

Charting a Course for a Vision and Strategy for Madawaska



A Concept Paper Prepared for the Town of Madawaska, Maine
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Executive Summary

This Concept Paper is a starting point to help chart a course for the planning of a 15 to 20-year strategy for the town of Madawaska, Maine. It offers insight about high-level issues that need to be tackled in the strategy, considerations for the planning process, and practical tools and resources to consider. It also introduces the expansive concept of *building a great place to live* as a driving force for the strategy.

By no means definitive or comprehensive, the intent of this paper is to offer guidance for a useful, relevant, and compelling vision and strategy. It starts the conversation to imagine what is possible. In some respects, it can be considered as a first stage of municipal strategic planning. A strategy for Madawaska is a roadmap to strengthen the community and region, realize progress and prosperity, and create conditions for great things to happen.

Once planning begins, the important work of convergence, imagination, and action takes place. This is where municipal government, elected officials, and people of Madawaska and beyond, come together to craft a way to maximize the town's potential, lead the conversation for regional development, mobilize for unrealized opportunities, and help the entrepreneurial, creative, and inventive capacities of the people of Madawaska to grow and flourish.

As with many small towns in Maine and across North America, Madawaska faces numerous challenges, such as a struggling and undiversified economy, out-migration of youth and talent, a fading downtown, and demands on scarce resources. The clarion call to address these and many other challenges cannot be ignored. Conversely, Madawaska possesses abundant assets and opportunities: its geographic location within the region and international area, its distinct culture and heritage, beautiful landscape, anchor industries, and people who care passionately about their home.

This paper was informed by research, the perspective of Madawaska residents and students, and stakeholders within the region and county. Key issues identified were grouped into seven areas of focus, which serve as a springboard for the strategy process. They will help the town move toward creating a liveable, distinctive, and prosperous community to live, work, retire, and visit. The focus areas include: 1) Community, Culture, and Place; 2) Education and Workforce; 3) Entrepreneurship and Prosperity, 4) Making and Imagination, 5) Youth and Population Growth; 6) Collaboration and Connection; and 7) Municipal Government.

Many variables are involved in planning for a municipal strategy. Planning will require time, capable expertise, resources, and commitment to achieve success. A good place to start is getting a strong planning team together to lead the way, followed by community engagement, relevant research, and solid analysis.

Recognizing the value of local knowledge, ensuring meaningful community participation, and being guided by a strong strategy process, will help the town move forward more confidently to define what really matters. The result of a concerted effort is a relevant and effective vision and strategic plan. With the help of a strong strategy and unprecedented cooperation and investment, Madawaska has an opportunity to shape a vibrant and prosperous future.

Building a Framework

Glimpse of Madawaska

Madawaska is a small, rural town situated in Aroostook County at the northeasternmost point of Maine and the United States. Part of the Maliseet (Wolastoqiyik) territory for thousands of years, a popular translation of Madawaska is “Land of the Porcupine” in the Maliseet language. In 1785, Acadians and French-Canadians settled the area and by the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, Madawaska became home to priests and nuns from Québec like the *Soeurs du Bon Pasteur* or the *Filles de la Sagesse* from France.¹ The town was founded in 1869 and is now home to over 4,000 residents (2010 Census), predominately of French heritage.

Situated along the St. John River, Madawaska is the largest of twenty towns and townships in the St. John Valley region. Locally known as “the Valley,” this bilingual and international region of approximately 13,000 people, borders the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Québec, and is renowned for its distinct culture and outstanding waterways, fields and forest.

The town is ideally situated in the central part of this 100-linear mile region, with the towns of Van Buren and Fort Kent within a half hour drive, and only minutes away from its sister city, Edmundston, in New Brunswick. The surrounding Maine communities of St. David, St. Agatha, Frenchville, Grand Isle, Lille, and Sinclair are considered within the greater Madawaska area. The town is also part of the St. John River watershed and near to Long Lake, the first and largest lake on the connected Fish River Chain of Seven Lakes.

Madawaska’s geographic location place within the St. John Valley and international region, positions it as a leader and anchor for the entire area. The Madawaska/Edmundston border crossing is one of the busiest along the U.S./Canada border. A couple miles away is the TransCanada Highway that connects the Maritime provinces with Québec and Ontario where tens of thousands of people pass by the “Madawaska, Me” exit annually. Within a 60-mile radius, Madawaska is part of a population of close to 100,000 people and only three hours away,² is Québec city, a UNESCO World Heritage City.

As with many small towns across rural North America, Madawaska faces numerous challenges, such as a struggling and undiversified economy, out-migration of youth and talent, a fading downtown, and demands on scarce resources. And yet, Madawaska possesses abundant assets and opportunities: its distinct culture and heritage (French language, historic sites on the National Register of Historic Sites), beautiful landscape and outdoor recreation (part of a 2,300 mile county-wide trail system, amongst the finest in New England), anchor industries (e.g., paper, agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing), and people who care passionately about their home.

¹ This section is sourced from the *St. John Valley Creative Economy Project*, Sheila Jans et al, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, UM, 2010.

² Source: succeedhere.org, includes northern Aroostook, ME and counties of Victoria, Restigouche, Madawaska, NB; and Témiscouata, QC.

Aim of This Paper

The Town of Madawaska may be at a pivotal time in its history. With a heightened level of awareness of its potential, there is momentum to explore ways to redefine Madawaska and to build and sustain a bright and prosperous future. This Concept Paper responds to the momentum. It grew out of discussions with municipal leadership about the need for a compelling 15 to 20-year vision and strategy for economic development.

A number of things were touched upon in the discussions: regional development, revitalization of Main Street, business growth and job creation, and the need to attract and retain youth and talent. Regional and international cooperation was discussed, along with how quality of place, art and culture, creativity, innovation, and making, are all important contributors to a vibrant community.

By no means definitive or comprehensive, this Concept Paper offers insight to help shape a useful, relevant, and compelling vision and strategy. In some respects, it can be considered a first stage of municipal strategic planning since it outlines some high-level issues that can be tackled, suggestions for a planning process, and practical tools and resources. It also helps to guide a course of action to secure funding and investment for future planning. At the core of this paper are three foundational and driving forces:

- 1) **Building a great place to live** – The expansive concept of building a great place to live, work, retire, and visit, points to the idea that there is something about a place where prosperity flourishes at the broadest sense of that word; where all the moving parts – *all that makes up where people live* – possess a symbiotic relationship and synchronicity.
- 2) **Creative ways to plan and seek solutions** – Economic development does not take place in a vacuum. All aspects of what makes Madawaska distinct, competitive, and exceptional, must be considered. An approach that is open to new ways to plan, more constructive ways to find solutions and include new voices, will contribute to shaping an effective vision and strategy.
- 3) **Imagine what is possible** – A critical ingredient to building prosperity and vibrancy is an attitude open to change, imagination, cooperation, and daring. Combine that with strong leadership, a spirit of collaboration, and intentional action, and the result is a town opening itself up to a mindset that anything is possible.

Methodology

In May, 2016, Sheila Jans, cultural development consultant of CultureWorth, was hired by the Town of Madawaska to write this Concept Paper. The working group, composed of the consultant and town manager, shaped the paper's scope and created an advisory group composed of five people who live and work in the Madawaska area. Initial findings were delivered in early July, a first draft by late August, and the final paper was delivered by early fall. Key tasks beyond writing and presentations included:

- Establishment and meeting of advisory group; meetings with town manager and other staff.
- Fourteen one-on-one and small group interviews (identified ideas and key issues to tackle).
- Madawaska Middle-High School online survey with 145 responses (what it means to live here).
- Research of studies and reports, vision/strategic planning, funding avenues, and resources.

Purpose of a Vision

Visioning is a process that helps to bring forth compelling images and define a desired and preferred future. Envisioning the future is not about what is improbable or impossible. Rather, it focuses on what is imagined and intended, the readiness to take risks, and to search for a shared future.

