



Municipality of Casselman Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Interim Report No. 1



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Table of Contents

1	Introduction _____	1
	<i>Background</i> _____	<i>1</i>
	<i>Methodology</i> _____	<i>1</i>
	<i>Approach</i> _____	<i>2</i>
	<i>Purpose of This Interim Report</i> _____	<i>2</i>
2	Summary of Document Review and Research Findings _____	3
	<i>PESTEL Analysis</i> _____	<i>3</i>
	<i>Political Factors</i> _____	<i>4</i>
	Federal Outlook _____	4
	Provincial Outlook _____	4
	Housing Affordability _____	5
	<i>Economic Factors</i> _____	<i>6</i>
	Employment Rates _____	6
	Participation Rates _____	7
	Unemployment Rates _____	7
	Labour Force by Occupation _____	9
	Labour Force by Industry _____	10
	<i>Social Factors</i> _____	<i>11</i>
	Population _____	11
	Ages 12 _____	12
	Visible Minorities _____	13
	Household Income _____	14
	Knowledge of Official Languages _____	16
	Educational Attainment _____	16
	Childcare _____	17
	<i>Technological Factors</i> _____	<i>18</i>
	<i>Environmental Factors</i> _____	<i>18</i>
	<i>Legal Factors</i> _____	<i>20</i>
3	First Planning Session _____	21
4	Stakeholder Engagement Activities _____	22
	Survey _____	22
	Focus Groups _____	22
	Interviews _____	22
	Town Hall Meetings _____	22
5	Exemplar Strategic Plans _____	23

1 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Village of Casselman is in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan that will clearly articulate a vision for the municipality and will be used to define the priorities of Council for the remainder of this term of Council, as well as setting longer term goals.

Through an RFP process, the Village has selected Capital Park Consultants Inc. to assist in the development of the new plan by:

- Assisting Council and staff in implementing a process to gather robust input from the community and other stakeholders to inform the development of the new strategic plan including services, vision for the future, values, mission, etc.
- Ensuring that Council is aware of municipal sector strategic plan precedents and “best practices” in the various components of a municipal strategic plan so that these can be considered when Casselman is drafting its new strategic plan
- Helping to identify and review possible indicators that can be used to measure the municipality’s success in achieving the goals it established in the new strategic plan
- Soliciting input from staff and ensure that the new strategic plan makes sense and is clearly understood from the staff perspective
- Ensuring meaningful participation and engagement of the public throughout the project
- Ensuring that the plan developed strikes an appropriate balance between being flexible enough to ensure that it is relevant if circumstances change, while also specific enough that it can be implemented decisively and measured clearly
- Ensuring that the new strategic plan builds on the municipality’s current initiatives and existing services

METHODOLOGY

Capital Park’s work plan includes the following components:

1. Kick-off meeting
2. Review background materials and research Strategic Plan precedents
3. Planning workshop with Councillors and Senior Staff (September 5)
4. Survey, focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders
5. Follow-up on workshop with Councillors and Senior Staff
6. Development of the contents of the Strategic Plan
7. Review of draft Strategic Plan by Council and Senior Staff, amendment as required, as issuance of final version

APPROACH

The approach that is being taken is summarized in this graphic.



PURPOSE OF THIS INTERIM REPORT

The purpose of this first interim report is to:

- Summarize the findings from the review of background materials and research
- Identify Strategic Plans from similar municipalities to be used to identify best practices (and practices to avoid)
- Serve as a briefing document for Councillors and Senior Staff prior to the planning workshop on September 5th
- Serve as resource material in the future for Councillors, Senior Staff and other interested parties

PESTEL ANALYSIS

A PESTEL analysis has been used to summarize the external factors affecting the Town. PESTEL is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors. It is a strategic planning tool that focuses on these six influences to gather information about various external factors affecting an organization.



The advantages of a PESTEL Analysis include:

- It's a simple framework
- It is comprehensive and facilitates an understanding of the wider environment
- It encourages the development of strategic thinking
- It can enable an organisation to anticipate future threats and take action to avoid or minimize their impact
- It can enable an organisation to spot opportunities and exploit them fully

A PESTEL Analysis is often used in conjunction with other planning tools, such as a SWOT Analysis, which looks at Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. During the first planning session on September 5th the participants will be using the results of the PESTEL Analysis to conduct a SWOT analysis for Casselman.

POLITICAL FACTORS

Municipal governments are affected a great deal by decisions made and policies implemented by higher levels of government, i.e. provincial and federal. It can be difficult to predict what changes will take place, particularly if there should happen to be a change in leadership of a governing party or an election that results in a different party coming into power. Here are some of the recent predictions that have been made.

FEDERAL OUTLOOK

“The Parliamentary Budget Office has trimmed its forecast for Canada’s economic growth this year.

The PBO’s latest economic and fiscal outlook predicts the economy will grow by 1.0 per cent this year followed by 1.6 per cent in 2024. The outlook compares with the agency’s October forecast for growth of 1.2 per cent for 2023 and 2.3 per cent in 2024.

It expects a decline in residential investment and weakness in consumer spending in the first half of the year, while businesses reduce their inventory investment over the course of 2023 as the growth in sales slows. The PBO also predicts the Bank of Canada will keep its key interest rate target on hold at 4.5 per cent for the rest of 2023 before starting to cut in 2024.

The federal budget watchdog forecasts the central bank will begin cutting its key policy rate in January 2024 by a quarter of a percentage point at each of its eight fixed announcement dates next year.” <https://globalnews.ca/news/9523302/pbo-economic-forecast-2023-interest-rates/>

What impact will high interest rates and sluggish growth have on Casselman? Will it affect long-term debt, maintenance of infrastructure, etc.?

PROVINCIAL OUTLOOK

The March 2023 provincial budget projects a small deficit for the current fiscal year and surpluses in future years.

“Overall, Budget 2023 is fiscally prudent and sets the Ontario government on a course for surplus next year, well ahead of schedule. Spending is limited to targeted areas for maximum impact and savings have been generated from a balanced pool of revenue streams.”

“While health care is getting the lion’s share of new spending, the government is planning to invest more in education, social services and “other programs.” <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/insights/sprinting-to-surplus-ontario-budget-2023>

It is noteworthy that that new provincial spending will focus on services that are not the responsibility of lower tier municipalities. (The one possible exception is additional funding for “infrastructure”, which will likely include municipal projects.)

“This provincial budget will be a challenge for municipal finances. There was no mention of replacing municipal revenues lost as a result of Bill 23. The City of Toronto and municipalities generally did not receive any funds to address pressures resulting from COVID. A failure to support municipalities will result in reduced services and higher property taxes locally. At the same time, there were no obvious cuts or signs of austerity from the Ford government as many had predicted.” <https://omssa.com/blog-report-on-2023-ontario-budget-march-2023.php>

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability has become one of the most dominant issues at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. There is a consensus emerging that the primary challenge at all levels of government is to increase the supply.

On June 16th, 2023, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation issued a report warning that we are moving in the wrong direction on housing affordability.

