HAWKESBURY

2025-2030

Strategic Plan

Final Report

May 8, 2025

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Foreword

This final report presents the 2025-2030 strategic plan for the Town of Hawkesbury. The plan is the result of a series of research, community engagement, analysis and strategic diagnostic activities. Key components of the plan include the Town's guiding statements: the mission, vision and values. These statements reflect the inputs and contributions gathered throughout the strategic planning process and the work sessions with the municipal council and administration.

The strategic diagnosis is an analysis of existing assets and potential challenges, both current and expected in the near future. This analysis considers internal and external factors, as well as short- and long-term perspectives. This diagnosis supported the development of the key guiding statements of the plan as well as its three strategies.

The strategies proposed in this report incorporate input from residents, Town employees, local partners, Council members, and members of the municipal administration. In addition, the articulation of strategies and objectives presents the Town's desired direction for the next five years. They reveal the Town's commitment, intent, and willingness to make the necessary changes and take action to achieve its vision.

Summary

The Town of Hawkesbury's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan sets out an ambitious and structured vision for the future. Designed as a clear and comprehensive guide, it demonstrates the Town's commitment to strong governance, sustainable growth, and enhanced community well-being. By balancing economic development, fiscal responsibility, quality services, and community development, this plan prepares the Town to navigate the coming years while preserving its unique identity. It is based on an in-depth analysis of the trends, challenges and opportunities shaping its future.

The development of the plan was motivated by the need to act on the future of the town of Hawkesbury while recognizing its challenges and building on the Town's strengths. The following key guiding statements outline a future built on opportunities and the enhancement of the Town's assets.

Mission
The Town of Hawkesbury provides quality services and supports its partners to contribute to the well-being of the community.

The Town of Hawkesbury's mission reflects its commitment to providing high-quality services either directly or in collaboration with its partners. The term "partners" encompasses a wide range of stakeholders, including non-profit organizations, public sector institutions, and the private sector. On the other hand, the term "community" encompasses not only residents but also civil society organizations and other stakeholders, recognizing their essential contribution to the urban fabric. This statement also emphasizes the Town's commitment to maintaining high standards of service delivery.

Vision

Hub for growth in Eastern Ontario, Hawkesbury is a great place to live, visit, work and do business.

Growth being a driving force of its future, the Town is committed to managing it by capitalizing on its geographic, commercial and service-related assets, which contribute to economic and social prosperity. The notion of a hub for growth refers to Hawkesbury's central role in the region in terms of services, retail, entertainment, and access to markets. As a hub for growth, Hawkesbury can benefit from these assets and enhance its reputation as a destination that welcomes new residents, businesses, and services.

Aspiration

The Town of Hawkesbury shapes its future and continues to build a safe and resilient community, while enhancing the quality of life of its citizens.

This aspiration emphasizes a balanced approach to shaping Hawkesbury's future by clearly communicating the purpose of the vision and managing growth to meet the community's evolving needs. This approach underlines the Town's commitment to growth and prosperity, as well as to the well-being and quality of life of community members. The Town recognizes the dynamic nature of building a solid understanding of the internal and external forces that influence Hawkesbury's present and future, of developing and updating plans and projects to implement the Town's strategies, and of securing the resources necessary to implement them.

Values

- **Active listening**
- **Mutual support**
- **Flexibility**
- **Innovation**
- **Fiscal responsibility**

The core values serve as a guide for responsible governance and informed decision-making. They play an essential role in guiding each stage of the plan's implementation, ensuring its consistency with the Town's vision and objectives.

Strategies

The Town has identified three strategies that it will implement to achieve its aspirations.

1. Quality Services

Develop and improve municipal infrastructure and services to ensure the Town's long-term sustainability.

- Ensure that the Town's investments in its infrastructure and assets are in line with its growth and the needs of its citizens and businesses.
- Continue to strengthen the Town's capacity to maintain service quality in line with municipal standards.
- Integrate services to optimize the use of resources and improve access for citizens.

The importance of investment in providing quality services is closely linked to the need to invest in both services and infrastructure, such as road repairs and the maintenance of municipal buildings. At the same time, maintaining a high level of satisfaction with, and quality of, municipal services, while also accommodating their growth and change, requires a commitment to balanced fiscal responsibility.

Recognizing that the community and its needs are evolving, the Town's capacity must continue to be strengthened to maintain its quality standards in line with the municipal sector. Furthermore, an approach focused on integration and collaboration across services will allow for more efficient delivery and greater impact on its citizens.

2. Supporting Growth

Identify and act on the key conditions that stimulate and sustain growth.

- Strengthen the working relationship with the provincial government to support investment priorities that meet the needs of the Town and the community.
- Explore regional and inter-municipal collaboration to create opportunities for mutual support and benefit.
- Facilitate dialogue and collaboration with groups and organizations that are contributing to the development and vitality of Hawkesbury.
- Conduct targeted promotion of Hawkesbury's unique features and potential to attract new players who can support growth.

This strategy ensures that residential, commercial, and industrial growth is consistent with the community's values, expectations, and overall quality of life. Leveraging the

Town's services, master plans, and policies, this approach emphasizes the importance of taking a proactive role in managing the issues that accompany growth, and the need to encourage dialogue and collaboration between stakeholders.

3. Community Issues

Leverage collaborative approaches to address complex community issues.

- Establish a regular dialogue with the community to identify local needs, priorities and issues.
- Target the issues to which the Town can contribute.
- Bring together the players and expertise needed to tackle these issues and develop solutions.
- Communicate progress and results.

This last strategy reveals how different parts of the plan are interconnected. In fact, addressing community issues while implementing quality services and supporting Hawkesbury's growth will require transparent communication mechanisms between the Town, its community, and its partners. At the same time, recognizing and acting on these issues is crucial in order to manage important and interconnected socioeconomic challenges such as housing, homelessness, population growth, and business diversification. In this context, the Town sees itself as a facilitator among its partners, supporting the exploration of solutions with the aim of acting collectively on common issues. Success thus depends on an approach based on mutual support, communication, and realistic actions with measurable impacts.

Objective

The purpose of this report is to describe and identify the implications of the Town of Hawkesbury's[1] strategic choices and to present a more in-depth vision of the contents of the strategic plan. Further, it serves to present the methodology employed, and the results that have emerged from the plan's intermediate stages. This creates a reference point for the Town to consult when addressing future challenges and opportunities.

Context

Incorporated in 1896, the Town of Hawkesbury has a special history due to its geographical location. From the outset, it has been a centre of economic and commercial activity, thanks to its location halfway between Ottawa and Montreal. This

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1 The use of the terms "Hawkesbury" and "Town of Hawkesbury" reflects the geographic location of the Town of Hawkesbury and its population. On the other hand, the term "Town" refers to its governance, i.e., the municipal council, and to its administration, i.e., the management and delivery of services.

advantage has enabled it to maintain an important position within the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR). With the opening of Highway 417, linking Ottawa directly with Montreal bypassing the towns and villages along Highway 17, the reduction in traffic forced Hawkesbury to adapt and quickly pivot to counteract the economic and commercial impact of this new road connection.

Today, the Town of Hawkesbury, with a population of 10,194, is preparing its new 2025-2030 strategic plan. Historically a bastion of the Francophone community of Eastern Ontario, it maintains a majority Francophone presence and shares with the City of Clarence-Rockland, the Municipality of Casselman, and the Municipality of Russell important regional services and community hubs. The government of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell participates in the administration of certain regional services located in the Town of Hawkesbury. Specifically, some responsibilities, such as regional roads, social services, and land use planning, are the prerogative of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, while others, such as local services (water, sewers, local roads, waste collection), are the responsibility of the Town itself.

The Town of Hawkesbury has several characteristics that set it apart from its peers. Notably, its location on the banks of the Ottawa River and its proximity to the province of Quebec. Franco-Ontarian culture is always present in institutions, businesses and cultural events. Bilingualism makes the Town of Hawkesbury a place that welcomes and attracts newcomers looking for a quieter environment while maintaining access to an active cultural life in close proximity to Ottawa and Montreal. Therefore, the Town of Hawkesbury remains an important hub for the surrounding population.

Like any other municipality in the United Counties of Prescott-Russell, the Town of Hawkesbury has its challenges. Thus, aware of its past and driven by the potential of its future, the Town of Hawkesbury aims to anchor its strategic plan in its current reality, drawing on its capacity for action to achieve its destination for 2030.

Against this backdrop, the Town of Hawkesbury embarked on a strategic planning process with the support of the KSAR Consulting Group. The goal of this process is to enable the Town to make key choices to guide its future growth and development. It's also an opportunity to reflect on the internal and external forces and characteristics that shape or will shape Hawkesbury, and for the Town to decide how to influence or adapt to them. The strategic plan is driven by the need to act for economic growth, the well-being of its population, the vibrancy of its cultural life, and the exemplary delivery of its municipal services.

Approach

The plan was prepared employing a sound methodology built around four main steps: initiation and planning, environmental scan, strategic diagnosis, and development of the strategic plan itself.

