONS

4.C.1 Develop a comprehensive communications strategy

Develop a progressive strategy to ensure sophisticated and effective communications, promotions, and marketing that reflect the Town's vision, mission, and values. By 2018, begin plans to improve the visual and message communications to reflect GPM: redesign Town logo and brand identity materials; website design and content and other platforms (social media, electronic sign, print, broadcast, WOWL). Craft authentic message ("value proposition") about Madawaska with reliable partners, integrate with intergovernmental departments, such as SJV Chamber of Commerce (aligns with 1.A.3, 1.B.3, 2.B.2, 2.C.2).

4.C.2 Become a major center for information

Become a “go to” place and clearinghouse (“InfoHub”) to share details about Town activities and market/promote Madawaska to external audience.

- Use range of platforms (Web, social media, electronic info sign, print, broadcast, etc.) and integrate French where appropriate.
- Create weekly ½ hour program for local cable network (“Madawaska News”), featuring a broad range of topics and way to highlight successes.
- Keep up-to-date on key Canadian activities, cross-border statistics, business-related information, and local asset inventories (aligns with 4.D.2).

STRATEGY 4.D

Actively cultivate and strengthen partnerships in the St. John Valley, New Brunswick, Québec, and Aroostook County to leverage assets, maximize resources, capitalize on new ideas, and foster growth.

ACTIONS

4.D.1 Identify partnerships and increase connection

Establish a list of primary partnerships and membership with regional, county, state, and national entities and private enterprises (including cross-border) that can support the efforts of the goals and actions of Grand Plan Madawaska. Identify external resources that can provide help and expertise; be open to ideas and best practices from other communities near and far.

4.D.2 Develop strategies for regional cooperation in the St. John Valley

- Organize a “St. John Valley Regional Summit” to mobilize municipalities and private, public, nonprofit sectors for regional cooperation and collective impact. Identify needs, assets, opportunities, how to increase capacity, and support existing infrastructure. Consider coordinating land-use opportunities in a regional context. Maintain discussions.¹³
- Explore with UMFK the expansion/reinvention of the Rural Sustainability Center to focus on region-wide issues such as regionalism, leadership, tourism, governance, civic participation, strengthening communities and economy. Explore potential of a satellite campus in Madawaska.
- Consider key strategies and actions in Goals 1, 2, and 3 as regional efforts.

¹³ Close to 88% of public survey respondents agree or completely agree that it is important for Madawaska to be a leader in regional development (based on 199 responses from public survey conducted during planning of GPM, June 2017).

4.D.3 **Increase and strengthen cross-border connections with New Brunswick and Québec**

- Position Madawaska as a Gateway to Canada *and* the United States. Develop ways to increase level of satisfaction and engagement with French-speaking people who come to Madawaska for retail, services, hospitality, and events.¹⁴
- Focus on activities and programs to encourage interaction and sharing of resources. Explore creating an “advisory” ombudsman for border issues (lobbying capacities). Strengthen relationship with municipalities, private sector, Core Leadership Team, tourism, arts/culture/language, sports/outdoors.
- Collaborate closely with City of Edmundston for new international bridge and port of entry. Identify areas of concern and common aspirations for design, location, and importance of the bridge to both communities.
- Explore: exchanges for French immersion and other activities; “International Info Hub” to share information on events and opportunities; ways to better leverage TransCanada Highway for transportation; enticing border-oriented businesses to locate in Madawaska.

4.D.4 **Increase and strengthen connections in Aroostook County**

Increase and strengthen relationships with municipalities, nonprofits, institutions, and the private sector throughout Aroostook County. Become more active with NMDC and Aroostook Partnership to take advantage of programs and resources. Be a conduit for, and maintain strong relationships with other key county and state agencies.



Madawaska, Maine and Edmundston, New Brunswick

¹⁴ Close to 85% of public survey respondents agree or completely agree that it is an advantage being situated next to Canada (based on 204 responses from public survey conducted during planning of GPM, June 2017).

Implementation Roadmap

Next Steps

Grand Plan Madawaska is about shaping the next decade for a more vibrant and thriving future. It sets the foundations to achieve a vision to become a community of opportunity. Implementing a 10-year strategy can be a challenge due to changing administrations, budgetary fluctuations, and external influences of a rapidly changing world. Moreover, implementation of this strategy will be a continual process – as long as the community changes, so should the plan. Given that, it is recommended that annual review and evaluation takes place, and by late 2022/early 2023, a more in-depth assessment and update.