“Canada's federal housing agency is worried affordability will deteriorate unless the country acts on supply challenges and other housing measures soon.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation rang alarm bells last summer when it estimated the country needs to build 3.5 million more homes by 2030 than it is on track for, to reach some semblance of affordability.

While 271,000 homes were built two years ago and roughly 260,000 last year, chief economist Bob Dugan is now forecasting between 210,000 and 220,000 will be constructed this year. Dugan believes this is a sign that the country is moving in the wrong direction and he is not optimistic that the country is on track to double the pace of housing starts.

Construction efforts have been constrained by labour shortages, higher interest rates and costs for materials, along with zoning issues and NIMBYism.

Dugan admits his outlook is not rosy but on the positive side, says moments of crisis can lead to innovation, which could positively alter the current housing forecast.” <https://www.cp24.com/news/housing-affordability-will-deteriorate-unless-we-act-soon-cmhc-chief-economist-1.6444323>

The Growth Management Strategy for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell Update report dated March 2022 identified that Casselman may not have enough land to accommodate all the projected residential growth. This shortage will likely be worsened by the fact that many more people are now able to work from home and Casselman is already the community of choice for many people working for Ottawa-based employers.

The Casselman Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Master Plan Phase One draft report issued in March 2023 identified that the current Water Treatment Plant will be at capacity by 2032 based on the projected growth in residential and industrial development. It is understood that the Village also requires a new or an additional source of water supply and several alternatives are being investigated.

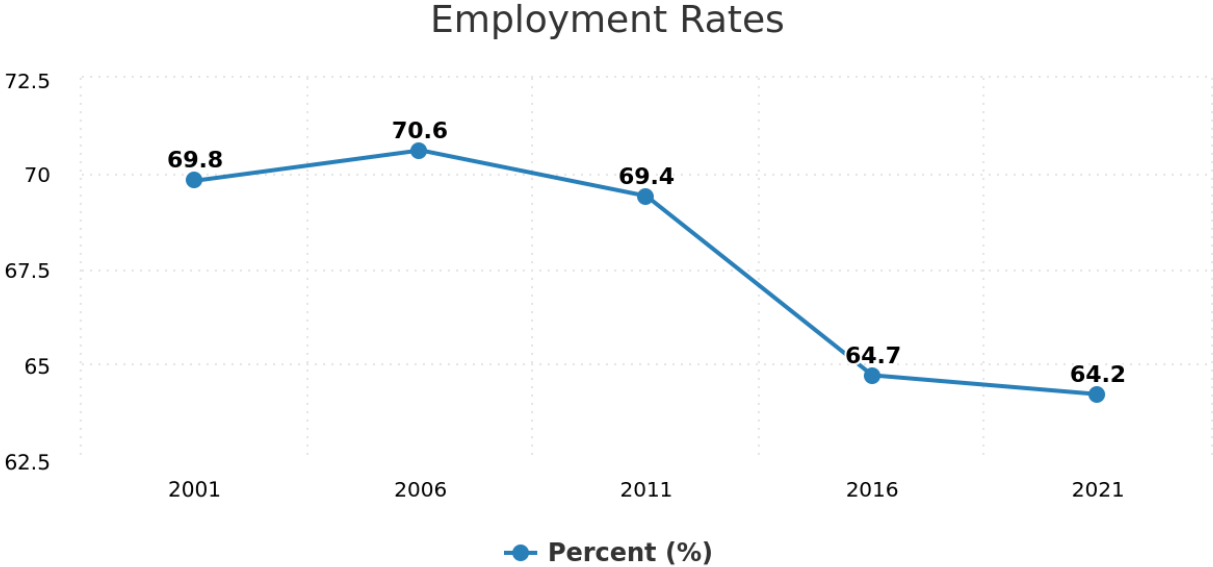
It should be noted that housing affordability extends into the rental market as well. There is a shortage of rental accommodation which drives up the rental costs and makes it challenging to find suitable housing.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Most statistics in this section relate to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. Much of the analysis comes from <https://townfolio.co/on/french-river/demographics>. Please note that StatsCan often rounds figures to the closest number divisible by five.

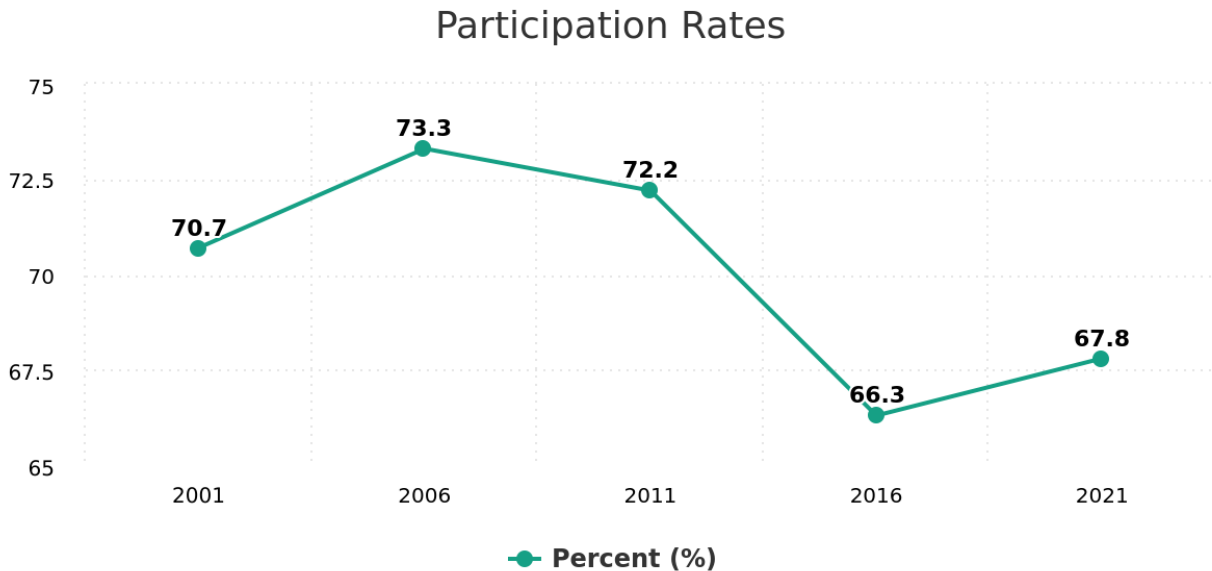
EMPLOYMENT RATES

The employment rate chart shows the average percentage of people of working age in Casselman who were employed during the 2021 census year and the two previous years. It should be kept in mind that these figures are low because of the pandemic. In June 2023 the employment rate in Canada was 65.7%. (<https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/employed-persons>).



PARTICIPATION RATES

The participation rates chart shows the percentage of people who are either employed or are actively looking for work. A growing participation rate signals more people coming into the labour force whether younger people looking for first jobs, people of working age switching careers or jobs, or people re-entering the job market after job disruptions. Migration can significantly affect this economic metric.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The unemployment rate chart shows the number of unemployed workers and people searching for a paid job expressed as a percentage of the labour force. An increasing unemployment rate signals an “employer’s market” where there are more job seekers compared to the number of jobs available.

