



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
Held on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 9:00 AM

Teleconference Toll Free Number – 1-833-311-4101
Access Code: 2632 895 7296

Video Conference Link: [Click Here](#)
Access Code: 2632 895 7296

1.	Call Meeting to Order
2.	Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature Thereof
3.	Public Question/Comment (Only Addressing Motion(s) or Reports on the Agenda)
4.	Presentation
	1. Suzanne Gibson & Associates – Suzanne Gibson, Principal – Alternative Vision and Mission Options and Draft Town of Gananoque Strategic Plan Review (+Report Council-CAO-2025-15 – Draft Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030 Update)
5.	Questions from the Media
6.	Confirmation By-law
	By-law No. 2025-110 – Confirm the proceedings of Council for the special meeting held on Monday, December 8, 2025 (3 Readings)
7.	Next Meeting: Regular Council – Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 5:00 PM
8.	Adjournment

The Town invites and encourages people with disabilities to attend and voice their comments in relation to accessibility related reports. For those who are unable to attend, the Town encourages the use of the Customer Feedback Form found on the Accessibility Page on the Town's website.



Town of Gananoque Five-Year Strategic Plan

OPTION 1

VISION

To be a healthy, vibrant, welcoming and prosperous waterfront community that both supports smart and sustainable growth and protects our historic, small-town character as the Gateway to the 1000 Islands.

MISSION

We promote economic prosperity, cherish cultural diversity, steward our history and protect our natural environment to make Gananoque a great place to work, live, play and thrive.

OPTION 2

VISION

To be a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable waterfront community that celebrates our historic small-town charm while fostering smart growth and serving as the welcoming Gateway to the 1000 Islands.

MISSION

We deliver exceptional service, promote responsible economic development and steward our historic and natural assets with collaboration and inclusivity at the forefront.



Town of Gananoque Five-Year Strategic Plan 2026 to 2030

VISION

To be a progressive, vibrant, financially sustainable community, intent upon supporting growth and development in a historic and culturally friendly manner while maintaining our small-town allure.

MISSION

We are a vibrant, historic waterfront community promoting economic prosperity and cultural diversity in an environmentally sustainable manner.

VALUES

Service:

We take pride in delivering accessible and respectful customer experiences that address the diverse needs and evolving challenges of the community.

Stewardship:

We preserve the Town's long-term financial health by proactively managing assets while providing transparent and responsible governance.

Inclusion:

We respect diverse perspectives, treat each person with dignity, and create a culture of trust and belonging.

Collaboration:

We embrace a spirit of engagement and collaboration, fostering teamwork with our colleagues, community and neighbours.

Progressive:

We promote a progressive and adaptive culture that embraces problem-solving, leverages opportunities, and prioritizes continuous improvement.

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT

Gananoque: A Community Built on Strength and Possibility

Gananoque is a community where extraordinary natural beauty meets the warmth and spirit of a welcoming, caring town. Internationally recognized as the *Gateway to the 1000 Islands*, Gananoque offers breathtaking waterfront vistas, walkable streets, scenic trails, and pristine parks – an environment that inspires creativity, connection, and a deeply rooted sense of belonging.

Nestled along the St. Lawrence River and adjacent to Highway 401 – with direct access to Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa – Gananoque offers the tranquillity of rural living paired with the conveniences and connectivity of a larger urban centre.

Part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a destination for visitors from around the world, Gananoque is home to numerous successful tourism-based businesses that anchor the local economy. The town's growing economy, supportive business community, and steady stream of visitors create a bountiful environment for entrepreneurs, innovators, and new ventures.

Gananoque's heritage and identity are deeply tied to place. The name Gananoque—pronounced *Gan-a-nock-wee*—derives from a Haudenosaunee word meaning *town on two rivers, meadow rising out of water, or water flowing over rocks*. This profound connection to land, water and community continues to shape the Town today. Cultural experiences, historic architecture, and breathtaking landscapes make it a beautiful and inspiring place to call home.

Like many Ontario municipalities, Gananoque is navigating the challenge of balancing growth, rising service demands, and financial sustainability. Increasing costs, aging infrastructure and limited revenue sources are stretching the Town's resources. Housing affordability, demographic shifts, and expanding community needs require strategic decision-making, careful prioritization, and innovative solutions to service delivery, including stronger partnerships.

Amid these challenges, Gananoque stands at a critical moment of opportunity. Poised for intentional growth, Gananoque's strengths provide a strong foundation for a prosperous future. This five-year strategic plan sets a clear direction to strengthen quality of life, support incremental and sustainable growth, and build a thriving future for all who call Gananoque home – all while keeping the Town an affordable place to raise a family and an ideal location to operate a business.

