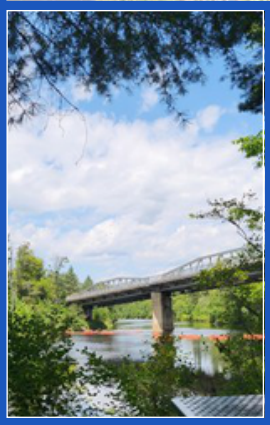
The Village Of
BURK'S FALLS

Municipal Strategic Plan

2026-2030

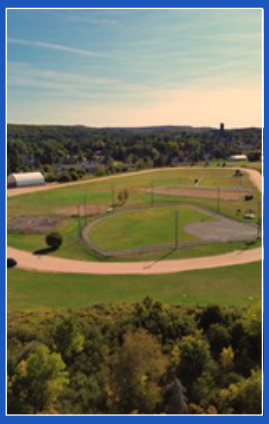
Prepared by:
TOWN HALL CONSULTING INC.

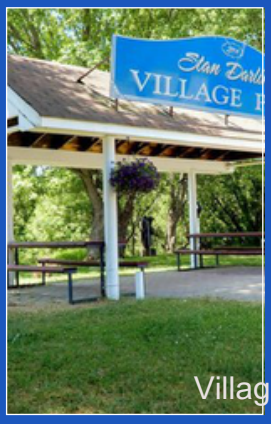
RIVER WALK



ENJOY

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES




VILLAGE

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Welcome to Burk's Falls

The Village of Burk's Falls is a welcoming community nestled in the heart of the Almaguin Highlands, just two hours north of the Greater Toronto Area. With stunning natural landscapes, deep historical roots, and a close-knit business community, Burk's Falls offers a distinctive blend of small-town character and forward-thinking ambition. Our community is built on a foundation of resilience, collaboration, and a shared commitment to enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Burk's Falls is a place where families grow, businesses thrive, and neighbours come together to celebrate everything from local festivals to shared achievements. As we look to the future, our vision is clear: honour the heritage and character that define us while strategically managing the opportunities and challenges of a dynamic rural community, harnessing innovation, focusing on sustainability, and strengthening the spirit that makes Burk's Falls home.

To ensure we stay on the right path, the Village of Burk's Falls has completed a Strategic Planning process. This collaborative effort engaged residents, businesses, and stakeholders to shape our community's future. Together, we have defined goals, set priorities, and developed a clear roadmap for success that reflects our shared values and aspirations.

This Strategic Plan positions Burk's Falls to continue fostering growth, preserving our heritage, and building a sustainable, inclusive community that will thrive for generations to come.