Inarguably, this is an ambitious plan that will require a fair amount of effort and resources. Town government is pivotal to its success. It is the strategy's main champion, leader, and catalyst. However, town government simply cannot do this work alone. Grand Plan Madawaska's success is dependent on a dedicated team effort led by town government and a GPM Action Council, with the entire community and many partners within the region, county, cross-border, and beyond. This is the opportunity for unprecedented private, public, and nonprofit sector collaboration to realize the plan's recommendations.

The goals, strategies, and actions speak directly to what emerged from research and voices of the people of Madawaska and the area. It was critical to capture the rich abundance of ideas and possibilities. Each goal includes big ideas with short, middle, and long-term actions.

On the next page are key steps for implementation, followed by overviews for each goal with timeline estimates and a suggested listing of potential partners. Town government will be the primary lead with a GPM Action Council in implementing Grand Plan Madawaska, but in some cases partners could or need to assume a lead role. Also included is a table that provides the level of priority for implementation of actions.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

- *Understand who and where we are.*
- *Be proactive, intentional, and daring in leveraging opportunities and doing what we do best.*
- *Create conditions for diversity, openness, talent, and new ideas to flourish.*
- *Ensure sustained investment, capable leadership, and productive partnerships.*
- *Celebrate successes along the way.*
- *Commit to the effort.*

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Early 2018

- Establish Select Board approval and adoption of Grand Plan Madawaska.
- Appoint a GPM Action Council to work with town government for implementation.
- Create a work plan.

Throughout 2018, 2019, and 2020

- Commit to dedicated action with an annual check-up on progress.
- Measure success where possible (see the section on performance indicators).

By 2021

- Evaluate if the plan is meeting the desired results.
- Make adjustments where necessary.

By late 2022/early 2023

- Make a full assessment of the goals, strategies, and actions.
- Measure success in reference to performance indicators, adjust actions where necessary, and commit to the next 5 years.



IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW – GOAL 1

Strong Culture and Place

Lead in the stewardship and promotion of the French culture and language, and the responsible use and protection of the natural environment.

STRATEGY 1.A – Set the foundations to become a cultural and linguistic center by stewarding and promoting the French culture and language.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
1.A.1 Asset and Resource Mapping	2018	2019 (review regularly; update as required)	MSD, UMFk, Library, NMDC, MAHC, Four Corners Park, AFVSJ, MHS, CLT, Senior Center cultural groups,
1.A.2 Connection and Support	2018	2019-2020	Same as above
1.A.3 Authentic Message	2018	2019-2020	Reputable sources, Library, MHS, MAHC, AFVSJ
1.A.4 Preservation and Promotion	2018	2020 (ongoing)	MHS, MDN, GSM, state agencies
1.A.5 Visible and Integrated French Language	2018	2022 (ongoing)	Library, AFVSJ, MSD, UMFk, CLT, Senior Center

STRATEGY 1.B – Establish progressive policies to protect natural environment, improve and expand green spaces, and integrate green technologies.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
1.B.1 Asset and Resource Mapping	2018	2019-20	Four Seasons, outdoor recreation groups, USJRO, NMDC, MSD, UMFk
1.B.2 Connection and Support	2018	2019-2020	Same as above
1.B.3 Authentic Message	2018	2019-2020	Same as above
1.B.4 Protection and Promotion	2018-19	2020 (ongoing)	Four Seasons, outdoor recreation groups, USJRO, NMDC, MSD, UMFk, MWC, NFC, state agencies
1.B.5 Green Spaces and Technology	2019	2022 (ongoing)	Same as above

LEGEND for Partners: ACT – Aroostook County Tourism • AFVSJ – L’Association Française de la Vallée St-Jean (formerly Le Club Français) CLT – Core Leadership Team, Acadia of the Lands and Forests • GSM – GrowSmart Maine • MAHC – Maine Acadian Heritage Council MDF – Maine Development Foundation • MDN – Maine Downtown Network • MHS – Madawaska Historical Society MDN – Maine Downtown Network • MP – Maine Preservation • MSD – Madawaska School Department • MWC – Maine Woods Consortium • NV – New Ventures Maine • NFC – Northern Forest Center • NMCC – Northern Maine Community College USJRO – Upper St. John River Organization

VISION – We are a vibrant center of opportunity where the French culture, nature’s abundance, and an international bond make Madawaska a great place to live, work, and visit.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW – GOAL 2

Vibrant and Attractive Community

Build a vibrant and attractive community through revitalization of the Main Street corridor and downtown district; activation in arts, nature, and visitation; and fostering growth in population.