Our Path Forward

Over the next five years, Gananoque will work collaboratively to strengthen community well-being, support sustainable growth, and cultivate a future-ready municipality.

This Strategic Plan focuses on three priorities:

- providing high-quality core services and infrastructure through responsible service delivery and smart investment;
- championing a strong and resilient local economy by supporting business growth, four-season tourism, and planned housing development; and
- cultivating a high-performing and future-focused municipal team by investing in people, technology, continuous improvement, and transparent communication.

Together, these commitments lead us to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future – ensuring Gananoque remains a remarkable place to live, work, visit, and invest for generations to come.

1. PROVIDE QUALITY CORE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Gananoque is committed to delivering high-quality services that address the community's needs, even in the context of rising economic pressures, increasing costs, and growing infrastructure demands. Council and staff will engage in deliberate, strategic discussions to determine feasible and responsible service levels – ensuring a balanced alignment between service expectations and available funding.

By implementing the 2025 Long-Term Financial Plan, the Town will proactively manage infrastructure investments in a way that is effective, efficient, and focused on long-term sustainability.

With continued dedication to fostering an inclusive community, the Town will ensure that municipal buildings, facilities, outdoor paths of travel, and programs remain accessible and aligned with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), supporting full participation for all residents.

Community Infrastructure

In keeping with Provincial legislation, the Town will implement and continuously maintain its 10-Year Asset Management Plan to guide responsible and strategic investment in infrastructure and services. This Plan includes the ongoing maintenance and renewal of roads, bridges, water, wastewater, and storm sewer systems, as well as the Town's fleet, municipal buildings, and community facilities that support cultural, recreational, and public services.

Major priorities will include advancing the replacement of the East End Pumping Station, the renewal of the Lagoon and the twinning of the Force Main, to ensure reliable service delivery and increase wastewater capacity for future growth. The Town will also explore

innovative solutions and emerging technologies to support long-term infrastructure sustainability and resilience.

Emergency Services and Community Health & Safety

Protecting residents' well-being remains a core priority and a foundation for community confidence, quality of life, and long-term prosperity. Reliable emergency services and strong partnerships that facilitate access to health care will ensure Gananoque thrives as a safe, healthy, and resilient community.

The Town will maintain high-quality emergency response services – including Fire Protection and local Policing – to ensure timely, coordinated support when residents need it most.

Providing better access to primary health care remains important. To this end, Gananoque will leverage physician incentive programs and collaborate with the United County of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG) to support physician recruitment, improving access to primary and emergency medical care close to home. The Town will also continue to fund long-term care, as well as Southeast Public Health (SEPH) to deliver essential public health programs that promote community wellness, disease prevention and healthy living.

Together, these initiatives reinforce community safety, enhance healthcare access, and support a strong and resilient future for all residents.

Community Well-Being, Recreation & Culture

Gananoque will strengthen community well-being by maintaining access to recreation, culture, and inclusive programming that fosters participation, connection, and a strong sense of belonging across all age groups. Through meaningful partnerships and strategic investment, the Town remains committed to building a vibrant and supportive community where residents of all ages thrive.

The Town will continue to enhance recreational amenities including trails, facilities, and sports courts, while cultivating the shared services agreement for the Gananoque & TLT Lou Jeffries Arena. Ongoing financial support for local sports organizations, such as hockey, curling, skating, soccer and other recreation groups, will help promote healthy lifestyles, active living, and community connection.

Gananoque is rooted in creativity and culture. The Town will continue to fund art and cultural initiatives that enhance community and support artists, while nurturing a growing cultural economy. Gananoque will support cultural institutions and heritage assets through annual grants and by maintaining eight buildings used by local organizations and institutions.

Gananoque will continue to host a vibrant calendar of festivals and events—from the Festival of Lights, Canada Day celebrations, and summer concerts to Le FestivILES, community markets, and seasonal gatherings such as International Women's Day,

Halloween, Witches Night, and Shop Local initiatives. These experiences strengthen inclusion and belonging, attract visitors, and contribute to local economic vitality.

Through partnerships with community organizations, Gananoque will expand services that support residents across generations. With Provincial support, the Town will develop and enhance seniors' programming to foster connections, reduce isolation, and promote healthy aging.

In collaboration with our partners, the Federal and Provincial Governments, the United County of Leeds & Grenville, and the YMCA, the Town will facilitate the expansion of childcare capacity to support young families living and working locally. It will also expand youth programming to encourage young people to stay in or return to the community.