Specifically, community visioning is a collaborative planning process that enables meaningful participation of residents, business owners, elected officials, local institutions, and other stakeholders, to reach a level of consensus, have a voice in decision-making, and be a part of the long-term future of their community.

For some communities, a visioning process can be a transformative experience because it offers residents and stakeholders the opportunity to imagine where they would like the community to be in five, ten, or twenty years; to explore new ideas and possibilities, and have a stronger sense of control over their destinies.

Visioning is usually done in conjunction with larger strategic planning. A resulting vision statement offers an important perspective of what matters and is of value to the community, its goals, and priorities. Inspirational, aspirational, and instructional, a vision helps to inform future planning, programs and regulations, sustainability, and development.³

Purpose of Strategic Planning

A strategic plan can help the town define its mission, vision and guiding principles; examine issues and identify strategies and resources; establish action steps with realistic goals and objectives; set a timeframe for implementation; and identify ways to measure success and adapt to change.

Strategic planning is a process that helps to determine where an entity, in this case, the Town of Madawaska, is going over a period of time, how it will get there, and how it will know if it got there or not. There are a variety of perspectives, models and approaches used in strategic planning. The duration of strategic plans can range from one, five, ten, or more years.

No matter the direction taken, the process can solve some major problems, develop leadership and community building (plus team building within municipal offices), instil a sense of ownership and investment, and increase productivity and efficiency. Successful development strategies also include identifying and leveraging assets and forming collaborations with other jurisdictions to maximize resources. See page 17 in the appendix for a suggested strategic planning process and page 21 for examples on strategy approaches.

³ Many sources informed this definition, such as <http://conservationtools.org/guides/51-community-visioning>; <http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Governance/Community-Strategic-Planning-and-Visioning/Creating-a-Community-Vision.aspx>;

Community Research

Interviews and a survey were conducted over a three-week period to gain insight into what Madawaska needs to consider in its strategic planning. Local, regional, and county plan, reports and studies were also reviewed (see page 24 in the appendix, including county, state, national and international resources).

Interviews

The aim of the interviews was to gain direct feedback from people within Madawaska and nearby communities about what they think are key, high-level issues that need to be tackled in visioning and strategic planning. Fourteen one-on-one and small group interviews were conducted. Effort was made to ensure diverse geography, age, and perspectives. Interviews were casual and relaxed conversations, with a demonstrable enthusiasm on the the part of the interviewees. Responses from interviewees are included in the focus areas for strategic planning on page 9. Key interview questions included:

1. What do we need to pay attention to in this strategy? What's important to include?
2. What should we strive toward? What's your biggest desire?
3. How could we approach this strategy? How can we think about this differently?

Online Survey

An online survey of students of the Madawaska Middle-High School was conducted of all grade levels except graduating students (192 students/145 responses).⁴ The survey provides a glimpse in to how young people perceive Madawaska and what they desire to live and work here. Responses ranged from cynical and not caring, to enthusiasm and love for Madawaska. The following is a short selection of slightly edited responses:

1. Think about your future: What does Madawaska need to be like for you to live and work here? *I would live and work in Madawaska if...*

- "There was less chance of job cuts, and if there were bigger companies that offered different restaurants, and shopping places."
- "If there are no opportunities in the field that I want to work in, then that will push me further away."

2. What are Madawaska's strongest assets?

- "Our uniqueness like our culture, our seasons, that we are one of the four corners and 5 minutes away from a city with 21,000 people and close to the Allagash, a drop dead gorgeous piece of land."
- "None, it all around sucks."

3. How can we create a really great town?

- "Somehow kicking the losers out, and bringing real people in."
- "Encourage people to follow their dreams and love doing what they're passionate for. This boosts people's creativity and may create jobs (probably diverse ones) which are so desperately needed."

⁴ The survey was designed and conducted with the help of Colin Jandreau, a member of the advisory group and a teacher at the MMHS.
Charting a Course for a Vision and Strategy, Town of Madawaska ©Sheila Jans, CultureWorth, October 2016

Suggested Directions

An online article entitled “A very bad sign for all but America’s biggest cities,” seems to forecast doom for small, rural communities. It portends fewer new businesses, less higher-tech start ups, and an attrition of traditional industry. In the innovation economy, urban areas will attract a more highly educated and highly skilled workforce.¹ These observations are not necessarily hyperbole. They reflect a disturbing reality and an unsettling future. But they also present an opportunity to redefine *small, rural, and town*, and to imagine what is possible for a different kind of future.

What does success look like? High-achieving and successful communities know where they are going. There is a sense of confidence and understanding of how all the elements of their town play a role in making it a prosperous place. Town leaders, elected officials, and stakeholders have a grasp of how to respond and adapt to rapid social, cultural, economic, and technological changes. They are intentional in shaping a *living* strategy – that is in itself adaptable and nimble, able to shift and respond to the environment.

A good municipal strategy starts with community.

It resonates with what a community values, what matters most, and what kind of future is desired. Madawaska can become a town **where the private and public sector invest and work together to build and sustain prosperity**. The town needs to galvanize and stretch itself; be intentional when it comes to “thinking global, acting local;” tap into its innumerable intrinsic assets; and forge new and creative partnerships.

Shaping a compelling vision and strategy takes motivation, commitment, resources, and a desire for something better. It requires manifesting success. There are many practical steps involved in the process, like understanding the community well, such as its assets, challenges, threats, aspirations, opportunities, and importantly, how to draw connections and leverage them, resulting in new opportunities. A strategic plan is like a road map for the future, where the journey is very important, if not more so, than the final destination.

The intent of this Concept Paper is to provide some guidance to chart the course for planning. Ultimately, the final directions for the strategy rests in the hands of the working group, steering committee, and Board of Selectpeople. The process can take many and varied forms, ranging from a couple years with extensive community engagement to a six or eight-month internally produced plan. Moving forward on a strategy depends on a number of factors, such as the nature and needs of the town, its resources and capacity, levels of support, and scheduling. Aiming for a planning process of 8 to 16 months may be a reasonable amount of time to consider.

Focus Areas

The high-level issues identified in the chapter Community Research, along with survey results and research, inform the seven areas of focus below. Multiple components are included in each. These focus areas help to serve as guideposts to drive the direction of the strategy. By no means are they definitive or absolute; rather, they are a starting point – a springboard for further discussion and planning.



1. Community, Culture, and Place

“Ignore at our peril the vital and important role that our culture and land play in our quality of life and attracting business.”

Strategic planning needs to include exploring what makes Madawaska a liveable community – a distinctive and attractive place to live, work, retire, and visit. Effort must be made to understand the intrinsic qualities and assets of Madawaska (including surrounding areas), as well as how to leverage and create new opportunities from them. This includes paying attention to and investing in:

- **Quality of life/place and the town’s visual environment**, especially Main Street (*“Main Street is an eyesore”*).⁵ The visual appeal and decline of the main street and many properties affects the ability to attract retail, investment, professionals and families. Focus is also needed on **zoning and standards on building and signage** (e.g., electronic, size, placement, etc.).
- **Preservation and promotion of art, culture and heritage to benefit the entire region**. For example, Madawaska can be a leader to set progressive policy to celebrate, protect, and foster the French culture (Acadian and French Canadian). Make the language and culture more visible and integrated more strategically in the school system.
- **Local food, specialized retail; creative business, creation of special districts; better parking** (e.g., a new business did not locate on Main Street because of its unappealing look and lack of parking).
- **Natural and built environment** (green spaces, parks, view sheds, community forest, vernacular architecture); **sense of place; eco-recreation** (e.g., expand trail systems, develop more non-motorized activities).

⁵ Quotes in this section are from interviewees.

