

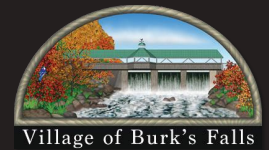
VILLAGE OF BURK'S FALLS



Village of Burk's Falls

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The goal of the project is to develop a Village of Burk's Falls Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Master Plan (Master Plan) that will increase visitation to the area, encourage private sector investment and revitalize the core area of Burk's Falls. The Master Plan will strengthen the downtown core and waterfront area and ensure the success over the years to come.

The report has been developed in collaboration with the Village of Burk's Falls Steering Committee, community leaders, residents, stakeholders, property owners and businesses. The final product will provide a road map for the future direction and to stimulate new investment and economic activity in the core.

The Steering Committee included the following participants:

- **Amber Wellbelove**, Welcome Centre Bakery and Barista/Pullman Excavating
- **Denis Sabourin**, Papa Bear's Restaurant
- **Willy Hollett**, Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce
- **Dave Gray**, Community Economic Development Officer
- **Lewis Hodgson**, Councillor, Village of Burk's Falls
- **Nicky Kunkel**, Clerk Administrator, Village of Burk's Falls

The Project Team conducted a situational analysis of the region. This included primary research consisting of engagement with:

- Municipal Council & staff
- Key stakeholders
- Businesses and property owners
- Community residents

Secondary research consisted of the following sources:

- A review of existing reports, studies and documents; and
- Market research including best practice review.

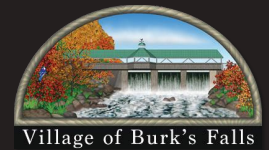
Following the research process, and analysis of the data collected was conducted to formulate the actions and vision outlined herein.



KILGOUR
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT INC.

MITCHELL
JENSEN
ARCHITECTS

The Village of Burk's Falls retained Karen Jones Consulting Inc. in partnership with Kilgour Planning & Development Inc. and Mitchell Jensen Architects (the Project Team) to conduct a Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Master Plan. The project included the development of a Community Improvement Plan to create a complete toolkit for implementation.



The Village of Burk's Falls Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Master Plan (Master Plan) was initiated by the Village of Burk's Falls in 2017. It was determined early in the study process that Burk's Falls has a strong foundation to build upon to enhance the Downtown Waterfront experience. Studies already undertaken addressing marketing, signage, and business retention & expansion provide necessary complementary efforts that will further this Master Plan initiative.

The Village of Burk's Falls has its own unique story to tell. With a supportive Council and business sector key players are engaged and are ready to champion an enhanced Downtown and Waterfront. The Master Plan uses accepted best practices that have proven successful, and applied them to the Village of Burk's Falls. Throughout the development of the Master Plan, public consultations were held to ensure all ideas were heard.

The following Vision Statement has been developed to provide a focused purpose to achieve the goals and actions set forth in this plan.

Vision

"To create a Downtown and Waterfront that is an attractive, unified destination for residents and tourists alike to foster economic success for all in the Village of Burk's Falls."

A Master Plan concept was developed based on the input from previous studies, stakeholder consultations, applying best practices, and following the guiding principles.

This Master Plan provides a visual guide and vision for the community and its partners to rally behind.

The Master Plan has the potential to generate significant economic benefits. These benefits are driven by the over-arching principles.

Guiding Principles

- 1 Enhance and promote connector to/from downtown and waterfront;
- 2 Retain passive recreation character;
- 3 Enhance community gathering spaces;
- 4 Create a sense of ownership and collaboration with the municipality, landlords, tenants, businesses and residents;
- 5 Establish a strong sense of arts, culture and heritage; and
- 6 Encourage investment attraction and business development.

Budget

To accomplish the required work to determine feasibility, to improve existing infrastructure and to implement the Community Improvement Plan as identified will require a long-term investment of \$6,070,000.

The funding may be acquired through federal, provincial and municipal sources over a five year period. Furthermore, public/private partnerships are recommended to stimulate new investment and encourage re-investment into existing buildings and businesses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



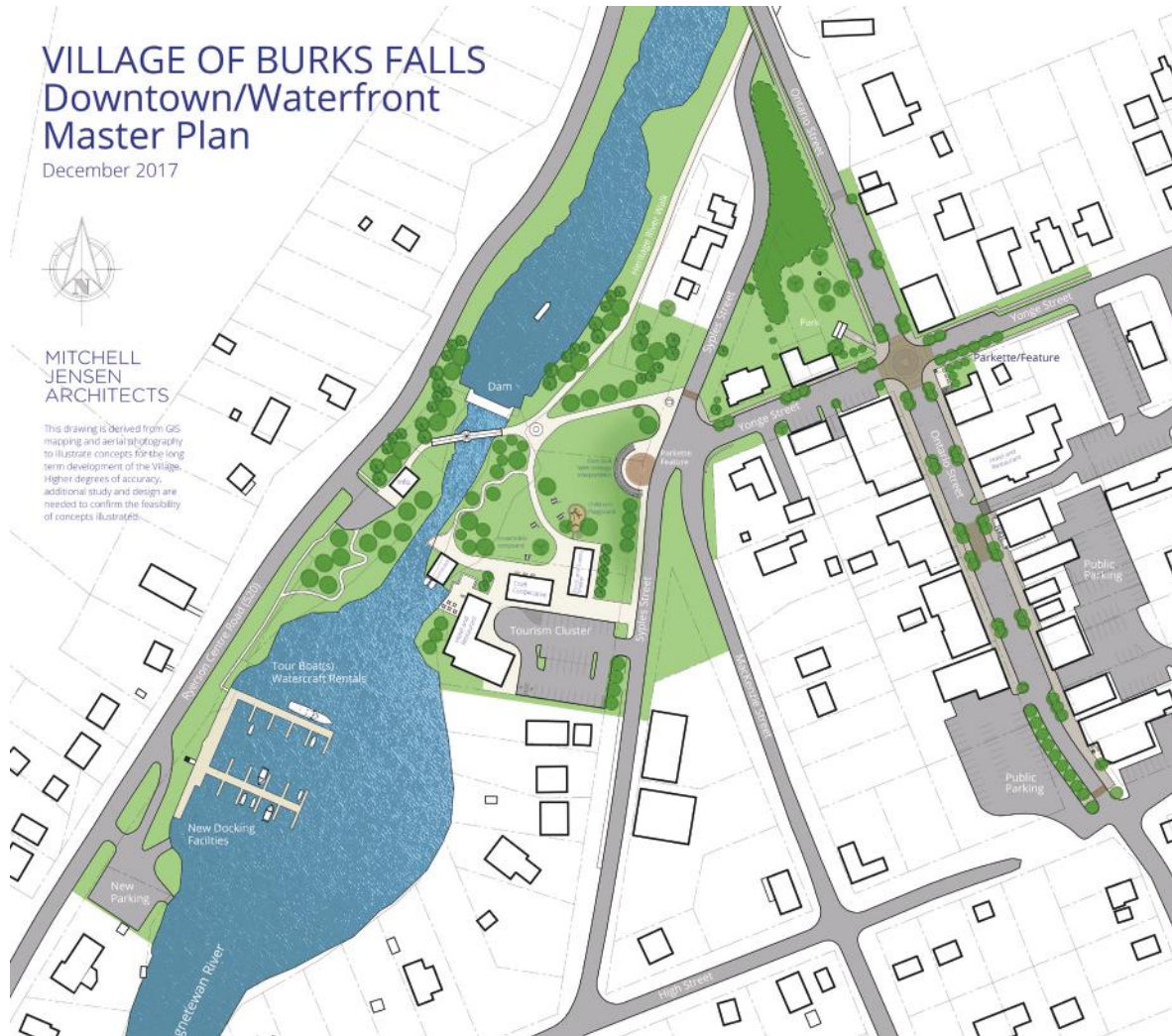
VILLAGE OF BURKS FALLS Downtown/Waterfront Master Plan

December 2017



MITCHELL
JENSEN
ARCHITECTS

This drawing is derived from GIS mapping and aerial photography to illustrate concepts for the long term development of the Village. Higher degrees of accuracy, additional study and design are needed to confirm the feasibility of concepts illustrated.



Priority Areas

The following priorities will lead the development and implementation of the Master Plan. The actions have been created with the priorities in mind and align with the guiding principles.



Connectivity



Downtown Revitalization



Waterfront Development



Arts, Culture & Heritage

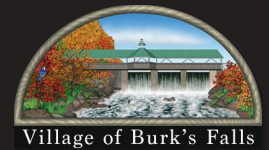


Recreation & Outdoor
Adventure



Beautification

INTRODUCTION



The Village of Burk's Falls is located in the Almaguin Highlands in the East Parry Sound District, located 265 kilometers north of Toronto, 90 kilometers south of North Bay and situated on Highway 520 which connects to Parry Sound. Located on the boundaries of Ryerson and Armour Townships, along the four lane Highway 11 Corridor and within close proximity to Algonquin Park, the Village is ideally positioned for growth within the tourism sector and to support the supply and distribution chains for local business.

Limited accommodations, deteriorating downtown, limited services for water-based activity and a lack of connection from the core to the waterfront area, are challenges that must be addressed. As such, the need for an action-oriented Master Plan was identified. The purpose of the Master Plan is to guide the revitalization process and ensure a complementary vision for the future is realized.

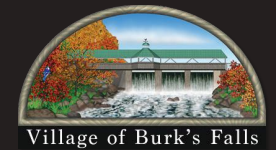
Recognizing valuable community assets and building on the already existing foundation of the community, allows for seamless implementation of the recommended strategies that have emerged during the project. The Master Plan provides a series of recommended initiatives and actions that have been developed based on the research findings generated throughout the project. The actions identified in the Master Plan incorporates the feedback received from the community consultations, one-on-one interviews and previous reports and studies, all of which have been integrated into this Master Plan.

This Master Plan provides a long-term vision, along with specific recommendations for waterfront land uses, downtown revitalization, business development, open spaces, parks, trails and arts, culture

and heritage amenities. To ensure forward momentum, the Master Plan provides details for each action identified. The actions address identified gaps and challenges and align with the overall vision for the Village of Burk's Falls.



PROJECT OVERVIEW



The overall goal of the project is to create a Downtown/Waterfront Master Plan that the Village of Burk's Falls and senior levels of government can support through the Community Improvement Plan and infrastructure programs. It is proven that this formula will stimulate significant private sector investment.

Downtowns across North America have been subject to declining private sector investment and deteriorating physical conditions. The trend is a result of consumer patterns shifting to urbanized strip malls, shopping centres and "big box" stores. Balanced growth is critical to every community, as it ensures that downtowns and other commercial districts receive the same degree of attention needed to foster compatible development. The condition of the downtown core is used as a barometer for the perceived economic health of the community, both internally and externally. An unhealthy looking downtown decreases investor confidence for future growth. A healthy downtown is vital to a community as it is a strong indicator to the overall condition of the region it serves. Historically the oldest part of a community, downtowns face a number of challenges that can be less common in other commercial districts.