Together, these partnerships strengthen inclusion, support well-being, and help ensure that residents can grow, thrive, and fully participate in community life.

Environmental Stewardship

Gananoque will protect its natural surroundings and ensure responsible, sustainable development that preserves the community's environmental assets for future generations. This work strengthens climate resilience, safeguards water quality, protects natural habitats, and enhances the quality of life that residents and visitors value.

To protect the Town's natural environment, Gananoque will preserve and enhance public parks and waterfront areas, including efforts to mitigate shoreline erosion. The Town will monitor and respond to evolving environmental legislation to ensure compliance and proactive environmental protection.

Infrastructure improvements are vital to environmental stewardship. Over the next five years, Gananoque will enhance wastewater infiltration and inflow control. We will also implement a stormwater monitoring program and advance improvements to the system. We will develop a Stormwater Master Plan to guide the creation of a comprehensive management program to reduce flooding risk, protect waterways, and support sustainable growth.

Collaboration remains central to this work. Gananoque will continue to financially support and partner with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) to monitor and protect water resources, natural habitats and shorelines, and to promote environmentally responsible land-use planning.

Leveraging Strategic Partnerships to Improve Services and Outcomes

Strong regional partnerships are essential to building resilient, sustainable, and well-supported communities. Gananoque will continue to work closely with the United County of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG) and neighbouring municipalities to enhance access to critical services and improve outcomes for residents. Gananoque will uphold its financial commitments to the UCLG to help deliver essential social services. – including subsidized childcare, Ontario Works, Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres, social housing,

and housing supports such as the Homelessness Prevention Benefit, Home Ownership Program, and Ontario Renovates Program. These contributions will also ensure the provision of land ambulance services to the Town.

Looking ahead, Gananoque will strengthen two-way communication and deepen collaboration with area municipalities to pursue shared opportunities, improve service delivery, and maximize public investment. The Town will explore creative approaches to pooling resources for shared services – including joint procurement, data collection and administrative coordination, and innovative models that create economies of scale. In tandem with the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville and neighbouring municipalities, Gananoque will explore strategies to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts, supporting a healthier, more sustainable future.

By working together, Gananoque and its regional partners can achieve more than any municipality can alone – strengthening services, reducing costs, and building stronger communities across the region.

Our key strategies for the next five years related to providing core service and infrastructure are:

- 1) Review, prioritize, and deliver core services according to responsible and sustainable service levels.
- 2) Implement the current 10-year Asset Management Plan.
- 3) Work with and fund partners to provide health care supports, culture, child care, social services, housing supports, ambulance services, environmental stewardship, and youth and seniors programming.

2. CHAMPION A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY

Gananoque is committed to strategic, sustainable economic growth that strengthens local prosperity while preserving the Town's rural character and natural beauty. The Town will explore opportunities to diversify the municipal tax base, grow employment and bolster the year-round economy, while supporting key sectors such as tourism, retail and commercial development.

Our plan includes supporting housing development – essential to economic growth by attracting and retaining workers, supporting business expansion, and strengthening the local tax base. Over time, by ensuring a range of housing options, Gananoque can sustain a strong workforce, grow local businesses, and build long-term financial resilience.

Business Growth and Commercial Development

A strong and resilient business ecosystem will fuel local employment, diversify the economy, and strengthen the community's long-term prosperity. Through collaborative partnerships and strategic investment, the Town will create the conditions for businesses to start, grow, and succeed here. This includes a focus on business retention and expansion and investment attraction efforts.

The municipality will work with the Business Support Network, including KEYS Job Centre, the Gananoque Public Library, the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and neighbouring municipalities, to expand coordinated business workshops, training, networking and entrepreneurship supports.

Through collaboration with the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville (UCLG), small business enterprise services will connect local entrepreneurs with expertise, funding and resources. The Town will help sustain a vibrant commercial sector and re-energize local business by working with local retailers to maintain commercial properties for lease or sale and by providing business supports, community improvement grants, and funding opportunities for more than 200 community businesses.

Youth entrepreneurship will remain a priority. We will leverage funding opportunities, and provide mentorship and guidance from concept through launch to help young entrepreneurs build successful ventures.

Gananoque's strategic location and infrastructure assets create strong advantages for investment and commercial growth. The Town will explore opportunities to improve access from Highway 401 to accommodate large commercial vehicles and support future development.

Industrial properties available in Gananoque are ideal for niche manufacturing, supply chain development and technology-based business. Over the next five years, the Town will examine the feasibility of attracting specialized niche manufacturing and create the conditions needed to attract this sector to the Town.