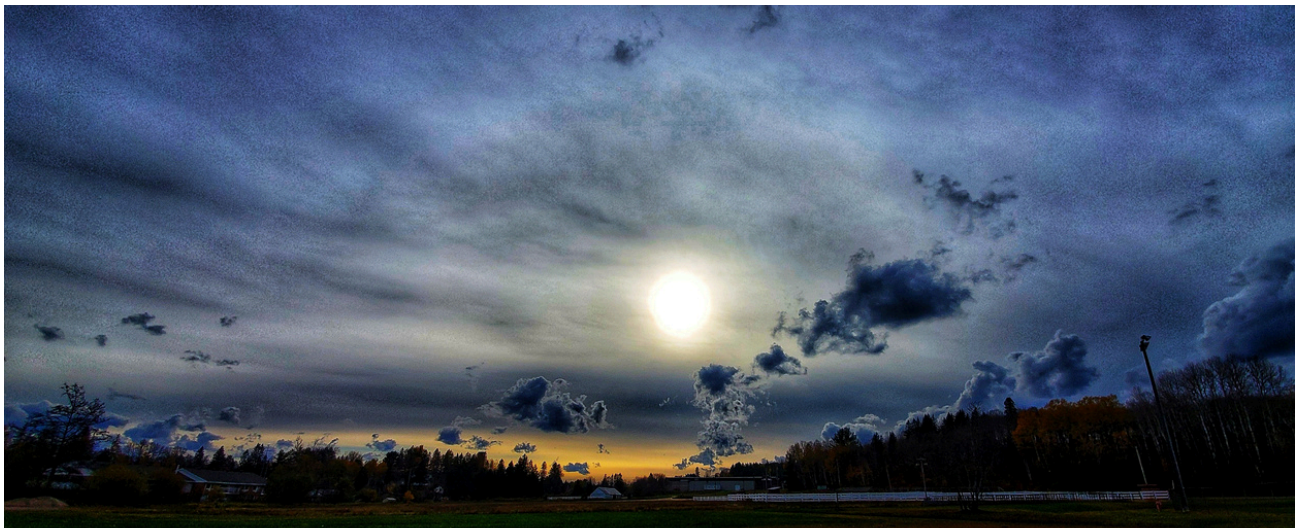
Land Acknowledgement

Welcome to the Village of Burk’s Falls as we gather on the traditional territory of indigenous peoples, dating back countless generations, we wish to honour the ancestral guardians of this land and its waterway and recognize the Robinson-Huron and Williams Treaties, showing respect for the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers.

Why Now?

The Village of Burk's Falls is at an important crossroads. After years of steady decline, the community is actively positioning itself for renewed growth, pursuing the infrastructure investments, planning approvals, and economic development initiatives needed to attract residents, businesses, and industry. With a Water and Wastewater Study on the horizon and subdivision approvals underway, Burk's Falls is laying the groundwork to become shovel-ready and competitive for the decade ahead.

The Village's previous efforts have established a strong foundation, focusing on maintaining a high quality of life, supporting local businesses, and preserving the character and heritage of a proud Almaguin Highlands community. With an eye toward the future, Burk's Falls is evaluating strategies to respond to evolving community needs, modernize municipal services, and strengthen its financial sustainability. The Village aims to balance growth with liveability, ensuring that new development enhances the small-town identity and natural beauty that make Burk's Falls home.



A Message From The Mayor and Council

On behalf of the Council of the Village of Burk's Falls, we are proud to present our Strategic Plan. This document is a significant milestone designed to chart a clear path for the future of our community. This plan is a collaborative project that reflects the input we sought from residents, businesses, and stakeholders who shared their ideas, hopes, and aspirations for Burk's Falls.

Our vision for the Village is rooted in fostering growth while preserving the small-town character and natural beauty of the Almaguin Highlands that make our community so special.

Left to right: Councillor Ryan Baptiste | Councillor Ashley Brandt | Treasurer Tammy Wylie | Mayor Chris Hope | CAO Denis Duguay | Deputy Mayor Sean Cotton | Absent: Councillor Nancy Kyte

Through this Strategic Plan, we have identified key priorities and actionable steps that will guide us in achieving sustainable development, enhancing services, and improving the overall quality of life for everyone who calls Burk's Falls home. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this process. Your voices have helped shape this roadmap, and your continued engagement will be vital as we work together to bring our shared vision to life.

As a Council, we remain committed to responsible decision-making, improving collaboration, and utilizing innovation as we implement the goals outlined in this plan. We will continue to work hard to make fiscally responsible decisions to build a thriving, inclusive community that we can all take pride in, today and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Chris Hope

Mayor Hope and Council of the Village of Burk's Falls

Community Engagement

The Village of Burk's Falls' Strategic Plan is the result of a collaborative process designed to reflect the community's collective vision, mission, values, and priorities. In developing this plan, the Village engaged with residents, businesses, community groups, Council, and staff to ensure it captures the diverse needs and aspirations of the community.

Community engagement was conducted both online and in person, utilizing a range of tools and methods to maximize participation and feedback. Key engagement activities included:

- **Online Survey**: Residents were invited to participate through an online survey, providing an accessible opportunity to share priorities, ideas, and feedback on the future of Burk's Falls.
- **Open House Monopoly Night**: Residents attended an in-person event where they could allocate $5 million in Monopoly money to strategic projects, engage with Council and staff, and contribute ideas through an open feedback board.
- **Focus Groups**: Key community leaders and representatives from local organizations participated in focus groups to provide detailed feedback and share perspectives that enhanced the plan's depth and inclusivity.

The community's contributions helped shape this Strategic Plan. Feedback gathered through the Monopoly Night and focus groups highlighted critical priorities, including financial sustainability, infrastructure improvements, and community vitality, reinforcing the vision, mission, and values reflected in this document.

This engagement process ensured that the Strategic Plan reflects what matters most to the residents of Burk's Falls, creating a roadmap that is not only aspirational but also rooted in the community's shared values and vision for the future.