Figure 1: Project phases

STEP **1** INITIATION AND PLANNING

STEP **2** ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

STEP **3** STRATEGIC DIAGNOSIS

STEP **4** STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A three-pronged approach was used to collect, capture and analyze qualitative and quantitative data, consisting of a literature review, data analysis, and consultations. These three components represent the totality of the information used to carry out an overall environmental scan.

Environmental Scan

The environmental scan allows to capture both quantitative and qualitative data through a variety of analytical lenses. When put together, this rich data and information provide a forward-looking perspective on the issues, challenges, and opportunities that can guide the Town towards realistic, achievable, and measurable strategic actions.

The results of the environmental scan are grouped into several categories which are then summarised along three main themes. These, in turn, provide essential information and insights for the next step of the strategic plan development process: the strategic diagnosis.

The Municipal Administration

First, it is important to note that satisfaction with municipal services is high, which is also reflected in the commitment and cohesion shown by staff when dealing with customers and citizens.

As the role and responsibilities of municipalities increase, clarifying and defining the Town's long-term goals and priorities has been identified as a key issue during the consultations. Further, at an operational level, the Town faces challenges in recruiting

and retaining personnel, which are challenges it shares with other municipalities in the region.

During the consultations, respondents shared their concern about the ability of the Town's public services to absorb further growth. This situation thus creates a potential imbalance between the Town's ability to manage long-term projects and issues, while ensuring the delivery of day-to-day services. In particular, infrastructure is a topic raised by residents, especially the state of the roads.

The Town of Hawkesbury and Its Environment

The residents of the Town of Hawkesbury maintain a positive outlook on the assets and potential of the municipality, viewing it as a place of opportunity, given its location, services, and character. For example, its proximity to Quebec, waterfront location, access to nature, the presence of services (e.g., the regional hospital), and a strong Francophone identity were noted as attractive features for current and potential residents and businesses. The consultations highlighted the fact that these assets could be better used to enhance the growth and well-being of the Town and its residents.

Demographics

The Town faces a demographic duality: on one hand, a stable population, and on the other, a population undergoing constant change. Hawkesbury's population has remained virtually unchanged for over 10 years; in 2011, it was 10,551, which is 3.3% less than its population in 2021 (10,194 people). In comparison, the population in the UCPR has grown by 7.1% in just 5 years.

The main trends that are affecting Hawkesbury's demographic composition as well as the current and future needs of its population are the increasing number, both absolute and relative, of seniors and newcomers. Of particular note are the changing and different housing needs of these two population groups. In particular, the lack of new housing limits the growth of the latter group, despite the fact that the cost of housing in Hawkesbury is relatively low when compared to nearby municipalities. If the Town wants to attract more people, especially young families, it needs more housing, which may require increasing density.

Socio-economic Factors

Many socio-economic issues, such as unemployment rates, are already known, while others, such as homelessness, are emerging. These trends are not unique to Hawkesbury, but compared to the rest of the region, the Town faces greater challenges, particularly from an economic point of view. The data show the presence of a labor market mismatch, with high unemployment and high job vacancy rates.

Through engagement activities, respondents emphasized that complex challenges require multi-stakeholder solutions. Collaboration, as a means of action, is repeatedly emphasized as an effective way to tackle socio-economic, social, and environmental issues.

Economic development is essential to facilitate the growth of existing and new businesses. Achieving this objective depends on a clear and precise vision and objectives for the Town, and on administrative processes that are as clear and predictable as possible. This observation was noted as a key element in supporting business decisions and plans. The Town has the opportunity to play a facilitating role, i.e. to ensure that the right conditions are in place for businesses to locate or expand in Hawkesbury. In addition, respondents suggested that better coordination between economic development players, possibly facilitated by the Town's administration, could facilitate the search for and implementation of economic opportunities.

Environmental Scan Main Themes

Opportunity

- The Town has many assets that can be further exploited to build its future and navigate effectively through the coming years.
- Clarifying the Town's direction and committing to long-term projects could greatly contribute to Hawkesbury's development.
- Focusing on clear strategic priorities, it will be possible to improve how the Town approaches priority issues, while contributing to raise quality of life.

Growth

- Economic growth is essential for the Town's future well-being.
- Acting on its core mandate - to continue offering quality services and create conditions conducive to growth - is at the heart of the Town's added value.
- Housing availability must align with growth to support economic activity.

Collaboration

- Strengthening inter-municipal collaboration offers a multi-party solution to complex issues and challenges.
- Considering current capacity and resource constraints, the consultations identify collaboration as the key to success, further noting that collaboration should be both horizontal (with partners) and vertical (integrative approach within the municipality).

Strategic Diagnosis

The results and findings of the environmental analysis fed into the development of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analytical framework presented below.

Figure 2: SWOT Analysis

Strenghts	Weaknesses
• The characteristics of the Town are attractive to long-time, recent, and potential new residents. • The Town has a number of assets that can stimulate economic growth. • Good level of resident satisfaction with municipal services. • The Town's administration is seen as a key player in facilitating partnerships in the social and economic sectors. • Staff is engaged, motivated and invested in the Town's success.	• The number of residents has been stable for several years. • The Town faces important socio-economic challenges, both long-standing and emerging. • Greater collaboration between players in the economic development space would be beneficial to the Town's development. • The Town would benefit from greater involvement in economic development. • The infrastructure needs updating, especially if the Town wants to focus on growth. • Financial and human resources are limited.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• An opportunity to set the tone for the Town's long-term development and to give it a clear identity. • Regional, provincial and national trends offer opportunities for population and local economic growth. • The alignment with federal and provincial priorities provides opportunities for housing expansion and investment in economic development, as well as interventions to address social issues.	• Trying to maintain the status quo in a changing environment. • Wider negative social and economic trends (region, province, Canada) are likely to intensify local problems. • Expectations of other levels of government, residents, and businesses are rising, but available resources are not keeping pace. • Neighbouring communities, with comparable economic and demographic advantages, compete to attract the same businesses and residents.

• There is potential for intermunicipal collaboration to improve service delivery.	• Nearby municipalities face similar staffing challenges, creating high competition for limited talent.

Several key insights emerge from the SWOT analysis. First, the strategic diagnosis underscores the need to break away from the status quo and pivot towards a future focused on innovation, action and growth. A number of factors need to be considered in drawing up the strategic plan, which will have a major impact in the coming years and influence the trajectory of the Hawkesbury's progress. It is worth highlighting:

- A commitment to drive change through action.
- An opportunity to position the Town as an economic, cultural and public service centre.
- The population's evolving needs in terms of quality of life, access to nature, and a sense of belonging.

The analysis also reveals a number of issues that counterbalance these driving forces. For example:

- The limited geographical boundaries of the Town of Hawkesbury.
- A stagnant population growth and an aging population.
- The Town of Hawkesbury's history, from its years of success and plenty to recent years marked by economic decline.
- The need for a shared vision to manage potential tensions between revenues and expenses, municipal and community interests, the Town and surrounding municipalities, and the importance of addressing the Hawkesbury's needs and the capacity to meet them.

The key factors and issues identified in the strategic diagnosis played a crucial role in the development of the strategic plan and in the choices made by the Town to shape its 2030 destination.

Further, the Town will have to manage certain emerging challenges and tensions in order to balance its human and financial resources constraints. In addition, the Town will have to pursue its objectives in relation to the priorities of stakeholders, such as citizens, businesses, community organizations, and other levels of government.

The strategic diagnosis also suggests that managing the Town's growth requires the right conditions to be put in place, such as clarifying its vision and priorities within its plans and processes. In addition, the Town needs to determine its role, responsibilities, and added value in order to meet complex challenges, including economic, social, operational and governance issues.

Strategic Plan for the Town of Hawkesbury

Mission

The mission expresses the Town's raison d'être and, considering the Ontario Municipal Act, the following mission has been established:

The Town of Hawkesbury provides quality services and supports its partners to contribute to the well-being of the community.

The Town's mission reflects its commitment to providing high-quality services directly or in collaboration with various partners. The term "partners" encompasses a wide range of stakeholders, including non-profit organizations, institutions, and the private sector. On the other hand, the term "community" encompasses not only residents but also civil society organizations and other stakeholders, recognizing their integral contribution to the urban fabric. This statement also emphasizes the commitment to maintaining high standards of service delivery, recognizing that partners contribute directly or indirectly to improving the well-being of the community.

The notion of quality services denotes the range of services that the Town can offer, as well as those offered by its many partners. The Town's mission is to ensure the accessibility, availability, and capacity to receive municipal and related services. To implement its mission, the Town will facilitate opportunities to leverage the potential of its partners for the benefit of the community, recognizing that offering a multitude of services successfully, involves the participation of multiple stakeholders. The mission is thus based on the concept of a collective effort by the Town and its partners to contribute to the community's growth and quality of life.

Vision

The vision articulates the state that the Town would like to achieve for the community over the long term, typically over the next 15 years. The vision for the Town of Hawkesbury is the following:

Hub for growth in Eastern Ontario, Hawkesbury, is a great place to live, visit, work and do business.

