



MDB
INSIGHT



Township of Champlain

Economic Development Strategy



Draft SOARR Analysis



Contents

1.	SOARR Analysis.....	1
----	---------------------	---



1. SOARR Analysis

The economic development strategy is designed for maximum impact and actionability in the short term to lay the groundwork for long-term goals. A SOARR Analysis is a forward-looking model, taking elements of what would traditionally be affiliated with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis. Using insights gained through stakeholder consultations and other research, SOARR informs the community's most desired future and how to know when aspirations have been achieved. It represents a summary of the key learnings that will inform the Economic Development Strategy action and implementation plans.



Source: MDB Insight, 2019.



STRENGTHS

What can we build on?

- What are we doing well?
- What key achievements are we most proud of?
- What positive aspects have individuals and enterprises commented on?

Artistic and Cultural History: The Township is home to a deep cultural history expressed through its architecture, recreation, festivals, and artists. The Township has a sense of community and shared cultural identity.

Projected Growth in the Region: The Township and United Counties of Prescott and Russell are projected to see increased population growth and investment. These trends are expected to accelerate due to COVID-19.

Bilingualism: The high rate of bilingualism in the community makes it an attractive option to potential residents and businesses.

Key Sectors

- **Agriculture:** The Township has a long history of agricultural production with many businesses and a workforce that has expanded in recent years to include specialty food and beverage manufacturing.
- **Manufacturing:** The Township has a significant concentration of businesses and workforce in manufacturing, particularly in metal manufacturing.
- **Retail Trade:** The Township has a significant concentration of businesses and workforce in the retail trade sector.
- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** The Township has a significant concentration of businesses and workforce in the Health care and social assistance sector, particularly in nursing and residential care facilities.
- **Tourism:** The Township has two distinct destinations L'Orignal and Vankleek Hill, each offering different amenities with a lot of tourism potential, including the growing commercial main street in Vankleek Hill and tourist attractions including beach access, festivals, events, art galleries, trails, cross country skiing and Beau's Brewery.

Strategic Location and Transportation Infrastructure: The Township sits an hour away from Ottawa and Montreal, benefiting from its proximity and access to transportation corridors.

Resident Survey Results

- The top three reasons selected for what makes the Township of Champlain a great place to live or work were: Laidback and easy-going lifestyle, It is a safe community and Access to Nature.
- Overall, resident satisfaction of the services provided by the Township is intense at 84%, with 32% "Very Satisfied" and 52% "Somewhat Satisfied."
- The services residents were most satisfied with were: Fire Services, Arena, Library, Playgrounds and Parks.
- 74% of the residents that had interacted with the council reported they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their most recent interaction.



- 76% of respondents agreed that the municipality provided sufficient tools and information to participate and engage meaningfully in municipal matters.

Business Survey Results

- Overall, business satisfaction in the Region is strong at 85%, with 14% “Very Satisfied” and 71% “Somewhat Satisfied.”
- The factors businesses were most satisfied with were: Provincial roads and highways, local roads and streets and Water availability.

Wide Variety of Lifestyles and Quality of Life Amenities: The cost of housing in the region is relatively lower than in Ottawa and Montreal, with a wide variety of built and outdoor recreation amenities. The Township offers a spectrum of housing types and lifestyle amenities that appeal to various potential residents. These elements provide diverse recreational opportunities and significantly raise the community’s quality of place experience.



OPPORTUNITIES

What are our best possible future opportunities?

- What changes in demand do we expect to see in the future?
- What external forces or trends may positively affect development?
- What are the key areas of untapped potential?
- What weaknesses or threats can be converted into SMART improvements?

Embracing Technology: Stakeholders have identified several opportunities to upgrade the Township’s technology assets to improve service delivery. This also includes an identified need to improve fibre connectivity in the Township.

Infrastructure Development: The need to develop investment-ready sites, expand and develop infrastructure in the industrial parks and attract investment. Sectors identified included light commercial, manufacturing, food processing, renewable energy.

Raising the Township’s Profile: Developing a focused message beyond the quality of life and target promoting business success stories emphasizing strengths and growth of key measurable indicators.

Business Retention and Expansion: A random business survey identified the following opportunities:

- The strategic priorities that are most likely to increase business satisfaction were Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement, Availability of post-secondary programming that aligns with business needs and Availability of health and medical services.
- Among the business responses, 31 opportunities for intervention were identified based on businesses’ plans for the next two years.
 - Thirteen businesses planned to expand and could potentially use support in this expansion.
 - Eighteen businesses indicated that they were downsizing, relocating, selling, or closing. These businesses could potentially use support to change their course or help succession planning.



Entrepreneurship Support: Develop programming to support new entrepreneurs in the community and convert historic buildings into businesses through renovation and façade improvement grants.

Improving the Development Process: Business owners identified opportunities to improve the permit processing processes to include more in-depth overviews of the process in welcome packages for new small businesses.

Supply Chain Opportunities: Businesses in the Food Manufacturing and Tourism supply chain identified opportunities, including hops and malts, produce and meat.

Workforce Development: Businesses and residents identified challenges in developing and recruiting talent in the Township.

High-Speed Internet Infrastructure: The Township needs high-speed internet to support online services, sales, remote working residents, and attract new businesses.

Attracting residents / young people: The Township needs to improve marketing to new residents and the number of amenities for families and young people.

Key Sectors

- **Agriculture and Value-added Agricultural Product Manufacturing:** Primary agriculture is active in the region and can attract agri-food processing/food manufacturing facilities and ag-tech companies.
- **Tourism Development:** Accelerate destination development in the Township, including agri-tourism, overnight stay options and customer service training.
- **Health services sector:** Residents identified the health services sector as an important growth opportunity in the region.

