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# City of Dryden

5-Year Economic Development  
& Tourism Strategic Plan



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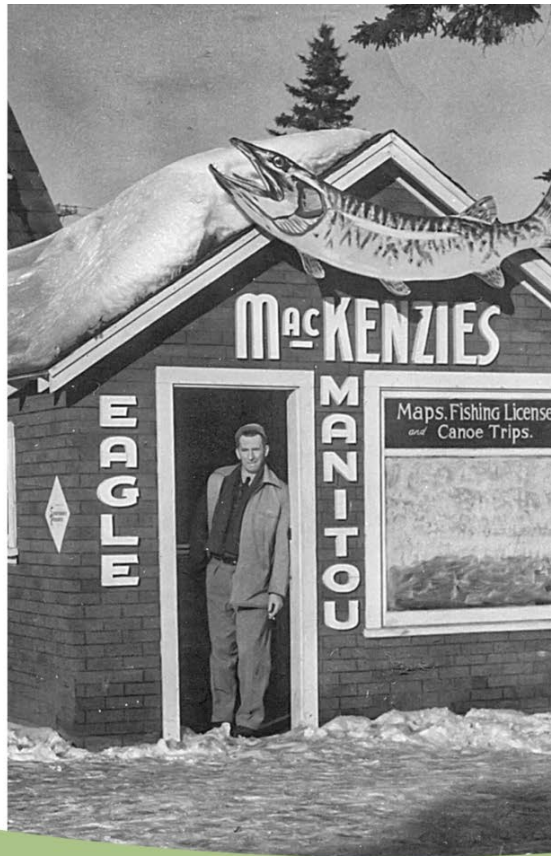
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# Executive Summary





# Executive Summary

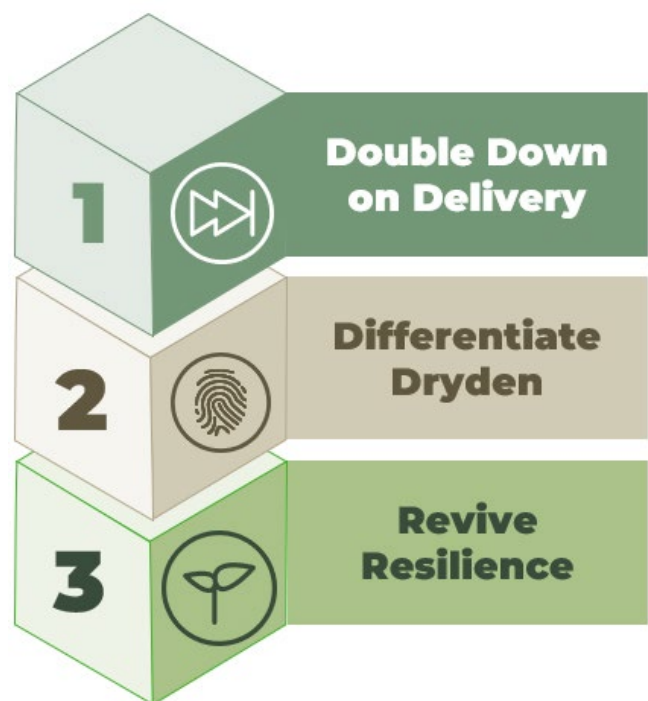
With a path to a fresh start, Dryden can move in a positive direction.

Dryden is a thriving northern city with a diverse economy that includes resource sectors, service businesses and a strong retail base. The city offers a high quality of life with access to outdoor experiences, affordable living, a strong sense of community and a love of sport.

The recommendations in this report are grounded in the unique circumstances of Dryden, using stakeholder feedback, data, the consulting team's expert knowledge and a consideration of best practices to chart a direction to diversify and strengthen the local economy. Relationship building with communities, organizations and people within the city and the surrounding region are foundational to Dryden's success, and Dryden's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy builds on the groundwork developed by Dryden and its partners.

Shifting priorities, trends, and changing economic impacts specific to the City of Dryden are explored in this new strategy. Attracting and housing new residents and workers is an important goal to support small businesses and major employers. Increased visitor spending is another important opportunity – because it represents new revenue into the community. Looking into the next decade, Dryden may be managing the impacts of regional resource development opportunities. Capturing potential benefits requires preparation and investment, making community and economic development capacity building a critical task. Through data analysis, engagement, and discussions, three strategic directions were established to provide a framework for Dryden's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. They are:

- Double Down on Delivery
- Differentiate Dryden
- Revive Resilience



Doubling down on delivery means that the City focus its capacity to deliver economic development and tourism programs. Incentives for development are to be clarified, provided

direction, and strengthened. A tangible focal point needs to be created for tourism and local business on the highway corridor and activity encouraged at the nexus of the downtown and the waterfront – two critical locations to strengthen first impressions and connect tourists and investors with Lake Wabigoon and local business.

Differentiating Dryden means that the City leverage its unique features, diversify the existing business mix, and identify visitor target markets and personas for effective tourism marketing efforts. Communicating a unique value proposition depends on Dryden's capacity to be prepared, to develop plans, and to execute tactics effectively, consistently, and with stamina for the long haul.

Reviving resilience means that the City must revitalize its key community spaces, specifically the downtown core and the waterfront. It must play an important role as a catalyst to expand the supply and diversity of housing and the availability and skill of its workforce. Resilience means preparing the local ecosystem with information and tools to weather economic and social upturns and downturns. Knowing potential risks and planning to mitigate them is of paramount concern.

Dryden's new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy provides a roadmap for a fresh look for the community. It highlights desired outcomes and sketches out tactics that will help the City achieve them.



# Summary of Research & Analysis



# Summary of Research and Analysis

This section presents the findings of the Background Review, Investment Readiness Assessment, and Service Delivery Analysis.