- **Housing options, being age-friendly** (youth *and* seniors), **volunteerism, health and wellness, public safety, animal welfare, and transportation.**⁶
- **Be attentive to what is happening around the world**, like advances in placemaking or how culture is a vehicle for economic growth and an instrument for reshaping communities.⁷ Attention to these elements is not only essential for people who live and work in Madawaska, but will also benefit **tourism and destination development** (e.g., create experiential opportunities and link with initiatives such as the Voici the Valley Cultureway and the St. John Valley Cultural Byway).⁸

2. Education and Workforce

*“Everyone has to be a player in changing the situation.
We need to show it’s possible for someone to have a good career here.”*

Understanding the direct role that educational institutions play in ensuring a capable workforce is essential. Madawaska needs to design and support efforts that nurtures, attracts, and sustains a skilled, ready, and able workforce. Advancing this and other job creation efforts also requires regional attention, long-term strategy, public and private collaborative efforts, and efficient use of existing infrastructure. Focus on:

- Short and long-term **advantages of school consolidation** to address mounting costs, sharing of resources, and student population diminishment. Forecasting of student population indicates that by 2025, Madawaska “will not be able to provide more than a basic education at the high school level”⁹.
- Design **school curriculum and workforce training around what is relevant and needed** (e.g., technology, agriculture, trades, forestry, becoming a Maine Guide).
- Be attentive to growth areas; **respond to the changes in technology and industry** (“*A strong and educated work force is needed or the community will fail*”).

3. Entrepreneurship and Prosperity

*“We need to keep a good eye on trends, create a more diverse economy,
understand our assets, and know where the gaps are”.*

Madawaska needs to shape an environment – an *ecosystem* – for risk-taking, progressive economic incentives, and the entrepreneurial spirit. Economic development, for example, can focus on providing relevant infrastructure and technology for job creation and business growth (especially small to medium-size businesses), cross-sector collaboration, leveraging intrinsic assets (including the region and international area), and becoming a generator of unique, specialized, and value-added products and services. Focus on:

- **Adopt entrepreneurialism** – the spirit and state of acting in an entrepreneurial manner – **as a central tenant for the town.**
- **Be a catalyst for entrepreneurial growth:** mentoring, incubation, and support programs; services for emerging and existing business/entrepreneurialism; increase collaboration between nonprofits, private and public sector); invest in high speed broadband and other technologies.

⁶ Article about culture, place, and the economy: <http://www.lfpress.com/2016/08/12/too-few-understand-the-economic-impact-of-culture-and-we-miss-opportunities-as-a-result/> / Art transformed the small, rural town of Marfa, Texas, population 1,981; world destination for Minimalist art, with flourishing retail, restaurant, tourism, economy: <http://www.visitmarfa.com/arts.php-.V7snEHq6Xdk>.

⁷ For example: placemaking, livable and walkable communities, etc. http://www.pps.org/?mc_cid=2df4347382&mc_eid=42edbae24d

⁸ Look to the success of the Economuseum Network: <http://www.economusees.com/en/>

⁹ Based on birth recordings in Madawaska and Grand Isle, by 2025 the total enrollment of elementary, middle, and high school will be 167 students, down from 923 in 1991 and 431 in 2016 (Source: forecasting document from Superintendent of Madawaska Schools)

- **Be a hub for innovation, new ideas, and start-ups.**¹⁰ Look at creating a “think-tank” and ways for people to come together with ideas and implement them (e.g., Entrepreneurial Challenge); consider viability of expanding Free Trade Zone, and creating a Free Culture Zone.
- Develop a **more diverse economy** (“*We have to stop complaining and thinking that big manufacturing will save us. We need to go beyond the mill*”); **look to our roots**, local foods and specialized products.
- **Be aware of gaps, trends, and growth areas** (e.g., IT, craft breweries, solar technologies, etc.); learn from other models of development (e.g., investment clubs, AnchorSpace in Bar Harbor).
- Develop **strategy to attract talent that left the town/region; become attractive to remote access jobs** and businesses that can thrive in a small, rural town (and also because of proximity to Canada).
- **Address a prevalent negative mindset and focus on what we do well that no one else does.**
- **Look to models of success** and best practices near and far.

4. Making and Imagination

“I want to wake up and say I’m proud to live in Madawaska. I don’t feel that way right now. We need more creative businesses. We need to be making more things.”

Madawaska can become a Maker Space – a place where the private sector, along with the nonprofit and public sector, makes (manufactures) things and possesses an energy and spirit of innovation, creativity, and imagination. Become a place where **Anything Is Possible**.

- **Invest in and act local** (while thinking global): **foods, talent and ingenuity, traditional occupations, natural and built environment.**
- Encourage **specialty restaurants** (especially those that offer indigenous cuisine), **boutique furniture marketing, local artists, handmade products, diversified crops, and experiences and products that speak to the culture and place** (and link these to tourism).
- Address negative and fatalistic attitudes; **be a catalyst for a positive and creative mindset** where talent is nurtured and harnessed, great ideas emerge, and imagination flourishes (“*to be successful, we need to change the atmosphere in the town. We need to create a sense of prosperity*”).
- Become a **hub for new ideas, innovation and creativity** (consider developing a conference center).

5. Youth and Population Growth

“You know what’s missing? The lack of attention on keeping and attracting young professionals. We have to provide opportunities for people to stay. We need risk takers.”

Fundamental to the future of Madawaska is attention on retention and attraction of young people, professionals with specialized skills, as well as consideration of growing the town’s population through immigration.¹¹ Give serious attention to the critical urgency of the diminishing student population. Work *with* young people – involve them directly in shaping the town’s future. Focusing on youth, however, should not preclude attention to seniors and how they can also grow Madawaska’s population.

¹⁰ Look to successful models: IndyHub: <http://www.indyhub.org>; Startup Zone in Prince Edward Island: <http://www.startupzone.ca/>

¹¹ Article about small US towns considering immigration to grow its population: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/08/05/shrinking-small-towns-see-hope-in-refugees>

6. Collaboration and Connection

“If Madawaska does well, everyone will benefit.”

Madawaska’s heritage and geographic location within the St. John Valley and next to Canada provides many advantages. It is ideally positioned to lead in aligning with surrounding communities for greater regional and international cooperation. Moving Madawaska forward, therefore, requires greater collaboration with communities within the region and county, as well as with neighboring communities in New Brunswick and Québec. These efforts will help to foster growth, maximize limited resources, capitalize on new ideas, and leverage investment. Additionally, it is important to align with agencies at all levels, and especially with jurisdictions and entities not normally considered. Additional considerations include:

- **Solve problems with better communication and partnering with towns, schools, and industry** (e.g., Twin Rivers could offer mentoring advice to entrepreneurs).
- Become a dynamic center that bring towns together and strives for regional planning. Take a **lead toward regionalism** (*“We need a regional attitude toward things like education, commerce, and tourism. This has to happen soon and it has to be St. John Valley wide – we’re all in this together”*).
- **Canada is considered critical to the success of Madawaska** regardless of the challenges of being situated on the border (*“We’re way too isolated in our thinking. Automatically, we’re a larger population when we think of ourselves as a single, international community”*). It can partner more strategically with Edmundston, for example, by complementing and expanding upon related efforts.
- Focus on **activities and programs to encourage people on both sides of the border to interact, share, and invest with one another**, tourism, and border-loving businesses (i.e., what kind of business could thrive precisely because Madawaska is situated directly next to Canada).
- Explore **how the TransCanada Highway can serve as an important asset for travel and business growth** (e.g., “pre-registration” with GPS tracking technology) and how expanding the Free Trade Zone (and creating a Free Culture Zone) could ease restrictions for greater cooperation, sharing, and interface between countries.
- **Ensure existing infrastructure remains strong** (e.g., Twin Rivers, University of Maine at Fort Kent, SJV Technology Center, Northern Maine Community College, Northern Maine Regional Airport).

7. Municipal Government

“Madawaska needs to create conditions that support and enable things to happen.”