Challenges include:

- ✓ Building structure issues
- ✓ Varying hours of operation among establishments
- ✓ Lack of parking
- ✓ Complex mix of multi-residential, compatible retail and professional services
- ✓ Vacant buildings
- ✓ Absentee landlords

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011 released by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines recognizes the need to foster development in strategic core areas. According to the Growth Plan, municipalities are encouraged to "plan for these areas to function as vibrant, walkable mixed-use districts that can:

- Attract employment uses and clusters, including office and retail;
- Accommodate higher densities; and
- Provide a range of amenities accessible to residents and visitors including vibrant streetscapes, shopping, entertainment, transportation, connections, lodging, education, health, social and cultural services."

Key Studies

Throughout the market research phase, key studies were reviewed. This includes the following:

BACED Marketing Plan 2016

- ✓ Highlighted Burk's Falls competitive advantage in the Village infrastructure and identified target markets
- ✓ SWOT Analysis guided project gaps

BACED Signage Audit Report

- ✓ Provided a solid base for access points and wayfinding requirements

Business Retention + Expansion Project

- ✓ Most comprehensive regional community input, guiding the direction and need for downtown revitalization

Community Engagement

Drawing on existing survey data and direct engagement with residents, businesses, landlords and stakeholders, local needs were assessed. This also included engagement with the engineering consultants involved with Ontario Street Design. While a variety of information was collected during this process, the following provides a summary of the feedback received from stakeholders.

“What would your ideal downtown look like?”

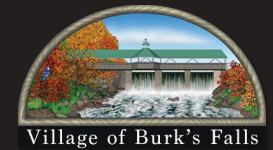
- Welcome signs
- Unique, historic and quaint with nice ambiance
- Variety of shopping, boutique style shopping, anchor stores
- Accessibility
- Beautification – trees, planters, facades
- No empty buildings, beautify vacant buildings until leased
- Minimum property standards for downtown appearance
- Façade improvements – funding for businesses
- Business tools to access funding dollars – incentives
- Pride of ownership
- Accommodations in the downtown
- Banks
- Businesses open all year round – standardized hours
- Food availability (coffee shops, candy stores, variety)
- Downtown committee/ambassador program
- Local music all year round – event space
- Collaboration amongst businesses
- Chamber of Commerce relocation is a big asset
- Investment attraction
- Unified signage – bylaw (including overhead signage)
- Standard times for putting garbage on curb
- Clean sidewalks free of snow on private property
- Well marked parking lots, “customer only” street parking, use of under-used laneways for parking
- Even sidewalks for patios and product displays
- Limited transport truck traffic



“ What would your ideal waterfront look like? ”

- Boat slips
- Dock
- Parking for vehicles and trailers
- Canoe, kayak & paddle board rentals
- Shuttle service to pick up one-way non-motor boat traffic
- Attraction to capitalize on busy river traffic
- Steam boats, river tours, dinner tours, history overview
- Historic theme
- Food available at waterfront- patio to eat near water
- Chartered fishing tours
- Expansion of the Heritage River Walk
- Utilize basement space for museum
- Create and sell Village of Burk's Falls apparel
- Events (horse races, motor boat races, snowmobile races)
- Accommodations (B&B, mixed use)
- Arts and culture hub – gathering space
- Place for children to play
- Nicer looking signage
- Improvement to overall look, painting bridge and infrastructure, maintenance, etc.

TOURISM OVERVIEW



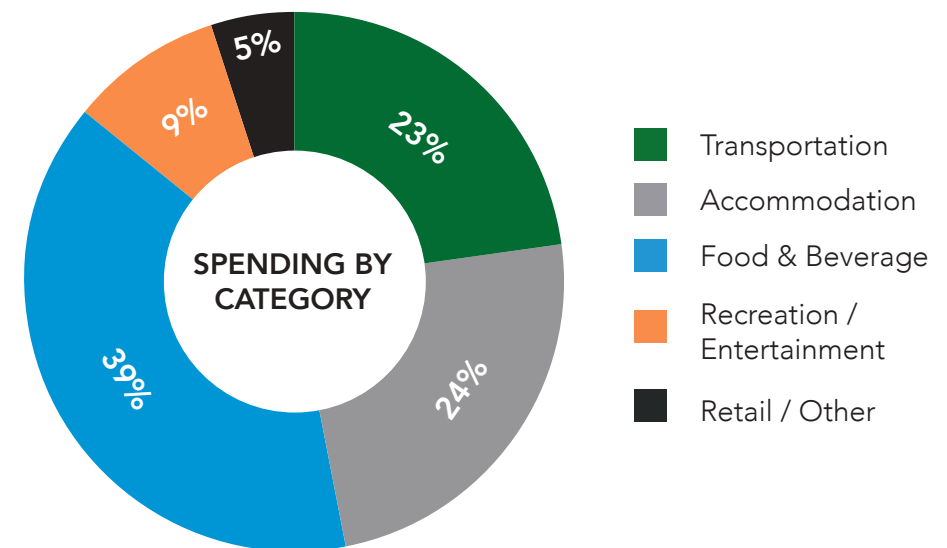
Regional Tourism Organizations foster growth within specific boundary areas of the Province. Ontario's tourism industry is separated in 13 regions and Burk's Falls is located within Region 12. The following table provides an overview of the tourism industry based on information collected from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport as it pertains to Region 12.

In 2012, there were 4.1 million visits to Region 12, representing 2.9% of total visits in Ontario. Visitors within the region, spent \$596 million, accounting for 2.7% of total visitor spending in Ontario.

REGION	VISITS (MILLIONS)	VISITOR SPENDING (\$ BILLIONS)
Ontario	141.7	22.3
Region 12	4.1	0.6
Region 12 proportion of total Ontario	2.9%	2.7%

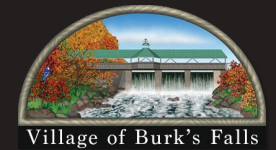
Ontario residents accounted for the vast majority of visits (95%) and spending (88%), U.S. visitors accounted for 3% of visits and 8% of expenditures, visitors from other parts of Canada made up 1% of visits and spending and overseas visitors accounted for 1% of visits and 3% of expenditure within Region 12.

The largest proportions of expenditures were spent on food & beverage, transportation and accommodations. Ontario visitors in Region 12 spent 48% of their food and beverage dollars at stores and 52% at restaurants.



The majority of visits (70%) to Region 12 were overnight visits, compared to Ontario where only 35% of visits were overnight. The average number of nights spent within the Region were 3, which was on par with Ontario's average. On average, overnight visitors spend 2 times as much as same-day visitors. The visitors average spend when in the Region was \$144/trip.

TOURISM OVERVIEW



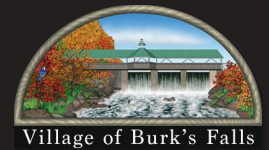
Trips made to Region 12 are mainly for pleasure, and in general, demonstrated a higher rate of participation in activities compared to visitors to other regions. Outdoor activities are the most popular among visitors, and historic sites and parks are more likely to be visited by the overseas market. While Burk's Falls is not currently attracting a large proportion of this tourism market, opportunity to capitalize on travelers in close proximity to the area exists. In order to accomplish this, new product and services are required.

The below chart represents a snapshot of main activities visitors participated in when visiting Region 12.



Tourism is a significant industry in Canada, Ontario and more specifically Almaguin Highlands, accounting for hundreds of jobs annually. The tourism industry is a significant creator of jobs in Ontario, supporting over 360,000 jobs in 2013. In 2012, the industry accounted for 5.2% of provincial employment, making it the 14th largest employer in the province. According to the Closing the Tourism Gap Report prepared by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, employment in RTO 12 accounts for 15.3% of the population. The following chart represents the proportion of Employment, GDP and Taxes Attributable to Ontario's Tourism Receipt's by Tourism Region, 2012.

TOURISM OVERVIEW



	RTO	% OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	% OF TOTAL GDP	% OF TOTAL MUNICIPAL REVENUES
1	Southwest Ontario	3.1%	2.2%	1.5%
2	Niagara Canada	11.8%	8.4%	5.2%
3	Hamilton, Halton and Brant	2.0%	1.5%	0.9%
4	Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington	3.5%	2.4%	1.5%
5	Greater Toronto Area	7.6%	5.9%	3.8%
6	York, Durham and Headwaters	2.1%	1.5%	0.9%
7	Bruce Peninsula, Southern Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe	6.5%	4.4%	3.6%
8	Kawartha Northumberland	6.5%	4.5%	2.8%
9	South Eastern Ontario	4.6%	3.3%	2.4%
10	Ottawa and Countryside	3.9%	3.0%	2.3%
11	Haliburton Highlands to the Ottawa Valley	5.8%	4.3%	3.2%
12	Algonquin Park, Almaguin Highlands, Muskoka and Parry Sound	15.3%	11.0%	5.7%
13a	Northeastern Ontario	3.8%	2.8%	3.4%
13b	Sault Ste. Marie - Algoma	4.5%	3.2%	5.0%
13c	Northwest Ontario	6.5%	3.8%	2.5%

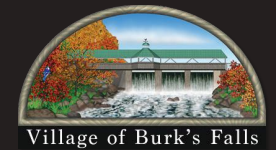
Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport



The majority of visits to Burk's Falls now and in the future are Ontario residents. Based on the data presented, this demographic who will spend 86% of their money primarily on accommodations, transportation, food and beverages. The remaining 14% is spent on entertainment/recreation/retail shopping.

As Burk's Falls continues to evolve, experiences unique to the area will emerge. As this growth develops, the travelling market will respond well to an authentic village anchored by accommodations and outdoor recreational experiences that include a variety of food and beverage establishments, with nearby entertainment, recreational activities and specialty retail shopping.

SWOT ANALYSIS

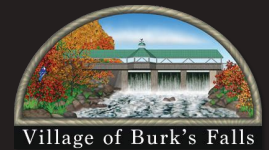


A SWOT represents strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors whereas opportunities and threats are external factors.