Hawkesbury's future lies in growth and in establishing itself as a gateway to development while preserving the spirit and advantages of a small town. With growth as

the driving force behind its future, the Town is committed to managing this expansion by capitalizing on its geographic, commercial, and service assets, which contribute to economic and social prosperity. As a hub, Hawkesbury can capitalize on these assets and become a place that welcomes new residents, businesses, and services.

The vision expresses the desire to keep the Town on the track of growth to create a place where the present and future population can benefit from the Town's economic and social prosperity. The notion of growth is at the heart of Hawkesbury's evolution, which is driven by economic diversification, administrative transparency, and openness to new partnerships. It also includes community inclusion where bilingualism, immigration, and the development of health and social services, as well as infrastructure, support both an aging and diversified population.

This vision also represents the Town's openness and commitment to embracing change and acting on conditions to modify, adapt, and innovate in the face of a constantly evolving reality. This will require the Town to adopt an approach that assesses its progress, which is becoming more sophisticated and active to meet the evolving needs of a growing municipality.

Aspiration

While the vision is for the very long term, the aspiration defines the goal that the Town will pursue with its strategic plan in the short term, up to 2030.

The Town of Hawkesbury shapes its future and continues to build a safe and resilient community, while enhancing the quality of life of its citizens.

This aspiration emphasizes a balanced approach to shaping Hawkesbury's future by clearly communicating the purpose of the vision and managing growth to meet the community's evolving needs. This approach underlines the Town of Hawkesbury's commitment to growth and prosperity, as well as to the well-being and quality of life of community members. The Town recognizes the dynamic nature of building a solid understanding of the internal and external forces that influence Hawkesbury's present and future, of developing and updating plans and projects to implement the Town's strategies, and of securing the resources necessary to implement them.

Values

Values are the beliefs and principles that shape the Town's organizational behaviour. They have been selected because they are deemed necessary to enable the Town to implement its strategic plan and successfully achieve its organizational aspirations. They also serve as an analytical framework for assessing situations, decisions, and the impact of the Town's actions. As part of the implementation of the strategic plan, values therefore play an important role in the development of policies, initiatives, and collaborations with partners. These values reflect the Town's commitment to providing a dynamic and prosperous living environment, in harmony with its mission and vision.

Active Listening

The Town values the needs, ideas, and concerns of its citizens, employees, and partners. Through respectful and open communication, it fosters constructive collaboration in the service of the community.

Mutual Support

The Town encourages solidarity and teamwork to build a Hawkesbury that is collaborative and caring. By supporting its citizens, employees and partners, it strengthens the social fabric and fosters the development of a strong, united community.

Flexibility

The Town employs an agile and adaptable approach to manage challenges and opportunities. By remaining open to new ideas and adjusting its methods, it ensures that its service delivery is efficient, scalable and responsive to the changing needs of citizens.

Innovation

The Town focuses on creativity and continuous improvement to offer modern and sustainable solutions. Integrating new ways of doing things and fostering a culture of innovation contributes to Hawkesbury's growth and prosperity.

Fiscal Responsibility

The Town manages its financial resources rigorously and transparently, ensuring the judicious use of public funds. Its commitment to sound budget management enables it to invest in the future while maintaining quality services for its citizens.

Values guide the implementation of the strategic plan, decision-making and the Town's actions. They embody the Town's commitment to efficient and responsible

management. The five values described above are levers that guide the Town's actions and decisions according to the context and issues at stake.

Strategies

The Town has identified three strategies that it will implement to further its objectives over the next few years.

1. Quality Services

Develop and improve municipal infrastructure and services to ensure the Town's long-term sustainability.

- Ensure that the Town's investments in its infrastructure and assets are in line with its growth and the needs of its citizens and businesses.
- Continue to strengthen the Town's capacity to maintain service quality in line with municipal standards.
- Integrate services to optimize the use of resources and improve access for citizens.

The Town's strategic plan emphasizes that its aspirations for continued growth must not compromise the quality of life and prosperity enjoyed by its residents. At the same time, the Town's mission underlines that the main tools for upholding and improving these aspects are the services the Town provides as well as the communication strategies it implements to ensure an open engagement with the community and its partners.

The importance of investing in quality services is closely linked to the need to invest in both services and infrastructure, such as road repairs or the upkeep of municipal buildings. At the same time, it is important to note that maintaining a high level of satisfaction and quality of municipal services in the face of growth and change requires a commitment to balanced fiscal responsibility.

Further, the Town's capacity must continue to be strengthened in order to maintain quality standards aligned with the rest of the municipal sector. Thus, the Town's Council and administration must both focus on building capacity to support the town's growth.

The Town also recognizes that achieving service quality in line with municipal sector standards will require better integration within its departments and with its partners. The goal of integration is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services, based on available resources.

This strategy also sets a clear benchmark for its services, emphasizing the importance of quality. First and foremost, these services need to be efficient and generate a

tangible positive impact. Second, they will evolve with and adapt to the changing needs of the community. Finally, they will be deployed in a timely and efficient manner, guaranteeing an optimal management of financial and human resources. Aware of the fundamental role played by its staff, the Town is committed to continually reinforcing its skills to provide services of excellence that meet the expectations of its citizens and contribute to sustainability.

2. Supporting Growth

Identify and act on the key conditions that stimulate and sustain growth.

- Strengthen the working relationship with the provincial government to support investment priorities that meet the needs of the Town and the community.
- Explore regional and inter-municipal collaboration to create opportunities for mutual support and mutual.
- Facilitate dialogue and collaboration with groups and organizations that are contributing to the development and vitality of Hawkesbury.
- Conduct targeted promotion of Hawkesbury's unique features and potential to attract new players who can support growth.

As growth is a crucial element of Town's future, this strategy describes and sets the tone for the approach the Town wishes to take to support it. Specifically, the Town is embarking on a process to combine the idea of proactively shaping the Town's future with the pragmatic need to reconcile a variety of objectives and interests. For instance, this means that connections with provincial decision-making authorities need to be supported and aligned with their priorities, capacity, and willingness to change to promote growth.

In keeping with its mission, as well as the value of mutual aid, the Town recognizes the potential of collaboration and service delivery partnerships with other municipalities. This reflects its commitment to evidence-based decision-making and underscores its desire to ensure that collaborations are aligned with its strategic objectives and make a positive contribution to the well-being of its residents and community partners.

Growth also means supporting community organizations and initiatives that create new or better jobs. Dialogue is also aligned with the value of active listening. As such, the Town will need to pursue and strengthen its community engagement practices based on the principles of dialogue and participatory decision-making, with both its community and municipal partners. This includes initiatives such as capacity building, offering financial and in-kind support, and strengthening their messages and communications.

The Town will have to position itself as a top destination, thanks to its economic strength, cultural dynamism, openness to welcoming newcomers, and collaborative leadership. The results of its strategic efforts will thus contribute to the success of other strategies.

Therefore, to ensure that growth aligns with both its strategic plan and the evolving needs and aspirations of its community, the Town must consider taking on the role of facilitator between different stakeholder groups and in decisions related to growth.

3. Community Issues

Leverage collaborative approaches to complex community issues.

- Establish a regular dialogue with the community to identify local needs, priorities and issues.
- Target the issues to which the Town can contribute.
- Bring together the players and expertise needed to tackle these issues and develop solutions.
- Communicate progress and results.

Community involvement is essential to enable the Town to better understand the needs and concerns of its population. By listening to the community and its partners, the Town encourages participation in the decisions that shape its development and evolution. This approach builds trust, a sense of belonging, and social cohesion while allowing to tackle complex community issues effectively.

Promoting an active civil society sector and supporting organizations that bring about positive change are at the heart of this approach. Prioritizing issues requires being committed to collaboration, while focusing on the values of listening, mutual aid, and innovation.

The diversification of players and the convergence of multiple perspectives are key to finding solutions to complex issues. This in itself fosters cohesion around a shared vision and mutual commitment to achieve a collective impact. The successes achieved for and by the community thus become the *modus operandi* for achieving the objectives of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

The ability to assess and track the results and progress of strategic objectives represents another pillar in the strategic plan framed by the Town's values. Therefore, strengthening the Town's communications is essential to increase accountability and transparency.

Conclusion

The strategic plan of the Town of Hawkesbury's reflects a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to local government. This comprehensive roadmap, which focuses on implementing measures to improve community well-being, underscores the Town's commitment to service excellence, responsible growth, and responsiveness to community priorities.

Creating an action-oriented strategic plan that builds on current assets and opportunities enables the Town to balance its intention to provide high-quality services, manage growth, and respond to community priorities. This approach is a testament to the Town's determination to act, and commitment to building a better understanding of the challenges that the Town will face in the years ahead. It also reinforces the Town's responsibility as a steward of its resources, the well-being of its inhabitants, and the collective aspiration for growth and stability.