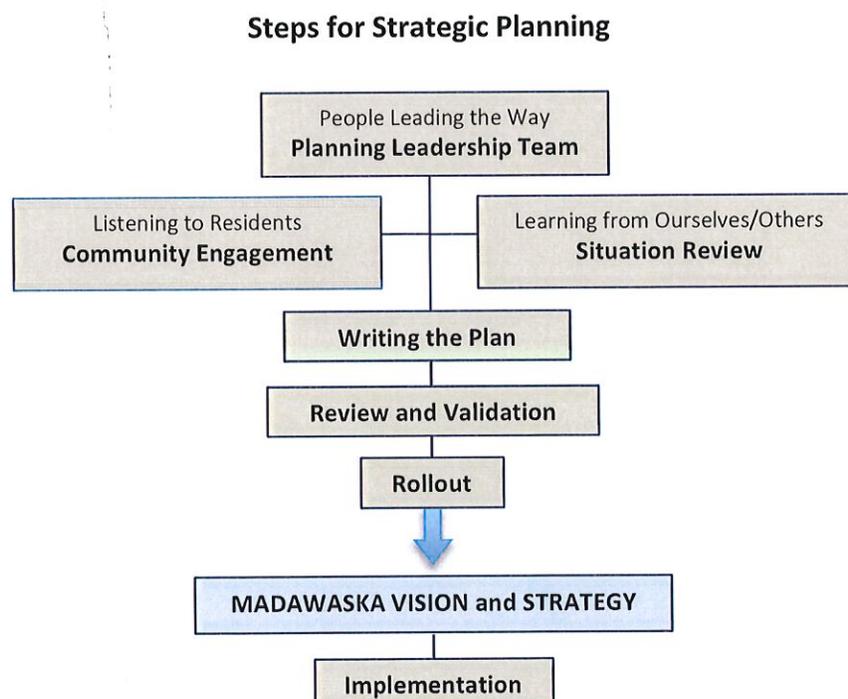
For Madawaska to be a thriving, dynamic, and vibrant town, municipal government needs to invest in shaping and implementing a thoughtful vision and strategy. Elected officials and administration must be leaders, catalysts, and collaborators. The Town needs to create the conditions to make things happen. This can be realized by shaping and adopting insightful policies, inspiring an environment of possibility and creativity, and implementing broad support for business development and opportunities for local residents to invest more in their town. Additional consideration can be given to investing in more effective communications and marketing, including better design materials and branding (e.g., town logo).

Planning Approach

As already indicated, the intent of this Concept Paper is to offer guidance, suggestions, and directions for vision and strategic planning. Though a variety of options are possible, six basic steps outlined in the following pages can be considered in shaping a process. They form a spine from which components can be used or activities added, depending on decisions made by the planning team, timeframe, resources, and other variables.

No matter the process chosen, a well-designed one is essential. Other important ingredients include: keep it manageable, transparent, and inclusive. Focus on the long-term but build in short-term wins (a 15-20 year plan is segmented into yearly timeframes). Embed the process and final plan with a spirit of possibility and adaptability; make it easy for people to get involved. Aim for a strategy that is inspiring and aspirational, as well as practical, substantive, and grounded in solid information. Consider creating a message around the strategy (e.g., “Accelerate/Advance Madawaska” or “Madawaska 2026.”). Importantly, make sure there is enthusiastic participation of the community and support of the town administration, steering committee, and Board of Selectpeople.

The first place to start is getting a good planning team together to lead the way. This is followed by community engagement and a situation review and analysis (e.g., economic projections, asset mapping, best practices, and other relevant research). Pulling all this information together takes place when writing the plan, followed by making it available for community review and validation. The completion and rollout of the plan begins the important process of implementation and action for success. A detailed explanation of the planning process can be found on page 17 in appendix.



Note: See the appendix for more details on the planning process.

A Word About Cost

This Concept Paper does not include itemization or in-depth analysis of the costs and resource needs to carry out vision and strategy planning. Both direct and indirect costs depend on the planning approach decided upon, professional fees, timeframe, resource needs, staff time and resources, required materials, mailings, printing, and so on. Given the span of possibilities, the cost for a strategic planning process could range from \$15,000 to \$25,000 (and more) depending on the complexity and scope of the effort.

To lessen direct costs, the planning process can be done internally with the use of volunteers. Many towns, however, do not take into account the real cost for staff time and resources. Depending on the scope of the strategy, a few staff members may be involved, allocating several hours/week for planning, meetings, and related activities (e.g., weekly meetings, monthly meetings with steering committee and board).

The Town of Madawaska could consider a combination of professionals, volunteers, and town staff for the vision and strategic planning process. For example, professionals could be hired for planning components such as establishing a process, engagement and facilitation, best practices and network contacts, gathering data, forecasting, mapping, analysis, and writing of the plan. Ultimately, the vision and strategic planning must be a cooperative effort where the residents of Madawaska, the Board of Selectpeople, and municipal government, have direct hands-on involvement.

Examples: *The Town of Fort Fairfield did its strategy planning for minimal cost since it was driven by volunteers and managed by staff. Some direct expenses were incurred for refreshments and materials for meetings, as well as printing the strategy document. The City of Edmundston hired a professional to lead a 2-day workshop, help shape a vision and directions, and write a report. The cost was \$15,000 CDN. All other costs were associated with staff time.*

Making it Happen

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there."

Lewis Carroll

A critical ingredient to fostering social, cultural, and economic vibrancy is an attitude that is open to change, imagination, tolerance, cooperation, and daring. Madawaska has an opportunity to shape a new approach for development and sustainability. It can be proactive in creating the conditions for unprecedented cooperation and investment in the prosperity of this town, as well as for the St. John Valley. This Concept Paper is a step forward in shaping that direction.

Madawaska is a small, rural town that possesses what many people strongly desire: open spaces, no traffic congestion, beautiful landscape, slower pace of life, friendly people, clean water, safe streets, and a distinct culture and heritage. Being mindful about the value of these quality of life attributes will position Madawaska as more attractive for business, development, and investment. Effort needs to be taken to more fully understand and supporting the town's cultural, social, natural, and economic capital.

Not alone in its struggles and challenges, Madawaska is simply a microcosm of what is happening in Maine and throughout North America. Certainly, one can take the position that there is an urgent need for serious change in Madawaska. A good hard look at ourselves, our attitudes, and the obstructions we construct, is worth earnest attention. One thing, however, is unequivocally clear: the residents of Madawaska care deeply for their town and they want it to flourish.

This is a great place to start with a vision and strategy. The talent and expertise to succeed in this strategy are abundantly available in Madawaska. Ideally, the final strategic plan will have emerged from a thoughtful and constructive process, which is equally, if not more important, than the final product. The following concepts and ideas may be helpful to keep in mind throughout the planning process:

- **Redefine *small, rural, and town*** – galvanize, stretch, and shape a new definition for our future.
- **Start with community** – harness our talent and honor community wisdom.
- **Imagine what is possible** – prepare for amazing ideas.
- **Know what matters** – understand what we value and cherish to guide our planning.
- **Tap into assets** – know all aspects of our community's intrinsic qualities.
- **Be practical and aspirational** – combine solid data and information with inspiration and motivation.
- **Forge new and creative partnerships** – span boundaries and lead the way for collaboration.
- **Work together** – align and create conditions for success.

Attaining prosperity, in the broadest sense of that word, requires a holistic way of thinking. It bears repeating that it is important to craft a municipal vision and strategy that embraces *all* aspects of what makes Madawaska distinct, competitive, and exceptional. Combine that with strong leadership, a spirit of collaboration, and intentional action, and the result is a town opening itself up to a sense that anything is possible.