Mission, Vision, Values

Vision

A sustainable, inclusive community where growth is thoughtfully managed, quality of life is protected, and every resident feels at home in Burk's Falls.

Mission

The Village of Burk's Falls is committed to providing efficient, accountable, and community-centred services that support a safe, inclusive, and thriving municipality, today and for generations to come.

Mission, Vision, Values

VALUES

Transparency
We communicate openly with residents, sharing information about decisions, finances, and operations in a timely and accessible way.

Integrity
We do what is right. Our decisions are guided by honesty, fairness, and an unwavering commitment to the public good.

Accountability
We take ownership of our actions and are answerable to the residents and ratepayers we serve.

Teamwork
Council, staff, and community partners work collaboratively, combining strengths to deliver the best outcomes for Burk's Falls.

Professionalism
We deliver services with competence, respect, and consistency, holding ourselves to high standards in everything we do.

Strategic Priorities

- Financial Sustainability + Good Governance
- Infrastructure + Asset Management
- Community Well-Being + Recreation
- Economic Development + Growth
- Service Excellence + Organizational Operation

1. Financial Sustainability + Good Governance

Financial sustainability ensures the Village can meet its current and future needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. This priority focuses on securing stable funding for the Health Centre, exploring regional service partnerships with neighbouring Almaguin Highlands municipalities, and maximizing grant eligibility through completed studies and strategic alignments. By maintaining a multi-year capital budget and aligning fiscal decisions with Strategic Plan priorities, Burk's Falls ensures responsible decision-making and long-term financial resilience.

How will we achieve this?

Objective	Action
1.1 Secure Sustainable Funding for the Health Centre	1.1.1 Establish a community fundraising initiative dedicated to the Health Centre 1.1.2 Explore grant and partnership opportunities 1.1.3 Expand Health Centre
1.2 Explore Regional Service Partnerships	1.2.1 Engage area municipalities to identify shared service goals, priorities, and potential areas for collaboration 1.2.2 Explore formal partnership opportunities within the Almaguin Highlands municipalities
1.3 Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability	1.3.1 Maintain a multi-year capital budget aligned with asset management findings 1.3.2 Align fiscal decisions with Strategic Plan priorities
1.4 Maximize Grant Eligibility	1.4.1 Identify funding gaps and complete required studies to position for funding 1.4.2 Partner with neighbouring municipalities where shared goals exist 1.4.3 Pursue federal and provincial grant funding for sewer and water infrastructure (informed by condition assessments (2.1.1) and Water Study findings (2.2))

2. Infrastructure + Asset Management

Strong infrastructure is the foundation of a thriving community. This priority focuses on addressing aging municipal systems through proactive condition assessments, a comprehensive Water and Wastewater Study, and targeted upgrades to sewer, water, and road infrastructure, including Yonge Street rehabilitation. By maintaining an up-to-date asset management plan and pursuing federal and provincial funding, Burk's Falls is building infrastructure ready to serve residents and support growth for the next 100 years.

How will we achieve this?

Objective	Action
2.1 Maintain and Improve Aging Municipal Infrastructure	2.1.1 Complete condition assessment to identify priority infrastructure needs 2.1.2 Maintain and update the asset management plan 2.1.3 Pursue grant funding for sewer and water infrastructure from federal and provincial levels 2.1.4 Prioritize Yonge Street rehabilitation and roads improvement in key public areas
2.2 Commission a Water and Wastewater Study	2.2.1 Secure funding to initiate the Study 2.2.2 Complete study and present findings to Council
2.3 Upgrade Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	2.3.1 Advance shovel-ready projects as funding is confirmed (pending 2.2 - Water Study findings)

3. Economic Development + Growth

A vibrant local economy strengthens the community for everyone. This priority focuses on attracting new industry, getting residential subdivisions shovel-ready, and supporting a diverse housing supply. Revitalizing Main Street, redeveloping the Fairgrounds, and developing a Business Retention and Expansion strategy will drive increased foot traffic, local employment, and a growing assessment base, positioning Burk's Falls as an attractive destination for residents, businesses, and investors alike.

How will we achieve this?