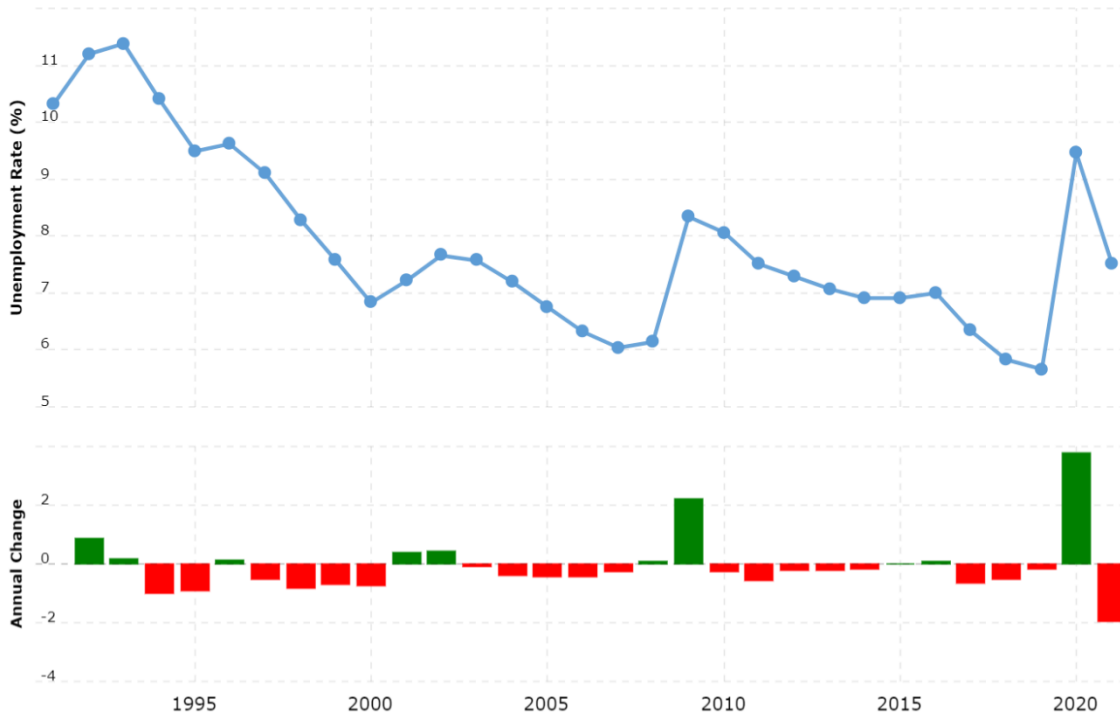
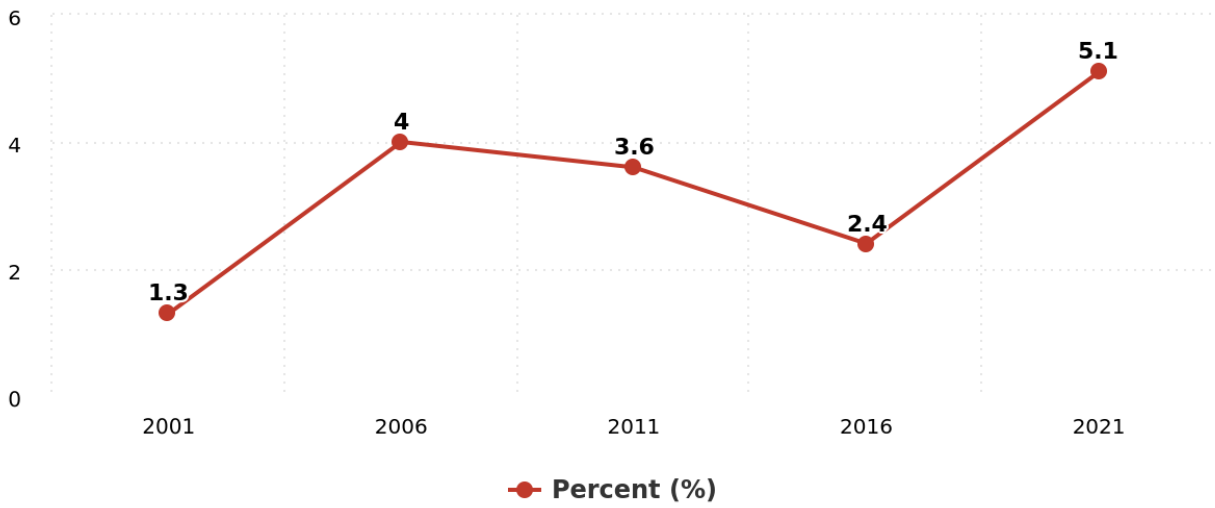
Again, it should be noted that when the 2021 Canada Census data was compiled the economy was still suffering from the pandemic.

The first chart on the next page (taken from Statistics Canada for Casselman), shows that Casselman’s unemployment rate has traditionally been well below the national and provincial averages, but had increased due to the pandemic.

The second chart on the next page, (using World Bank data), shows that nationally, the Canadian unemployment rate has been above Casselman’s and has improved significantly over the last two years.

The unemployment rates for Canada from January to June 2023 have ranged from 5.0% to 5.4%. (<https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/employed-persons>)

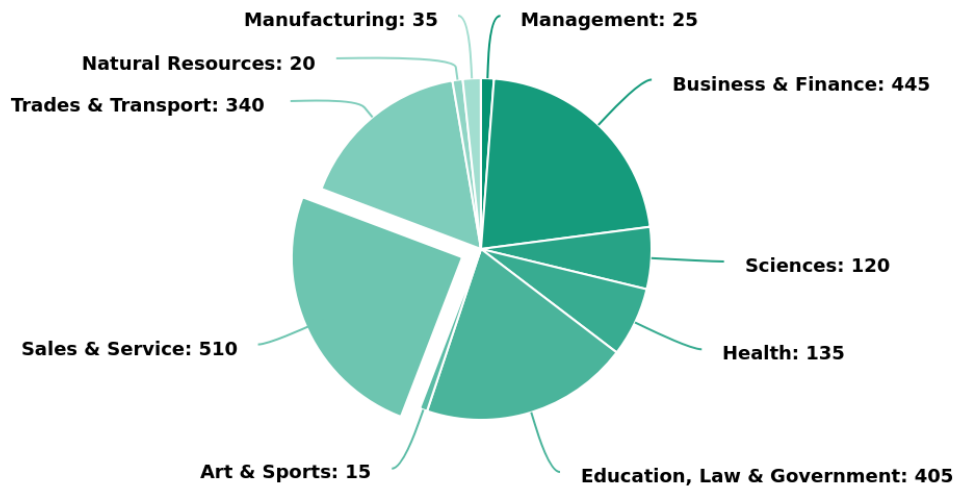
Unemployment Rates



LABOUR FORCE BY OCCUPATION

The labour force of Casselman appears to be concentrated primarily in “white collar” occupations.