## Background Review

### Dryden's Fringe Population

The Northern Policy Institute uncovered that in Northern Ontario, nearly 80% of the total unincorporated population lives in communities without distinct census data.<sup>1</sup> It is important to understand the fringe population directly outside of rural communities such as Dryden as they impact the services that are provided by the municipality. There is of course a benefit to having the fringe population so close to the City as it allows local businesses to draw in additional customers and employees from the population.<sup>2</sup> The Northern Policy Institute looked at neighbouring dissemination blocks (DBs)<sup>3</sup> of larger centres across Northern Ontario and identified the fringe population around them. Using 2016 census data, Dryden had a fringe population of 3,620.<sup>4</sup>

The Deloitte Project Team undertook a fringe population analysis using a similar methodology as the Northern Policy Institute and used the latest 2021 census data. This analysis looked at DBs that were within approximately 30 kilometers of Dryden. It was found that in 2021, Dryden had a fringe population of 3,671. It is unclear which specific dissemination blocks were used to calculate Dryden's initial fringe population from the Northern Policy Institute, so comparison should not be made between them.

What can be ascertained, is that by including the fringe population around Dryden, Dryden's overall population increases by 49.7% (11,509 in 2021), from the base Dryden Census Subdivision population data provided by Statistics Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Northern Policy Institute, Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario Should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> A dissemination block is an area bounded on all sides by roads and/or boundaries of Statistics Canada's standard geographic areas for dissemination. The dissemination block is the smallest geographic area for which population and dwelling counts are disseminated.

<sup>4</sup> Northern Policy Institute, Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario Should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance.



## Guiding Documents

This strategy uses the following documents to support the development of strategic goals, objectives, and actions to ensure alignment of priorities.

- Business Gap Analysis
- City of Dryden 2020-2025 Community Strategic Plan
- City of Dryden - Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan
- City of Dryden Communications Plan
- City of Dryden Official Plan (June 2023 Draft)
- Community Capacity Study
- Community Improvement Plan
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Dryden Development Corporation Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Dryden Regional Airport Strategic Plan 2021
- Dryden Signature Trail System Improvements Feasibility Study
- Dryden Tourism Development Strategy and Implementation Plan
- City of Dryden Facilities Master Plan

## Key Economic and Community Profile Trends

- The median age of Dryden's population is considerably higher than Ontario and Canada's median and is in decline, consistent with neighbouring communities. As can often be seen in communities with a strong manufacturing base, over 50% of Dryden's labour force has no post-secondary diploma, degree, or certificate.
- Dryden's total employment count is not expected to rebound to pre-pandemic levels until after 2028 and the city is a net importer of workers, primarily from the Kenora Unorganized Census Subdivision.<sup>5</sup> The employment composition in Dryden suggests that the local economy has specialized in service industries, mostly around industries such as retail trade and accommodation and food services. Most of the businesses in Dryden are small with 46% of all businesses with employees having under five employees, and 83% of all businesses with employees have under 20 employees.
- Dryden has a high concentration (calculated as a percent of total businesses in Dryden divided by the percent of total businesses in Ontario) of businesses in logging<sup>6</sup>, recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps<sup>7</sup>, gasoline stations<sup>8</sup>, and traveller

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<sup>5</sup> The Kenora Unorganized Census Division encompasses a large land area beyond Dryden's fringe population area estimates.

<sup>6</sup> Logging refers to establishments primarily engaged in cutting timber, producing rough, round, hewn, or riven primary wood, and producing wood chips in the forest. Establishments primarily engaged in cutting and transporting timber are also included in this industry.

<sup>7</sup> Recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps refers to establishments primarily engaged in operating recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds, hunting and fishing camps, and various types of vacation and adventure camps. These establishments cater to outdoor enthusiasts and are characterized by the type of accommodation and by the nature and the range of recreational facilities and activities provided to their clients.

<sup>8</sup> Gasoline stations is comprised of establishments primarily engaged in retailing motor fuels, whether or not the gasoline station is operated in conjunction with a convenience store, repair garage, restaurant or other type of operation.

accommodations<sup>9</sup> based on an analysis of business concentrations in comparison to Ontario.

## Visitor Perception Highlights

- The visitor perception assessment draws from external visitor perceptions from online travel rating systems such as Google Reviews and TripAdvisor. The weighted average highlighted the top assets in Dryden are primarily outdoor-based attractions that include parks, lakes, and trails. The top five attractions, as perceived by visitors in May 2023, included Aaron Provincial Park operated by the City of Dryden; Max the Moose, a two-ton monument installed in 1962; Eagle's Landing Golf and Curling Club; the City's arena, pool, and fitness centre; and the City's Museum.
- Gaps in Dryden's tourism products and services include full-service restaurants, accommodations<sup>10</sup> and family-friendly recreational activities oriented to young people and families. While the Dryden Trailblazer Tourism Association has focused marketing efforts on fishing, no fishing experiences or outfitting operators appeared in the Visitor Perception assessment, indicating that operators are either at capacity or could use support with marketing. This analysis can provide insights into product gaps and opportunities for new and existing businesses to capitalize on. Destination Northern Ontario is a key partner that the City of Dryden can work with to increase tourism products.

## Major Employers and Opportunities

Outside of the boundaries of the Dryden Census Subdivision are major regional employers including the Dryden Regional Airport which is home to several organizations and has a direct effect of 228 full-time jobs,<sup>11</sup> including the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) which employs 83 full-time staff, 110 part-time staff, and during the peak of the fire season can accommodate in excess of 300 employees.<sup>12</sup>

Dryden Fibre Canada, (previously Domtar), which operates a major pulp mill within the boundaries of the Dryden Census Subdivision, reports approximately 370 employees.<sup>13</sup> This number is significantly higher than the counts provided by Statistics Canada and Lightcast Analyst, which purport to be generated from payroll remittance information gathered by the Canada Revenue Agency. Adjustments to this data and seasonal fluctuations may create misalignment between actual job counts and government reporting.

There may be other significant employers in the region whose datasets are not captured correctly by Statistics Canada and may have misleading employee counts and labour

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<sup>9</sup> Traveller accommodation businesses are comprised of establishments primarily engaged in providing short-term lodging in facilities such as hotels, motor hotels, resorts, motels, casino hotels, bed and breakfast homes, and housekeeping cottages and cabins.

<sup>10</sup> More attention needs to be given to a "larger variety of accommodation options" in Dryden, according to the Ignace Area Tourism Study by Urban Systems, November 2022.