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Private Sector Sponsors

Alete Salon & Spa
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Advisory Group

Denise Hébert – Farmer/Owner, Au Jardins, St. David
Colin Jandreau – Teacher, Madawaska Middle-High School; Four Seasons Association, Madawaska
Jonathan Roy – Manager, Ridgewood Estates; Inn of Acadia; Madawaska and Frenchville
Luis Sanclemente – Vice President, Acadia Federal Credit Union, Madawaska and Fort Kent

Interviewees

Steve Collard – Vice President of Supply Chain, Twin Rivers Paper, Madawaska
Bob Clark – Executive Director, Northern Maine Development Commission, Caribou
Tim Crowley – President, Northern Maine Community College, Presque Isle
Don Cyr – Director, Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel, Lille
Alex Daigle – Manager, Daigle & Sons, Madawaska
Gisèle Dionne – Superintendant, Madawaska Schools, Madawaska
Jenney Dionne – Owner, Alete Salon, Madawaska
Bob Dorsey – President and CEO, Aroostook Partnership, Caribou
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Terry Helms – Selectman, Town of Grand Isle
Raylan Lagassé – Selectman, Town of Grand Isle
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Dave Wylie – Grantwriter, St. John Valley

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Appendices

Steps for Strategic Planning

1. Planning Leadership

The strategy process must be driven and managed by a capable and committed team of people to lead the way, composed of a working group and a community advisory group or steering committee (these are working names only). Aim for small numbers to minimize internal conflict and to more easily facilitate decision-making. The composition and tasks of the planning team could include:

Working Group

- Composed of 3-5 people (municipal staff, townspeople, and if desired, a strategy consultant).
- Responsible for primary direction, establishing timeframe for the strategy scope and process, management and execution of planning, determining who needs to be at the table, communications, volunteer management, working with community, completion of the plan.
- Directly reports to the Board of Selectpeople.
- Additional expertise (professional or volunteer) may be required for facilitation, note-taking, digital technology (re. survey, social media), gathering and analyzing data (e.g., mapping, economic projections), writing the plan, etc.

Community Steering Committee

- Composed of 8-10 people from a range of backgrounds and private, public, nonprofit sectors (business, education, culture, nature, including mix of gender, age, ethnicity, etc.).
- Consider a Youth “Secretariat” (advisory group of young people ages 18-29) that is independent, but still part of the main steering committee (potential for it to continue beyond the planning process).
- Responsible for providing feedback, insight, outreach, and identifying priorities and directions (depending on approach, can also assume role of facilitation, note-taking, and other planning items).
- Can identify “task leaders” to rally people around key issues, gather information, etc.
- Meets as required depending on timeframe of process.
- A few members can be visible on the front line in community engagement (ambassadors).

The talent and expertise to succeed in this strategy are abundantly available in Madawaska. Given the importance of building a strong strategy, it is essential that young people play a significant and proactive role in designing the strategy. Diversity and inclusiveness are important ingredients in forming the steering committee’s composition. Along with a selection of people who have a deep and broad knowledge of key town issues, new faces and voices must be at the table. When selecting members of the advisory groups, the ultimate criteria will be their commitment to creating a successful vision and strategy for Madawaska.

2. Community Engagement

Consultation and engagement with the community will help lay the foundation for a strong vision and strategy. A successful process brings together a diverse group of stakeholders who tackle some basic questions, such as “Where are we now?” “Where are we going?” “Where do we want to be?” “How do we get there?” and eventually, “Are we getting there?” (Source: New Oregon Model). Additional questions: What matters most? What resources and talents do we need? How do we span boundaries and create alliances?

Through workshops, charrettes, focus groups, one-on-one conversations, potluck dinners – whatever the form of getting together – a vision can be shaped, goals and priorities can be identified, and action can be taken. A planning process provides an rare opportunity for municipal leaders and elected officials to work directly with the community in a constructive and creative way.

Though there may be a sense of trepidation for broad and wide community involvement due to a variety of challenges, efforts should still be made to include as many people as possible. Conversations are enriched by new voices and new ideas. This means casting a wide net for involvement: artists, historians, businesses, millworkers, elders, teachers, community leaders, students, municipal staff, newcomers – essentially, everyone who wants to be involved.

Engagement Goals

- Generate awareness about the plan; create an emotional connection to the process.
- Engage community through conversations, digital connections, sharing of information.
- Welcome wide participation and responses.
- Understand who can do what, with commitments to action and investment in practical terms.
- Determine how to continue working together (sustained access to wisdom and sharing).
- Create public support and identify champions for outcomes of the plan.

Engagement Interaction

Community engagement should be outcome oriented, allowing for brainstorming, the emergence of amazing ideas, a vision, and the identification of practical and tangible short and long-term wins. For all aspects of engagement, be mindful of transparency, take good notes, and keep good records. Community engagement will require capable leadership to manage the conversations, guide consensus, and move toward action.

This is a change initiative, and so inevitably, there will be some resistance and obstacles (e.g., people not responding well to change, negativity, polarizing and entrenched attitudes). Keep on track, but be adaptable, make information accessible, bring people into the fold, and create a sense of excitement about the future.

An option to consider is a kickoff gathering (or challenge) and an online survey, which could be launching opportunities to gain high visibility, generate excitement, and get people involved. Information gathered from those engagement components can then be analyzed and further developed through stakeholder conversations, workshops, focus groups (and ultimately, through the working group and steering committee). SWOT analysis, asset mapping, and visioning can take place in all engagement situations or as a separate endeavour. (Identifying community assets is key – this is an opportunity to involve students in school projects about what matters to them and what they would like to see.)

Engagement Components *(suggestions only)*

Conversations

- a) Up to 15 one-on-one or small group informal conversations with internal and external stakeholders.
- b) Allow 1-1.5 hrs/meeting with up to 5-7 questions (held internally, at their location or neutral place).
- c) Focus options: getting feedback on assets, challenges, opportunities, funding avenues, possibilities for action and collaboration, short and long-term wins.
- d) Requires interviewer and note taking.

Town Gatherings

- a) Up to three large town gatherings (or planning summits) for anyone who wants to attend.
- b) Allow 2-3 hours (9-noon or 1-3) with time for breakout groups that report back.
- c) Hold at accessible, central locations within the town (hold separate gatherings if necessary for elders, youth, special needs).
- d) Focus options: identify assets, challenges, collaboration possibilities, key goals, objectives and priorities, how to improve priorities and ideas, people who can help, short and long term wins.
- e) Requires facilitation (respected local person can introduce and help lead conversations), note taking, and recording (televise and stream live if desired/possible).

Focus Groups

- a) Up to 5 group discussions of 6-9 people selected for their expertise and knowledge
- b) Allow up to 2 hours (held at varying locations).
- c) Focus options: Conducted like a think-tank responsible for deeper reflection, analysis, and recommendations, organized around key strategy issues.
- d) Requires facilitation, note taking and recording.

Online Survey

- a) Survey designed for the general public for online access and is available in print form.
- b) Allow one month (if possible) for public response.
- c) Pose 7-10 questions (mix of rating and narrative), requiring 5-7 minutes for completion.
- d) Focus options: to learn about key assets, opportunities for the town, perspectives, and priorities.
- e) Consider ways for people to complete the survey: online, scan QR code to get to website, print, or by telephone (made visible through website and distributed through chamber, local cable).

Traditional and Social Media

- a) Consider various platforms to get the conversation going, update the public, and gain feedback (e.g., ideas, best practices, research), through a website, email, Facebook, Twitter, telephone, or write-in.
- b) Visibility can be established through cable, in print or online by posing a few questions about how to make Madawaska a great place to live and how to make it happen.
- c) An online map of Madawaska can invite people to tag interesting events, natural and historic sites, potential attractions and important and exciting things emerging (helpful for inventory and clusters).
- d) Consider students creating aspects of the engagement material (e.g., visual print, skits, short videos).

3. Situation Review

Also called an environmental scan, a situation review includes gathering and analysis of relevant journals, policies, statistics, best practices, inspiring examples, and emerging trends (with industry, rural life, community development, placemaking, etc.). This also includes current and relevant statistics on the town, such as population, demographics, education, employment, as well as existing infrastructure, transportation, businesses, services, and nonprofits.

Undoubtedly, this effort will become more focused as new subjects arise. It is recommended that the Town include economic analysis and asset mapping in its strategy, along with SWOT and/or variations of analysis. See the section on Strategy Approaches for more details.