Finally, to support a competitive, business-friendly environment, the Town will review and modernize municipal policies, processes, and By-laws to remove barriers and enhance the experience of doing business in Gananoque.

Tourism Development

Tourism is a cornerstone of Gananoque's economy, driven by the Town's identity as the *Gateway to the 1000 Islands* and its unparalleled natural, cultural, and marine assets. These unique features create significant opportunities to expand both traditional and experiential tourism offerings, supporting local businesses, generating employment, and enhancing the vibrancy and visibility of the community.

Over time, Gananoque will advance as a premier tourist destination with a vibrant four-season economy. We will expand attractions and experiences that serve both residents and visitors, with a focus on increasing activity during shoulder seasons.

We will provide a wide variety of attractions and experiences for residents and tourists alike, managed by the Tourism Advisory Panel, comprised of industry professionals. Community festivals and public events will continue to play an important role in drawing visitors, energizing the local economy, and fostering a lively, welcoming environment that showcases the best of Gananoque.

Strategic investment in the Visitor Centre as a hub for residents, travellers, and businesses will reinforce Gananoque's reputation as an exceptional place to live, work, and play. Additionally, the Town will implement coordinated destination marketing and management strategies, leveraging Municipal Accommodation Tax revenues to reinvest in tourism development and support long-term growth.

Housing Development

Gananoque will prioritize planned, responsible housing growth that ensures affordability, strengthens the local economy, and enables residents to live, work, and thrive in the community. Increasing housing supply is essential to attract and retain workers, support employers, and ensure that people across generations can find a home that meets their needs.

We will consult with stakeholders to identify barriers and opportunities related to housing development, helping to inform practical and achievable solutions. The Town will review surplus municipal lands to assess their feasibility for new housing, including opportunities on unserviced pockets, pending viability and infrastructure considerations.

Efforts will focus on promoting infill development—with an emphasis on secondary suites. Gananoque will actively market emerging affordable housing opportunities to developers and explore enhancements to the Community Investment Program (CIP), including the potential for grants, loans, or funding tied to contribution agreements for affordable or rent-geared-to-income units.

Lastly, through financial support for the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville (UCLG) County and its 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, we will work to create stable, supportive housing options for residents while improving community outreach.

Through thoughtful planning, strategic partnerships, and proactive policy tools, Gananoque will enhance its readiness to expand housing options, to support a diverse and growing population, and help secure long-term community and economic prosperity.

In the next five years, our key strategies for championing a strong and resilient local economy are:

- 1) Support a strong and resilient business ecosystem.
- 2) Invest strategically in tourism development to support long-term growth.
- 3) Improve the conditions and opportunities for planned, responsible housing.

3. CULTIVATE A HIGH-PERFORMING AND FUTURE-FOCUSED MUNICIPAL TEAM

Gananoque's Council and staff are the backbone of a strong and effective municipality that delivers high-quality public service and enhances community well-being. The Town is committed to fostering a positive, collaborative, and transparent organizational culture where people are valued, supported, and empowered to do their best work.

Investing in people is a core priority. We will strengthen recruitment, professional and leadership development, staff engagement, and meaningful recognition to attract and retain skilled talent. Priorities for the next planning cycle include designing a comprehensive staff onboarding system and solidifying succession planning to ensure organizational continuity and long-term stability.

Modernizing internal systems and leveraging new technologies will enhance efficiency, improve customer service, and position the Town for the future. We will develop an Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy and implementation plan, adopt the ICity platform to integrate tax and utility services, establish Diligent Community to increase secure public access to information, and maintain the new, robust cybersecurity system with real-time threat monitoring to protect municipal assets and data.

The Town will complete the Official Plan update and review the Development Permit By-law (Zoning) while maintaining alignment with provincial legislative and regulatory changes. The Town will also inventory corporate policies and implement a review schedule to ensure they remain current and support effective risk management.

Gananoque will enhance evaluation, reporting, and continuous improvement processes to strengthen decision-making and identify opportunities for innovation and operational excellence. We will strengthen communications with residents and stakeholders via an updated communications policy and an AODA-compliant communications strategy that improves access to timely, accurate information, enhancing accountability and building community trust.

Together, these investments will position Gananoque to respond effectively to community needs and deliver service excellence.

In the next five years, our key strategies to foster a high-performing, resilient and future-ready organization are:

- 1) Invest in our people.
- 2) Modernize systems, corporate infrastructure, and continuous improvement processes to facilitate continuous enhancements.
- 3) Improve communications and access to information.