STRATEGY 2.A – Improve visual environment with a focus on revitalization and enhancement of the Main Street corridor, downtown district, and other key areas.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
2.A.1 Main Street Corridor and Downtown District	2018	2022 – 2028	Professionals, MDN, GSM, MP, NMDC, financial institutions, adjacent communities, federal/state agencies (MDOT)
2.A.2 Inventory, Urban Planning, Zoning	2018	2020	NMDC, state/county agencies
2.A.3 Reinvention and Growth Areas	2018	2022-2028	Real estate company, NMDC, AP, businesses/nonprofits

STRATEGY 2.B – Lead in developing and supporting a robust and thriving arts and outdoor/nature sector to engage residents and attract visitors.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
2.B.1 Arts and Nature Experiences (“ArtsHub”, “NatureHub”)	2018	2022-2028 (ongoing)	Library, Chamber/art gallery, MSD, artists, nonprofits, Four Seasons, Four Corners, MWC, federal/state agencies
2.B.2 Visitation and Destination Development	2018	2019-2020	NMDC/ACT, local groups/agencies, Chamber, Edmundston Tourism, CLT, BikeMaine, MWC, state agencies (MOT)

STRATEGY 2.C – Direct and guide growth in population by creating a livable, age-friendly community with a focus on attracting youth, young families, and professionals.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
2.C.1 Access and Livability	2018-19	2022-2028 (ongoing)	Health care agencies and clinics, MSD, Senior Center, ACAP, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, county/state agencies
2.C.2 Youth Engagement	2018	2018	MSD, students (student council), WOWL
2.C.3 Attraction Strategy (“Welcome Home Campaign” and “Madawaska Magnet”)	2019	2024 (ongoing)	MSD, SJV Tech, UMFk, Twin Rivers, Acadian Festival, Chamber, Library, Four Seasons, St.Agatha relevant nonprofits and businesses

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IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW – GOAL 3

Diverse and Thriving Local Economy

Develop the environment for a robust entrepreneurial climate that supports business, generates jobs, and stimulates economic growth.

STRATEGY 3.A – Deliver programs that serve entrepreneurs, recognize and encourage local creativity and innovation, and enhance Madawaska as a great place for business.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
3.A.1 Adopt Entrepreneurship	2018	2019-2022 (ongoing)	Led by Town
3.A.2 Asset Mapping	2018	2019	Led by Town
3.A.3 Partnerships & Memberships	2018	2019	Led by Town
3.A.4 Business Toolkits	2018	2019-2022 (ongoing)	NMDC, NV, SBDC, Chamber, state agencies
3.A.5 Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards	2019	2020-2022 (ongoing)	NMDC, Chamber, MSD, NV, SBDC, AP, state agencies
3.A.6 Capital Support	2019	2022 (ongoing)	NMDC, SBDC, financial institutions, private sector

STRATEGY 3.B – Become an epicenter for diverse entrepreneurship and opportunity by investing in business support, retention, expansion, and creation.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
3.B.1 EntrepreneurHub – Maker Space	2018	2019-2022/28 (ongoing)	NMDC, AP, County, Chamber, NV, SBDC, state agencies
3.B.2 Catalyst and Accelerator	2018	2019-2020 (ongoing)	NMDC, AP, Chamber, NV, SBDC, state agencies
3.B.3 Significant Sector Impact	2018	2019-2022 (ongoing)	Led by Town
3.B.4 Digital Literacy	2018	2020-2022 (ongoing)	Axiom Education and Training Center, NMDC, AP
3.B.5 Opportunity Madawaska	2019	2020-2022 (ongoing)	NMDC, Chamber, AP