4. Writing the Vision and Plan

The following are some basic elements to include in a strategic plan:¹²

Vision (*what we desire*) – A solid vision statement is a springboard for goal making. It paints a picture of what the town wants to become in the future – a desired state of *what could be*. It is about telling stories about the future that compel us to change ways of doing and being. A vision is rich, textured, and vivid; the final vision statement should be specific enough to describe what life might be like if it were implemented – an image of what success will look like. It should help guide goal-setting activities, but be broad enough to encompass many goals and implementation strategies. Depending on the model followed, a vision statement may be drafted by the steering committee as a result of one or more public workshops.

Mission (*who we are and what we do*) – A mission statement is a brief description of the fundamental purpose and what is to be achieved overall. It answers the question: “Why do we exist?” It also helps with decision-making, planning, public relations, and attracting stakeholders, investors, and community involvement. The more focused the mission, the better the performance.

¹² See the Introduction for more details about vision and strategy, and Strategy Approaches for examples of models and approaches.

Values (*what we believe in*) – Values are guiding principles that define what is cherished and worthwhile. They represent the highest priorities, deeply held beliefs and fundamental driving forces. Values are essential and enduring tenants of an entity – timeless guiding principles that require no external justification.

Goals (*what we want to do*) – Goals are typically ongoing, long-term procedures, ideals or aims that affect an entire entity. Prioritize them and make them as specific as possible (consider SMART goal principles – Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-based).

Objectives (*how we will get there*) – Objectives are strategic actions with specific steps that must be taken to achieve desired outcomes. They often include deadlines and budget limitations and assigned specific workers or teams with the expertise to accomplish the tasks on time.

Outcomes (*where we want to be*) – Expected or intended outcomes refer to what kind of change will occur as a result of the accomplishment of objectives.

Budget and Resources – Refers to budget development, requirement and allocation of resources.

Timeframe (*when we will get there*) – Goals need to be prioritized and grounded in a realistic timeframe.

Action and Implementation – Precise identification of who is responsible for action will ensure greater implementation. A timeframe is associated with action and implementation.

Measurement and Evaluation – A methodology to measure and evaluate the progress and success of the strategy will help to understand whether quantifiable targets and implemented strategies were hit. When progress is measured, work stays on track, target dates are attained, and motivation continues. Answer: How much? How many? How will we know when it is accomplished?

5. Review and Validation

After reviewing all of the materials gathered through community engagement and research, a draft of the plan is written. It is worth consideration to place the draft (or components of it) online and in print for public feedback. This allows for final comments on the plan, additional ideas and suggestions, and validation. Public review of the draft, however, depends on the timeline, resources, and the planning team's directions.

6. Rollout of the Strategy

The final vision and strategic plan must be endorsed by the Board of Selectpeople. Depending on the timeline, resources, and the planning team's direction, the rollout of the strategy could be: 1. High profile public launching at a significant location, 2. Low profile public launching at a small community location; or 3. Internal launching with announcement made by press release. Whatever direction (or combination) is decided upon, it is important that the community knows about the strategy's release and how to access it.

7. Implementation and Follow-up

The strategic plan will be a living, public document; the process does not end with its completion. Build in action steps, measurement, and evaluation. Consider appointing a volunteer committee to monitor the progress of the plan and to see that the goals are implemented. Ensure regular review and where necessary, update and amend (e.g., quarterly review by the Board), and if possible, engage in another strategic planning process within five years.

Strategy Approaches

Below is a selection of vision and strategic planning approaches and models to help inform and enrich the town's planning process. Also included is a glimpse of visioning and strategic planning approaches from other communities. Links are suggestions only.

New Oregon Model – A planning approach that develops a better understanding of current community conditions and creating an action plan for redirecting trends toward a better future. It requires community input throughout process by asking: 1. *Where are we now?* 2. *Where are we going?* 3. *Where do we want to be?* 4. *How do we get there?* Data on social, environmental, and economic trends are gathered. Takes 1 year to 18 months. <http://oconto.uwex.edu/files/2010/08/g3708-buildingourfuture-aguidetocommunityvisioning.pdf>
https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Documents/publicProcesses/Using_Visioning_in_Comprehensive_Planning_Process.pdf

Community Heart & Soul – A field tested, resident-driven planning method for community planning and development to increase participation in local decision-making and empower residents to shape the future of their communities in a way that upholds its unique character. <http://www.orton.org/>
<http://www.planningtoolexchange.org/resource/community-heart-soul%E2%80%9A%C3%91%C2%A2-field-guide>

Asset Mapping – A disciplined process to create a framework to discover and understand what is truly unique and distinct about a place, its competitive advantage, and opportunities. The focus is on tangible assets such as infrastructure, nature, and cultural/historic, or intangible assets like excellence, innovation, experience, infrastructure, and knowledge. <http://www.nmdc.org/mobilize/> (See also: [intrinsic qualities in the Corridor Management and Partnership Plan for the St. John Valley Cultural Byway](#)).

Charrette – A model that uses workshops with the public and community leaders to contribute ideas and directions for a more sustainable community (over 2-3 months). A vision and action plan can be developed. <http://www.charretteinstitute.org/resources/>

Future Search – A planning methodology with workshops to discuss the past, present, and preferred future. Stakeholders assess current trends, identify a shared vision, and develop action plans to achieve it (over 3 days). Creative thinking, not hard data, is part of the process. <http://www.futuresearch.net/method/methodology/index.cfm>
<http://www.sustainablecherryhill.org/what-do-you-want-the-future-to-look-like/>

S.W.O.T. – A planning and appraisal methodology that evaluates internal and external *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats* of an entity, project, product, or place. Helps to explore new initiatives, understand internal and external factors, make decisions about new policies, and identify areas for change. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/swot-analysis/main>

S.O.A.R. – A strategy planning approach that focuses on strengths. It helps focus on what is being done well, what skills can be improved upon, and what's most compelling to stakeholders. SOAR. *Strengths*: what can we build on?; *Opportunities*: what are our stakeholders asking for?; *Aspirations*: What do we care deeply about?; *Results*: How do we know we are succeeding?(Linked to Appreciative Inquiry below.) <http://www.soar-strategy.com/>

Appreciative Inquiry – An evaluation process “that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of what is in an organization in order to create a better future.” Based on the belief that human systems are made and imagined by those who live and work within them and seeks out the “best of what is” to help ignite the collective imagination of “what might be.” <http://www.centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/more-on-ai/what-is-appreciative-inquiry-ai/>

S.M.A.R.T. Goals – A process to help set goals: *Specific*: very detailed, precise; *Measurable*: know that advancement is being made and by how much; *Attainable*: realistic and attainable; *Realistic*: reasonably “real”–reasonably made into a reality; *Time*: timeframe attached to goals. http://www.appleseeds.org/rohn_smart-goals.htm

Strategic Doing – Not so much a strategic plan, but more like an easy-to-read and concise guide that quickly explains where we are going and how we are going to get there. Goals are more like strategic agendas that can be quickly revised, new ideas added, respond to new opportunities. Asks four questions: 1. *What could we do together?* 2. *What should we do together?* 3. *What will we do together?* 4. *When will we get back together?*
<http://sparkgrowth.net/strategic-ed-morrison-keynote/>

Blue Ocean Strategy – A strategic approach for business that explores what is distinct and differentiates it from its competition, creating uncontested new market space that will attract new investment. For example, with tourism, how certain innovations can identify new audiences, extend and increase visitor stays, grow visitor spending, create new products and enhanced visitor experience. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/>

Examples of Strategies

City of Edmundston, New Brunswick – In 2011, a SWOT analysis was conducted on services. A consultant conducted a 2-day workshop with council members and staff to shape a vision, brand, and to write a report. Planning was conducted over a year with a committee composed of council members and staff (public consultations from 2008 informed the planning). The result was a focus on entrepreneurialism and innovation with attention on five sectors: Education, Socio-economics, Community, Youth, Entrepreneurs and Innovation.
<http://edmundston.ca/en/l-hotel-de-ville/planification-strategique>