2026 to 2030 Strategic Plan

SUMMARY OF OUR THREE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

1. Provide Quality Core Services and Infrastructure

Key strategies are:

- 1) Review, prioritize and deliver core services based on responsible and viable service levels.
- 2) Implement and maintain the 10-year Asset Management Plan.
- 3) Work with and fund partners to provide health care supports, culture, child care, social services, housing supports, ambulance services, environmental stewardship, and youth and seniors programming.

2. Champion a Strong and Sustainable Local Economy

Key strategies are:

- 1) Support a strong and resilient business ecosystem.
- 2) Invest strategically in tourism development to support long-term growth.
- 3) Improve the conditions and opportunities for planned, responsible housing.

3. Cultivate a High-Performing and Future-Focused Municipal Team

Key strategies are:

- 1) Invest in our people.
- 2) Modernize systems, corporate infrastructure, and continuous improvement processes to facilitate continuous enhancements.
- 3) Improve communications and access to information.

Council Report – CAO-2025-15

Date: December 8, 2025 ☐ **IN CAMERA**

Subject: Draft Strategic Plan 2026 – 2030 Update

Author: Melanie Kirkby, CAO ☒ **OPEN COUNCIL**

RECOMMENDATION:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF GANANOQUE RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION THE DRAFT 1 STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 – 2030,

AND FURTHER COUNCIL APPROVES OPTION #_____, AS THE TOWN OF GANANOQUE'S VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT, AS PRESENTED BY SUZANNE GIBSON OF SUZANNE GIBSON AND ASSOCIATES AND AS PRESENTED IN COUNCIL REPORT CAO-2025-15.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMENTS:

Sector 1 – Economic Prosperity – Strategic Initiative #1 – Ensure that Gananoque is and remains an affordable place to do business and raise a family.

BACKGROUND:

At the September 16, 2025, Council meeting, Council awarded a contract to Suzanne Gibson for the facilitation of the new Strategic Plan 2026- 2030. Ms. Gibson had submitted a proposed work plan which included the proposed timeline for the project.

A kick off training session was held with senior management on October 14th, 2025 and a training working session with Council and Senior Management was held on October 23rd, 2025.

A meeting was held virtually on November 17th, 2025 for the three (3) members of Council who were unable to attend the October 14th meeting, to ensure that all 7 members of Council contributed to the content of the draft document.

Staff met with Ms. Gibson on November 20th and 21st, 2025, to review the content from the October 14th, 2025 meeting and to draft an initial Strategic Planning document.

A public meeting will be held on February 10th, 2026, in conjunction with the issuance of an online survey to ensure opportunity for public consultation.

The final plan would be tentatively scheduled for Council adoption in late March 2026.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION:

Attached for Council review is the preliminary draft document which encompasses the content from the October 14th, 2025, meeting. Ms. Gibson is looking for feedback from Council on this high-level compilation.

Staff will be meeting with Suzanne on December 8th and 9th, 2025, to work on drafting the action items that will implement the planning document.

The first draft of the 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan will be presented at a public meeting on February 10, 2026.

In addition to the public meeting, a survey will be issued for Town residents and Property Owners who don't wish to, or are not able to attend the public meeting.

Once all of the Public comments are compiled, a final plan would be tentatively scheduled for Council adoption in late March 2026.

Staff recommend that Council receives the draft 2026-2030 Strategic Plan as presented by Ms. Gibson on Monday, December 8th, and approve one (1) of the following Options.

Option #1:**VISION**

To be a healthy, vibrant, welcoming and prosperous waterfront community that both supports smart and sustainable growth and protects our historic, small-town character as the Gateway to the 1000 Islands.

MISSION

We promote economic prosperity, cherish cultural diversity, steward our history and protect our natural environment to make Gananoque a great place to work, live, play and thrive.

Option #2:**VISION**

To be a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable waterfront community that celebrates our historic small-town charm while fostering smart growth and serving as the welcoming Gateway to the 1000 Islands.

MISSION

We deliver exceptional service, promote responsible economic development and steward our historic and natural assets with collaboration and inclusivity at the forefront.

APPLICABLE POLICY/LEGISLATION:

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The award of the contract for the agreed scope of work was \$20,200.

CONSULTATIONS:

Suzanne Gibson, Principal – Suzanne Gibson & Associates

ATTACHMENTS:

None

APPROVAL	<hr/> <p>Melanie Kirkby, CAO</p> <p>Certifies that unless otherwise provided for in this report the funds are contained within the approved Budgets and that the financial transactions follow Council's own policies and guidelines and the <i>Municipal Act</i> and regulations.</p>
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