As the plan develops, it remains in tune with the dynamic nature of the community and the importance of adaptability. Its active listening and collaborative approach enables the Town to ascertain the feelings of residents, the views of municipal staff, and the strengths of partnerships, providing valuable insight into the factors that determine satisfaction levels. The desire to understand these underlying forces reflects a commitment to responsive, resident-centred governance. Over the next five years, the strategic plan will serve as a compass to guide Hawkesbury towards the realization of its vision. This vision aims to achieve targeted growth, foster collaboration, provide high-quality services, and promote community cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Appendix 1: Methodology

The strategic plan was developed by the Town of Hawkesbury with the support of the KSAR Consulting Group. The plan was prepared using a sound methodology built around four main phases: planning, an environmental scan, a strategic diagnosis and the development of the strategic plan itself.

Environmental Scan

The aim of the environmental scan was to describe the current state of the municipality and the main factors, trends and forces shaping its present and future. This phase involved three sub-phases: document review, data analysis, and consultations.

The document review focused on the analysis of documents provided by the Town, including plans, reports and by-laws, as well as similar documents from provincial and federal governments and Tier 1 municipalities. The review also included documentation prepared by organizations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The review was also complemented by a comparative analysis of the strategic plans of a number of municipalities, chosen for their similarity and proximity to the Town of Hawkesbury, as well as the effectiveness of their administration.[2]

The data analysis used publicly available raw data and calculations to paint a picture of the demographic, social and economic conditions and trends in Hawkesbury and surrounding areas, including the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR), the Ottawa region and the province. Data sources include Statistics Canada and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

Engagement activities were carried out with the Town's stakeholders, residents, Municipal Council, staff, and management.

The consultation process included an online survey, with multiple response and open-ended questions, stakeholder interviews, two in-person focus groups and three Town Hall meetings. The themes explored in the consultation methods were similar to ensure comparability, and many people were consulted, as shown in Table 1 below.

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2 Champlain Township, Russell Township, Alfred and Plantagenet, Prescott, Brockville and Cornwall as well as Salaberry-de-Valleyfield and Lachute (Province of Quebec). According to MacLean's Canada's Best Communities.
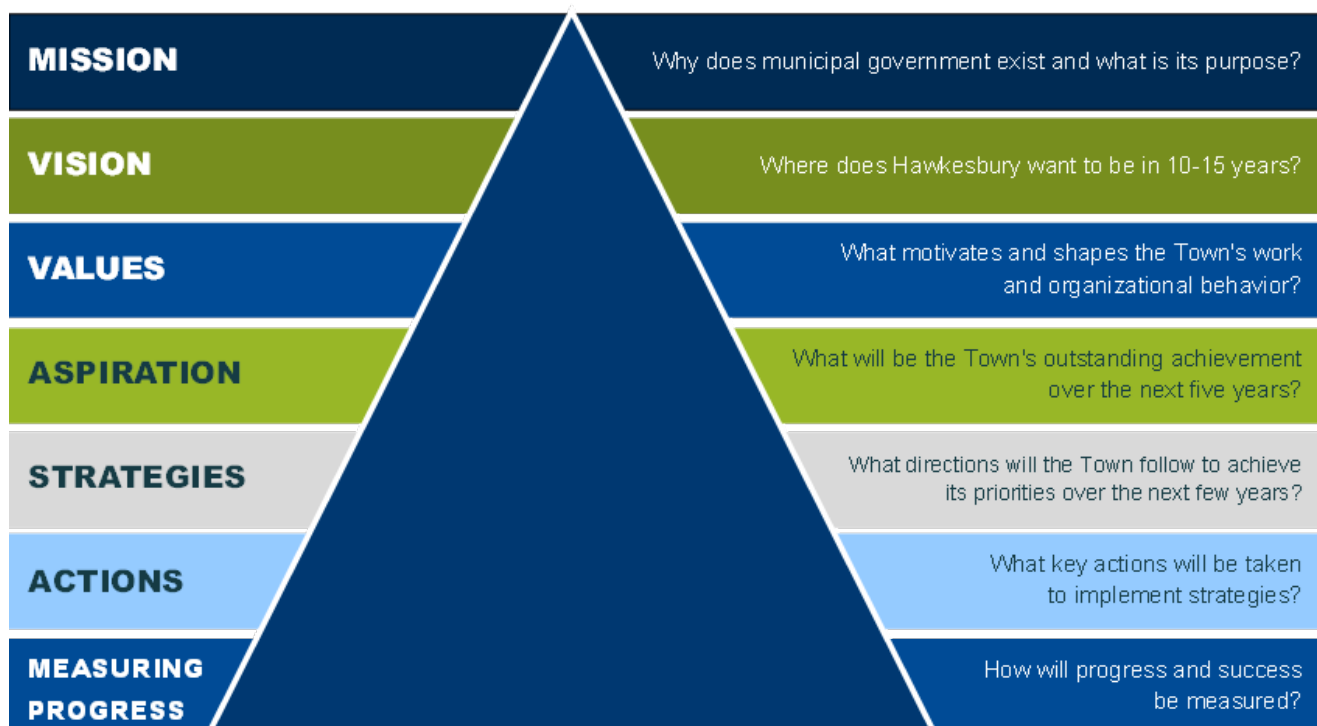
Table 1: Consultation Summary

Consultation summary	
Methodology	**Respondents**
Focus Group Discussions	21 participants (2 groups - 1 with staff and 1 with senior management)
In-depth interviews	22
Town Hall Meetings	12 participants (2 days, 3 groups)
Online survey	**187**

Interviews were conducted with businesses and professional organizations, cultural organizations, health services, community and social service organizations, the United Counties of Prescott and Russell, and other neighbouring municipalities.

Strategic Plan Development

The lessons learned from the strategic diagnosis served as the basis for the development of the strategic plan through working sessions involving the Town's directors and the Municipal Council. The structure and content of the strategic plan conform to the framework presented below.

Figure 3: Strategic Plan Framework

MISSION	Why does municipal government exist and what is its purpose?
VISION	Where does Hawkesbury want to be in 10-15 years?
VALUES	What motivates and shapes the Town's work and organizational behavior?
ASPIRATION	What will be the Town's outstanding achievement over the next five years?
STRATEGIES	What directions will the Town follow to achieve its priorities over the next few years?
ACTIONS	What key actions will be taken to implement strategies?
MEASURING PROGRESS	How will progress and success be measured?

Appendix 2: Environmental Scan Results

The results of the Town of Hawkesbury's environmental scan are presented in three sections. The first section looks at the Town's geographical location and socio-demographic characteristics and trends, all of which can be a source of both opportunities and challenges. A second section presents an overview of Hawkesbury's economy, followed by a third section focusing on the municipal administration. As previously mentioned, the results are based on a literature review and a consultation process with numerous stakeholders in Hawkesbury and the surrounding area, including a community survey, focus groups and town hall meetings.

The Town Of Hawkesbury: A Prime Location, A Source Of Opportunities And Challenges

Proximity to the cities of Ottawa and Montreal provides Hawkesbury residents with a wide range of employment, shopping and entertainment opportunities. This proximity also attracts new residents and businesses. However, it means competition for Hawkesbury's shops and businesses, both in terms of human resources and customers.

Located on the border with Quebec, Hawkesbury benefits from this connection with the neighbouring province. This brings an interprovincial flow of customers, as people come to Hawkesbury to shop. For example, consultations results suggest that changes to regulations in Quebec have led to a proliferation of stores selling vaping and cannabis products in Hawkesbury, creating a business and employment opportunity for the Town. However, the same consultations highlighted that many residents are not particularly supportive of the expansion of this type of business, which they feel doesn't add much value to the Town.

Hawkesbury's geographical position favors the interprovincial **relocation of people and businesses**. For example, individuals, businesses and companies looking to relocate to Ontario to access services or take advantage of economic opportunities (taxes, regulations, cost of living, etc.) may consider Hawkesbury an advantageous place to locate. Similarly, many seniors move to Hawkesbury from Quebec to access Ontario health care services, including Hawkesbury's General Hospital.

Hawkesbury's waterfront location **on the Ottawa River** is an important asset for commercial, recreational and residential development. Many residents consider the waterfront a priority. The historic cradle of Hawkesbury, Île du Chenail, an island not far from the Town centre and home to the Centre Culturel le Chenail, attracts many visitors, especially in summer. Further, participants to the consultations have appreciated that

the services available in the Confederation Park on the island have improved considerably in recent years.

Hawkesbury's proximity to Quebec, its access to the waterfront and nature, the presence of services (e.g., the hospital) and its strong francophone identity are all attractive features for current and future residents, businesses and enterprises. The consultations highlighted that **these assets could be better used to enhance Hawkesbury's** growth and the well-being of its residents.

Entertainment and Culture

Community events are offered throughout the year. However, satisfaction with leisure programs and cultural offerings is average and varies with age, with younger people less satisfied and older people more satisfied. It's worth noting that non-residents use the entertainment options offered by Hawkesbury, which is both an opportunity and a cost.

Sense of Community

Residents, merchants and entrepreneurs see Hawkesbury's strong Francophone (table 2) identity as an asset that fosters a sense of community, even if the number of anglophones, in both relative and absolute terms, has recently increased (graph 1). What's more, this community is seen as supportive and caring. As shown in Graph 2, many say they chose Hawkesbury as a place to live because of its size, where everything they need is close, they feel safe, have a close network of contacts, and can easily access services, leisure activities and stores.