Fort Fairfield Economic Development Investment Strategy – In 2009, the Town and a group of volunteers held a kick-off challenge in 2009 to the community to envision what Fort Fairfield could be. Over two years, residents met at potluck dinners to brainstorm directions. Ten committees composed of volunteers identified priorities. They wanted to be a town that was “ready, willing, and able to make things happen.” Two-hundred copies of the plan were printed in-house. A Quality of Place Council was created and became an independent corporation (initiatives include purchasing and renovating dilapidated properties). <http://www.fortfairfield.org/Images/pdf/InvestmentStrategy.pdf>

Prince Edward Island Food Island Partnership – Their vision is to “establish Prince Edward Island as an internationally recognized place of origin for premium food products and a destination for culinary excellence.” The focus is on company and product development, research, and leveraging and building the PEI food brand. Their strategy included a look at global markets, areas of concern, and opportunities.
<http://www.foodislandpei.ca/docs/Food-Island-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

NWT Strong Cultures, Strong Territory – A 10-year culture and heritage strategic framework (2015-2025) of the Government of Northwest Territories, identifies culture and heritage program gaps and develops future initiatives. Their approach: research of existing data, information about programs, review of other strategies, an online survey, and 31 focus groups, meetings and workshops with governments, organizations, elders, youth, communities, and advisory groups. A good example of keeping good records about public engagement (p.30).
http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td_341-175.pdf

Sunrise County Economic Council – Its 2016-2020 strategic plan tackled a multitude of challenges. One of the Council’s key challenges is one of scale, “the danger is that our efforts, while individually successful, are insufficient to shift the trajectory of the county’s economy.” Planning underscored that the Council grow into a larger, more capable group to achieve greater results for the county. <http://sunrisecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SCEC-Five-Year-Strategic-Plan-Adopted-January-21-2016.pdf>

United Kingdom Trade and Investment – Delivered a 2015 report entitled “UK Creative Industries – International Strategy” about helping creative industries sector grow exports and encourage inward investment. The GREAT Britain campaign is a marketing campaign to showcase the best of what Britain has to offer and encourage the world to visit, study, and do business with the UK, focusing especially on the creative industries.
http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/252528/ukti_creative_industries_action_plan_aw_rev_3-0_spreads.pdf

University of Maine at Fort Kent – Utilized Appreciative Inquiry approach for its Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Goal of the plan is to serve as a five-year blueprint and living document for achieving their objectives and building upon UMFK’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results, while guiding them to financial stability.
<http://staticweb.maine.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Tab-12.1-UMFK-Strategic-Plan.pdf?565a1d>

Example of a Vision Statement

Princeton Borough and Princeton Township, New Jersey – “Our vision is for Princeton to be a community, which recognizes that economic, environmental and social issues are interrelated and that they should be addressed as a whole. It recognizes the need to design the built environment in a way that protects the integrity of the natural environment. It shifts away from polluting and wasteful practices and embraces clean energy and renewable resources. It rises to the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and curbing climate change. It understands its natural, cultural, historical and human assets and resources and acts to protect and enhance them. A Sustainable Princeton community leads by examples, monitors its results, and is empowered by an educated and active citizenry.” Source from a document from Sustainable Jersey: [In the year 2015, Oakland will be a safe, health, and vital city offering a high quality of life through: a dynamic economy that taps into Oakland’s](#)

Funding Avenues

Below are suggestions of state and national funding avenues that may support a strategic planning process and implementation of the plan. This list is *not* definitive. Some entities listed below may not provide grants, but could collaborate on initiatives, help access funds, provide technical support, or serve as a pass-through for funds. Other considerations include online fundraising, investment clubs, private funding, or an expatriate campaign.

Fundraising Resource

Foundation Center
Grants.gov
Grantsmanship Center
Maine Philanthropy Center

State Public Agencies

Maine Arts Commission
Maine Department Conservation
Maine Depart of Economic and Community D’mt
Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Maine Department of Transportation
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Maine Humanities Council
Maine Office of Community Development
Maine Office of Tourism

State Private Foundations

Betterment Fund
Davis Family Foundation
Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
Environmental Funders Network
John T. Gorman Foundation
Kindling Fund
Libra Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Initiatives
Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
Morton Kelly Foundation
Quimby Family Foundation
Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation

Federal Public Agencies

National Endowment for the Arts (e.g., Our Town, Citizen’s Institute on Rural Design)
National Endowment for the Humanities (e.g., America’s Historic Places)
National Park Service (e.g., Preserve America, Save America’s Treasures)
National Trust for Historic Preservation (e.g., Share your Heritage)
Northern Border Regional Commission Grant Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture (e.g., Rural Development: Strategic Economic and Community Development, Rural Business, Preserve America, Agritourism and Alternative Enterprises, Resource Conservation and Development)
U.S. Department of Commerce (e.g., Market Developer Cooperator Program; Public Works, Economic Adjustment, Planning, and Research and Technical Assistance Program)

U.S. Department of Economic Development Administration
 U.S. Department of the Environment (e.g., for waterway cleaning programs)
 Department of Housing and Urban Development (e.g., Community Development Block Grants; Rural Housing and Economic Development Grants)
 U.S. Department of the Interior (e.g., National Register of Historic Places, National Trail Systems, River, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program)
 U.S. Small Business Administration (e.g., training programs)

National Private Foundations

| | |
|---|--|
| ArtPlace America | Northern Forest Center |
| Foundation for Rural Service | Northeastern States Research Cooperative |
| J. M. Kaplan Fund (historic preservation) | Sewell Foundation |
| Jane's Trust | Surdna Foundation |
| Kresge Foundation | Tiffany Foundation |
| Nathan Cumming Foundation | Tourism Cares |
| New England Foundation for the Arts | Wallace Foundation |

Resources

This section offers a handful of local, county, state, national, and international studies, plans, organizations and agencies, as well as initiatives and websites that may serve as useful resource and technical support for strategic planning and implementation. Resources are listed in alphabetical order and for some, a brief description is included.

Reports, Plans, Studies

Local, Regional, County

Corridor Management and Partnership Plan – a 2014 draft report for the management of the St. John Valley Cultural Byway. It provides useful information on assets, opportunities, visitor experience, and transportation.
http://www.nmdc.org/Planning/sjvbyway/CMPP_Draft.pdf

Madawaska Comprehensive Plan – Overarching economic development goal from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan was to “promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.”

Madawaska-Edmundston Economic Development Presentation – A 2001 attraction document to entice business investment, focusing on economic prosperity in Madawaska by leveraging its position within the St. John Valley, Aroostook County, and the Trans-Canada Highway Corridor – New Brunswick and Québec (“Madawaska and Edmundston form a significant retail and commercial metropolitan area...”).

Madawaska Resource Committee Survey – In 2015, the Resource Committee surveyed town residents as to their level of satisfaction for town services (e.g., ambulance, public works, library, town office, recycling). Some findings: residents care deeply for Madawaska; there is a strong desire/concern for greater prosperity, such as more business, better online capacity, visionary leadership, and unified community.

Madawaska Strategic Economic Development Plan – A 2013 plan by Woodard & Curran, which expressed an urgency for the Town to foster additional economic development efforts beyond the paper mill to help sustain and grow the community. They identified the need for a historic district and connecting recreation and natural resource assets with existing businesses and emerging industry (e.g., renewable energy and IT).

Northern Maine Tourism Action Plan – A five-year plan (2011-2016) that offers strategies for tourism development for Aroostook County, including a focus on outdoor recreation, artisan and cultural activities.
http://www.nmdc.org/Development/NM_Tourism_Action_Plan_2011-2016.pdf

St. John Valley Creative Economy Project – Completed in 2010, this two-year research initiative was a collaborative effort of the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at UM and the UMFK. The research focused on how to strengthen the region’s communities and economy through culture and place. Extensive resource information on development, collaboration, and product ideas. <http://www.umfk.edu/economy/>

Upper Saint John Valley International Cultural Assessment – Conducted in 2003 as a collaborative study with the Quebec-Labrador Foundation, which offers an analysis (including reference to economics, demographics, culture, and geography) of the international region of the St. John Valley and northwestern New Brunswick as preparation for an international cultural route, called Voici the Valley Cultureway (available in pdf upon request).