Resident Survey Results: The top five highest priority services affecting resident satisfaction were:

- Internet Connectivity.
- Economic Development.
- Road Repair.
- Building permits and services.
- Road Maintenance.

The top-rated issues that residents felt should receive the greatest attention from Mayor and Council were:

- Growth, Development and Employment.
- Roads.
- Greenspace Environment and Recreation.
- Lower Taxes.
- Communication/Transparency.
- Internet Infrastructure.



Business Survey Results: The top five highest priority services affecting business satisfaction were:

- “Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement.”
- “Availability of post-secondary programming that aligns with business needs.”
- “Availability of health and medical services.”
- “Availability of appropriate work-related training.”
- “Availability of skilled labour.”



ASPIRATIONS

What do we care deeply about achieving?

- What are we deeply passionate about?
- As a region, what difference do we hope to make (e.g. to residents, for institutions, to businesses)?
- What does our preferred future look like?

Transparent Leadership: Residents indicated a desire for a community vision that they can support; they want to know a plan is in place and how they can be involved.

Shared Community Identity: Stakeholders want to see a stronger shared community identity and that current residents are more connected to their towns, not the broader Township of Champlain.

Sustainable Population and Business Growth: Residents have identified that growth in the community is a high priority but should be compatible with preserving the environment, amenities, and local culture. Residents want to see their communities grow sustainably and attract residents that integrate into the social fabric.

Municipal Buildings Improvement: Stakeholders identified several municipal buildings that require repair or replacement. They would like to see these enhancements also improve service delivery and inclusivity in the community.

Infrastructure Investment: Stakeholders want to see the community embrace growth but guide where investment locates through targeted infrastructure investments.

Technology Upgrades / Online Automation: Stakeholders in the community want to see increased adoption of technology by the Township to improve service delivery. This includes streamlining and enhancing the development process. Internet infrastructure is a crucial aspect of this technology adoption.

More Attractions and Community Amenities: Stakeholders would like to see growth in amenities and attractions that bring visitors to the community and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Resident Survey: The top three words to best describe resident's vision for the future of Champlain were:

- Nature/Environment
- Safe
- Growth

Promotion of the Township: Residents feel that the Township is not well known outside the community and should be more aggressively marketed to attract new visitors, residents, and businesses.

Mainstreet Development: Continued enhancement of the commercial cores of the two Towns while preserving historical architecture is a key aspiration.

Attract and Retain Workforce: Stakeholders want to see improvements in connecting local talent to jobs and building a quality of place that encourages students who have moved away to return.

Community Growth: Stakeholders want more people visiting and working in the Township, including entrepreneurs and supporting businesses. Residents do not want to be just a bedroom community.



	RISKS How will we recognize and mitigate or eliminate potential risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What challenges do we need to be aware of?• What policy shifts could impact our aspirations?• What contingencies should we have in place to address threats or unexpected consequences?
---	--	---

Infrastructure and Fiscal Responsibility: Stakeholders want the Township to invest in the community’s infrastructure but are also concerned about rising taxes, creating a conflict between the desire for action and reducing costs.

Buildings and Maintenance: Several municipally-owned buildings require upgrades or replacement, putting those services at risk or on hold.

Rising Housing Prices: New development and residents leaving cities have caused rising prices throughout the Township, creating concerns that young people may not find places to live in the community.

NIMBYism and the Impact of Green Policies: There are anti-development sentiments in the community that could slow growth, balancing the need for growth with preservation.

Access to Capital: A significant lack of access to capital for investments in infrastructure, services, and local entrepreneurs.

Lack of Leadership: Consultation reveals that there is no clear understanding of the vision for the community and how everyone fits in the long-term economic development of the Township.

Business Survey Results: The factors with the lowest levels of satisfaction were:

Shared Identity: Stakeholders feel the Township does not have a strong shared identity.

Lack of Investment Ready Land: The Township does not have a ready supply of investment-ready (serviced) industrial or commercial land.

Language: Bilingualism is not always the case in the Township, and serving guests in both languages can be difficult.

Lack of Amenities: Stakeholders indicated the Township needs to increase the number and awareness of community assets for tourists and locals, including access to childcare.

Retaining Workforce: Business stakeholders indicated that training and retaining a workforce is a challenge.

Development Processes: Stakeholders indicated the current building permit process, particularly for old buildings, is difficult and expensive with long timelines.

Internet Access: The Township has poor internet access, speed, and reliability, critical factors in attracting residents and businesses.



RESULTS

How will we know we are succeeding?

- What are the key goals we would like to accomplish in order to achieve these results?
- What meaningful measures will indicate that we are on track toward achieving our goals?
- What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and initiatives?

Tax Base Ratio: By tracking and working to balance the rates of commercial, residential, and industrial assessment, it can track the success of overall economic development efforts.

Business Owner Satisfaction: Ongoing tracking of local business satisfaction and intervention success rates, including businesses retained, jobs created, and investment supported.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Support: The Availability of entrepreneurship support programming (workshops, consultations, grant assistance and wins) and companies, jobs, and investment supported through the start-up ecosystem.

Proactive, Targeted Development: A vision for new development that coincides with the community's goals and an improved non-residential assessment ratio.

Workforce Development: Ongoing collaboration between municipalities, education providers and businesses to track labour force demand to understand/address sector or occupation pipeline needs. The Township needs to work with education providers to monitor, support and retain trained individuals in the community.

Sustainable Population Growth: Growth and commiserate maintenance/expansion of lifestyle assets.

Clear Vision and Leadership: Achieving a well-understood positive vision for the community supports a sense of cohesion, shared values, and community.

Community Connectivity: Improved Township-wide participation in businesses supports networks and activation of business corridors.

Growth of Tourism Assets: Increasing the number of tourism assets, attractions, and workforce.