STRATEGY 3.C – Build a foundation that harnesses and supports talent and ideas as valuable collateral and cultivates an environment for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
3.C.1 Redefining Rural Think Tank	2019	2022-2028	NMDC, AP, County, MDF, NFC, GSM, MWC, NMCC, state/federal agencies
3.C.2 Curriculum Design	2018	2022-2028	MSD, UMFk, NMCC, SJVtech Center
3.C.3 Creative and Entrepreneurial Series	2019	2022-2028	MSD, UMFk, Foster Student Innovation Center at UM, NV, NMDC, AP, NMCC, Aroostook Aspirations, financial institutions, private enterprises

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IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW– GOAL 4

Efficient and Exceptional Government

Create conditions for prosperity by providing exceptional municipal services and leadership, fiscal sustainability and transparency, and a progressive and collaborative approach to management.

STRATEGY 4.A – Improve productivity and customer service, respond to residents’ needs, manage information effectively, and implement progressive policies.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4.A.1 Service and Outreach	2018	2018-2022 (ongoing)	Madawaska Schools, SJVTech Center, county agencies
4.A.2 Policies, Zoning, Regulations	2018	2020-2022	NMDC, county/state agencies

STRATEGY 4.B – Use Grand Plan Madawaska as a planning and prioritization guide to direct resources, focus attention, and evaluate performance and progress.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4.B.1 Implementing Grand Plan Madawaska	2018	2019-2021	Led by Town
4.B.2 Town Staff	2018	2019-2020 (ongoing)	Led by Town
4.B.3 Select Board	2018	2019-2022 (ongoing)	Led by Town
4.B.4 Infrastructure	2018	2020-2022 (ongoing)	NMDC, county agencies

STRATEGY 4.C – Establish and maintain strong and cohesive communications and brand identity that support the vision, mission, and values of Grand Plan Madawaska.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4.C.1 Communications Strategy	2018	2022-2028	Professionals, Library, Madawaska Historical Society, NMDC
4.C.2 Information Hub	2019	2019-2022 (ongoing)	Madawaska Schools, CLT

STRATEGY 4.D – Cultivate and strengthen key partnerships to leverage assets, maximize resources, capitalize on new ideas, and foster growth.

ACTIONS	BEGIN	COMPLETE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4.D.1 Partnerships and Memberships	2018	2019-2028 (ongoing)	Led by Town
4.D.2 St. John Valley	2018	2022-2028 (ongoing)	UMFK, SJV municipalities, NMDC, AP
4.D.3 New Brunswick and Québec	2018	2022-2028 (ongoing)	CLT, City of Edmundston, SJV municipalities Municipalité Reg. de Comté de Témiscouata
4.D.4 Aroostook County	2018	2022-2028 (ongoing)	NMDC, AP, County Commission, county agencies, municipalities

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ACTION PRIORITIES 2018 – 2022

Goal	#1 Priority – PRIMARY	#2 Priority – SECONDARY	#3 Priority – TERTIARY
<i>Strong Culture and Place</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset and resource mapping for culture and nature • Roundtable discussion for culture and nature • Policies, zoning for culture and nature • Visible and Integrated French language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to live in French in Madawaska • Arts/folk activities showcase French culture and language • French language education • Improve/expand green spaces, parks, trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic narrative about culture/nature • Acadian Festival funding/TA; other nonprofits • Integration of green technologies • Community forest
<i>Vibrant and Attractive Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalize Main Street corridor and Downtown District • Inventory of Main Street, etc. • Review of all codes, land use, signage, residential use for street front buildings • Explore repurposing Mid-Town Plaza; expand Farmers Pavilion • Increase digital literacy • Create youth advisory group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking, safety, lighting, pedestrian-friendly design • “Arts Hub” and “Outdoor/Nature Hub” • Visitation and destination development strategy • Look at housing options • Identify amenity needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine potential of areas outside Main Street and downtown district • Plan for conference-community-rec center • “Welcome Home Campaign” and “Madawaska Magnet”
<i>Diverse and Thriving Local Economy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Entrepreneurship, review economic zones, industrial park, business friendly certification • Asset mapping and identification of partnerships & memberships • Design Business Toolkits • Entrepreneur Hub – Maker Space, Farmers Pavilion • Identify sectors with significant impact • Digital literacy - Axiom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with State for incentives • Innovation and Entrepreneurship Awards (Youth Challenge and Innovation Award) • Catalyst and Accelerator • Curriculum design • Creative and Entrepreneurial Series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore initiatives for access to capital • “Madawaska Makers Network” • “Opportunity Madawaska” • “Redefining Rural” Think Tank
<i>Effective and Exceptional Government</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectboard adoption of GPM • Create GPM Action Council & youth advisory group • “Ignite Madawaska” campaign • Work plan, safeguards for GPM • Community outreach • Review policies, ordinances, zoning/update land use • Establish capital budget of \$5M • Evaluate charter • Communications strategy, new logo and branding • Identify partners, cross border connection, international bridge, “International Info Hub” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Town App • Create strategy to leverage funds from other sources • Identify/improve areas of boards/committee governance • Enhance Town tax acquired property • Organize “St. John Valley Regional Summit” • Explore border advisory ombudsmen concept • Strengthen connections within Aroostook County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental departments MOU’s • Professional development needs-skill assessment • Assess and identify need for infrastructure upgrades • Explore green technologies • Information Hub • “Madawaska News” • Explore reinventing UMFK’s Rural Sustainability Center