State, National

Building Sustainable Communities – A review that examines the “Building Sustainable Communities” experience about Quality of Life Planning in Indianapolis to understand and explain elements and practices that caused its success. http://www.instituteccd.org/uploads/iccd/documents/qofl_planning_-_implementation_report_final_document_v_6.1.pdf

Quality of Place and Job Growth – Produced in 2008, a report on investing in quality of place in Maine. http://www.ci.rockland.me.us/vertical/sites/%7BDE9EDD66-EFF4-4A6B-8A58-AA91254C1584%7D/uploads/Report_-_Quality_of_Place_And_Job_Growth.pdf

Revitalize Rural Downtown – “The Local Agricultural Community Exchange Outcomes and Lessons Learned from a Public-Private Initiative to Revitalize a Downtown Community,” presented by the Carsey Institute. <http://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1159&context=carsey>

Rural Wealth Creation – USDA report about concepts, strategies and measures to build a conceptual framework for rural wealth creation that emphasizes the importance of multiple types of assets (physical, financial, human, intellectual, natural, social, political, and cultural capital) and the economic, institutional, and policy context in which rural wealth strategies are devised. http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/365520/err131_1_.pdf

Initiatives and Programs

Build Maine – A day-long program that focuses on ways to build economically stronger, more successful towns and cities in Maine by aligning investment with more durable outcomes. <http://www.build-maine.com/>

City of Littleton, Colorado – Pioneered “economic gardening” as an alternative to traditional economic development. Wealth and economies can be created from *the inside* through well-cultivated entrepreneurial activity, nurturing environment for local companies, and by building community assets and infrastructure, rather than just business recruitment or providing incentives: <http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/economic-development/small-business-and-entrepreneurship/a-local-perspective-littleton%E2%80%9A%C3%84%C3%B4s-economic-gardening-strategy>

Core Leadership Team – As a legacy initiative of the 2014 *Congès mondiale acadien*, people from Québec, New Brunswick, Maine, created the Core Leadership Team with a mission to stimulate and facilitate regional cooperation to ensure sustainable economic development of the three-territory region that they call “Acadia of the Lands and Forests.” <http://www.succeedhere.org/en/>

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem – A term that describes the environment and conditions that bring people together to affect entrepreneurship, foster economic prosperity, and wealth creation. Nine elements are considered important: government policy, regulatory framework and infrastructure, funding and finance, culture, mentors, advisors and support systems, education and training, human capital and workforce, local and global markets. (Source: <http://theconversation.com/entrepreneurial-ecosystems-and-the-role-of-government-policy-35809>)

Houlton Entrepreneur Challenge – As a way to create a “buzz” and promote Houlton as a great place to start a business, this program aims to inspire business recruitment, enhance business mix; encourage business expansion, and transform underutilized or vacant commercial spaces into vibrant and attractive locations. <http://sadcaroostook.org/entrepreneur-challenge/>

Destination St. John Valley – The Inn of Acadia in Madawaska offers guests an experience of the international region through its cuisine, art, website and in-room tourism handout. <http://innofacadia.com>

Maine Startup and Create Week – A week to “celebrate entrepreneurship, cultivate creativity, and drive high-impact innovation” focusing on growing enterprises, what can be achieved outside of major metropolitan areas, and about content and conversations “that will raise the bar and inspire you, no matter where you live [in Maine]. <http://www.mainestartupandcreateweek.com/our-story/>

Mobilize Northern Maine – Grew from the statewide Mobilize Maine, a collaborative grass roots economic development process that builds on the strengths and assets of Aroostook County by understanding their market-leverage in the global economy. <http://www.nmdc.org/mobilize/>

Project Cultivate – A creative economic development initiative about cultivating creative thinkers, supporting great ideas, and helping to build a more prosperous St. John Valley region through culture and place. Components include a micro-loan delivery system, training and apprenticeships, regional network, and educational series (funding dependent). <http://www.fiddleheadfocus.com/story/culture-and-economy-project-featured-white-house4322>

Groups and Agencies

County and State

Aroostook Partnership
Build Maine
Coastal Enterprises, Inc
Common Good Ventures.com
Envision Maine
Growsmart Maine
Knowledge Transfer Alliance, UM
Lift360
Maine Arts Commission
Maine Center for Creativity
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Center for Entrepreneurial Development
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Creates
Northern Maine Development Commission

Maine Development Foundation
Maine Downtown Center
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Humanities Council
Maine Rural Partners
Maine Small Business Development Center
Maine Woods Consortium
Maine’s Outdoor Learning Center
Maine Technology Institute
New Ventures Maine
Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development
Northern Forest Center
Slow Money Maine

National and International

Agenda 21 for culture
Center for Rural Affairs
City of Littleton (Economic Gardening)
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
Creative City Network Canada
Creative Startups
Economuseum Network
Handmade in America
New England Foundation for the Arts

Northern Forest Center
Northern Forest Canoe Trail
Project for Public Spaces
Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Small Town, Big Ideas
Smart Growth America
Sustainable Communities Resource Center (HUD)
Walkable and Liveable Communities Institute
WealthWorks

Agenda 21 for Culture – The Committee on culture of the world assoc. of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform of cities, organizations and networks to learn, cooperate and launch policies and programmes on the role of culture in sustainable development (the fourth pillar of sustainable development). <http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php>

Center for Rural Entrepreneurship – Focuses on energizing entrepreneurial communities and helping community leaders build a prosperous future by supporting and– empowering business, social and civic entrepreneurs. <http://www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/>

Creative Startups – Based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, offers workshops, seminars and the Creative Startups Accelerator, committed to building thriving creative economies. <http://www.creativestartups.org/>

Economuseum Network (*Réseau Economusée*) – An international network and retail system founded in Québec to showcase traditional trades and knowledge. Craft or agri-food businesses open their doors to the public, showing how they create their handmade product. They are self-financed through the sale of their products (e.g., soap making, brewing/wine making, cabinetmaking, jewelry, glass making). <http://www.economusees.com/en/>

Handmade in America – a nonprofit organization supporting craft-related businesses and activities in Western North Carolina with a focus on creating sustainable economic development opportunities that maintain their rural quality of life, providing business and financial support for craftspeople, and raising awareness of the value of craft. <http://www.handmadeinamerica.org>

Project for Public Spaces – The central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, expertise, and partners who share a passion for creating vital places, how to reimagine our streets and places, how to transform inadequate places to extraordinary places. <http://www.pps.org/>

Smart Growth America – An advocate for people who want to live and work in great neighborhoods. Its Rural Development program is designed to strengthen rural economies through a smart growth approach and information about the financial and economic impacts of development choices. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>

Print and Online

Economicdevelopment.org – A hub of world-wide economic development news and resources that shares insight about around economic development and its impact on people and places. <http://economicdevelopment.org/>

Northern Forest E-news Digest – Produced by the Northern Forest Center, offering information about policies, programs, grants, and opportunities for communities within the northern forest. <http://northernforest.org>

Small Town Planning Handbook – Step-by-step guide that small towns and rural communities plan for change, including drafting and implementing a comprehensive plan through zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements programs, with sensitivity to local character and limited resources. https://www.downtowndevelopment.com/small_town_planning_handbook.php

Small Town, Big Ideas – Case studies of 45 small towns, populations for smaller than 10,000 that are thriving and hubs of civic and economic activity http://www.sitka.net/Downloads/Small_Towns.pdf

Rural E-news – Produced by the national Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation with information on programs, grant opportunities, conference notices, and reports. <http://www.lisc.org/rural>