Labour Force by Occupation

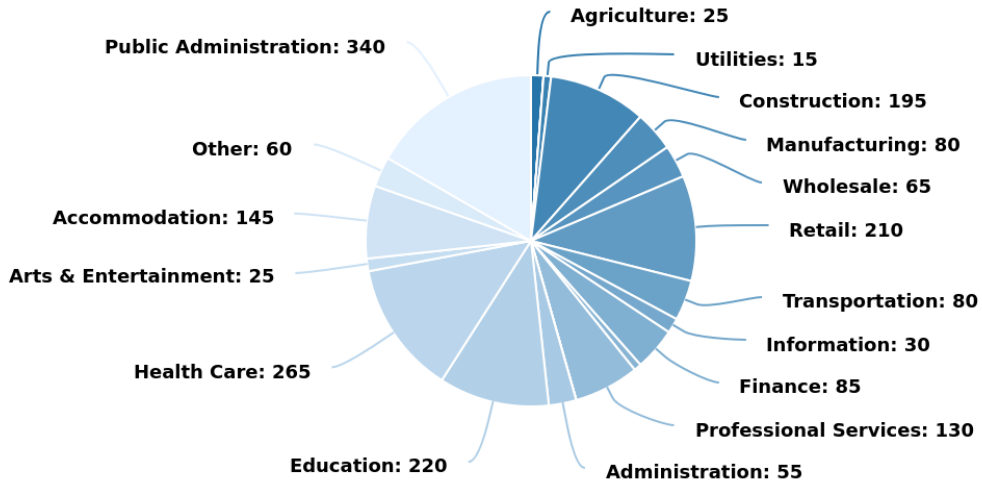


Occupation	Number	Percentage
Sales & Service	510	24.88%
Business & Finance	445	21.71%
Education, Law & Government	405	19.76%
Trades & Transport	340	16.59%
Health	135	6.59%
Sciences	120	5.85%
Manufacturing	35	1.71%
Management	25	1.22%
Natural Resources	20	0.98%
Art & Sports	15	0.73%
Total	2,050	100.00%

LABOUR FORCE BY INDUSTRY

As with the labour force by occupation, the labour force by industry shows a concentration of “white collar” industries.

Labour Force by Industry



Industry	Number	Percentage
Public Administration	340	16.67%
Health Care	265	12.99%
Education	220	10.78%
Retail	210	10.29%
Construction	195	9.56%
Accommodation	145	7.11%
Professional Services	130	6.37%
Finance	85	4.17%
Manufacturing	80	3.92%
Transportation	80	3.92%
Wholesale	65	3.19%
Other	60	2.94%
Administration	55	2.70%
Information	30	1.47%
Agriculture	25	1.23%
Arts & Entertainment	25	1.23%
Utilities	15	0.74%
Real Estate	15	0.74%
Total	2,040	100.00%

SOCIAL FACTORS

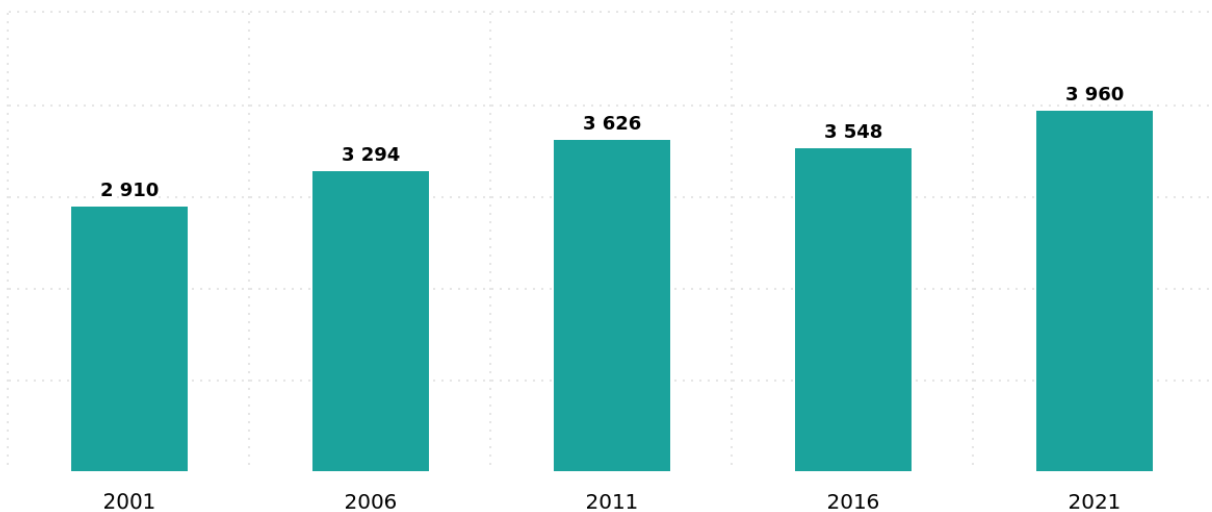
Social factors include demographics. Is the population growing, shrinking, or remaining constant? Is the age distribution of residents changing? What are the socio-economic indicators? Most statistics in this section relate to the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. Much of the analysis comes from <https://townfolio.co/on/casselman/demographics>. Please note that for some factors StatsCan rounds the figures to the closest number divisible by five.

POPULATION

Population is the sum of births plus in-migration, and it signifies the total market size possible in the area. This is an important metric for economic developers to measure their economic health and investment attraction. Businesses also use this as a metric for market size when evaluating startup, expansion or relocation decisions.

The population of Casselman has seen steady growth over the last 20 years.

Population

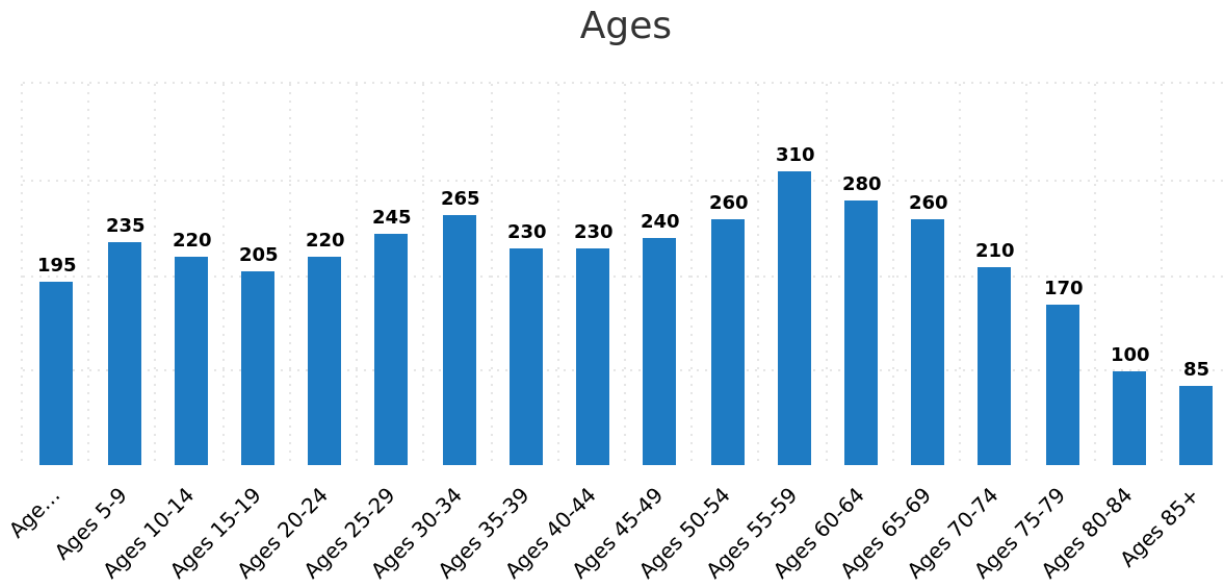


The growth in the population of Casselman has been significantly greater than the population growth for Ontario and for Canada over the past 20 years.