Appendices

PROJECT SUPPORT

Working Group

Strategic Consultants – Sheila Jans, CultureWorth and Jim Haguewood, ONE Group
Town Staff – Gary Picard, Town Manager, Andrew Dubé, Code Enforcement Officer, and Suzie Paradis, Director of Economic and Community Development
Additional assistance from Nathalie Morneault, Senior Deputy Clerk

Planning Committee

Jim Bloomfield, Real Estate Appraiser, Madawaska
Don Chassé, Town of Madawaska Select Board
Don Cyr, Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel, Lille
Renée Daigle, Aroostook Mental Health Center, Madawaska
Denise Hébert, Au Jardin, St. David
Derrick Hébert, Twin Rivers, Madawaska
Colin Jandreau, Madawaska Middle-High School, Four Seasons, Madawaska
April LeClair, Madawaska Middle-High School, and private practice, Madawaska
Bev Madore, retired educator, Madawaska
Suzie Paradis, Director of Economic and Community Development, Town of Madawaska
Jonathan Roy, Inn of Acadia/Ridgewood Estates, Madawaska-Frenchville-Fort Kent
Luis Sanclemente, Acadia Federal Credit Union, Madawaska-Fort Kent

Credits

Grand Plan Madawaska naming, logo, and design: Daniel Picard, Majuscule Design
Photos: Paul Cyr (pp.6,31); Sheila Jans (pp.8, 11)

Contributors to the 2016 Concept Paper

Consultant – Sheila Jans, CultureWorth
Advisors – Ryan D. Pelletier, Denise Hébert, Colin Jandreau, Daniel Picard, Jonathan Roy, Luis Sanclemente
Private Sector Sponsors – Alete Salon & Spa, Daigle Oil Company, Long Lake Construction, Key Bank, Marden's, Paradis Shop and Save, UIG Ezzy Insurance Agency
Interviewees – Steve Collard, Twin Rivers Paper; Robert Clark, Northern Maine Development Commission; Tim Crowley, Northern Maine Community College; Don Cyr, Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel; Alex Daigle, Daigle & Sons; Gisèle Dionne, Madawaska Schools; Jenney Dionne, Alete Salon; Bob Dorsey, Aroostook Partnership; Jon Gulliver, Aroostook Partnership; Louise Hébert, Madawaska Senior Citizen Center; Terry Helms, Town of Grand Isle; Raylan Lagassé –Town of Grand Isle; Ryan E. Pelletier, Town of Frenchville; Gary Picard, Town of St. Agatha; John Short, University of Maine at Fort Kent; Cyrille Simard, City of Edmundston; Dave Wylie, Town of Frenchville

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The following individuals participated in public consultations, ranging from one-on-one/group interviews, community conversations, and focus groups. Consultations also include an internal municipal organizational survey (97 responses) and public opinion survey (250 responses).