Objective	Action
3.1 Attract New Industry and Grow the Assessment Base	3.1.1 Leverage Water Study findings (2.2) to demonstrate servicing capacity to prospective industries 3.1.2 Market available land and serviced lots to commercial prospects
3.2 Get Shovel-Ready for Residential Development	3.2.1 Finalize the Official Plan and zoning by-laws 3.2.2 Pursue subdivision approvals
3.3 Support a Sustainable and Diverse Housing Supply	3.3.1 Work with developers and upper-tier government to encourage a range of housing types 3.3.2 Ensure zoning supports gentle intensification and affordable options 3.3.3 Participate in provincial and county housing initiatives
3.4 Revitalize the Main Street	3.4.1 Develop a Community Improvement Plan 3.4.2 Support downtown activation through festivals, seasonal banners, and wayfinding 3.4.3 Explore funding opportunities to revitalize Main Street

3. Economic Development + Growth

Objective	Action
3.5 Redevelop Fairgrounds	3.5.1 Complete a Strategic plan for the Fairground redevelopment 3.5.2 Explore funding and partnerships for Fairgrounds redevelopment 3.5.3 Redevelop fairground and upgrade facilities
3.6 Develop a Business Retention & Expansion Plan	3.6.1 Develop a new business attraction and support program

4. Community Well-Being + Recreation

A connected, active community is a healthy one. This priority focuses on upgrading parks and recreation facilities for all ages and abilities, revitalizing the Theatre as a cultural hub, enhancing the trails and active transportation network, and improving access and amenities at the Riverfront. By investing in the spaces where residents gather, play, and celebrate, Burk's Falls strengthens the community spirit and quality of life that make it a place people are proud to call home.

How will we achieve this?

Objective	Action
4.1 Develop a Parks and Recreation Strategy to upgrade Facilities to Maximize Use and Accessibility	4.1.1 Pursue & complete a Parks + Rec Plan, including a recreation needs assessment to identify gaps in programming for all ages and abilities 4.1.2 Apply for provincial and federal funding for upgrades and accessibility improvements 4.1.3 Explore a recreation coordinator role or student placement
4.2 Revitalize the Theatre as a Community Cultural Hub	4.2.1 Expand community use through engagement and renovation planning 4.2.2 Explore funding for theatre improvements
4.3 Upgrade Trails System and Active Transportation	4.3.1 Explore trail development and active transportation connections to improve recreational access across the community
4.4 Riverfront Improvements	4.4.1 Upgrade access, seating and signage for increased community usage at Riverfront

5. Service Excellence + Organizational Operation

Effective municipal government depends on clear communication and efficient operations. This priority focuses on improving community engagement through modern digital tools, modernizing customer service with resident-facing technology, and ensuring staff and Council remain focused on the priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan. By streamlining internal processes and expanding public participation, Burk's Falls builds a responsive, accountable municipality that residents can trust.

How will we achieve this?

Objective	Action
5.1 Improve Community Engagement	5.1.1 Adopt technology to improve accessibility of municipal information, including implementing an online engagement platform (e.g. SocialPoint) 5.1.2 Explore ways to include the public in Council meetings such as Controlled Open Sessions
5.2 Modernize Customer Service and Internal Communications	5.2.1 Adopt resident-facing technology for online tax payments, service requests, and issue reporting 5.2.2 Implement internal systems to improve staff workflow, service tracking, and record management
5.3 Deliver Focused and Sustainable Municipal Services	5.3.1 Council and staff commit to the priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan 5.3.2 New initiatives are evaluated against existing priorities before being adopted