<sup>11</sup> The Loomex Group, Dryden Regional Airport Strategic Plan 2021, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> City of Dryden, Greg Rickford, MPP, Dryden Regional Airport Brief, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.drydenfibre.ca/>

participation rates for the city. This is particularly true of businesses who are located beyond the borders of the Dryden Census Subdivision.

Besides the major employers in the city, Dryden also stands at the cusp of unprecedented economic expansion, fueled by several major developments in the region. The impact of these opportunities on Dryden's long-term social and economic prospects cannot be understated.

- **NWMO Deep Geological Repository:** The Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is selecting a site for a deep geological repository to contain and isolate Canada's used nuclear fuel. Two areas remain as potential hosts for the repository — the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation (WLON)-Ignace area and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON)-South Bruce area, both in Ontario<sup>14</sup>. Should the WLON-Ignace area be selected as the host for the repository, it is estimated that the pre-construction, construction, and operation of the repository will bring 1,540 new jobs to the region. The project would increase housing demand in the Ignace/Dryden area, where housing supply and affordability are already constrained. Aging housing stock and a lack of services exacerbate these issues. Other NWMO studies indicate that the project will also affect consumer spending, workforce shortages, and competition for labour on wages.<sup>15</sup>
- **Gold:** Mining in the surrounding region is also developing and growing, with Treasury Metals continuing to move plans forward on the Goliath Gold Complex, just one of many mining and mining-related opportunities in the surrounding region, but one that is well-positioned to impact the local economy. The Goliath Gold Complex, 20 kilometres east of Dryden, is expected to start its mining operations as early as 2026<sup>16</sup>. There has been an increase in active gold exploration efforts from companies such as Dryden Gold, which has assembled a 400-square-kilometre land package, 30 kilometers east of Dryden<sup>17</sup> becoming active in the region.
- **Lithium:** Critical Resources Ltd. is studying the infrastructure needs and the construction and operating costs of a potential lithium mine located 19 kilometres northeast of Dryden. The company is reported to consider this opportunity a flagship project in its mine development track to service the North American electric vehicle sector<sup>18</sup>.
- **Waasigan Transmission Line:** Northwest Ontario needs access to more power by the mid-2020s to meet growing electricity demand. Hydro One is completing development work, including an environmental assessment, on a proposed new double-circuit 230 kilovolt transmission line and a new single-circuit 230 kilovolt transmission line connecting the City of Dryden with transformer stations to the south and east<sup>19</sup>.

As these projects progress, they will require a sizable workforce, which might create new job opportunities for residents and attract talent to the city. Furthermore, there will be additional secondary economic activities linked to those opportunities, from supply chain management

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<sup>14</sup> NWMO, Site Selection Process

<sup>15</sup> NWMO / Ignace, Ignace Area Community Well-being Studies: A Summary of Key Findings, 2023.

<sup>16</sup> [Northern Ontario Business, 2023](#)

<sup>17</sup> [VID TV webinar](#), Dryden Gold Corp., September 2023.

<sup>18</sup> [Northern Ontario Business](#), retrieved September 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Hydro One, Waasigan Transmission Line, 2022. [Retrieved September 2023](#).

to local retail and trade benefits. However, these opportunities also come with a range of challenges that must be addressed to ensure sustainable growth.

According to the City of Dryden Community Capacity Study, the potential increase in new residents and visitors may result in:

- Gaps in municipal residential, commercial, and industrial developments
- Level of municipal infrastructure and capacity may not be sufficient to support growth.
- Strain on essential services provided by external partners like healthcare and education.

To tackle these challenges, it is imperative for development proponents and city leaders to engage with community stakeholders. Comprehensive plans will need to be developed to address the needs of all residents and ensure sustainable economic growth in the long run. Given that several regional economic development opportunities lie beyond Dryden's municipal boundaries, the City should work in tandem with public and private entities to explore innovative funding models that can support future growth. The municipality could explore collaborative strategies to optimize land utilization to ensure adequate capacity to accommodate future residential, commercial, and industrial needs. In addition to the City's lobbying efforts with NOMA and senior levels of government, Dryden could also play an advocacy role in building awareness and action through the Northern Ontario Municipal Association, and by supporting the Northern Policy Institute's Regional Districts initiative<sup>20</sup> to address issues stemming from unincorporated areas surrounding Dryden.

## Investment Readiness Assessment

Research by Deloitte and input from municipal staff provided insight into the municipality's investment readiness. From an investor-facing perspective, assessment criteria were grouped into seven categories, each element representing an aspect of the economic development customer service delivery model. The framework is meant to be scalable, depending on the size and intricacy of the local economy. Areas of inquiry were grouped into subject areas.

- Investor Intake and Tracking
- Rapport and Collaboration
- Welcoming Land-Use Planning Regimen
- Serviced Property Inventory
- Readiness to Respond
- Existing Business Intelligence
- Marketing and Communications

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<sup>20</sup> Northern Policy Institute. *Time to Reorganize: Why Northern Ontario should Follow BC's Lead in Local Governance*. 2021.



Key Findings

The City of Dryden scored 70% in terms of overall investment readiness. Evaluations for sections related to Rapport and Collaboration scored well (86%) as did Marketing and Communications (75%). Readiness to Respond and Investor Intake and Tracking could be improved, at 48% and 67% respectively.

Top priorities for improving Dryden’s investment readiness include:

- Increase City response time:** Being ready to respond is a key component of investment attraction. Capacity issues can hinder the City’s ability to provide a same-day response to inquiries, which is considered a basic standard in the industry. In some cases, communities arrange a standard response that indicates the inquiry has been received, and the Economic Development team is pulling together information to respond. A budget line specifically labelled as “economic development” is also recommended, which sends a positive signal to developers. Economic development staff should also be maintaining a list of local business leaders for community testimonials or insights.
- Manage client relationships:** For the purposes of investor intake and tracking, Dryden would benefit from staff, contractor, or partnership in place to generate leads for investment attraction. Websites are the first stop for potential investors and updates are time consuming for staff. Dryden may need communications resources to keep the web presence up to date, ensuring all links are current and new data is online. A specific contact is recommended over a general inquiry contact. While municipal staff are well connected and work together to improve outcomes for investors, a more formal process for tracking investment inquiries and regular follow up is recommended.
- Articulate costs:** Having an easily accessible list of planning and development related fees, charges, and levies directly on Dryden’s economic development webpage, instead of linking away to a fees and charges schedule saves a potential investor an extra click, which can make a difference. Highlighting if there is no cost to a business is also advantageous. Ensuring staff are accessible and able to share the costs associated with and the value of investing in Dryden to a business owner or developer would be a best practice.