	2001 Population	2021 Population	Growth (%)
Casselman	2,910	3,960	36.08%
Ontario	11,410,046	14,223,942	24.66%
Canada	30,007,094	36,991,981	23.28%

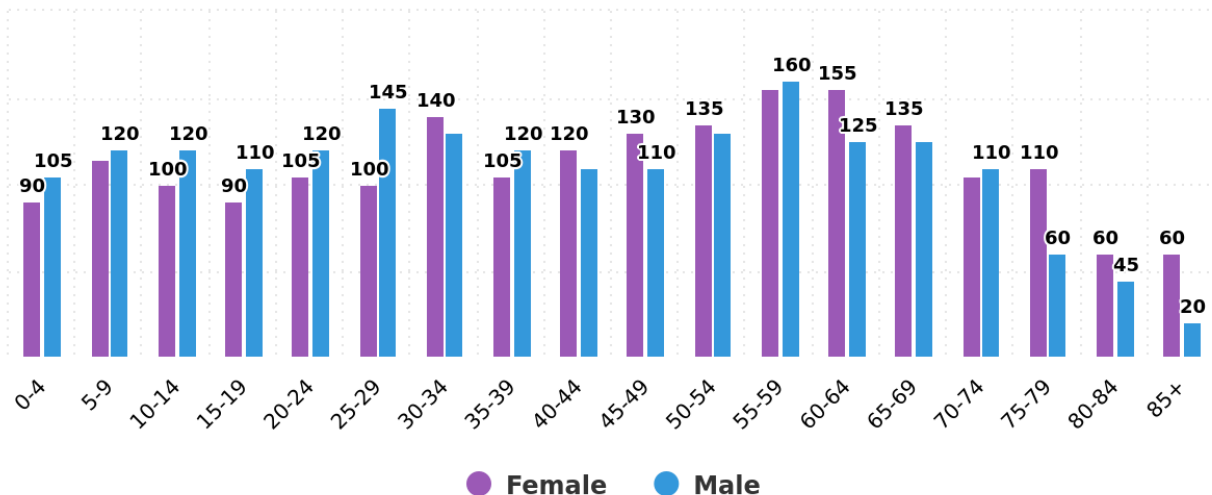
AGES

The Ages chart illustrates the age trends across all age groupings.



It is common for smaller and rural municipalities to see outward migration of young adults, as they leave their home community for higher education, employment opportunities, etc. This does not appear to be happening in Casselman as the numbers of young adults, i.e. 20 to 34 years of age, increases for each five-year increment. In general, the Ages chart is similar to those for Ontario and Canada and dissimilar from those of other small municipalities.

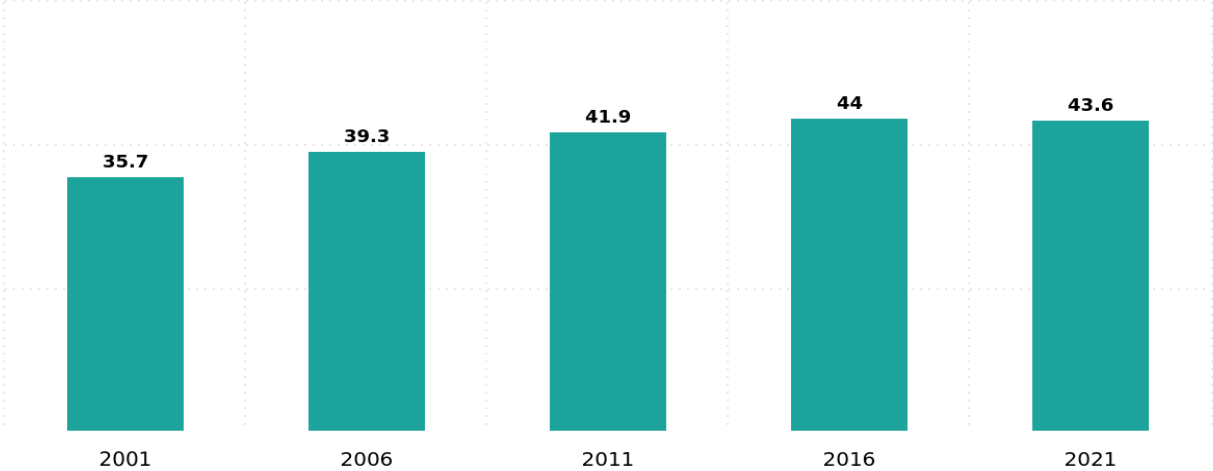
Gender



When the Ages chart is subdivided by gender, it appears that the increase in the young adult population is due to males migrating to Casselman. Not surprisingly, in the 85+ category there are more women than men, since women tend to live longer.

The median age indicates the age separating the population group into two halves of equal size. As shown in the chart and table below, the median age of Casselman is increasing, but so is the median age for all of Canada.