Implementation

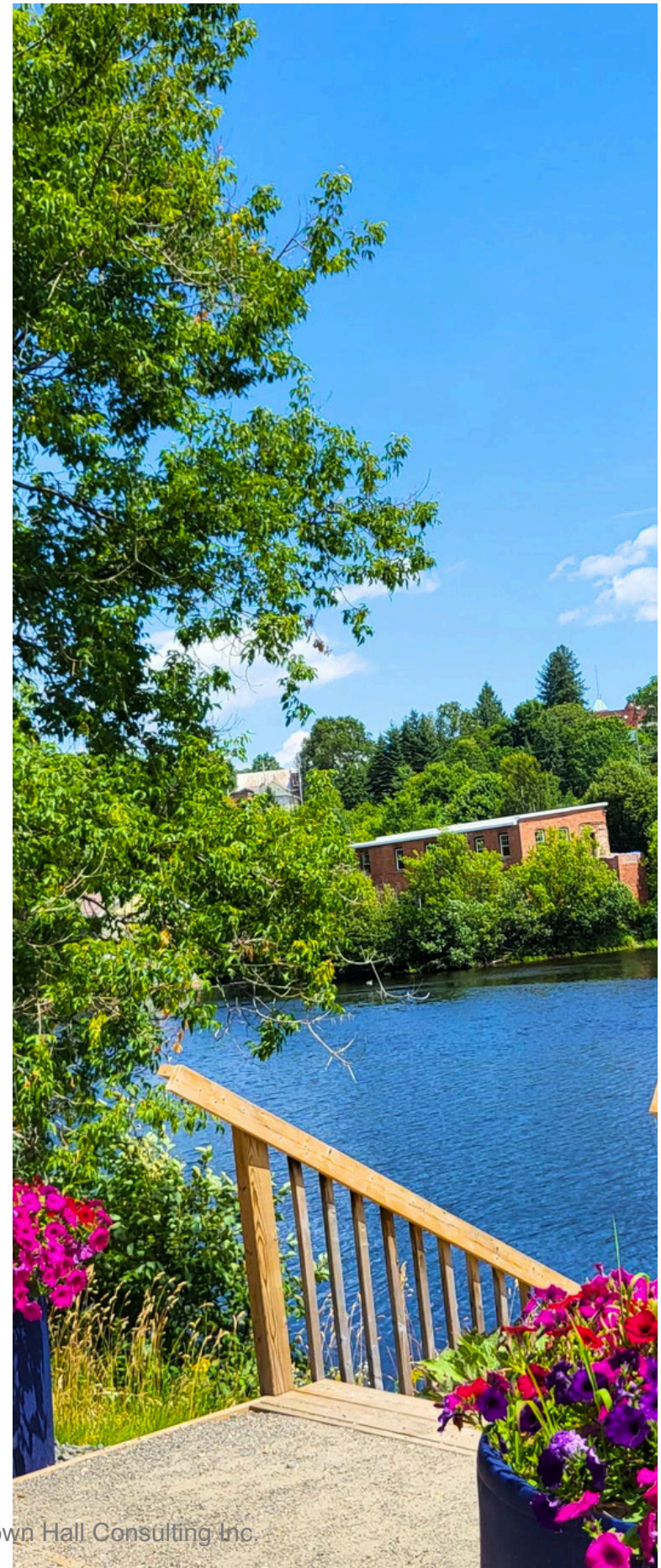
The Village of Burk's Falls' Strategic Plan represents a bold and forward-thinking vision for the future of our community. Now finalized, the focus shifts to implementation, turning strategic priorities and objectives into tangible actions that deliver meaningful results.

To ensure effective implementation, the Village will use an internal implementation tracker to monitor progress and ensure initiatives align with the strategic objectives. This tracker will allow staff to evaluate ongoing actions, address challenges, and celebrate successes.

A health check will provide an opportunity to assess the plan's effectiveness at the mid-point of the plan's lifecycle. During this phase, adjustments will be made as needed to ensure initiatives remain relevant and responsive to the community's evolving needs.

Key actions under each strategic priority will be executed in alignment with available resources, ensuring a balance between ambition and sustainability. Progress updates will be provided regularly to keep the community informed and engaged, ensuring residents remain connected to the work being done on their behalf.

This implementation phase marks the beginning of a shared journey, one that transforms aspirations into achievements while building a stronger, more vibrant Burk's Falls.



Conclusion

The Village of Burk's Falls' Strategic Plan represents a collective vision for the future, one that balances growth, sustainability, and community well-being. Rooted in the priorities of residents, businesses, and stakeholders, this plan serves as a guiding framework to shape the Village's progress over the coming years.

Turning strategy into action requires collaboration, commitment, and ongoing engagement. Through careful implementation, regular progress reviews, and adaptability, the Village will ensure that the goals outlined in this plan lead to tangible improvements in services, infrastructure, and quality of life.

A successful future for Burk's Falls depends on the efforts of many, Council, staff, community organizations, and residents alike. By working together, we can build a Village that honours its heritage, embraces innovation, and fosters a strong and connected community.

This plan is a stepping stone toward a brighter future for Burk's Falls. Let's move forward, together.

THANK YOU

Village of Burk's Falls

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