The following SWOT Analysis has been adapted from the Burk's Falls & Area Marketing Plan 2016 to include additions from the feedback received during the Master Plan. The original information was compiled from a variety of studies and reports as identified in the Marketing Plan.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway 11 and distances to GTA and Southern Ontario • Natural surroundings/tranquility • Access to many lakes and Magnetawan River • Infrastructure- water/sewer, accessible 3 phase power, fiber optic internet • Tourism- year-round opportunities and strong tourist/seasonal resident base • Vibrant art/music community • Sense of community- friendly people • Many cost benefits- lower taxes in rural municipalities, no development fees, affordable real estate • Safe place to live/quality emergency and social services • Great parks, recreation spaces and trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of overnight accommodations in the area • Downtown needs to be revitalized • Not well known to people outside of the area • Low year-round population • Low average income/income disparity • Proximity to larger retail competitors discourages shopping locally • Lack of signage to direct visitors to attractions/points of interest • Limited commercial and residential rental housing options • Aging community with a lack of services geared towards seniors and retirees • Very limited tourism experiences to accommodate tourists and seasonal residents. • No waterfront development • Parking challenges • Garbage left on Ontario Street the night before next day pick up detracts from visual appearance • High volume of transport truck traffic

SWOT ANALYSIS



OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and promote a brand/identity for the area • Create a downtown revitalization and/or community improvement plan • Create and support joint marketing initiatives with local businesses • Support the development of tourism product and experiences • Create/participate in a regional marketing partnership with regional stakeholders • Collaborate with regional economic development organizations and the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce • Engage local supportive organizations to find alignment opportunities within their programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many neighbouring and Northern communities promote a similar experience- with more resources • Negative attitude from some residents and retail front line staff members • Downtown seems depressed with many vacant storefronts • Provincial legislation and 'red tape' impose high costs and barriers to property and businesses owners • Municipal funding is limited due to low taxation base • Low bridge on the river near Midlothian road intersection • Foam at the waterfalls which makes it unappealing • Dead trees along waterfront

Overall, the Village of Burk's Falls downtown core is perceived as unhealthy, unkempt and tired. Due to the appearance of the buildings, vacancy rates, minimal pedestrian traffic and looming value gap, investor confidence is at a low, public perception is negative and under-utilized space in storefronts and upper level floors is noticeable. To ensure consistent development and growth, the gap between the cost of construction and the market value must make economic sense. If not, the likelihood of development occurring is minimal. In addition, the lease rates (cost per square foot) must be relative to market value for prime space. Otherwise, economic stability will be hindered. If real estate values decline below assessed values, property owners may appeal the assessments which results in substantial decreases in assessment and taxes.

To determine if a value gap is unbalanced, the following statements prove true:

- 1 A property owner cannot recover the costs to construct and immediately sell a new building.
- 2 A property owner does not benefit from investing significant dollars into under-utilized sites because the current economic situation will not allow for the costs incurred to be recovered through leasing or selling.
- 3 Exterior of buildings are chronically in a state of disrepair, creating an unwelcoming atmosphere.

Community Improvement Plans are effective tools that can work towards mitigating value gap issues. Furthermore, working collaboratively and regularly with property owners and developers on relevant initiatives will provide an effective way to maintain open communication lines, establish relationships and measure the overall progress. As the market changes and new development occurs, the closing value gap will be evident.

A Community Improvement Plan has been created for the Village of Burk's Falls. This tool has been developed to foster private/public sector investment and support property and business owners with the current value gap. Please refer to Appendix A.

Upon review of the SWOT analysis and through community feedback, the following gaps have been identified.

Recommendations on how to address the identified gaps is what forms the basis of the Master Plan actions.

Gaps

- ✓ Wayfinding/signage to and from downtown and waterfront
- ✓ Well marked walking loops
- ✓ Beautification/ambiance/lighting
- ✓ Places to sit/public spaces
- ✓ Pride of place
- ✓ Quality accommodations
- ✓ Boutiques/specialty stores
- ✓ Scheduled activities/experiences
- ✓ Lack of rentals for recreational equipment
- ✓ Parking signage
- ✓ Adequate parking spaces in downtown core and waterfront
- ✓ Connectivity (road, sidewalks, trails and water)
- ✓ Investment attraction incentives to combat aging buildings and deteriorating façades
- ✓ Under-utilized and poorly leveraged natural/water access points
- ✓ Lack of value on Magnetawan River marketing

Moving forward, it is critical that the Village of Burk's Falls implements strategies and tactics to bolster visitor attractiveness. An emphasis should be placed on revitalizing the Downtown and Waterfront areas to encourage pride of place and increase investor confidence.



When assessing a variety of other communities' assets and strengths, many compatible ideas emerged for the Village of Burk's Falls to consider. This included the following:



Business Development

- ✓ Mixed use development – accommodation, condos, restaurant, cafe, bistro, craft brewery
- ✓ Cost-effective rental space
- ✓ Business partnerships through packaging
- ✓ Community Improvement Plan including tax rebates, grants, waive building, tipping, health unit, planning fees



Recreation

- ✓ Stand up paddle boards, kayaks, canoe rentals with a shuttle to pick people up after one-way trip and bring them back to explore the Village of Burk's Falls (dine, play, shop)
- ✓ River tours
- ✓ Outdoor gear rentals (bicycles, ski, snow shoe, etc.)
- ✓ Trail systems development with wayfinding signage and well-marked loops
- ✓ Parks & open spaces with places to gather, sit and play
- ✓ Snowmobile compound



Events & Activities

- ✓ Indoor/outdoor Flea Market/Farmer's Market
- ✓ Organized day-trips, competitions & races (e.g. canoe, kayak, bathtub races)
- ✓ Unique festivals
- ✓ Music events (e.g. symphony splash)



Art, Heritage & Culture

- ✓ Heritage sites- plaques and photographs- walking tour
- ✓ Capitalizing on steamship roots
- ✓ Public art displays

The following identifies several of the locations the Project Team researched during the best practice phase:



Lessons Learned

- Educate community about potential opportunity to position community as leading tourism destination.
- Identify community champions who are willing to take the first step and invest in the concept.
- Ensure authenticity of product.

LEAVENWORTH, WASHINGTON

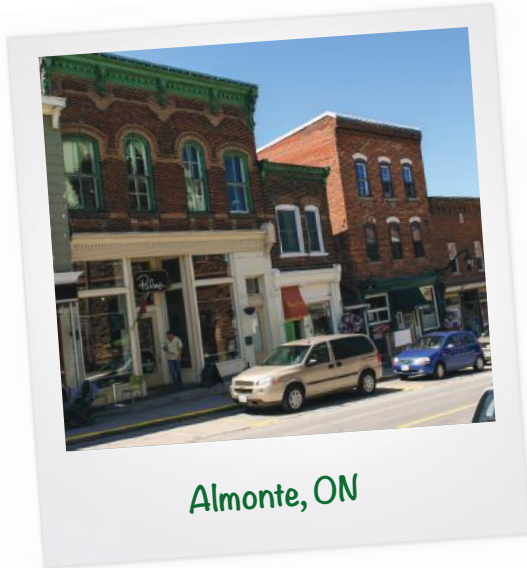
Leavenworth is a small town in Washington that reinvented itself after the loss of its railway and timber industries. The Bavarian theme was carefully researched, architects were hired, building codes were changed and townspeople took to learning about the German culture and have fully adopted the Bavarian theme throughout the community including architecture, music, food, clothing, service, souvenirs, festivals and events.

Purpose

To position itself as a Bavarian Village in efforts to diversify and sustain its economy.

Opportunity For Burk's Falls

- ✓ The Village of Burk's Falls has the opportunity to embrace their heritage and utilize tourism assets to share their story. This should be done in an authentic way that is unlike the Muskoka brand and is driven by the Burk's Falls community.
- ✓ Steamboat river tours along the river to educate visitors about the history.
- ✓ Expansion of Heritage River Walk to connect visitors to the waterfront and downtown in a loop formation.
- ✓ Work with creators of the Heritage River Walk to expand on valuable asset.
- ✓ Local businesses to sell Burk's Falls souvenirs.
- ✓ Business owners/property owners to improve building façades while portraying a authentic northern village.



ALMONTE, ONTARIO

Almonte is a former mill town, 40 minutes outside of Ottawa. Almonte is located on the banks of Canada's Mississippi River, showcasing a series of dramatic waterfalls within the town. They have embraced their heritage as an old mill town and revitalized historic buildings to host a mix of retail outlets, restaurants and art galleries. Downtown business owners usually don't sell the same products as other vendors in order to work together to support local business.

Purpose

- To enhance the historic downtown with unique boutiques, galleries and restaurants.
- To create a community for artisans to flourish.
- To establish a strong downtown business network.

Opportunity For Burk's Falls

- ✓ Establishing a downtown network to foster business support and growth amongst local retailers.
- ✓ Showcase the vision in order to recruit developers to transform old mill buildings into mixed-use space.
- ✓ Recruit complementary business operations to relocate into the downtown core.
- ✓ Create an artisan hub in order to foster growth within the sector and act as a tourism asset.

Lessons Learned

- Creating a supportive business network to foster growth.
- Find local champions to support and promote the project.



KWAZULU NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

A mural depicting native birds of the area was created by a group of brand and communications school students and recent graduates. The birds which represent the 101 Important Bird Areas of South Africa are etched into the road interchange over a section of the Umegeni River.

Purpose

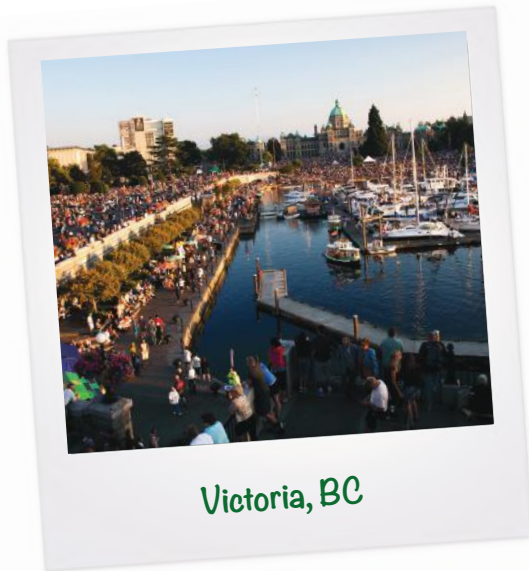
- Pay tribute to the abundant biodiversity in the area.
- Bring awareness to birding tour opportunities.
- Beautify high traffic area.
- Build on existing brand.

Lessons Learned

- Working with local talent to showcase their abilities.
- Building on and promoting an asset.
- Tying together products and services through brand recognition.

Opportunity For Burk's Falls

- ✓ Community beautification building on culture/assets.
- ✓ Work with local talent, students, Indigenous communities, and/or other community members to assist in beautification process.
- ✓ Create murals and other visual representations depicting Burk's Falls heritage and brand on exterior of buildings throughout the project area.



VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Victoria has established a vibrant downtown that connects to the waterfront through various access points, outdoor markets and boutique stores. They have created a lively waterfront through a selection of restaurants, water activities, cruises and events held annually.

Purpose

- Establish the waterfront as a high-quality destination with many amenities and attractions for all.
- Foster an artisan culture through the development and implementation of many festivals and events.

Lessons Learned

- Instill connection to the downtown with local residents in order to share with visitors.
- Wayfinding is essential for visitor accessibility.
- A wide variety of waterfront activities for all ages.

Opportunity For Burk's Falls

- ✓ Foster growth within the corridor connectors between the waterfront and downtown will assist in moving visitors to both locations.
- ✓ Establishing waterfront activities that all age groups can enjoy.
- ✓ Hosting annual events such as Symphony Splashes and boat races to bring community residents and visitors to the waterfront.