Table 2: First Official Language Spoken (FOLS) in French

French FOLS	2006	2011	2016	2021
Hawkesbury	80%	80%	79%	75%
UCPR	67%	65%	64%	60%

Graph 1: Francophone Population of Hawkesbury

Francophone Population - Town of Hawkesbury

	2006	2011	2016	2021
MT: French or English and French	80%	79%	79%	75%
MT: French	77%	77%	77%	71%
FOLS: French or English and French	80%	80%	79%	75%
FOLS: French	79%	78%	78%	73%
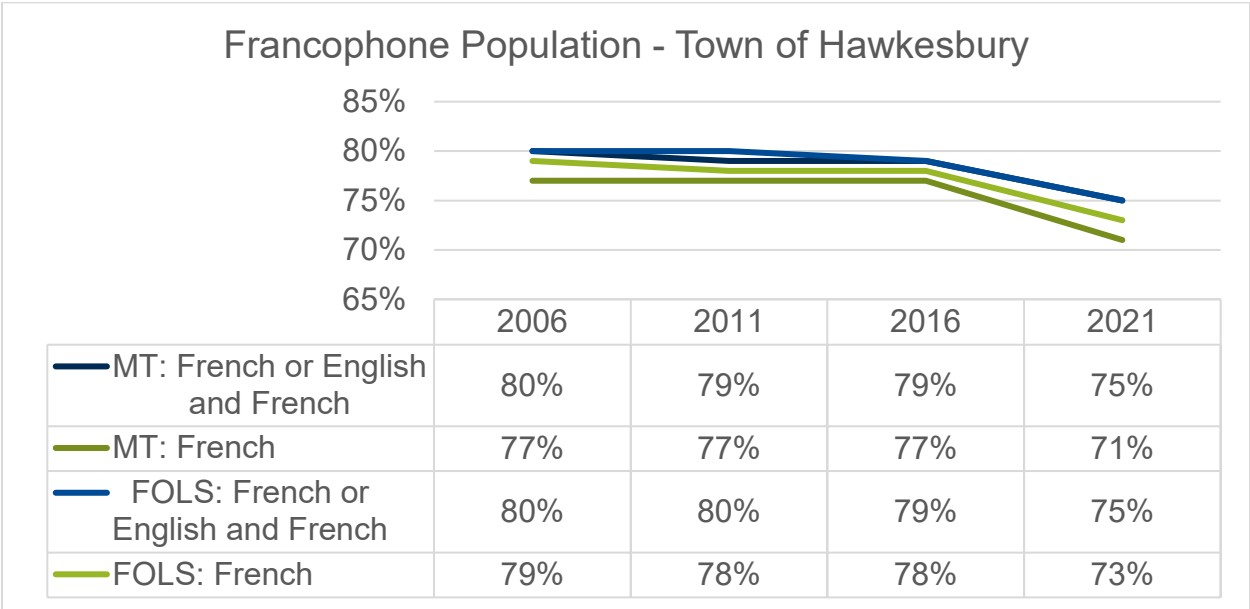
Caption: FOLS - First official language spoken   MT - Mother tongue

Graph 2: Reason for choosing to live in Hawkesbury

Reason for choosing to live in Hawkesbury

Reason	Value
Family and friends	76
Location	69
Cost of living	49
Language	46
Services	45
Employment	40
Community	28
Urban amenities	17
Other	16
NA	10
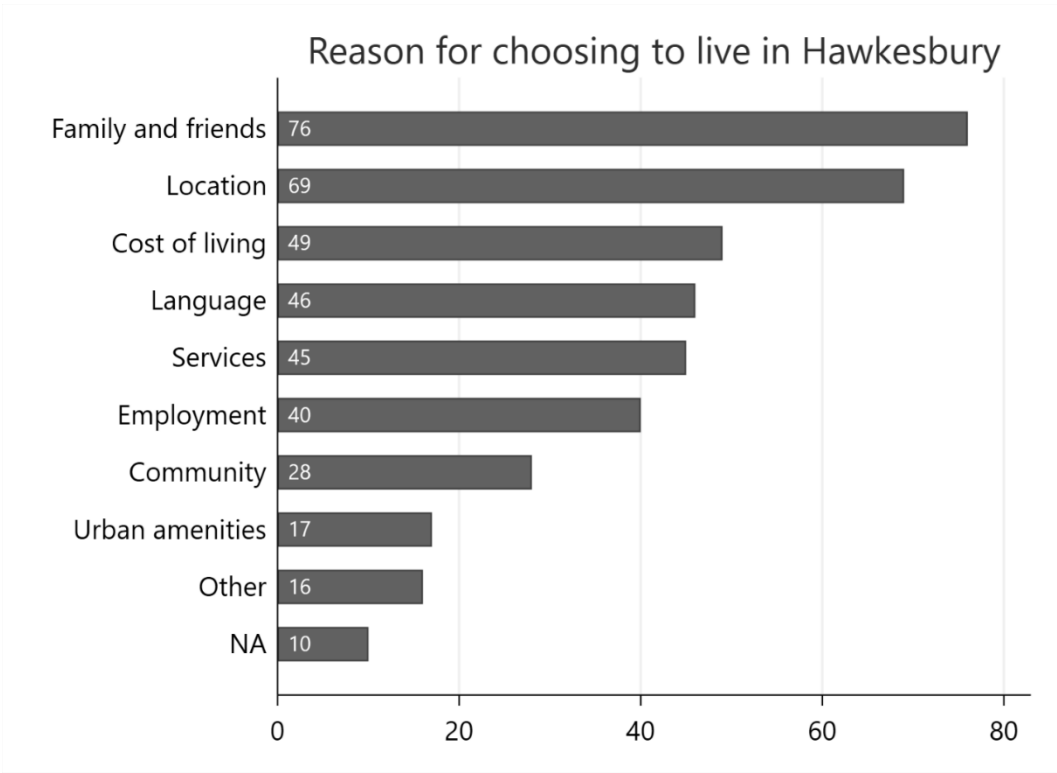
Health and Social Services

The presence of a hospital is unanimously seen as an asset. However, social services are considered essential, but insufficient, given the ever-increasing demand for this type of service. Socio-community organizations appreciate collaboration with the Town and would like to strengthen it.

Demographic Duality

Demographic Duality

As shown in table 3, the population of Hawkesbury has not increased for at least the last ten years, with a growth rate of -0.7% between 2016 and 2021. In comparison, the population of the UCPR has grown by 7.1% in just five years. However, the demographic composition of the Town is changing considerably, with the population aged over 65 increasing by 16.3% over the same period. These trends are not unique to this Town (or to Canada), but change is occurring more rapidly in Hawkesbury due to a specific dynamic: young people are leaving the Town (to pursue post-secondary education or find employment) and older people are moving in (to access services).

The number of immigrants rose by +77.3% between 2016 and 2021. They currently make up 5.9% of Hawkesbury's population. These are mainly French-speaking newcomers, as the Town is a Communauté Francophone Accueillante (CFA) and a bilingual municipality. However, improving the retention and integration of new arrivals is seen as an important goal requiring collaboration between several stakeholders.

Table 3: Population and demographic characteristics and trends

	Hawkesbury	UCPR
Population	10 194	95 639
Δ% 2016-2021	*-0,7%*	*+7,1%*
14 and under	1 200	16 105
% of total	*11,8%*	*16,8%*
Δ% 2016-2021	*-7,3%*	*+7,4%*
15 - 64 years	5 745	60 395
% of total	*56,4%*	*63,1%*
Δ% 2016-2021	*-7,0%*	*+2,6%*
65 and over	3 250	19 135
% of total	*31,9%*	*20,0%*
Δ% 2016-2021	*+16,3%*	*+23,6%*
Immigrants	585	5 335
% of total	*5,7%*	*5,6%*
Δ% 2016-2021	*+77,3%*	*+32,4%*

Housing

Housing is considered to be one of the main challenges of the Town and a limiting factor in Hawkesbury's growth. There is consensus on the need to increase residential density due to spatial constraints. Hawkesbury is home to most of UCPR's social housing, for historical and practical reasons (proximity to services). However, very few new social housing units have been built in several years and the current stock is unable to meet demand.

While the lower average cost of housing is seen as a major asset in attracting young families to the Town, housing affordability remains a concern for the population as a whole. Young people, especially single mothers, make up a significant proportion of households in "core housing need", as do indigenous households, and households with people suffering from cognitive or mental disorders, addictions or reduced mobility. Perhaps surprisingly, in 2021, no newcomer households (immigrants or refugees) were in core housing need. These results are summarized in graph 3.