- **Motivate property owners to sell or improve:** Having a satisfactory mix of available buildings and shovel-ready lands is essential for maximizing Dryden's economic development outcomes. Currently, there is a lack of available and affordable commercial space at varying levels of readiness. By-laws (e.g., vacant property registry) and incentives need to be in place to ensure owners of available buildings and shovel-ready lands are motivated to sell or improve properties. The commercial and industrial real estate inventory should be regularly updated with the status of properties for sale that are not listed with a broker.
- **Focused business retention and expansion efforts:** Taking advantage of opportunity requires knowing the existing business intelligence that resides in the community. To that end, it is extremely important that Economic Development staff coordinate a scalable Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Program that considers current capacity, including regular business visits, tracked progress on issues raised by local employers, including follow up. Ensuring municipal leadership is connecting with the business community on a regular basis to discuss business needs and future planning will help keep business intelligence updated. A business ambassador program for BR+E site visits could be of value and help to alleviate capacity issues.
- **Marketing:** Dryden's economic development efforts will be enhanced by an investment attraction marketing plan that identifies specific targets, tactics, channels, timelines, messages, and tracking. These promotions, including social media should be aimed at investors and should be separate from general municipal promotions aimed at citizens.

## Service Delivery Analysis

The Service Delivery Analysis aimed to identify workloads, resources, and budget requirements related to economic development and tourism programs. It is important to ensure that the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy aligns with the mandates of external and community partners. The exercise can help to reduce duplication and gaps in service delivery.

### Key Findings

From the analysis, many services were appropriately set up within the community with a single lead and appropriate levels of support from other organizations or government entities. Areas of strength for Dryden include business licensing and quality assurance, Municipal Accommodations Tax collection, administration and reporting, gateway and wayfinding signage, tourism marketing tactics, tourism product knowledge and familiarization, and tourism product and experience development.

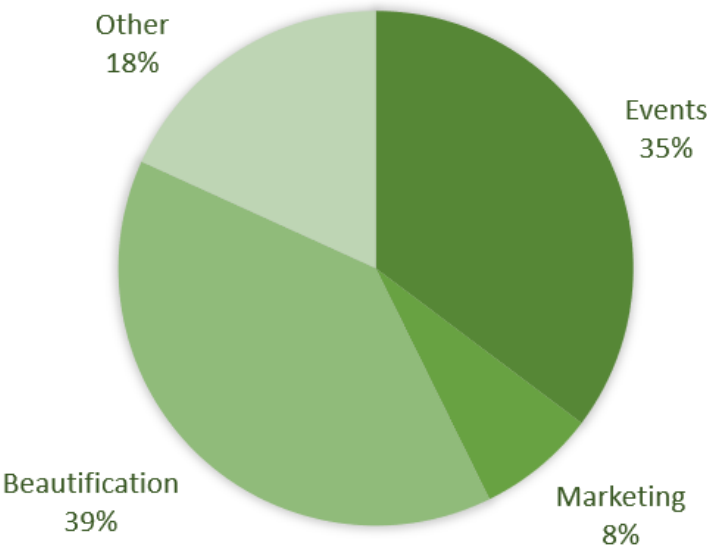
The analysis also shows several service areas where there are limited support options available. In some cases, there are only support organizations identified. In the case of workforce development, this is because the organizations providing services in this area are doing so for either a limited base of clientele, working on an ad-hoc basis or serving the larger region with no specific local presence. Service delivery areas where no organizations are providing local support for Dryden include an ambassador program, investment attraction marketing tactics, and translation / interpreters for visitors.

The only area where multiple leads were identified was in grants, loans, and incentives. Given the nature of this service area, as long as organizations are reasonably aligned and there are not duplications for the same activities, no changes are recommended.

## Municipal Accommodation Tax

Under the Municipal Act, the Province of Ontario permits municipalities to collect a “transient accommodation tax,” usually referred to as the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). At least 50% of the funds collected must be shared with a local tourism entity.<sup>21</sup> The City of Dryden set up a MAT and collects and administers the 4% tax on the price of any overnight stay of less than 30 nights, including short-term rentals. In November 2022, the City executed an agreement with the Dryden District Chamber of Commerce, which receives 50% of the funds collected. The funds provided to the Chamber must “be used to advance the City as a tourist destination by supporting and promoting local events, initiatives, and infrastructure that bring people to the City.” Under the agreement, a seven-person committee was established by the Chamber to disburse the funds. In June 2023, the Chamber and City amended the agreement to specifically include one representative of the accommodations sector on the committee. In 2022, the City shared \$247,065 in MAT revenues with the Chamber, which disbursed \$221,425 in funds for projects and expenses.<sup>22</sup> Local events and beautification projects accounted for 75% of disbursements (see chart).

2022 MAT Disbursements by Dryden Chamber of Commerce



<sup>21</sup> Province of Ontario, Municipal Act, 2001, O. Reg. 435/17: Transient Accommodation Tax

<sup>22</sup> Source: City of Dryden

The Province does not limit how a municipality may use the other 50% in revenues from a MAT other than the sharing arrangement. The City of Dryden saves its share of the MAT in a reserve fund and has expended it to date on waterfront redevelopment initiatives. Some municipalities, such as the Town of Huntsville, have specific budgetary principles in place for use of the MAT funds.<sup>23</sup>

## Key Findings

The analysis of Dryden's MAT indicates that the City and the Chamber of Commerce have a basic process in place to collect, administer, and disburse revenues collected. In its first full year of operation, the two entities shared almost \$500,000 in funding collected from visitors and intended to improve Dryden's tourism economy. Although both the City and the Chamber have been spending the funds on tourism-related initiatives, there are no specific guidelines in place for either entity. The development of guidelines including review processes and reporting, and clarity of communication, would maximize the effectiveness of the MAT funds.