Review of successful downtown attributes was included as part of the research component of this study. A variety of elements have emerged that are examples of important attributes that support downtown revitalization efforts. This research conducted revealed a variety of trends among healthy and vibrant downtown cores.

What contributes to a healthy downtown?

Downtowns play a large role in the strength of the local economy. Investment in revitalization creates jobs, increases property values and attracts visitors and community members to spend money at the local businesses. The Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) conducted a study about the value of investing in downtowns. The following factors were identified as being crucial to establishing a health downtown:

Architecture and Design: landmark projects, heritage protection, development at the human scale.

Connectivity: appropriate forms of public transit, walking, cycling, marine design for all ages.

Culture: vibe, values, virtuosity.

Innovation: education and research, partnerships and networks, universities and colleges, educated and skilled labour force.

Employment: a variety of medium sized enterprises, creative industries, diverse economic base.

Public Realm: quality streets and streetscape, plazas and squares, parks and other gathering places, destinations, private space that enhance the public realm (e.g. sidewalk cafés).

Sustainability: sustainable development, good air and water quality, community energy projects.

Diversity: open fluid society that facilitates participation and opportunities for new immigrants.

Venture Capital: availability of venture capital and management of market research.



Healthy downtowns must have:



Healthy downtown cores have a clear vision that reflects consumer trends, attitudes, land uses and activities. In order for a clear vision to be achieved, community residents, key stakeholders, property owners and businesses must be committed to supporting the developed long-term vision. Due to the cyclical process of downtown renewal, it is a continuous process that must be adapted over time. Short-term decisions affect the long-term vision and must be compatible and strategic to ensure desired outcomes.



Business and property owners in a healthy downtown take pride in the exterior look of their buildings and the street. Recognizing that Ontario winters can be problematic for the overall appeal of a downtown, strong cores have guidelines and expectations in place to ensure minimum property standards are met.

This includes:

- ✓ By-laws for sidewalks to be cleared of snow by business/property owners in front of the building within 24-hours of a snowfall;
- ✓ Municipal snow removal occurring on a regular basis to clear sidewalks down to the pavement and removing snow from downtown core to eliminate banks;
- ✓ Municipal and senior government infrastructure investments to create pedestrian friendly streetscapes;

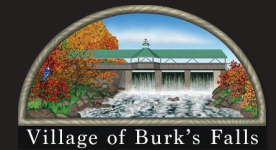
- ✓ Business owners ensuring paths are shoveled through the snow banks in front of establishment to make it easier for visitors to get from car to sidewalks;
- ✓ Cleaning windows and sweeping entrances on a regular basis to remove insects, webs, debris, etc.
- ✓ Unified garbage units and cigarette disposals with flower baskets (summer)/and decorative greens (winter) placed in a variety of areas throughout the core;
- ✓ A-frame signage on sidewalks to provide strong indicator that businesses are open; and
- ✓ Uniformed vertical signage and lighting to provide consistent and visual look.



Healthy downtowns have strong brand presence. As brands are something that are created by consumer perception, it is important to consciously implement strategies that foster positive brand awareness as opposed to negative awareness. To accomplish this, brand power is established by developing:

- ✓ Marketing communication strategies to increase awareness and promote the aspects about the downtown to ensure positive perceptions are developed;
- ✓ Products that complement the brand such as new businesses, events and activities;
- ✓ Public relation strategies and stimulating positive word of mouth throughout the community;

HEALTHY DOWNTOWNS



- ✓ Experiences that create energy and excitement and create a destination;
- ✓ Strategies to differentiate from other commercial nodes; and
- ✓ Targeted initiatives.



AMENITIES

Healthy downtowns have a variety of amenities that make the experience of visiting more enjoyable. There is a complementary mix of residential, retail and services that are well balanced with entertainment, arts, culture, heritage and food/beverage services. Overall, this creates a destination experience. The following helps to accomplish the creation of a positive downtown experience:

- ✓ Access to public washrooms that are open, clean and well signed;
- ✓ Directional signage throughout the core and leading to the core that are well marked, lit and visually appealing;
- ✓ Downtown buildings with heritage look and feel;
- ✓ Links between downtown and waterfront;
- ✓ Sidewalk amenities such as street art, benches, music, activities to market the experience interesting; and
- ✓ Walking loops that connect landmarks, historical elements, recreation and other amenities.





ADEQUATE PARKING

Adequate Parking

Healthy downtowns recognize the challenges and perceptions associated with parking and develop strategies and tactics that work within each community. While some downtowns offer a combination of either free on street and/or free lot parking, other downtowns offer incentive programs to reduce the negativity associated with parking. The following attributes are important for a healthy downtown:

- ✓ More than two-hour street parking available;
- ✓ All-day parking lots available with clearly marked signage;
- ✓ Innovative ticket enforcement strategies that encourage repeat visitation;

- ✓ Incentive parking programs;
- ✓ Angled-in street parking as it is more effective than parallel parking; and
- ✓ On-street parking for visitors with designated lots for property/business owners and employees.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Healthy downtowns are active in the community to ensure the overall brand is positioned favourably in the minds of residents. If residents do not want to visit their downtown, there is a good chance that tourists will not either. Through presentations and workshops, information is disseminated about why downtowns are important, what exists in the downtown, and any other information relevant to the community.



EMBRACE SOCIAL SERVICES

Healthy downtowns look for ways to embrace the social service neighbour by working together. This is accomplished by understanding the role of the organizations, identifying opportunities to share resources, develop programs to meet the needs of the organization's clients and create strategies to reduce the challenges. There are some businesses that also work with the social service organizations by utilizing the services of the clients to shovel snow, clean building exteriors and provide any handy work required.



ACCESSIBILITY

Healthy downtowns ensure that accessibility is a priority. Private sector businesses, property owners and municipal staff play a role in making this happen. Businesses/property owners create ramps to get into stores where there are steps, ensure the entrances are well cared for, clear of snow and ice and remove barriers as they are identified in a timely fashion. Municipal staff play a role by undertaking things such as keeping up with snow removal, cleaning sidewalks so wheelchairs, walkers and strollers can be used in winter months and repairing municipal property when required.





STRONG AFFECTION

Healthy downtowns have community pride and are beloved by the residents. To develop a strong affection, a sense of passion must be established. Community leaders must recognize and appreciate the value and significance of the downtown core to the community.

Healthy downtowns share a common mindset:

- ✓ A mix of residential housing is a priority and regulations must support growth;
- ✓ The edge of downtown should be surrounded by welcoming and viable neighborhoods;
- ✓ Old buildings must be preserved and reused;
- ✓ Must be safe, clean and comfortable to visit;

- ✓ A brand/theme is important as a destination identifier;
- ✓ Beautification, physical infrastructure improvements and accessibility is key;
- ✓ New and improved amenities that attract people to a destination is essential;
- ✓ Walking loops and connectors to the waterfront are important ways to keep people in the area longer;
- ✓ A 24/7 downtown creates vibrancy, energy and excitement;
- ✓ Special places must be created to develop focal points; and
- ✓ Downtown is never "done" as management continues on a daily basis.



Aligned with the Burk's Falls & Area Marketing Plan 2016 mission, to "support economic growth within Burk's Falls, Armour Township and Ryerson Township by increasing investment in our community through promoting business development, attracting new residents, and increasing visitation and visitor spending", the Master Plan will support business growth, lifestyle and tourism.

As the tourism sector represents untapped potential in the region for many businesses located within the downtown core, many opportunities exist with the implementation of a sustainable revitalization plan. As indicated in the 2016 Marketing Plan, there is strong potential for growth for experiential tourism offerings and entrepreneurialism.

THE VISION



To create a Downtown and Waterfront that is an attractive, unified destination for residents and tourists alike to foster economic success for all in the Village of Burk's Falls.

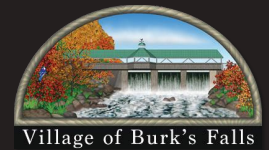


Guiding Principles

Based on the community consultation process and best practice research, the following guiding principles have been developed.

- 1 Enhance and promote connector to/from downtown and waterfront;
- 2 Retain passive recreation character;
- 3 Enhance community gathering spaces;
- 4 Create a sense of collaboration with landlords, tenants, businesses and residents;
- 5 Establish a strong sense of arts, culture and heritage; and
- 6 Encourage investment attraction and business development.

MASTER PLAN



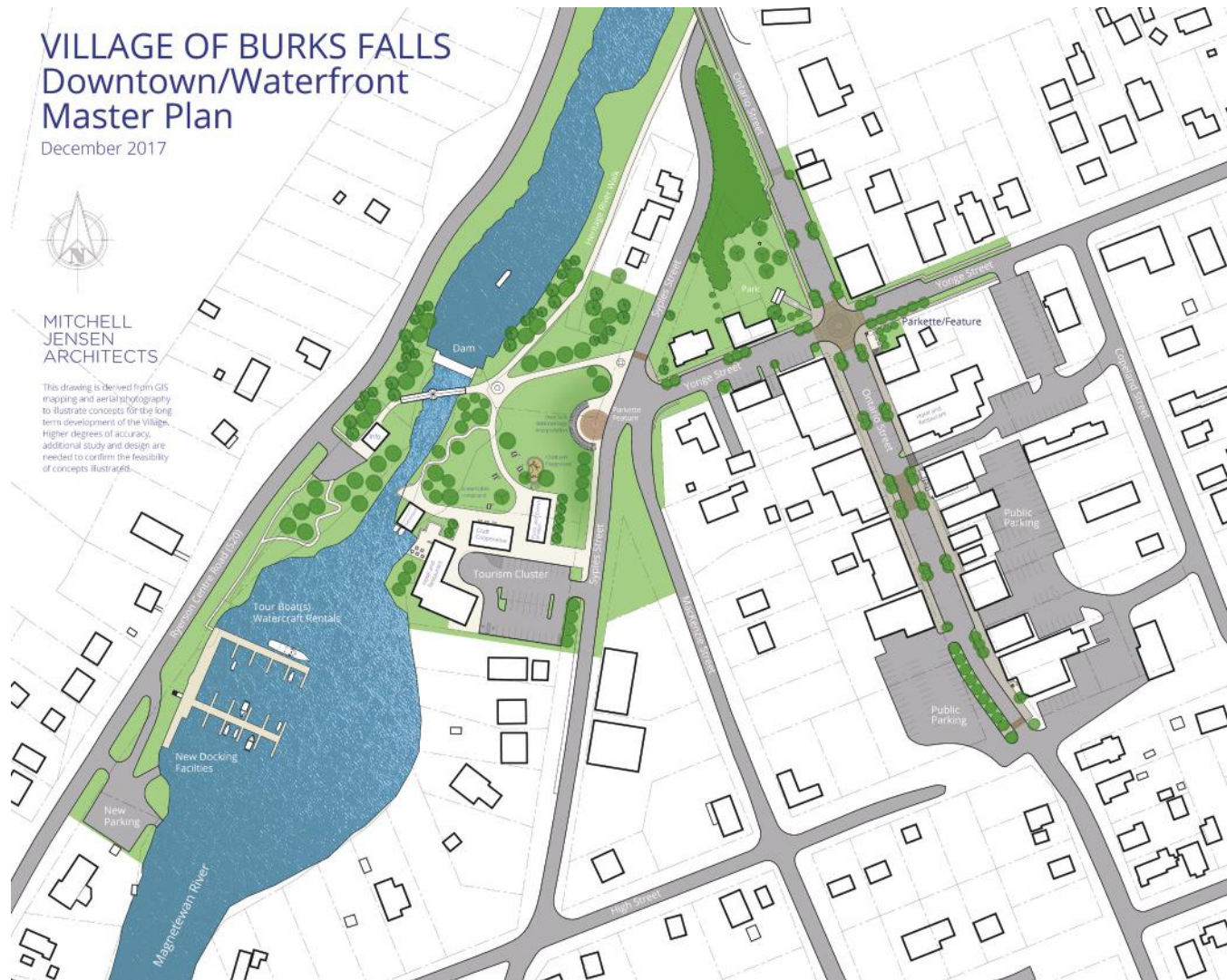
VILLAGE OF BURKS FALLS Downtown/Waterfront Master Plan

December 2017



MITCHELL
JENSEN
ARCHITECTS

This drawing is derived from GIS mapping and aerial photography to illustrate concepts for the long-term development of the village. Higher degrees of accuracy, additional study and design are needed to confirm the feasibility of concepts illustrated.