Graph 3: Percentage of households in need of housing, according to the priority population

Percentage of Households (HH) in Core Housing Need by Priority Population, 2021

Priority Population	Percentage
Single mother-led	8.8%
Women-led	9.7%
Indigenous	15.1%
Visbile minority	6.7%
Black-led	
New migrant-led	
Refugee claimant-led	
HH head under 25	20.7%
HH head over 65	3.2%
HH head over 85	
HH with physical activity limitation	5.9%
HH with cognitive, mental, or addictions…	9.5%
Transgender or Non-binary	
Community	8.3%

Socio-economic Challenges

Unemployment is high in Hawkesbury (11.5%) especially compared to nearby municipalities (table 4). This is also accompanied by a low labour market participation rate[3], which reveals that nearly half of the population in Hawkesbury is not working and not looking for work. While this can partly be explained by an aging population and the number of retirees living in Hawkesbury, the rate is also affected by working-age individuals who are either unable or unwilling to work. Consultations' results suggest a correlation between this result and growing socio-economic challenges, including addiction, homelessness, and mental health issues. Evidence from the rest of Canada indicates that these problems can give rise to public safety issues, particularly in terms of theft and drug trafficking, a concern that has been echoed throughout the consultations and is reflected in graph 4.

Table 4: Labour Market and Household Income Characteristics

	Hawkesbury	CUPR
Unemployment Rate	11.5%	7%
Participation Rate	48,3%	64,4%
Median Household Income (AT)	49,200	83,000
Average household income (AT)	59,250	90,900

Socio-economic issues put a strain on social services (e.g., the food bank), but consultations' participants report a good level of cooperation with the municipal administration in this area. It has been reported that the Town could do more to help bring players together around the same table to tackle social issues, including with higher levels of government (e.g., UCPR). Similarly, the Town could offer greater support, if only in terms of goods and services (e.g., office space) to socio-community organizations.

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3 Participation rate is computed as the ratio of employed and unemployed people over the total population over 15. In other words, it represents the proportion of the working age population that is either working or willing to work.

Graph 4: Security Priorities[4]

Safety priorities
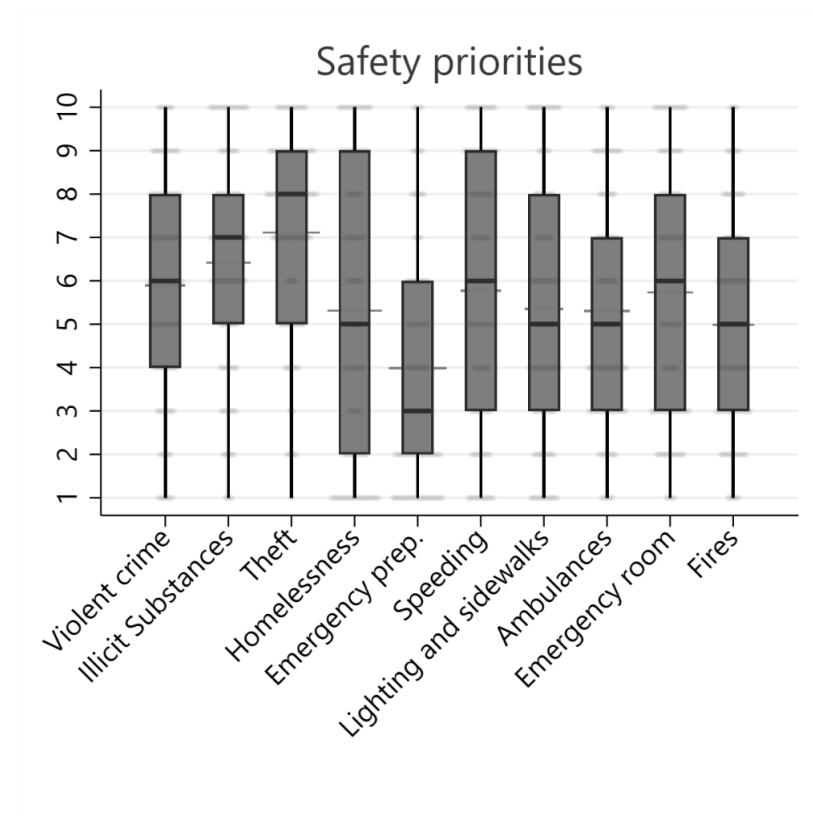
These are obviously complex issues that are not unique to Hawkesbury and are common in urban areas. In particular, it is important to note that there is no evidence that the presence of social services exacerbates them. Finally, the consensus from the consultations was that in order to address these issues it is necessary to provide both economic development and social support, in line with the social determinants of health.

With regards to the topics covered so far, the graphs below represent survey results pertaining the personal and community priorities of respondents and their level of satisfaction concerning the same factors. The box-and-whiskers graphs (graphs 5 and 7) show the importance that respondents attach to each category, using a scale from 1 (least important) to either 7 or 8, depending on the number of available options. The thick horizontal line in each column shows the median score of each priority, which helps identify top-ranked priorities. For instance, in the case of personal priorities, health and entertainment emerge as the top two priorities. In the case of community priorities,
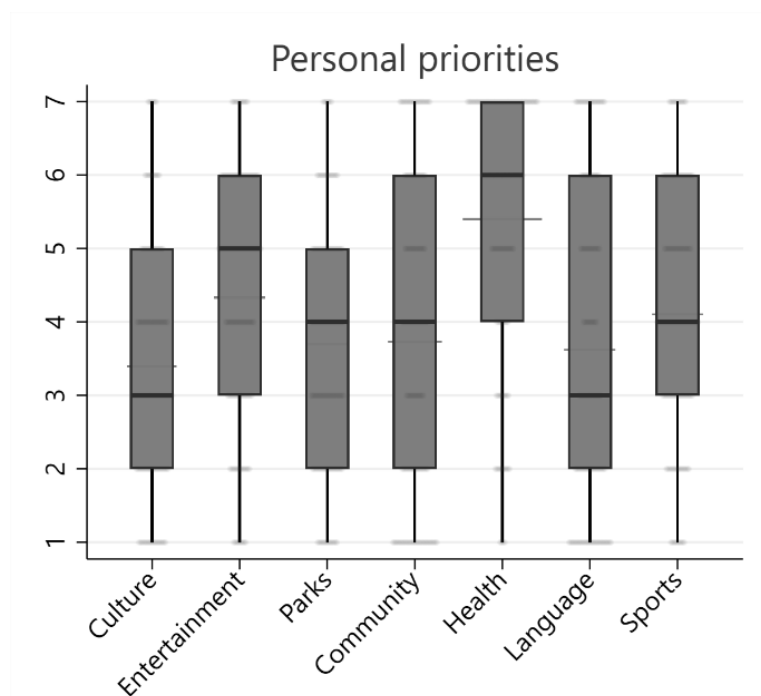
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4 This type of graph was created using survey results. Respondents were asked to rank categories, in this case safety priorities, from the most important (in this case 10, as there are 10 categories) to the least important (1). The thick horizontal line in each column shows the median score a category received. For example, "theft" emerged as the top priority, followed by "illicit substances." The height of each column reflects the level of agreement among respondents, with, specifically, 50% of all responses falling within the column. Shorter columns, like the one for "illicit substances," indicate strong agreement, while taller columns, such as for "homelessness," show greater variation in how participants ranked that issue.

safety is the top concern, followed by infrastructure, housing, and health and social services, which share the same median score. The height of each box represents the level of agreement among respondents with respect to each category. Specifically, 50% of all answers fall within each column (25% above the median and 25% below). Therefore, shorter columns indicate stronger agreement, while taller ones show disagreement. Finally, the thin horizontal lines show average scores, while the faint, transparent horizontal lines show the full distribution of responses.
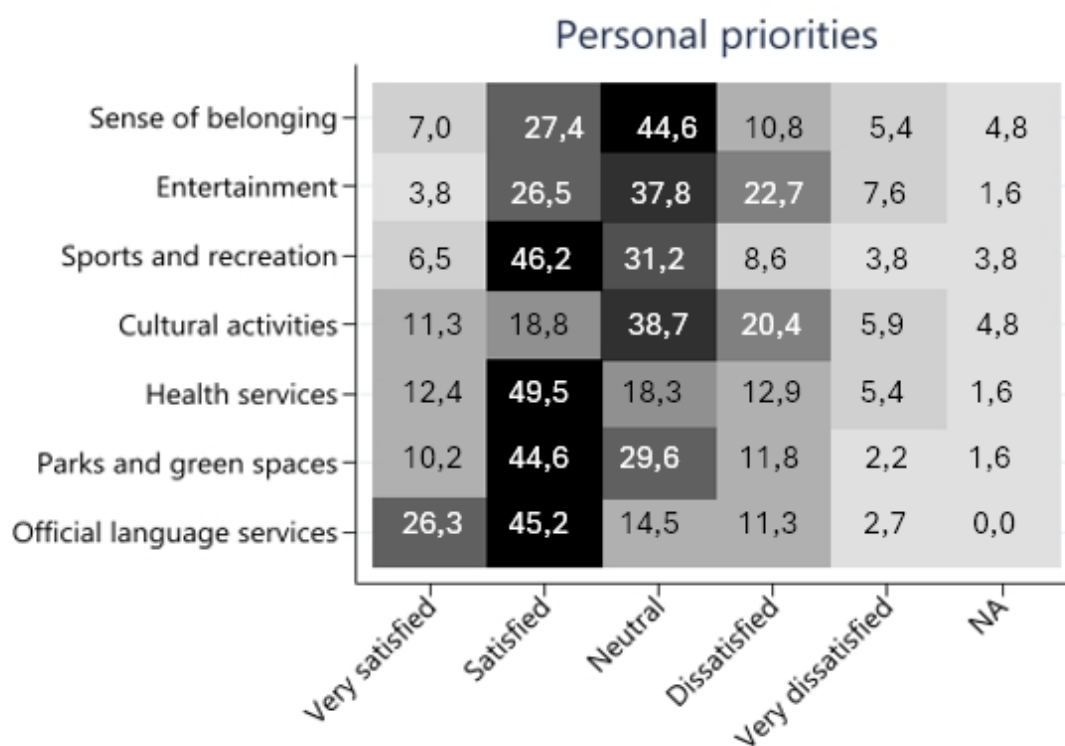
These graphs are complemented by heat maps (graphs 5 and 8), which show the level of *satisfaction* of respondents with the same priorities. Reading these graphs together helps identify which issues are considered important and how satisfied people are with them, which is useful information for setting priorities.