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<sup>23</sup> Town of Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Budget Principles, October 2021.  
<https://huntsvilleon.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/52513>





# Engagement Summary



# Engagement Summary

Stakeholder engagement helps to understand the economic and tourism environment in Dryden. It was undertaken to seek input on the strengths and challenges of the City of Dryden's economic development and tourism efforts, as well as understanding the aspirations of people and areas of improvement. The feedback gathered informed the development of the SOARR analysis and the development of the Dryden Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and priorities.

This section summarizes the engagement activities and insights that will ultimately define the objectives, priorities, and goals within this strategy. This engagement included the participation of a total of 45 key stakeholders. This engagement with local businesses, partners, residents, and Indigenous communities created a forum to share ideas and can help develop buy-in for the strategy. Indigenous perspectives are critically important to Dryden and can support enabling an inclusive, strong, and sustainable community.

## Engagement Process

### Focus Group with Municipal Partners

This virtual focus group with municipal partners took place on July 27, 2023, with 18 attendees. This virtual session focused on the challenges and barriers that Dryden is facing and what opportunities exist over the next five years. Consideration was also given to how the partners would advise the municipality to implement the final strategy.

### Conversation with Dryden Working Circle

A conversation with the Dryden Working Circle (An advisory committee of council within the City of Dryden comprised of five Indigenous community members, and five non-Indigenous members including three City Councillors, the CAO (Chief Administrative Officer), and one other member of City staff, who are all appointed by council) took place in person/virtually on July 5, 2023. This conversation sought advice for the City of Dryden to further support Indigenous economic development within the community as well as appropriate ways in which to build stronger relationships with the surrounding Indigenous communities.

### Strategic Planning Workshop with Council & Senior Management

Two small group sessions with City councillors took place in-person on June 14 and 15 with four councillors. These conversations with councillors focused on the future opportunities for

Dryden and how feasible these opportunities may be given the current resource allocation within the City of Dryden.

Industry Workshops/Business Focus Groups

Two business focus group sessions were held in-person on June 15 and were jointly attended by ten local stakeholders. These conversations were tailored towards understanding the strengths of the community and the emerging opportunities and challenges that local businesses and entrepreneurs saw for Dryden.

One-on-one Interviews

Three key stakeholders who were unable to attend in-person focus groups were interviewed in late June and early July virtually. Like the Industry and Business Focus Groups, these conversations sought to uncover unique trends, opportunities, and challenges that Dryden may be well positioned to take advantage of.



## Key Findings

Through community engagement, a diverse group were engaged to capture their thoughts on what they see as opportunities, challenges, and aspirations for the City of Dryden. The key themes that emerged are summarized in terms of strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks, and results.

### Strengths

- The forestry sector makes significant contributions to the local economy and has potential spin-off opportunities.
- Central to Northwestern Ontario, on the Trans-Canada between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, and a major connection traveling North from the U.S. border via Highway 502.
- The Dryden Airport provides additional economic and employment benefits for the city.
- Mining supply and service, including exploration, is a current strength.
- Fishing is a core tourism attractor for the region, and Dryden is well positioned to provide services to this group of tourists.
- Dryden hosts several cultural events such as the Dryden Highschool Pow Wow, Indigenous Peoples Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day, and a variety of local markets and fairs.
- Aaron Provincial Park is a municipal asset that can be used for events, camping accommodations, and contributes strongly to Dryden's sense of place. The park has nearly 100 campsites which can accommodate tents to large trailers.

### Opportunities

- Create a marketing campaign to appeal to those who enjoy the lifestyle that Dryden can provide to attract new residents and workforce to Dryden.
- Develop additional promotion of sports recreation (e.g., hockey, soccer, and baseball) and winter activities in Dryden (e.g., snowmobiling).
- Enhance tourism infrastructure and visibility on the highway corridor to attract visitors from highway traffic, including the plans for the tourism information centre.
- Develop Dryden's waterfront around downtown and Van Horne Landing.
- Support and promote recreation facilities, tournaments, and events to improve the vibrancy of arts, culture, and sport in Dryden beyond regular business hours and the summer months.
- Work with educational institutions to further develop the workforce for current and future needs.
- Mining activity in northwestern Ontario is growing, including investments by Treasury Metals in the Goliath Gold complex, just one of many active projects in the region.
- The proposed Waasigan Transmission Line plans to bring increased energy capacity to the region.
- The Nuclear Waste Management Organization continues a site selection process including the nearby community of Ignace, with the potential for associated employment and economic opportunities.
- The City of Dryden does not have development fees. This can be marketed as an advantage of Dryden to attract out of town investors.



## Aspirations

- Attract a trades school to Dryden to support trades training so residents do not have to leave the city to learn.
- Expand the Community Improvement Program for local businesses and restrict use by corporate franchised chain establishments.
- Increase population density downtown to support commercial activity and community safety.
- Increase the number of restaurants downtown to accommodate and attract tourists, expand activity in the evening.

## Risks

- Major employers expressed concern about finding homes for new employees as they look to attract qualified individuals to Dryden.
- There are limited scheduled flights through the airport for business and leisure.
- There can be retention issues with newcomers in the community as they may not be universally welcomed by residents.
- The city's economy would benefit from diversification, global macro-economic conditions could impact attempts to attract new industries or sectors.
- Local commercial business owners find it difficult to find available and affordable leasing locations downtown for their businesses.
- Existing municipal infrastructure and service capacity will be challenged to accommodate a large influx of residents, should major economic development opportunities commence in the region.
- The City and Chamber lack guidelines for the allocation of the MAT tax, which may undermine the integrity of the program.
- Given that several regional economic development and residential development opportunities lie beyond Dryden's municipal boundaries with no direct taxation benefits, the City needs to find innovative funding models.