The Master Plan seeks to rejuvenate the downtown core, enhance public access to the waterfront and refresh public spaces through long-term implementation strategies.

The need for a Master Plan emerged from community feedback to strengthen the business environment, create a welcoming waterfront and develop a strong connection between the downtown and waterfront areas. As such the project core area was formed. The project area boundaries are depicted in the concept drawing to the left.

The Master Plan includes recommendations for a phased approach to assist with sustainable implementation of prioritized actions. It is expected that implementation will involve a number of partners, including all three levels of government, private investment, and community groups. All players should be encouraged to take action to achieve the components of the Master Plan to realize a common vision.

Priority Areas

The following priorities will lead the development and implementation of the Master Plan. The actions have been created with the priorities in mind and align with the guiding principles.



Connectivity



Downtown Revitalization



Waterfront Development



Arts, Culture & Heritage



Recreation & Outdoor Adventure



Beautification

Actions

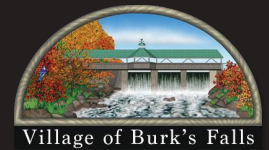
To effectively revitalize the project area a long-term vision has been identified. A Master Plan has been developed along with a variety of actions for implementation. The following provides a summary of the prioritized top recommended actions that have the ability to enhance existing infrastructure, assets and business development opportunities. The actions listed within this document describe:

- ✓ recommended action;
- ✓ alignment of priority area, activity and deliverables;
- ✓ challenges/gaps;
- ✓ anticipated project deliverables; and
- ✓ recommended partners for implementation.



The solutions are intended to provide actionable and realistic initiatives that can be implemented and/or followed up with further work to ensure progress is in alignment with the overall project vision.



RECOMMENDATIONS



PHASE 1: Within 12 Months

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Develop Yonge and Ontario Streets as a connecting link to waterfront.</p>	<p> Beautification</p> <p> Connectivity</p>	<p>Currently the pedestrian connection between the downtown and waterfront is under-utilized.</p> <p>The quantity of transport trucks using the downtown core for access detracts from a pedestrian friendly environment and creates safety issues.</p>	<p>Establish a walkable and accessible connection between Yonge and Ontario Streets, in addition to building some significance at the intersection.</p> <p>This area should be pedestrian friendly and walking traffic should be encouraged to visit waterfront.</p> <p>Consider pedestrian friendly street design visually integrating downtown and waterfront through paving patterns, use of bump-outs, wider sidewalks and a raised intersection at Yonge and Ontario Street to slow down vehicular traffic.</p> <p>Reduce and/or eliminate transport trucks in the downtown core by re-routing truck traffic.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Engineers</p> <p>Construction firms</p> <p>Infrastructure Canada</p> <p>Trucking businesses</p>



Things to Consider

Re-engage Landscape Architect to provide and design locations for future streetscape enhancements when funding becomes available.

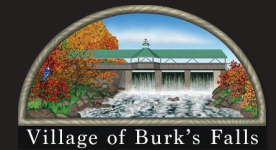
Create authentic streetscape materials using local manufacturers & suppliers.

Continue pedestrian streetscape design elements onto Yonge Street when funding is available.



Finalize Engineering design and preliminary budget, tender and construct.

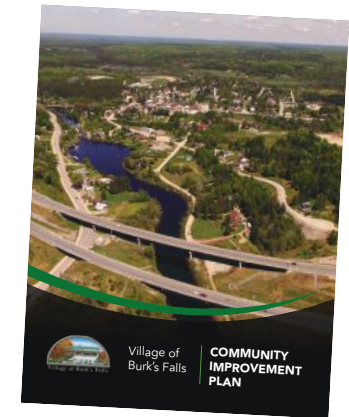
"We would like to become more pedestrian-friendly and eliminate the amount of transport truck activity in the core."

RECOMMENDATIONS



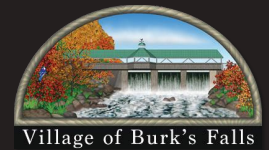
PHASE 1: Within 12 Months

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/ GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Implement a Community Improvement Plan that is focused on the project areas to stimulate economic growth and private sector investment.</p>	<p>  Downtown Revitalization  Waterfront Development </p>	<p>There are limited financial incentives to encourage private sector development and redevelopment within the downtown and waterfront area.</p>	<p>Follow Provincial process to formally adopt Community Improvement Plan in the Village of Burk's Falls.</p> <p>Fund the Community Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Refer to Community Improvement Plan package for program outline, implementation tactics, recommended by-laws and public notice template.</p> <p>Work with the Business Development Team to realize vision.</p> <p>Develop an expression of interest in order to develop a roster of designers and architects that meet the 'authentic' vision.</p> <p>Market the Community Improvement Plan to potential applicants and encourage compatible development and exterior improvements.</p> <p>To maximize investment through the Community Improvement Plan, establish property standards that utilize high quality materials and represent an authentic vibe. This can be accomplished by discouraging use of materials that do not age well which include non-traditional stucco, vinyl, exterior installation finishing systems and highly reflective glass.</p> <p>Façade Guidelines should include tactile, durable materials with an emphasis on ground floor space being retail and transparent.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Business owners</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>FedNor</p> <p>NOHFC</p>





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RECOMMENDATIONS



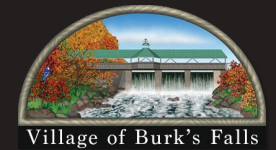
PHASE 1: Within 12 Months

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Expand Heritage River Walk.</p>	<p> Connectivity</p> <p> Arts, Culture & Heritage</p>	<p>While the trails are visually appealing, the Heritage River Walk currently does not loop and comes to a dead end near the arena. Furthermore, the trail system does not guide people to the downtown core in order to entice them to shop in the local stores, dine in the restaurants and enjoy the cultural experience.</p>	<p>To develop a connection from the arena through downtown to connect to Yonge Street and back to waterfront area.</p> <p>Determine best trail route and preliminary budget in order to prepare a Plan and submit for trail funding. Acquire lands or rights thereto may be necessary.</p> <p>The walking trail should be smoothed out in a cost-effective manner to meet accessibility standards and facilitate family friendly walking trails.</p> <p>Add interpretive and wayfinding signage throughout trail system marking distances to local businesses and amenities.</p> <p>Build the trail and capture “urban walkway” in character as it approaches Yonge Street. Possibly engage Downtown in the experience and position the trail system to “exit through the gift shop”.</p> <p>Update and market the Heritage River Walk app to encourage self-guided tours.</p> <p>Increase awareness about walking loops to provide an educational experience to visitors along with showcasing the culture of the area.</p>	<p>Explorer's Edge (RTO 12)</p> <p>Lakeland Power</p> <p>Service clubs</p> <p>Heritage River Walk Committee</p>




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RECOMMENDATIONS




PHASE 1: Within 12 Months

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Develop strategies and initiatives to encourage business owners to take a proactive approach to development and growth.</p>	<p> Downtown Revitalization</p>	<p>There is a lack of cohesiveness in the downtown core which limits business growth.</p>	<p>A variety of initiatives to foster collaboration between business owners in the core should be explored.</p> <p>This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate networking events to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration and joint marketing among local business, artists, entrepreneurs, retailers. Create affordable mixed-use spaces that attract entrepreneurs, artists and businesses to work together and collaborate. Establish a Business Development Team comprised of a mix of business/property owners and organizations to work together to implement priorities set forth by the Village of Burk's Falls. 	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound</p> <p>NECO</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Business owners</p>



NOTES: _____

PHASE 1: Within 12 Months





ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Develop strategies and initiatives to encourage business owners to take a proactive approach to development and growth. (continued)</p>	 Downtown Revitalization	<p>There is a lack of cohesiveness in the downtown core which limits business growth.</p>	<p>Develop a downtown business guidebook that identifies standardized best practices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardized hours Snow and ice removal Garbage removal Building maintenance Beautification Noise & safety Employee and business owner parking Village public works services Accessibility standards such as wheelchair ramps <p>Encourage property owners to repair buildings, upgrade facades and ensure well maintained streetscape with penalties and expropriation of property if compliance is not met.</p> <p>Develop strategies with the Village of Burk's Falls to create an opportunity for sidewalk café's, outdoor product displays and A-frame signage to ensure core is interactive and visually appealing to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound</p> <p>NECO</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Business owners</p>

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RECOMMENDATIONS

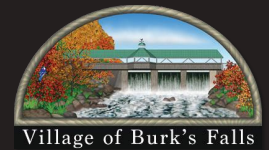


PHASE 1: Within 12 Months

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
Develop strategies and initiatives to encourage business owners to take a proactive approach to development and growth. (continued)	 Downtown Revitalization	There is a lack of cohesiveness in the downtown core which limits business growth.	Encourage existing and new retail development to address and investigate product gaps within the Village. Products such as Village of Burk's Falls souvenirs, apparel and local goods could be explored.	Village of Burk's Falls Business owners
Establish accessible parking within high traffic areas.	 Downtown Revitalization  Waterfront Development	There is a lack of accessible parking and concerns with limited availability for visitors to the project areas.	Create visually appealing parking lots that are well signed, well-lit, maintained and located in strategic areas within the downtown core and waterfront.	Village of Burk's Falls Property owners
Encourage employee and business owner parking in designated lots instead of on the street.	 Downtown Revitalization	Prime parking locations are being utilized by business owners and employees which reduces available parking for visitors.	Designate Village parking lots for workforce and implement "warning notices" to those abusing system. Designated parking areas may require joint-venture agreements from existing property owners of compatible space.	Village of Burk's Falls Business owners Property owners