Median Age

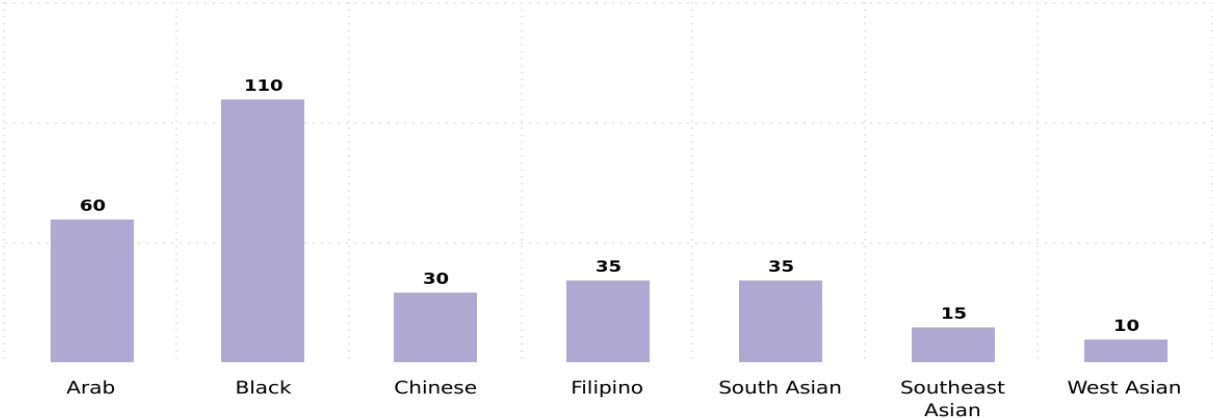


Year	Casselman	Canada
2001	36	37
2006	39	39
2011	42	40
2016	44	41
2021	44	41

VISIBLE MINORITIES

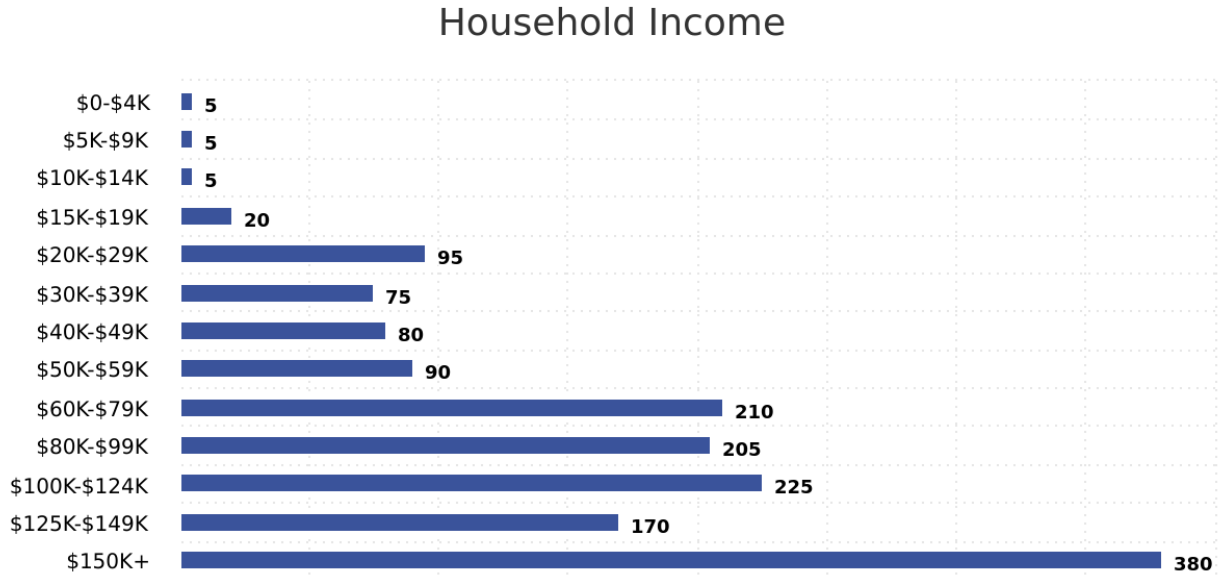
This chart shows the number of people belonging to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act and, if so, the visible minority group to which the person belongs. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as 'persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.'

Visible Minorities



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The household incomes chart shows how many households fall in each of the income brackets specified by Statistics Canada.

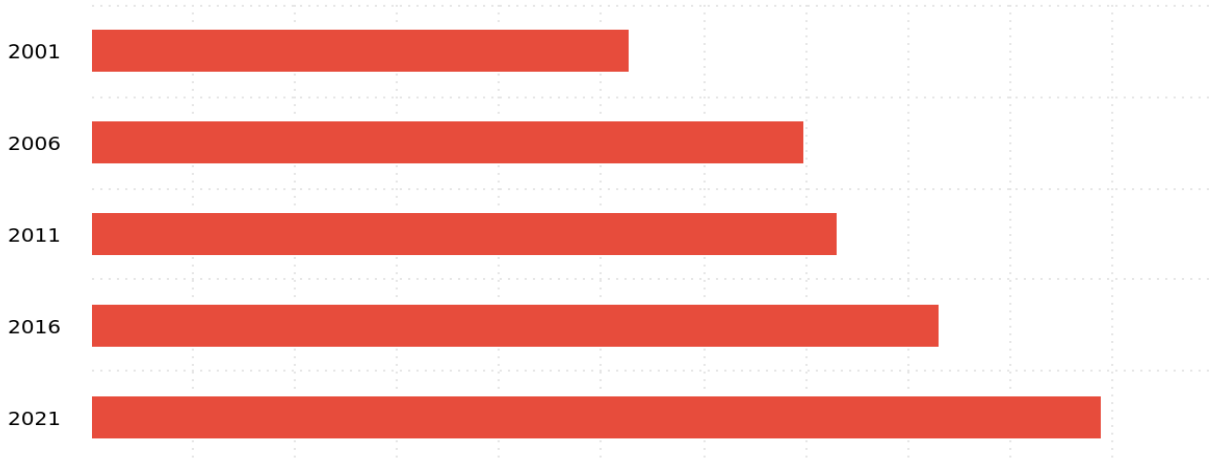


Almost half of Casselman households have incomes over \$100,000.

Household Income	Number	Percentage	Percentage
0-4K	5	0.32%	
5-9K	5	0.32%	
10-14K	5	0.32%	
15-19	20	1.28%	
20-29K	95	6.07%	
30-39K	75	4.79%	
40-49K	80	5.11%	
50-59K	90	5.75%	
60-79K	210	13.42%	
80-99K	205	13.10%	
100-124K	225	14.38%	14.38%
125-149K	170	10.86%	10.86%
150+K	380	24.28%	24.28%
Total	1,565	100.00%	49.52%

The median income indicates the income bracket separating the income earners into two halves of equal size. The following graphs show how Casselman’s median income in 2021 had roughly doubled over the last 20 years and how Casselman compared to national and provincial median household incomes.

Median Household Income

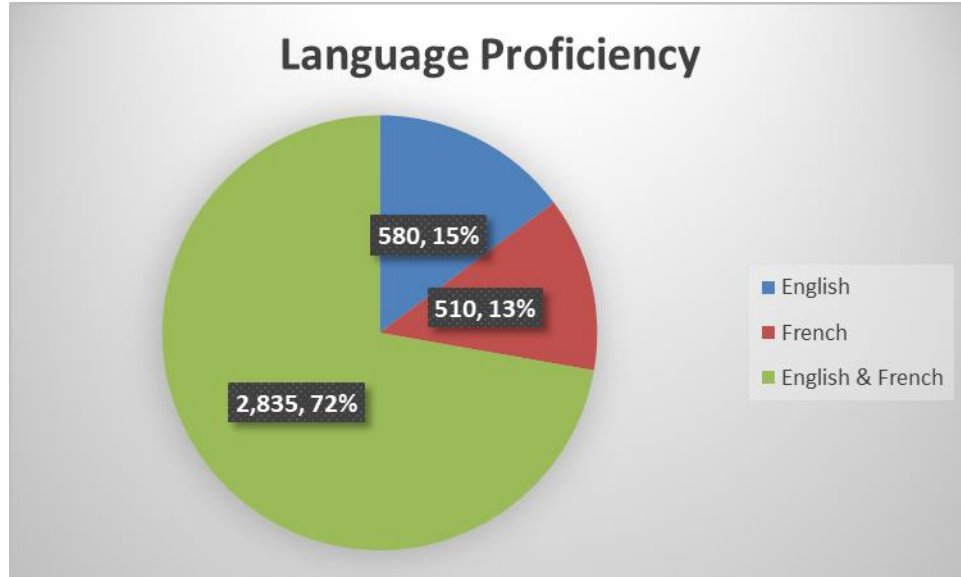


Census Year	Median Household Income
2001	\$52,851
2006	\$69,771
2011	\$73,028
2016	\$83,014
2021	\$99,000