## Results

- Develop pathways for increased training and employment to increase participation of the local labour force, including Indigenous-specific pathways.
- Further develop relationships with the surrounding First Nation communities of Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, Eagle Lake First Nation, Wabauskang First Nation, Lac Seul First Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, and others, to foster and promote Indigenous economic development and tourism.
- Increased commercial development in the vacant lots along Highway 17 through the city through brownfield development.
- Increased economic diversification to improve economic resiliency.
- Dryden is a destination for remote workers through increased marketing efforts of the city.
- Dryden's waterfront has been developed and supports commercial uses.

## Tourism is central to improving a city's economy

Tourism attracts new revenue to a community through visitor spending. It also acts as a catalyst for community revitalization and a gateway to attracting new investment.

Simply put, tourism<sup>24</sup> is of central importance to economic development, because today's tourists are tomorrow's new residents, talent, and business owners.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, every city must compete with everywhere else for its share of attention. People must be aware of your community, feel good about it, want to visit it, and meet its people.<sup>25</sup> Among the noise of social media influencers and attention attracting internet headlines, a city must differentiate itself. The passion of a city's leaders and residents must be evident and sincere. Communities cannot be ambivalent toward visitors – inclusivity is paramount.

A city that takes an authentic approach to community revitalization will not only satisfy its residents but provide more reasons for visitors to check it out. When a city develops itself as a welcoming, sustainable, and safe place, it is much easier to tell powerful, true stories that catch the attention of visitors and investors. A visit will be their first step to validating that the city lives up to the hype, and how easy it is to get there. Visitors who have positive experiences are likely to share them with others and even consider relocating or investing in the community.

Municipalities, tourism offices, and economic development staff can work together to improve a city's infrastructure and attractiveness and raise awareness about its quality of life. Local leaders can encourage the passion and commitment of fellow residents and build a sales team that grows exponentially over time. In Ontario, all these efforts can be supported by MAT funding.

By doubling down on initiatives that integrate tourism into economic development, Dryden can differentiate itself and improve its resilience.

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<sup>24</sup> World Tourism Organization (UNWTO): "Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors ... and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure".

<sup>25</sup> Destinations International, the world's largest global network destination organizations with over 650 members across 20 countries.

## Importance of Partnerships

Economic development is most effective with grassroots support, engagement, and partnership. Dryden will only accomplish its ambitions when the City works together with local and regional partners.

For many business and tourism-related initiatives, it will be critical for the City to work closely with the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Northwest Business Centre, Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre, Destination Northern Ontario, Ontario's Sunset Country Travel Association, Dryden District Chamber of Commerce, Dryden Tourism Trailblazer Association, and Dryden Area Young Professionals Network to provide networking opportunities and to support strategic investments and programs.

The following image is built from the City of Dryden Community Capacity Study and summarizes agencies and partners that could support other aspects of economic and tourism development, including health, housing, social services, workforce, education, and Indigenous supports.





# Strategic Directions



# Strategic Directions

The following key priorities for the City of Dryden emerged through the analysis of the community's economic circumstances, document review, scan of economic trends, stakeholder engagement, investment readiness assessment, and a SOARR analysis.

These strategic directions set a clear path for Dryden's commitment to economic development activities and take the current resources of the economic development and tourism team into account to maximize Dryden's opportunities.

## Double Down on Delivery

Dryden has completed several strategic initiatives in recent years, and it is important to ensure alignment throughout this strategy. Capitalizing on forward momentum means doubling down on some initiatives and increasing capacity to deliver on programming.



## Differentiate Dryden

Tourism product development will play an important role in leveraging Dryden's unique features and opportunities to grow business. A deeper understanding of visitation to the area helps to understand how to differentiate Dryden through marketing and product development initiatives.



## Revive Resilience

Dryden has many small businesses with resilient roots, and one large employer going through a transition. The overall economy -- especially retail businesses and the downtown -- has changed drastically over recent years, and Dryden's downtown needs revitalization support.







# Action Plan



# Action Plan

Building upon the strategic directions, the following action plan provides a roadmap for the City of Dryden to guide its priorities and decisions. The capacity of the Economic Development Department is top of mind, and actions are designed to target areas of highest importance to the community.

The recommendations identified use research and engagement findings to prepare Dryden for economic growth and to capitalize on tourism opportunities. Concise statements were developed for each of the strategic directions, including:

## Actions and Tactics

The Action Plan contains clear and concise actions, tactics, and steps that are meaningful and achievable, for integration into annual work plans.

## Examples

Ideas and best practices from other communities offer aspirational benchmarks for the City of Dryden to strive towards. In many areas of the Action Plan, examples are offered to connect Dryden with current practices that can support the area.



## 1 Double Down on Delivery

Dryden has completed several strategic initiatives in recent years, and it is important to ensure alignment throughout this strategy. Capitalizing on forward momentum means doubling down on some initiatives and increasing capacity to deliver on programming.

### Action 1.1:

#### Focus the City's capacity to deliver economic development and tourism programs

##### Tactics and Steps

- A. **Review economic development program delivery.**
  - Analyze current workloads and reallocate staff hours to priority initiatives.
  - Hire additional staff member(s) to implement priority initiatives that are not currently resourced, as needed.
  - Consider a budget allocation for appropriate economic development program tools and marketing (e.g., funds for a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system to track leads and local business intelligence, website, and social media services)
  - Encourage ongoing professional development to stay current on opportunities for Dryden (e.g., EDCO (Economic Developers Council of Ontario) conferences, PDAC, EcD certification)
  - Assign a staff member to act as a development concierge to reduce response times, with ability to articulate the cost of investing and value of doing business in Dryden
- B. **Explore new and expanded collaborations with other organizations and communities.**
  - Approach potential partners to share resources for initiatives of mutual benefit (e.g., regional census, joint marketing, strategic planning)
  - Initiate partnerships with education- and tech-related organizations and tools to expand capacity (e.g., Artificial Intelligence)

**Examples:** CRMs: Examples of Client Relationship Management systems (CRMs) include TIEIT, Executive Pulse, Salesforce Economic Development Cloud, CiviCRM, Insightly, Magnet, Synchronist, Hubspot, and Zoho.