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RECOMMENDATIONS



Village of Burk's Falls

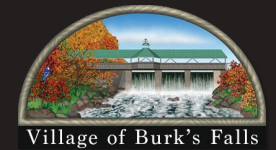
PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>To establish a tourism cluster that spurs private and public sector investment, creates a tourism destination, adds historical significance and creates a pride of place.</p>	<p>  Waterfront Development  Recreation and Outdoor Adventure </p>	<p>The waterfront area is under developed and under-utilized. Opportunities to drive traffic to the area and encourage follow-on visitation to the downtown core is lacking. Furthermore, taking economic advantage of the existing river traffic is currently a missed opportunity.</p>	<p>Conduct Feasibility Study, Market Needs Analysis and additional background studies highlighted in the next steps section. These studies will further develop the concept plan and identify any additional costs associated with developing the waterfront. This is a critical next step after developing the Master Plan.</p> <p>Redevelop the public docking infrastructure and develop boat slips for visitors and residents.</p> <p>New development on the waterfront should be designed to complement the overall goal of recreation, arts and culture, green space, connectivity, and reflect a high quality of design.</p> <p>Enhance waterfront activity through the establishment of a tour boat operation in order to create a tourism driver to the waterfront.</p> <p>Consider developing public private opportunities and venture space to accommodate identified business. e.g. Welcome Centre canoe rental area.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>FedNor</p> <p>NOHFC</p> <p>Infrastructure Canada</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry</p> <p>Ministry of Transportation</p> <p>Fisheries & Oceans Canada</p> <p>Explorers' Edge (RTO 12)</p> <p>Lakeland Power</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>Businesses/Entrepreneurs</p>





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RECOMMENDATIONS



PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>To establish a tourism cluster that spurs private and public sector investment, creates a tourism destination, adds historical significance and creates a pride of place. (continued)</p>	<p> Waterfront Development</p> <p> Recreation and Outdoor Adventure</p>	<p>The waterfront area is under developed and under-utilized. Opportunities to drive traffic to the area and encourage follow-on visitation to the downtown core is lacking. Furthermore, taking economic advantage of the existing river traffic is currently a missed opportunity.</p>	<p>Develop a snowmobile compound to take advantage of existing snowmobile traffic. This will assist in driving traffic to the waterfront and downtown core.</p> <p>Partner with property owners/ developers to establish mixed use-commercial space that could house a unique inn/boutique hotel, spa services, restaurant/ craft brewery, etc. to cater to the rising interest of staying and playing in waterfront areas.</p> <p>Once traffic is at the waterfront area, signage, trails and connectivity to should encourage people to visit the downtown core to eat, shop and explore.</p> <p>Develop a series of events at the waterfront to generate tourism traffic and foster pride of place.</p> <p>Capitalize on industrial heritage of waterfront through use of images, stories, river boat tours, heritage lookout and welcome centre.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>FedNor</p> <p>NOHFC</p> <p>Infrastructure Canada</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry</p> <p>Ministry of Transportation</p> <p>Fisheries & Oceans Canada</p> <p>Explorers' Edge (RTO 12)</p> <p>Lakeland Power</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>Businesses/ Entrepreneurs</p>

Things to Consider

Conduct Feasibility Analysis to determine scale of marina operations and operating model. The identified model could differ from past operations and will identify the number of slips available for transient, residential, and private sector (tour operation) occupants.

Create a market needs analysis of components such as hotel, restaurant etc.

Develop preliminary environmental & engineering design (water flows, bathymetry, fisheries).

Fund the development through Municipal capital budget in partnership with provincial & federal funding and private sector investment.

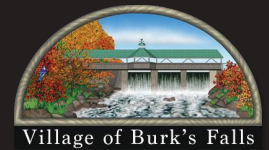
Conduct land acquisition process in order to purchase abutting lands.

Develop architectural & engineering design.

Solicit RFP through tendering process.


Construct new marina with identified number of boat slips and materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Village of Burk's Falls

PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Establish a recreation and outdoor culture by offering services and amenities that cater to identified tourism market demand.</p>	 <p>Recreation and Outdoor Adventure</p>	<p>There is a limited amount of commercial services and amenities to cater to the outdoor market.</p>	<p>Encourage new business development that offers family fun activities that keep people at the waterfront longer. This includes rentals and/or sale of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayaks • Canoes • Paddleboard • Paddleboats • Bicycles • Fishing Gear • Snowshoes • Apparel • River shuttle service <p>Develop docking infrastructure to include boat slips and marina in order to increase boat traffic and encourage pedestrian movement to the downtown core.</p> <p>Re-instate bike share program to encourage mobilization to and from waterfront and downtown core.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>The Business Centre Nipissing Parry Sound</p> <p>NECO</p> <p>Ontario Trillium Foundation</p> <p>Explorers' Edge (RTO 12)</p> <p>Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry</p> <p>Fisheries & Oceans Canada</p>


NOTES:

"We would like to have a redeveloped dock that allows for boat slips so visitors can dock and walk to the downtown core."

RECOMMENDATIONS



PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
Develop focal points.	 Connectivity	There is nothing "special" or interesting that encourages people to walk between the downtown and waterfront. The two areas operate in isolation of one another.	Create a visual anchor and a place of activity. Erect visible landmarks such as monuments, clock towers, sculptures, fountain, etc. at the intersection of Yonge and Ontario and throughout the project area Establish a heritage lookout at the end of Yonge and Syples Street. Photographs and plaques illustrating the buildings and industrial activity that used to be at the waterfront should be mounted in the area.	Village of Burk's Falls Ontario Trillium Foundation Burk's Falls Historical Society



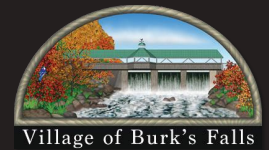
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“A street you go to, not just through.”


- Streets as PLACES

“We would like to create a place of “curiosity” both inside the shops and outside along the sidewalk to encourage people to slow down, visit, and spend.”

RECOMMENDATIONS



PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Create small enhancements to improve sensory experiences in order to create an attractive and welcoming environment in downtown core and waterfront area.</p>	 <p>Beautification</p>	<p>While there is great opportunity, the project areas lack aesthetic appeal and ambiance.</p>	<p>Create a sense of gathering to encourage people to walk slowly and visit longer through the implementation of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches • Trees • Planters • Gardens • Pedestrian scale lighting • Decorative garbage bins • Picnic areas/tables • Consistent heritage themed sign posts • Visually appealing banners • Painted bike racks with signage <p>Clean up the image of waterfront area by removing chain fencing and replacing with upgraded fences, removing dead trees, planting flowers, painting existing bridge and generator building as well as ensuring signage has consistent theme.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Business owners</p> <p>Non-profit organizations <i>*consider a partnership to build benches and auction off at charity events for business advertising opportunities</i></p> <p>Area residents</p> <p>Lakeland Power</p>




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RECOMMENDATIONS



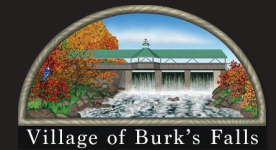
PHASE 2: Within 1-3 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Public Art contributes to creating an identity and a sense of place, conveying local stories in creative ways and providing opportunities for local artists to share their talents with the community.</p>	 Arts, Culture & Heritage	<p>There is a lack of art displayed throughout the community and a missed opportunity to showcase the Village of Burk's Falls heritage and culture.</p>	<p>Create a rich arts, culture and heritage environment by implementing a variety of activities aligned with the overall theme.</p> <p>Identify specific locations for landmarks or stand-alone pieces of art.</p> <p>Integrate art and heritage into functional elements, like furnishings or shade structures throughout project area.</p> <p>Contribute to a sense of place by creatively expressing the history, landscape and identity of the Village of Burk's Falls.</p> <p>A mix of temporary and permanent artworks, and highly visible/ hidden pieces, is encouraged throughout the project area. This could include murals on sides of buildings to beautify core.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Art Centre</p> <p>Indigenous communities</p> <p>Local artists</p> <p>Non-profit organizations</p> <p>Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Property owners</p> <p>Business owners</p>




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RECOMMENDATIONS



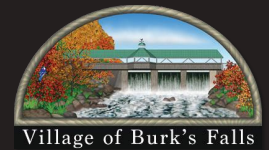
PHASE 3: Within 3-5 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Further develop cultural heritage attraction at waterfront.</p>	 Arts, Culture & Heritage	<p>There is a limited number of amenities, culture and activities to draw and engage people to the area.</p>	<p>Develop a variety of family-friendly activities to draw people to the area and establish a tourism cluster. This can be accomplished by implementing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic Area; • Event/activities shelter; • Farmer's Market; • Heritage trails and lookout with interpretive signage; • Children's playground with heritage theme; • River boat tours using old steamboats as a vessel to explore the Magnetawan River; • Signage; and • Hydro Power interpretative tour. <p>Establish a Craft Cooperative to encourage like-minded companies to explore collaborative working environments.</p>	<p>Village of Burk's Falls</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Property Owners</p> <p>Lakeland Power</p> <p>Art Centre</p> <p>Farmer's Market Organization</p> <p>Heritage River Walk Committee</p> <p>RTO 12</p> <p>Ontario Trillium Foundation</p> <p>FedNor</p> <p>NOHFC</p>




NOTES: _____

RECOMMENDATIONS



PHASE 3: Within 3-5 Years

ACTION	PRIORITY AREA	CHALLENGE/GAP	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS
<p>Create a trolley system to provide a cultural transportation service that is unique and appealing to visitors and community residents.</p>	 Connectivity	<p>There is a disconnect between the waterfront and the downtown. Due to a lack of direct vehicle access, connection to and from the two areas can be challenging and is reliant on pedestrian traffic.</p>	<p>To establish a trolley network to connect the waterfront to the downtown. This network could also be utilized as a mechanism to mobilize traffic to the Historical Society site locations in Armour and Ryerson.</p> <p>The trolley should have a heritage look and feel to represent the authenticity of the community. Trolley stops could include heritage style benches and signage. A small fee would be charged for users.</p> <p>Review the Saugeen Shores Trolley as a model that could be implemented.</p>	<p>A lead organization should be identified to develop the system. This concept could establish a revenue generation model for a non-profit organization.</p> <p>Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Burk's Falls Historical Society</p> <p>Corporate Sponsors</p>



NOTES: _____

"We want to create an accessible and family-friendly mode of transportation to link the waterfront and downtown."

The Implementation section identifies next steps and critical success factors to move forward with the Master Plan. To ensure success, certain components of the Master Plan will require further studies, approvals and review processes before additional work can be completed. This section also identifies a list of next steps, accompanied by high level cost estimates for each initiative identified in the Master Plan.

An authentic approach

“Authentic”.

This word has been used to describe a quality of the Village of Burk's Falls which should not be lost in its future development. It is critical that this authenticity is marketed and promoted to residents and travellers alike.

What does that mean?