	Median Household Income Before Taxes
Canada	\$92,764
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$87,392
Prince Edward Island	\$74,210
Nova Scotia	\$76,797
New Brunswick	\$72,786
Quebec	\$77,306
Ontario	\$97,856
Manitoba	\$85,373
Saskatchewan	\$93,942
Alberta	\$125,522
British Columbia	\$90,354
Yukon Territories	\$98,739
Northwest Territories	\$134,794
Nunavut	\$115,823

KNOWLEDGE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

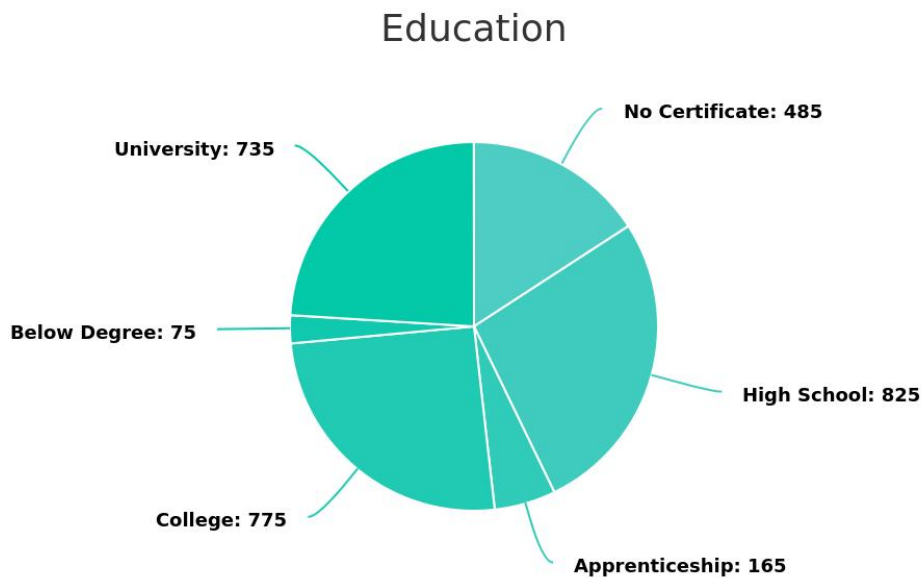
This pie chart shows how many individuals can carry a conversation in English only, in French only, in both English and French, or in neither English nor French.



The quality of life in Casselman is enriched by its bilingual culture. The Village must be diligent to ensure that residents are able to go about their daily life and conduct their interactions with municipal government in the language of their choice.

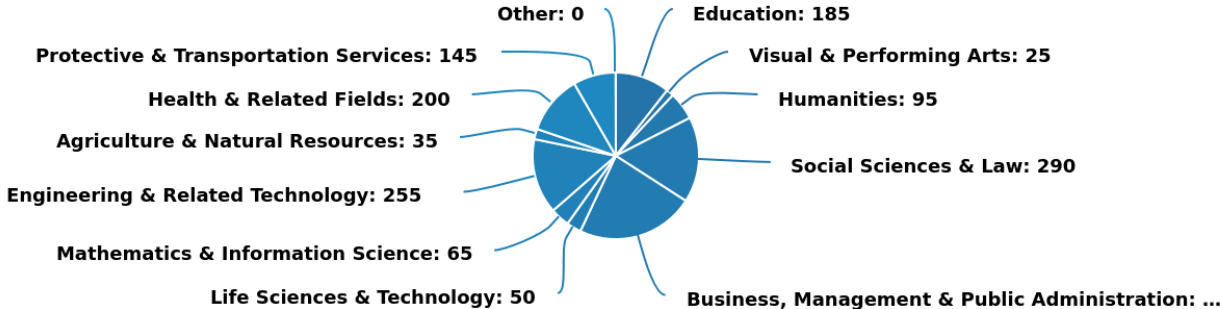
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment refers to the highest degree of education an individual has completed, and this chart shows the number of residents for each level of education.



The major field of study chart shows the predominant disciplines or areas of learning or training of a person's highest completed postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree classified by Statistics Canada.

Major Field of Study



Field of Study	Number	Percentage
Business, Management & Public Administration	400	22.92%
Social Sciences & Law	290	16.62%
Engineering & Related Technology	255	14.61%
Health & Related Fields	200	11.46%
Education	185	10.60%
Protective & Transportation Services	145	8.31%
Humanities	95	5.44%
Mathematics & Information Science	65	3.72%
Life Sciences & Technology	50	2.87%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	35	2.01%
Visual & Performing Arts	25	1.43%
Total	1,745	100.00%

CHILDCARE

Childcare is a major challenge for municipalities across Canada. Lack of childcare options inhibits residential growth, limits the employment choices of parents, and causes a great deal of stress. A municipality that can resolve this challenge will have significant advantages over other municipalities.

TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

From one year to the next, technological change proves constant—and new technology brings both challenges and opportunities. Automation trends and innovations can make it challenging to meet the evolving expectations of ratepayers, provide training to help municipal staff adjust to new roles, and juggle the human impact of eliminating jobs to pay for automation.

- The technology boom of the early 21st century increased the quality of life for millions of people, making it easier than ever to access critical goods and services with a few taps on a phone. As a result, citizens have come to expect quick, efficient, and highly-responsive services — which local governments don't always have the resources to provide.
- A technologically connected world has increased cybersecurity threats, including the number of ransomware and malware attacks that public organizations experience. Many local governments invest in cybersecurity and other IT technology solutions to counter these attacks. Cloud-based infrastructure helps governments get up and running more quickly after a cyber attack — and with less data loss — than those that rely on physical servers alone.
- Paper-based workflows slow down government processes, making it challenging for municipal employees to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. For example, the Casselman Development Services Review report of January 2022 identified the risks to good file management and the efficient processing of files with the current manual systems in the Planning and Building departments and advises that the Municipality would likely greatly benefit from having an application management solution to self-monitor the progress of applications and ensure that regulatory and statutory requirements are met.
- Many parts of Canada do not have access to high-speed internet, reliable cell service, or the technology to have virtual meetings as more people work from home. Do all parts of Casselman have sufficient capacity for high-speed connectivity?

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

In an era of ecological crises and climate change concerns, it's more important than ever for municipalities to pay attention to environmental issues as they arise.