## Action 1.2:

### Clarify expectations of and incentives for developers and property owners

#### Tactics and Steps

##### A. Update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

- Review innovative incentive models in other communities to remain competitive.
- Improve incentive tools for targeted small businesses and minimize the application process.
- Allocate consistent funding to the CIP

##### B. Create a Vacant Property Registry

- Approve a by-law to establish a system of registering and monitoring vacant buildings and property.
- Establish policies, protocols, and procedures to spur improvement, leasing, or sale of identified vacant non-residential buildings or land in targeted areas.
- Increase communication of City expectations about maintenance of properties to owners
- Continue to ensure deficiencies are known and remedied with assistance from Building and Fire Departments
- Continue to fine absentee property owners who do not register or comply with by-laws.
- Explore policy changes to property taxes related to vacant properties.
- Encourage tours of vacant properties to spur business start-ups, relocations, or expansions

##### C. Update the Zoning By-law

- Ensure zoning is supportive of entrepreneurship.
- Reduce restrictive zoning and onerous processes.

#### Examples:

**Community Improvement Plan:** Older buildings may also have decayed structural or mechanical systems that must be improved to meet codes and regulations. The Building Structural and Mechanical Upgrade program of the Township of Muskoka Lakes CIP includes construction costs related to structural and mechanical upgrades to existing commercial buildings (directly related to compliance with Building Code, Fire Code, or health regulations). The Muskoka Lakes Attainable or Worker Housing program is also leading edge. Some communities, such as Smooth Rock Falls, have strong incentives in place to encourage new residents.

**Vacant Property Registry:** The Town of Prescott, through its Vacant Building Registry By-Law, charges a monthly fee of \$75 in six-month increments (\$450) for registering or renewal of a vacant building or vacant unit within a building to a maximum of three units per building. Penalties related to failure to register or re-register, post signage, monitor property, allow inspection, comply with an order or direction range from \$75 for first offences to \$775 for subsequent offences. The City of Welland has a Vacant Building Registration by-law and application form in place. The City of North Bay passed a vacant buildings by-law in 2022.

**Update Zoning Bylaw:** Cities like Thunder Bay update their zoning bylaws to include tourism-related uses such as microbreweries in several zones. It is also an opportunity to refine definitions in the zoning bylaw, such as the updates in the Township of Ashield-Colborne-Wawanosh, which includes cideries, distilleries, wineries, and event hosting within its definition of microbreweries.

## Action 1.3:

### Create a focal point to improve the welcome experience for visitors to Dryden

#### Tactics and Steps

- A. **Complete work to open a combined museum and visitor centre in Dryden as recommended in the City of Dryden Facilities Master Plan**
  - Ensure adequate wayfinding signage and parking is available for visitors to the centre.
  - Ensure public washrooms are available in the visitor centre.
  - Promote tourism packages in the visitor centre.
  - Align promotion and installations in the visitor centre with the “New Brand” for the City of Dryden
- B. **Assemble ambassadors to support economic development**
  - Develop a team of local business leaders who will provide testimonials or insights about Dryden.
  - Develop a volunteer ambassador program to assist at the visitor centre and with sports tourism

#### Examples:

**Collaborations:** The Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute ([amii](#)) provides AI (Artificial Intelligence) literacy and skill training for Tourism Jasper. They work with tourism domain experts to map out AI opportunities and support the recruitment and mentorship of technical talent to move projects forward. This also includes a dedicated machine learning intern to work on Tourism Jasper projects throughout the year.

**Volunteer Ambassadors:** The [Town of Gravenhurst](#) has a Community Ambassador Program, where volunteers positively promote the community and its opportunities for business investment. The [Town of Stony Plain](#) equips its local business owners and their employees to act as volunteer ambassadors to respond to visitor inquiries. A volunteer program coordinated by [Tourism London](#) helps individuals to develop their skills, learn more about their favourite music, culture, and sporting events while meeting others who share the same pride and commitment towards the community.





Tourism product development will play an important role in leveraging Dryden’s unique features and opportunities to grow business. A deeper understanding of visitation to the area helps to understand how to differentiate Dryden through marketing and product development initiatives.

## Action 2.1:

### Leverage unique features

Tactics and Steps
<p><b>A. Develop Indigenous tourism experiences.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reach out to Indigenous-related organizations (e.g., Dryden Working Circle, Dryden Native Friendship Centre) and First Nations to encourage mutual understanding and collaboration.</li> <li>▪ Co-create a plan to incorporate more Indigenous tourism business activities within the City of Dryden.</li> <li>▪ Provide financial support for events and business partnerships led by Indigenous tourism operators and organizers.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Expand the tourism potential of spectator sports.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leverage the City’s existing membership in Sport Tourism Canada to develop a sport tourism attraction plan, including a facility inventory and target market analysis.</li> <li>▪ Allocate resources to bid on sporting events and tournaments.</li> <li>▪ Promote use of recreational facilities by out-of-town users.</li> <li>▪ Market the multi-use recreation facility and other sport tourism assets to target clients.</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Increase monetized tourism experiences connected with local waterways.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve wayfinding to water activity access points.</li> <li>▪ Promote opportunities for outdoor charters and guided services to be based in Dryden and provide services/activities on Eagle Lake and Wabigoon Lake.</li> <li>▪ Encourage hospitality businesses adjacent to the lake.</li> <li>▪ Connect the lake with the trail system and the downtown core.</li> </ul>

## Tactics and Steps

### Examples:

**Indigenous Tourism:** The Business Advisory Program of Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) can assist businesses to improve sustainability and resiliency and encourage success within their operations.

**Sport Tourism:** Communities such as Leduc, Alberta, have sport tourism strategies in place to guide their priorities and resources.

**Water-based experiences and infrastructure:** Orillia and Lake Country Tourism established detailed local paddling routes for Lake Simcoe and area. Outfitters could leverage the Maukinak Trail referenced by Ontario Parks with Dryden as an access point. The Township of Muskoka Lakes added a Shoreline Structure Program to its CIP to encourage the development of additional day-use docking and/or boat slips for operators of pleasure craft and boat taxis travelling to the CIP area.