Interviewees

Jeff Albert, Owner, Albert Farms Inc.
 Debbie Bellefleur, Manager, Marden's
 Brian Bouley, Executive Director, St. John Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Chad Carter, Town of Madawaska Select Board
 Steve Collard, VP of Supply Chain, Twin Rivers Paper Company
 Glenn Daigle, Owner, Daigle Furniture
 Andrew Dubé, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Madawaska
 Denise Duperré, Town of Madawaska Select Board
 Adam Levy, CFO, Twin Rivers Paper Company
 Ricky Nadeau, Owner, Big Rick's Burgers and Wings
 Ryan Pelletier, former Town Manager, Madawaska (current Aroostook County Administrator)
 Gary Picard, Town Manager, Town of Madawaska
 Suzie Paradis, Economic and Community Development Director, Town of Madawaska
 Glen Saucier, Director of Human Resources, Twin Rivers Paper Company
 Cyrille Simard, Mayor, Edmundston, New Brunswick
 Brian Synder, CEO, Twin Rivers Paper Company
 Brian Thibeault, Chair, Town of Madawaska Select Board

Focus Groups

Don Cyr, Director, Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel
 Scott Cyr, Port Director, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, US Department of Homeland Security
 Gisèle Dionne, Superintendent, Madawaska School Department
 Jenney Dionne, Owner, Alete Salon
 Andrew Dubé, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Madawaska
 Denise Duperré, Town of Madawaska Select Board
 Joanne Fortin, Director of Communications, Northern Maine Medical Center
 Derrick Hébert, Employee, Twin Rivers Paper Company
 Colin Jandreau, President, Four Seasons Association
 Joe LaChance, President, Four Corners Park
 Jim Lavertu, Chair, L'Association Française de la Vallée St-Jean
 Suzie Paradis, Economic and Community Development Director, Town of Madawaska
 Daniel Picard, Owner, Majuscule Design
 Jonathan Roy, Owner, Inn of Acadia
 John Short, President, University of Maine at Fort Kent
 Derrick Young, Owner, Pedal Products

Community Conversations

Lillian Carter and members of Madawaska Senior Citizen Center
 Students of Madawaska Middle High School: Chantal Ackley, Alexis Cyr, Matthew Cyr, Mckenzie Cyr, Austin Dechaine, Elizabeth Dufresne, Karissa Hebert, Annabelle Hodgkin, Shayki Kuptchik, Kaitlyn Martin, Madison Ringuette

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

March – December, 2017

Phase 1 – Foundational Planning

- *Planning leadership team* – Composed of a working group (town manager, two consultants, and code enforcement officer); 12-member planning committee (community leaders, business people); youth advisory group (MMHS student council).
- *Communications* – Branding and Grand Plan Madawaska logo; Facebook page and other social media, Town website, local newspapers.
- *Internal municipal organizational review* – Online survey of Town employees for insight on opportunities, challenges, mission, vision, and services (received 97 responses - 69% response rate).
- *Situation review and analysis* – Snapshot of Madawaska today in terms of its economic, demographic, social, and community indicators (e.g., population, financial structures, land use, quality of life, cultural resources, workforce, education, in/out migration, location, border crossings, visitation, real estate).
- *General research* – Research ongoing throughout process (e.g., preliminary asset mapping, research of best practices, other strategies and models for development).

Phase 2 – Community Engagement

- *Communications* – Maintained outreach through social media, press media, and Town website.
- *Interviews* – Twenty one-on-one/group interviews with Town staff, Select Board, community leaders, business people.
- *Community Conversations* – Two events with senior citizens and Middle-High School students.
- *Focus Groups* – Two focus groups held on Quality of Life and Economic Growth.
- *Public Survey* – Online/print public opinion survey conducted (250 responses).

Engagement was framed around understanding:

1. *Where are we now* – Assets, strengths, concerns, pressing issues and challenges; what makes us distinct, sets us apart from other places, what works well, what do you love about Madawaska?
2. *What matters the most* – What's really important, what do you cherish, what do you need to live and work in Madawaska, what kind of change do you want to see?
3. *Vision of Madawaska* – What do you desire for Madawaska's future, your vision and aspirations, imagine what is possible, where do we need to go, who should we become, what opportunities are in front of us?
4. *How can we get there* – What can we do together to achieve success, what are the priorities, what's needed to make our vision a reality, what role can you play?

Phase 3 – Composing Grand Plan Madawaska

The third phase of the strategic planning process involved the synthesis, analysis, and writing of the strategic plan. A first draft was presented in October and November to the Town Manager, Select Board. Sharing progress of the plan with the general public was made through press and social media. The final strategic plan was launched in December, 2017.