There is growing public concern about the impact of climate change. *“Municipalities have influence over roughly 50% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. By adopting practices that reduce, remove or avoid GHG emissions and pursuing meaningful ways to adapt to changing climate realities, municipalities can improve their residents' quality of life while saving money in operating costs.”*

<https://fcm.ca/en/programs/municipalities-climate-innovation-program>

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has published numerous reports on environmental stewardship. *“There are many municipal roles related to environmental stewardship. To illustrate, listed below are a few examples of AMO’s environmental policy files.*

Municipal Water Stewardship

Municipal governments across Ontario have a longstanding responsibility for protecting public health and the environment through water stewardship:

- *Municipal governments are responsible for delivering safe drinking water that meets exacting quality.*
- *Municipal wastewater treatment is also subject to high quality standards for treatment and effluent.*
- *Stormwater systems are built, operated, and maintained to contain and treat runoff to lakes and rivers.*
- *Source water protection regulations also assign municipalities responsibility for ensuring the protection of drinking water sources and municipalities work with their communities to ensure these sources are protected.*

Waste Diversion

Municipal waste diversion programs reduce the amount of garbage dumped in landfills and waste disposal sites. Municipal governments play a crucial role in ensuring that residential waste is properly managed to safeguard the health of our communities and our environment. This means ensuring that waste is managed safely, including litter clean up, managing residual waste in our wastewater treatment facilities, and through recycling and disposal programs. While significant progress has been made in developing integrated waste management systems that divert about half of Ontario’s residential waste stream, household recycling has stalled, the amount of waste keeps increasing along with costs to manage it while municipalities have little control over the waste that is produced.

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) refers to a policy that places financial and operational responsibility for the end-of-life management of a product or packaging to those who produce it – such as manufacturers, packagers, or retailers. Municipal governments have been strongly supportive of EPR as it creates economic opportunities, incentivizes innovation, improves our environment, and reduces the burden on Ontario’s taxpayers.

Climate Change

Climate change is a growing global concern, and its effects are being experienced on a local level, including across Ontario. When dangerous heat waves, flooding and storms occur, municipal services are often the first to respond. Combatting climate change has been a longstanding advocacy issue for AMO because municipal governments across Ontario are at the forefront of climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Over the

years, municipal councils have declared climate change emergencies and developed climate change action plans to complement the municipal energy plans they are required to complete and help address the local impacts of climate change.

Environmental Assessment

Federal and provincial legislation on Environmental Assessment (EA) lays out the framework and process for evaluating the potential environmental effects of a project. AMO and municipal staff associations, including the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA), have long called for changes to streamline the EA process to make it easier and faster to undertake projects that communities need to increase prosperity while protecting important ecosystems and natural capital.”

<https://www.amo.on.ca/advocacy/energy-climate-change/municipal-environmental-stewardship> (abridged to shorten the length of the article)

LEGAL FACTORS

This PESTEL factor differs from its political counterpart because it focuses on current laws rather than potential ones. In order to maintain both integrity and sustainability, a municipality must observe evolving intellectual property, antidiscrimination, and privacy laws as well as numerous more traditional legal issues.

Municipalities face unique legal challenges as creatures of statute having to adapt to quickly changing provincial, national and even international regulatory contexts and market forces. Recent court cases in Canada have included cases related to the following issues:

- land acquisition, assembly and expropriation projects
- urban renewal and other projects combining land acquisition and land use planning
- brownfield redevelopment
- infrastructure and environmental assessment matters
- conservation authority matters
- cultural heritage designations and disputes
- development charges and other fees and charges
- other revenue tools and cost-sharing agreements
- municipal governance matters
- code of conduct and integrity matters
- opinions on municipal powers
- preparation of bylaws
- bylaw challenges
- cannabis retail, production and related matters
- emerging sectors such as autonomous vehicles, cutting-edge service delivery technologies, etc.

3 FIRST PLANNING SESSION

A full day planning session with all members of Council and Senior Administrators is scheduled for Tuesday September 5th. The facilitators will be Tim Hore, President of Capital Park, and Steve Lichty, Project Manager. The tentative agenda for the one-day session is summarized below:

Start	Duration	Description	Notes
3:00 P.M.	15 minutes	Introductions	Around the table
	15 minutes	Overview of the Project	Presentation (Tim)
	20 minutes	Notes from Research and Document Review	Presentation (Steve) and discussion
	20 minutes	SWOT Analysis	Breakout groups
	20 minutes	SWOT Analysis	Plenary presentations & discussion
	20 minutes	What makes a great Strategic Plan?	Presentation (Tim)
	10 minutes	COFFEE BREAK	
	45 minutes	Review of exemplar municipal strategic plans	Breakout groups & plenary presentations
	15 minutes	Discussion of Strategic Plan contents for Casselman	Group discussion
	15 minutes	Vision & Mission, - best practices	Presentation (Steve)
	30 minutes	Validating and/or modifying Mission & Vision Statements	Working in pairs and plenary presentations
	10 minutes	Values Statements - best practices	Presentation (Steve)
	10 minutes	Validating and/or modifying Values Statement	Working in pairs and plenary presentations
	10 minutes	Developing strategic priorities	Presentation (Tim)
	45 minutes	Group development of strategic priorities	Breakout groups
	20 minutes	MEAL BREAK	
	60 minutes	Strategic priorities presentations	Plenary presentations and discussion
	15 minutes	Key Performance Indicators	Presentation (Steve) and Discussion
	20 minutes	Expectations from Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Discussion
	10 minutes	Wrap-up and next steps	Tim and Steve
		ADJOURNMENT	

4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

SURVEY

Residents and business owners will be encouraged to complete a survey that will be available on-line and in hard copy. The survey questions will be reviewed and approved during the first planning session on September 5th.

The intent is to have the survey go “live” shortly after approval on and to remain active for approximately four weeks.

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group sessions will be conducted during December to obtain input from specific interest groups. Each session will be facilitated by a bilingual Capital Park consultant so that participants will be able to communicate in the language of their choice.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be conducted with the Municipality’s senior managers. Each manager will be given the option of a private meeting or to include some of their key staff in the session.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

There will be a public meeting, or “Town Hall Meeting”, held during the week of on September 19th at 6:00 p.m. A bilingual Capital Park consultant will lead the presentation and facilitate the discussions, but representatives from Council and senior staff should be present.

5 EXEMPLAR STRATEGIC PLANS

During the first planning session, Council members and Senior Administrative Staff will review seven Strategic Plans of similar municipalities to identify features that they like, and features that they would like to avoid. These seven plans are provided under separate cover as Appendix A to this interim report.

The following plans have been included for the planning session participants to study:

- Town of Banff
- City of Cornwall
- Town of Hinton
- City of Port Moody
- Township of North Glengarry
- City of Quinte West
- City of Thunder Bay

Please note that participants in the planning session are not expected to read each of the exemplar strategic plans in detail prior to the session. Time will be allotted during the planning session for each small group to do a detailed analysis of two or three plans. However, it will be helpful if everyone has skimmed the seven plans beforehand to have some familiarity with the style, format, contents, substance, etc.