It is not an applied, homogeneous presentation, designed to offer a unified image, locked into a particular time frame or thematic concept. It is evolutionary, and incremental rather hasty. It is eclectic and varied rather than standardized. It's rustic rather than refined. It welcomes diversity and celebrates uniqueness, individuality and character.

Authenticity suggests fewer 'rules' to control design, and more organic growth. This need not diminish the quality of individual efforts or the strength of the collective effort, provided there is an overall commitment to quality in the design and implementation of this diversity.

The authentic identity will differentiate the Village of Burk's Falls from other communities such as Muskoka and provide tourists/visitors a unique experience and reason to venture to the Burk's Falls area.

Burk's Falls while providing the tried and true necessities (accommodations/ restaurants/brew pub/winery) will provide a different feel and experience than other small towns. This will happen on the street, through design details for the streetscape and improved facades.

For Burk's Falls to differentiate themselves from other similar small towns and provide an exciting authentic experience, a theme/brand needs to be developed. It is recommended that a tendering process be held for local manufacturers to design and manufacture local streetscaping needs such as light fixtures, benches, fencing, garbage cans, buttresses, signage frames and pedestals and portable planters (large for small trees and shrubs, and small planters for floral designs on the street).

Facilitating a visioning workshop with local manufacturers will ensure that their products meet the authentic criteria of being unique and different. In addition to integrating local businesses into the process and generating revenue for local companies, it will also provide companies with experience in municipal vendor opportunities.

Next Steps

The next steps to realizing this vision include:

- Fund and implement Village of Burk's Falls Community Improvement Plan.
- Complete applications in order to access funding for continued project development.
- Ontario and Yonge streetscape design and construction (ideally part of road reconstruction project), including features at Yonge/Ontario and Yonge and Sydes.
- Additional waterfront studies required:
 - Topographic Surveying;
 - Geotechnical and Environment Phase Two Investigation;
 - Hydrology and Bathymetry Studies;
 - Ecological Assessment; and
 - Floodplain Analysis and Alternative Measures.
- Feasibility Study of potential waterfront development with preliminary design and business planning.
- Gaining control of desired river-front lands (cost unknown).
- Acquiring public funding support for a public/private partnership development of the waterfront

- Preparing and administering solicitation for a private/public partnership opportunity on the waterfront and negotiating development agreements.
- Design
 - Marina
 - Landscape development waterfront park
 - Picnic/events shelter
 - Craft Cooperative
 - Themed children's playground
 - Boutique hotel/restaurant
- Approvals
- Build
 - Marina
 - Landscape development waterfront park
 - Picnic/events shelter
 - Craft Cooperative
 - Themed children's playground
 - Boutique hotel/restaurant
- Operate/program/maintain

Potential Publicly-funded projects:

- ✓ Ontario Street redevelopment (including features)
- ✓ Yonge Street redevelopment (including features)
- ✓ Marina development
- ✓ Waterfront parkland development with playground
- ✓ Enhanced heritage interpretation
- ✓ Craft Cooperative
- ✓ Picnic/events shelter
- ✓ Heritage River Walk trail development

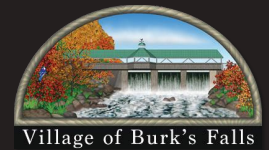


Potential Privately-funded projects:

- ✓ Acquire existing heritage structure (currently residential)
- ✓ Renovation/addition to create boutique hotel, restaurant, craft brewery, etc.
- ✓ Associated parking and landscaping



COMMUNICATION PLAN



The following provides an overview of the communication messaging, action and specific tactics associated with the three target markets:




Local Residents



**Downtown Businesses
Property Owners**

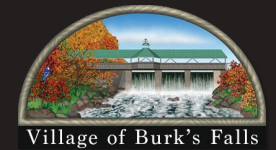




Visitors

AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION MESSAGE	ACTION	TACTICS
 Local Residents	<p>Step out and experience your own backyard!</p> <p>The Village of Burk's Falls is working together with residents like you to build a better village. You have a variety of local businesses right downtown so be sure to shop local.</p> <p>Take advantage of our newly designed multi-recreational waterfront right in your backyard.</p>	<p>Work with the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce to promote shop local program/organization as well as the waterfront.</p>	<p>SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop local stickers displayed in the window of local business Potential for shop local reward system Shop local, support local marketing material (postcards, posters, etc.) Starlight shopping nights Map & directory of all downtown businesses to be mailed with municipal documents Social media / website announcements, etc. <p>WATERFRONT CAMPAIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map of new waterfront design to be mailed with municipal documents Social Media / website announcements Improve website representation of waterfront image & amenities Host a launch with free family activities Photography competition using social media

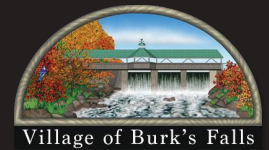
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COMMUNICATION PLAN



 <p>Downtown Businesses Property Owners</p>	<p>Burk's Falls is building better business.</p> <p>The Village of Burk's Falls is working together with business owners like you to support and grow the local economy. We encourage you to support your fellow small business owners and improve your facade to entice both residents and visitors to experience your shop.</p> <p>Encourage residents to take advantage of their own backyard & visitors to stay to explore local shopping, amenities and our new multi-recreational waterfront.</p>	<p>Work with the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce to promote shop local program/ organization.</p> <p>Work with The Business Centre and NECO to ensure local businesses have the support they need to grow sustainable businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop shop local program in conjunction with Chambers of Commerce • Produce shop local reward cards / stickers / marketing material for businesses to display & use • Host Lunch & Learn sessions for key areas such as branding, customer service and online marketing • Host information & training sessions about the shop local program • Communicate announcements, etc. to businesses through social media, flyers, postcards, etc. • Inform business owners of the available incentives to upgrade the facade, signage and building • Create a downtown committee to foster a collaborative network of business owners
 <p>Visitors</p>	<p>Whether you're staying a day or you've come to play for awhile, Burk's Falls is the place to be.</p> <p>Immerse yourself in the quaint beauty and historical charm, check out a wide variety of local shopping or enjoy a variety of activities at our beautiful waterfront, just steps from downtown.</p>	<p>Welcome Centre to promote local tourism amenities</p> <p>Work with local operators to develop stay and play packages</p> <p>Develop different activities for the waterfront</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billboard advertisements to encourage visitors to exit off the highway • New welcome signs to entice visitors to stop • Market tourism packages with a brochure • Advertise in Northern Ontario / Ontario travel guides • Produce a downtown shopping map with a map to waterfront • Social media strategies to promote the area • Develop "11 Reasons to visit Burk's Falls" advertising campaign

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS



In order for the implementation process to be effective, the following success factors are required.

Building Owner Engagement

In order for the downtown revitalization process to be successful, willingness and commitment from the building owners is needed to enhance their properties. The Village of Burk's Falls should continue to work to foster strong relationships with building owners and develop financial incentive programs to support the overall process.

Partnership Building

To accomplish the actions listed within this Master Plan, the participation and support from numerous organizations, partners, downtown businesses, residents and the community at large is required.

Communication

To ensure awareness, open dialogue, combat negative perceptions and promote an entrepreneurial spirit with an "open for business" culture, a communication plan should be implemented to guide the marketing, social media and program development initiatives.

Community Building

To expand the strong sense of community, a variety of processes and programs may be implemented to foster collaboration.

This may include downtown appreciation days, recognition programs for actions completed in the Master Plan and other special awareness programs.

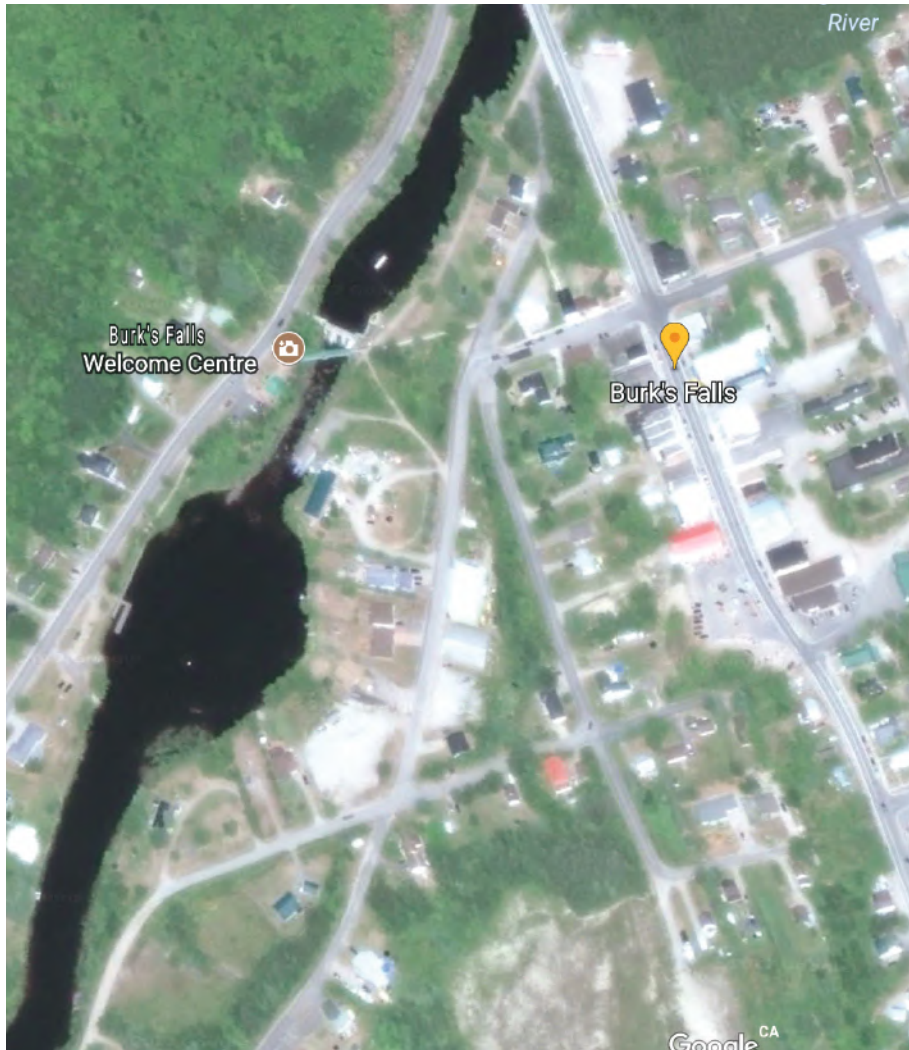
Financial Incentives

The implementation of a Community Improvement Plan that is aligned with the core focus areas and actions outlined in this Master Plan is recommended. Ensuring that all enhancement programs stimulate high-quality design and architecture is critical.

Business Support

While in the early stages of implementing this Master Plan, additional support from the Village is beneficial for existing business and new investment to stimulate economic development. This support should be provided by working with existing business owners and potential new investors in a variety of ways to meet their needs:

- Economic Development services such as project planning, funding applications, leveraging resources, business guidance and mentorship.
- Marketing services such as cross-promotion initiatives, digital strategies and new events/initiatives to drive traffic to the core.
- Encouraging new investment by increasing awareness that the Village is open for business and willing to support qualified new investment and existing businesses wishing to expand.