In practice, the data shows a high degree of variability in how respondents rank both personal and community priorities, suggesting diverse perspectives. On the other hand, some issues stand out as both important and associated with relatively low satisfaction, meaning that they could warrant targeted attention. These issues include, for example, infrastructure in the community priorities and entertainment in the personal priorities.

Graph 5: Personal Priorities

Personal priorities

Graph 6: Personal Priorities

Personal priorities

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	NA
Sense of belonging	7,0	27,4	44,6	10,8	5,4	4,8
Entertainment	3,8	26,5	37,8	22,7	7,6	1,6
Sports and recreation	6,5	46,2	31,2	8,6	3,8	3,8
Cultural activities	11,3	18,8	38,7	20,4	5,9	4,8
Health services	12,4	49,5	18,3	12,9	5,4	1,6
Parks and green spaces	10,2	44,6	29,6	11,8	2,2	1,6
Official language services	26,3	45,2	14,5	11,3	2,7	0,0

Graph 7: Community Priorities

Community Priorities
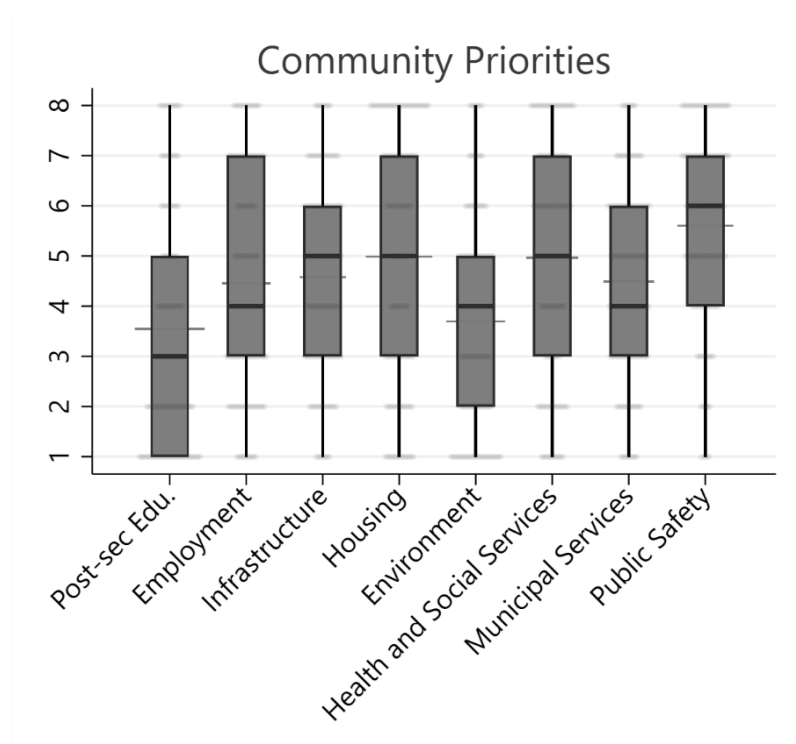
Graph 8: Community Priorities

Community priorities

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	NA
Post-secondary education	8,6	23,7	38,7	7,5	8,6	12,9
Availability of employment	2,2	26,9	34,9	21,5	6,5	8,1
Affordable housing	3,8	7,0	31,4	27,0	22,7	8,1
Public safety	12,4	45,4	24,9	11,9	4,9	0,5
Municipal services	12,9	54,3	19,9	9,1	2,2	1,6
Infrastructure	1,6	22,6	24,7	32,8	17,7	0,5
Environmental quality	5,4	35,5	39,2	14,0	3,2	2,7
Health and social services	11,8	48,9	21,0	10,2	5,4	2,7

The Hawkesbury Economy

Household income

Household income levels in Hawkesbury are lower than in neighbouring municipalities but are rising at a faster pace (table 5 and 6). In addition, Hawkesbury's lower cost of housing compared to other municipalities is seen as a factor in attracting new residents. However, it does not appear to constitute a strong value-added for people already living and working in the community already, considering their average income. In this regard, it's important to note that most residents live and work in Hawkesbury as shown in graph 9.
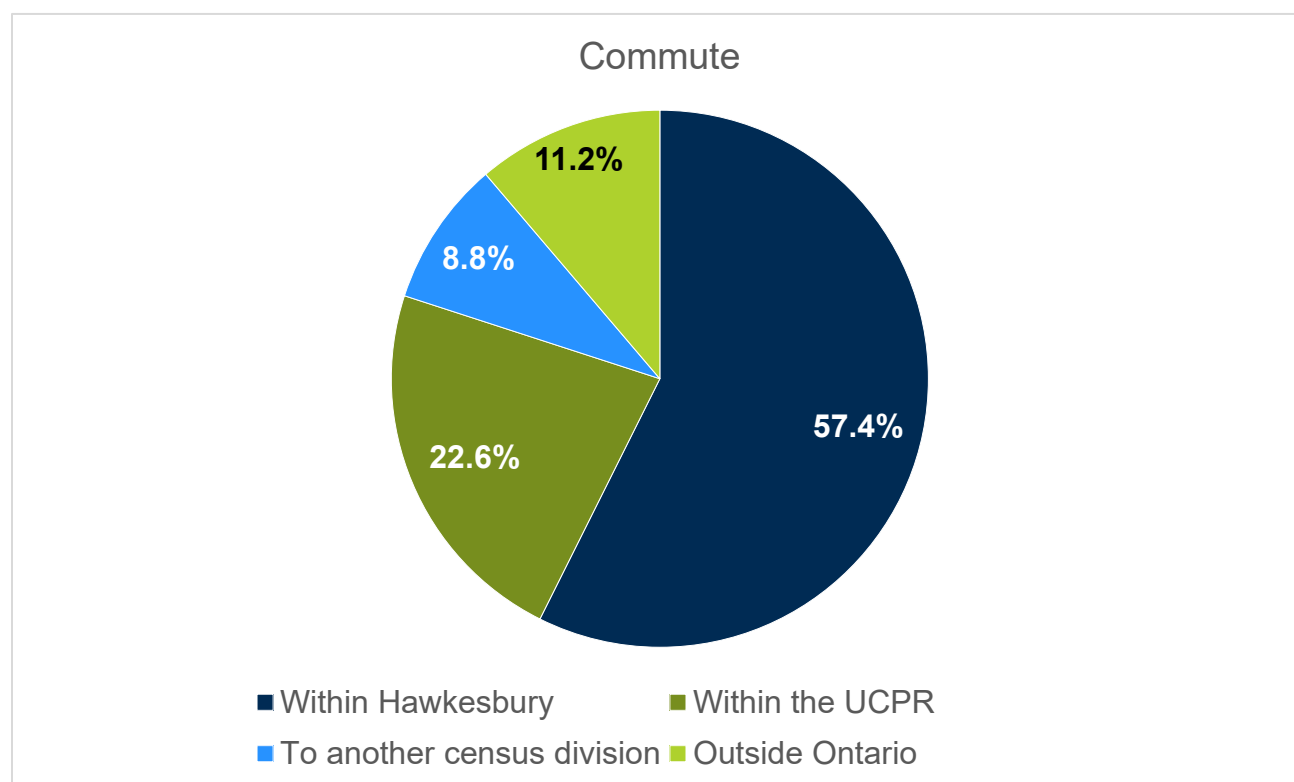
Table 5: Household Income After Tax

Household Income After Tax	Hawkesbury	Prescott Russell	Ottawa Gatineau	Ontario
Median	49,200	83,000	84,000	79,500
Δ% ('16-'21)	*15%*	*12.2%*	*11,3%*	*12,8%*
Medium	59,250	90,900	97,400	95,300
Δ% ('16-'21)	*21%*	*19.4%*	*18.7%*	*18.6%*