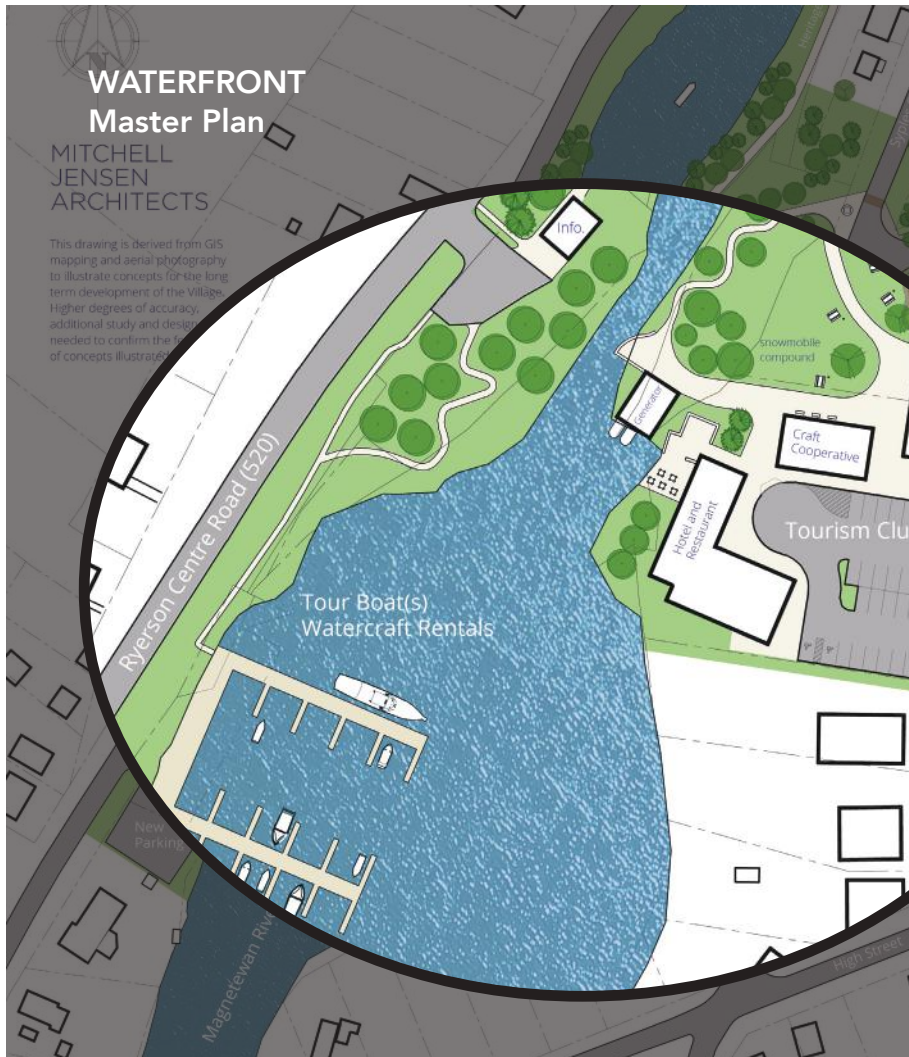
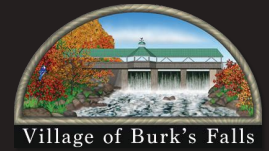


Support for Development

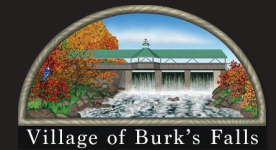
The development of a tourism cluster that includes mixed-use infrastructure such as food, accommodations, arts & culture, recreation, entertainment and mixed-retail is vital to creating an authentic tourism destination. Offering tourists, a place to stay on the waterfront, provides an experience that is attractive for travelers. By encouraging individuals to dock their boats or park their snowmobiles is the first step to showcasing the Village of Burk's Falls to a tourist. Once attracted to the area, strategies and initiatives to pull the traveler to the downtown core for another unique experience is critical. A healthy downtown cannot exist without a healthy tourism cluster at the waterfront, and likewise a healthy tourism cluster at the waterfront cannot exist without a healthy downtown. The two areas must work in tandem to create one destination.

As the downtown core continues to evolve and new business is attracted, local community members and travelers will be drawn to the area to shop, eat, stay. A small, boutique hotel in the downtown core would help considerably to creating an attractive 24/7 downtown. This would provide an opportunity for travelers to stay overnight and shop and eat locally. As the tourism traffic grows the need for two small boutique hotels in Burk's Falls may be realized with one being placed at the waterfront and in the downtown to facilitate overnight visitation in both areas. Strategies and promotional efforts to draw two-way traffic between the two areas should be implemented.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS



BUDGET



DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COSTS	
Required Studies		
Topographic Surveying	\$30,000	
Geotechnical and Environment Phase 2 Investigation	\$50,000	
Hydrology and Bathymetry Studies (for marina design)	\$40,000	
Ecological Assessment	\$25,000	
Flood Plane Analysis and Alternative Measures	\$25,000	
Feasibility Study (preliminary design and business planning)	\$150,000	
Studies Subtotal		\$320,000
Preparing and administering solicitation for private/public partnership opportunities		\$50,000
Waterfront infrastructure parking (acquire land and improve parking)		\$400,000
Ontario Street landscaping*		\$300,000
Yonge Street redevelopment (including intersection)*		\$800,000
Marina development (Repair dock, improve boat launch, add boat slips)		\$400,000
Waterfront parkland development (with children's playground)		\$1,500,000 (up to)
Enhance heritage interpretation		\$200,000 (up to)
Craft Cooperative		\$1,800,000 (up to)
Picnic/event shelter		\$300,000 (up to)
Heritage River Walk Trail Development (loop through Yonge Street)		Cost unknown
TOTAL		\$6,070,000

*High level estimate for this conceptual planning phase. The estimate will be further refined during future feasibility study and/or preliminary design. No project should be tendered using these estimates.

FINAL THOUGHTS



The Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Master Plan identifies the Village of Burk's Falls vision and priorities to significantly enhance its attractiveness to its residents, visitors and business sector. The Master Plan provides a framework for budgeting and decision making to turn the vision into a reality over the next five years. With the continued interest and support by community leaders, and both the private and senior government partners, success can be realized quickly.

The Village of Burk's Falls has a very strong foundation to build upon. Success should be celebrated as each of the actions identified within the Master Plan are achieved. All stakeholders should be congratulated and take pride in making critical steps to achieving the vision. In this way, momentum will build, and along with it, community pride and spirit.



APPENDICES

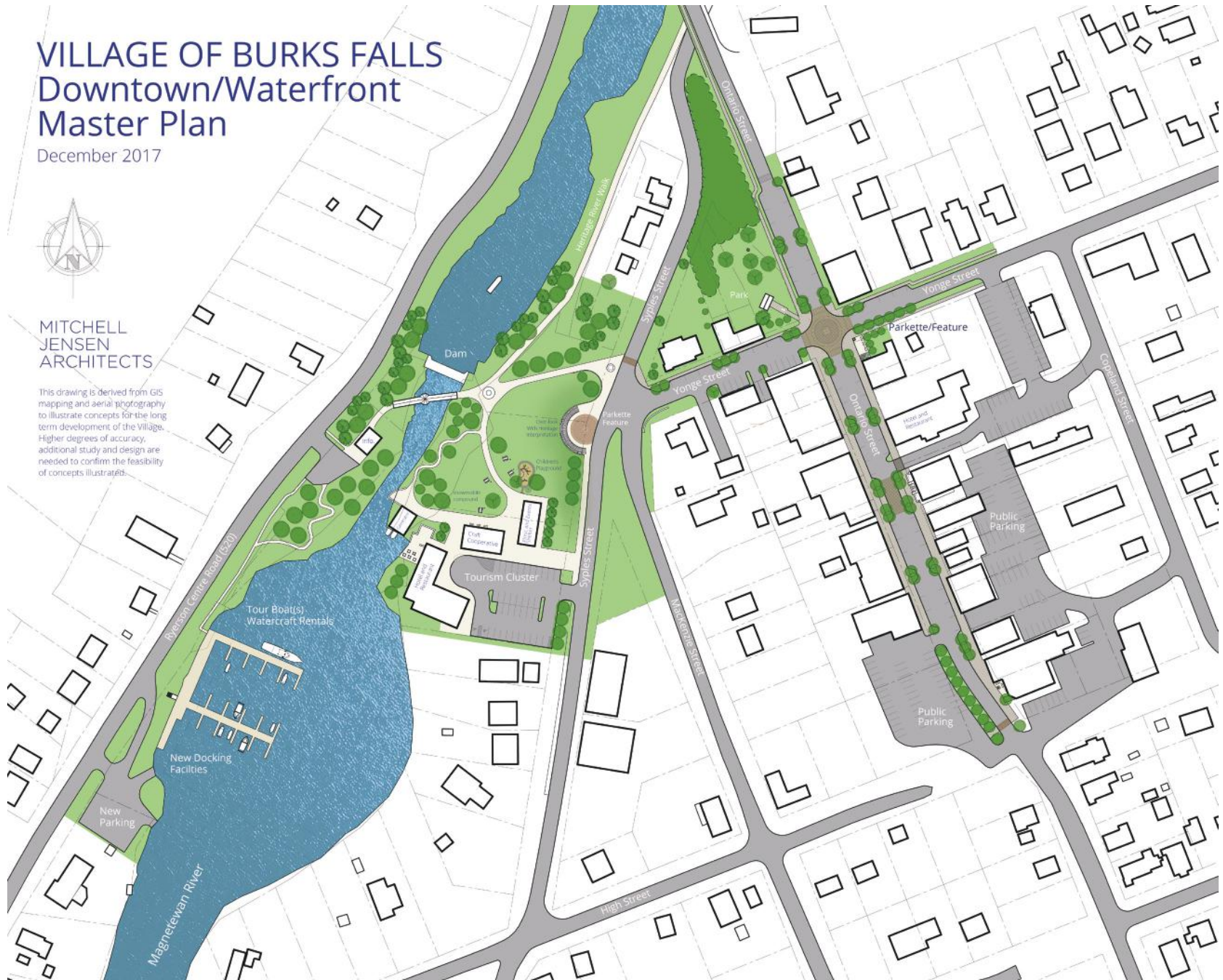
VILLAGE OF BURKS FALLS Downtown/Waterfront Master Plan

December 2017



MITCHELL
JENSEN
ARCHITECTS

This drawing is derived from GIS mapping and aerial photography to illustrate concepts for the long term development of the Village. Higher degrees of accuracy, additional study and design are needed to confirm the feasibility of concepts illustrated.





Village of Burk's Falls

www.burksfalls.net