Table 6: Annual Household Income

Income Category	Annual Household Income	% of Total HHs	# of CHN† HHs
Area Median Household Income	$53,200		
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	≤ $10,640	0.6%	25
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	$10,640 - $26,600	17.91%	335
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	$26,600 - $42,560	21.39%	40
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	$42,560 - $63,840	19,8%	0
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	≥ $63,841	40,3%	0

Graph 9: Daily Commuters Destination

Commute

- 57.4% Within Hawkesbury
- 22.6% Within the UCPR
- 8.8% To another census division
- 11.2% Outside Ontario

Labour Market

As mentioned before, Hawkesbury's participation[5] and unemployment rates are, respectively low and high, especially when compared to other communities (table 7). The participation rate is obviously linked to the Town's demographic and social characteristics, which are showing an increasingly aging population, which results in a high proportion of retirees (graph 10).
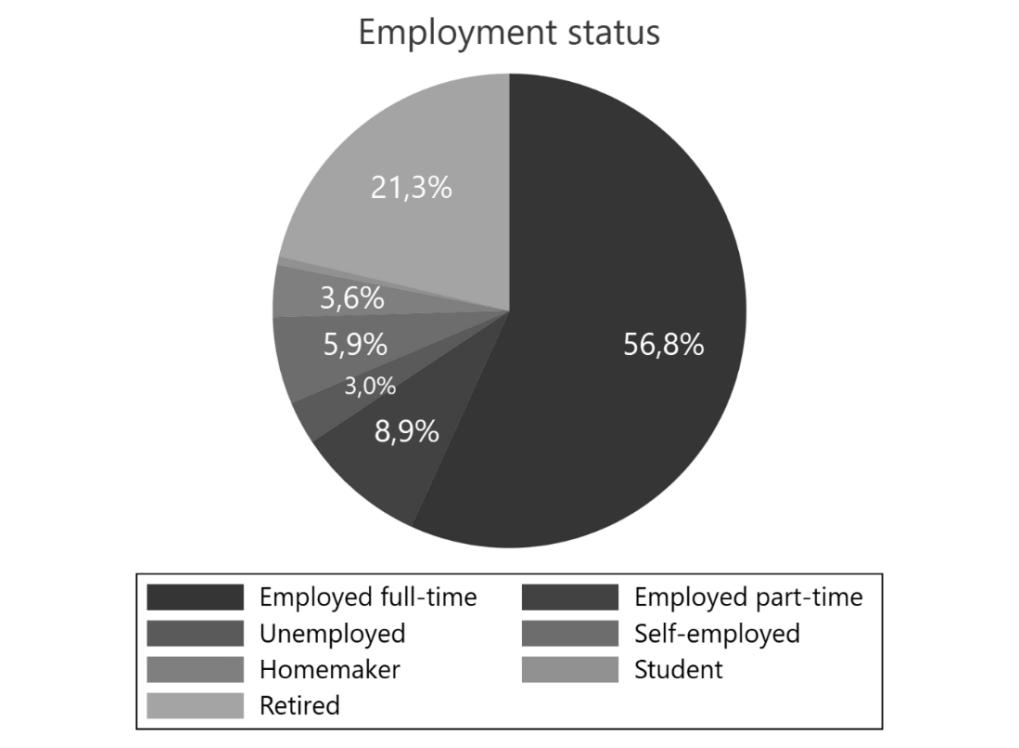
Table 7: Unemployment and Participation Rates

	Hawkesbury	UCPR	Ottawa Gatineau	Ontario
Unemployment rate	11.5%	7%	10%	12%
Δ% ('16-'21)	+1.9%	+1%	+3%	+5%
Participation rate* (%)	48,3%	64,4%	66,0%	62.8%
Δ% ('16-'21)	-2.4%	-2.3%	-1.7%	-1.9%

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5 Participation rate is computed as the ratio of employed and unemployed people over the total population over 15. In other words, it represents the proportion of the working age population that is either working or willing to work.

Consultations and data insights show the presence of a labour market mismatch. Characteristics of the available workforce (e.g., skill level, education background and experience) do not seem to meet the needs of local businesses. Most interviewees also pointed to high job vacancy rate as a major issue affecting Hawkesbury's economy and social fabric. To attract talent, the Town is partly relying on newcomers, who must be better integrated and retained through, among other things, an adequate housing offer. The presence of newcomers is seen as crucial to Hawkesbury's demographic stability and growth. However, relatively low wages and Hawkesbury's socio-economic image represent challenges for workforce recruitment and training.

Graph 10: Employment Status

Employment status

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired

Employment is driven by a small number of key employers and employment sectors (table 8), for example, the Hawkesbury General Hospital, which is the main employer in Hawkesbury.

Table 8: Main Sectors of Employment

Main Sectors of Employment:
• Manufacturing
• Health care and social assistance
• Wholesale trade
• Educational services
• Construction

Economic development

It is important to remember that Hawkesbury competes to attract businesses with nearby municipalities, which share some of Hawkesbury's assets (e.g., location, bilingual workforce). That being said, *all participants in the consultations consider the strengthening of Hawkesbury's economy to be a major* imperative.

The Town's Role in Economic Development

Several players are responsible for promoting economic development: some are local, others regional. Some respondents see the environment as confusing, leading to sometimes overlapping efforts. It is hoped that the municipal administration will play a facilitating role, for example, by setting up an economic development task force or round table, to promote communication and collaboration between the players involved.

Factors companies consider when relocating to Hawkesbury.
Costs

- Property taxes: considered higher than other neighbouring municipalities.
- Investment costs: seen as comparable to other municipalities.
- Utility costs[6]: no distinct advantages/disadvantages were identified during the interviews.
- Salary costs: not considered to be very different from those in other neighbouring municipalities.
- In general, there are very high levels of satisfaction and appreciation of the Community Improvement Plan incentives.

Access to market

- Population density and immediate proximity to Quebec are attractive features for retailers, some professionals, and parts of the service industry.
- For manufacturers, characteristics of the Town are similar to nearby municipalities.

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6 In the context of this report utility costs include water, electricity, gas, waste, and sewage.

Available manpower

- As mentioned above, local labour issues (skills, availability) are not unique to Hawkesbury. We note, however, that the Town must take steps to promote:
  - The construction of new housing to attract new residents and, consequently, workers.
  - Initiatives to make better use of and develop the local workforce, especially newcomers.

Services and infrastructure

- Overall, the current level of satisfaction with municipal services is good.
- There are, however, concerns about the capacity of utilities (e.g., water, electricity) to cope with Hawkesbury's growth.
- Dissatisfaction with road infrastructure is common. Some respondents indicated that they would like to receive more information about planned public works, particularly those likely to affect areas where businesses are located.

Building Permits and Municipal Bureaucracy

- Most respondents noted that the process of obtaining building and business permits is a key area of improvement. They would like the procedure to be quicker, more transparent and clearer, particularly with regards to the requirements for applicants.
- In this context, the predictability of the permit application and granting process (e.g., requirements, deadlines and results) is crucial for companies looking to establish themselves in the Town. Some respondents expressed concern about the municipal administration's ability to continue issuing construction and business permits.

Zoning and Official Plan

- Available lots in Hawkesbury are limited in number. Excluding potential extensions to its territory, the arrival of new businesses and housing might require changes to zoning by-laws and plans. Many of those interviewed expressed concern about the Town's vision for zoning and development. The fact that the Town no longer has an urban planner was seen as a cause for concern by several respondents. Such concerns can be linked back to the lack of an updated Official Plan.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Services and infrastructure

As mentioned above, most respondents are satisfied with the Town's services and infrastructure, with a few exceptions:

- The state of the roads and the speed of procedures for obtaining construction or operating permits.
- The ability of the Town's utilities to accommodate Hawkesbury's potential growth.
- The need for the Town to work with UCPR to test new forms of public transport. The results of the most recent pilot project conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic are being called into question due to the context in which they were implemented.
- Town communications need to be improved to make it easier for residents, shops and businesses to find the information they need, especially on the Town's website.

Several respondents mentioned that municipalities are being asked to do more. For example, the provincial government is transferring some responsibilities to them, and residents, businesses and retailers have higher expectations of municipal authorities. Against this backdrop, municipalities may lack the resources and capacity to cope with this increased complexity. Intermunicipal collaboration could play an important role in addressing this issue. At the same time, the UCPR is undergoing a service review, whose results will be important to monitor.

Staffing and Management

Town staff have good potential, with good levels of motivation and cohesion. However, the Town faces significant staffing challenges, with retention being a major issue, leading to difficulties, such as:

- Workforce capacity and training due to high turnover.
- Workload management.
- The need to tackle long-term challenges and projects rather than just providing day-to-day services.

These staffing challenges are not unique to Hawkesbury. Several interviewees identified competition for staff between municipalities as a problem and suggested that it should be tackled as part of a regional approach, not just specific to each municipality. This competition has a direct impact on the Town's ability to undertake and carry out projects and initiatives. In this constrained context, establishing clear **priorities and long-term objectives** are needed to address key service improvement issues, as well as complex challenges and projects.