## Action 2.2: Develop the business mix

Tactics and Steps
<p><b>A. Create an investment attraction plan to address the Business Gap Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare a theoretical capacity assessment<sup>26</sup> for Dryden's business gaps.</li> <li>▪ Develop and execute a lead-generation plan for priority targets, along with specific tactics, channels, timelines, messages, and tracking separate from municipal promotions aimed at citizens.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Improve visitor perception of locally owned businesses.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Share visitor perceptions with individual businesses.</li> <li>▪ Provide options and referrals for businesses to enhance their digital presence</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Expand tourism product development.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a closer partnership with Destination Northern Ontario and leverage DNO's Product Teams and Working Groups</li> <li>▪ Encourage participation in tourism training programs (e.g., Tourism Excellence North)</li> <li>▪ Explore short-term accommodation diversification strategy (e.g., range of types: budget to luxury)</li> <li>▪ Encourage outdoor equipment rental operators to increase users of non-operating Provincial Parks)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <p><b>Investment Attraction Plan:</b> The Village of <a href="#">Clinton, B.C.</a>, developed an investment attraction strategy with specific target sectors and actions. Destination Northern Ontario has created an <a href="#">Investment Attraction Strategy</a> that seeks to increase investment in the tourism industry that enhances the visitor experience. The Stratford Economic Enterprise Development Corporation, <a href="#">investStratford</a>, has developed marketing material that highlights its unique value proposition and why businesses should invest in the City. County of Grande Prairie developed an <a href="#">Industrial Investment Attraction Strategy</a> and provides investors with certified sites for investment.</p> <p><b>Improve Visitor Perception:</b> One of Ontario's Regional Tourism Organizations (<a href="#">RTO4</a>) offers a Digital Curriculum for tourism operators to brush up on digital skills and knowledge, such as Enhancing Discoverability Through Google, Responding to Reviews, Social Media for Small Business, and Digital Marketing Trends. <a href="#">RTO9</a> posts its workshops and events as recordings, such as Greenstep: Introduction to Sustainability for Tourism Businesses and How to Create Social Media Video Content.</p> <p><b>Tourism Product Development:</b> <a href="#">Tourism Excellence North</a> (TEN) is a tourism development program for Northern Ontario, providing training solutions designed to strengthen the ability of tourism operations to respond to change, adapt to quality visitor expectations, and develop innovative experiences. In Thunder Bay, the local Rotary Club worked with DNO to fund the <a href="#">Economic and Tourism Impact Study of the Waterfront Trail</a>. In Saskatchewan, the provincial government <a href="#">issued an Request For Proposals</a> to encourage private-sector tourism operators to add features to six provincial parks, after the successful installation of an inflatable water park at Rowan's Ravine.</p>

<sup>26</sup> Theoretical capacity is the theoretical number of enterprises that can be supported by the local population. Some franchises and chains require a community to meet a threshold of population before a location will be considered for that community.

## Action 2.3:

### Identify target markets and personas

Tactics and Steps
<p><b>A. Understand visitor spending and origin.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze visitor spending data to identify origin communities of tourists, length of stay, and spending categories every 5 years, leveraging partnerships to share cost.</li> <li>Identify visitor personas based on driving yield instead of volume (High Value Guests)</li> <li>Prepare marketing tactics for priority target markets and personas</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <p><b>Visitor Spending Analysis:</b> Communities such as <u>Wellington County</u> analyzed visitor spending to understand the origin and value of visitor spending, using data such as point-of-sale transactions. Tourism Sault Ste. Marie utilized visitor spending data to determine the industry's recovery rate compared to pre-pandemic spending. <u>Tourism Sault Ste Marie</u> discovered through visitor spending analysis that its tourism sector has largely recovered to 2019 levels.</p>



## Revive Resilience

Dryden has many small businesses with resilient roots, and one large employer going through a transition. The overall economy -- especially retail businesses and the downtown -- has changed drastically over recent years, and Dryden's downtown needs revitalization support.

### Action 3.1:

#### Improve the effectiveness and integrity of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

##### Tactics and Steps

##### A. Develop guiding principles for how MAT revenues should be utilized.

- Based on research and engagement, the guiding principles may include:
  - Support for placemaking
  - Regenerate tourism infrastructure
  - Fund sport tourism activities
  - Further waterfront development
  - Revitalize downtown.
- Collaborate with the Dryden Chamber of Commerce to agree to the new guiding principles of how MAT revenues are to be used.
- Update marketing of the MAT to reflect changes and set new expectations for local operators.

##### Examples:

**MAT Tax Priorities:** Tourism Sault Ste. Marie has developed two streams within its Tourism Development Fund from municipal accommodation tax revenue. They have positioned Festivals and Events as a strategic priority and focus on aligning funding with strengthening this priority area. Timmins has established guidelines for use of the MAT Tax, as has Huntsville. The City of Victoria allocated funding from its accommodation tax to support the construction of affordable housing for workers.



## Action 3.2:

### Encourage waterfront development and trail infrastructure

#### Tactics and Steps

- A. **Seek funding and approval for a waterfront development plan for Van Horne Landing**
  - Prepare funding applications.
  - Confirm municipal support
- B. **Prepare and implement a waterfront development plan.**
  - Determine the best use of undeveloped waterfront properties.
  - Determine infrastructure requirements for future development.
  - Connect with downtown revitalization planning efforts
- C. **Increase support for tourism-related waterfront projects with MAT funding.**
  - Consider MAT funding for placemaking initiatives.
  - Encourage events at or near Dryden's waterfront to increase activity and use of downtown by residents and visitors
- D. **Continue to improve the Dryden Signature Trail with MAT funding.**

Based on the Trail Systems Feasibility Study, the following may benefit from MAT funding:

  - Transition to consistent trail width and surface material to improve accessibility.
  - Replace existing light fixtures with consistent and contemporary fixtures.
  - Prepare a signage plan that provides design and location guidance for a family of sign types.
  - Prepare an updated interpretative plan for the Signature Trail

#### Examples:

**Waterfront event activation:** Waterfront event's that communities have supported and have become a staple in the community and attracted tourism include the Gimli International Film Festival and Live From the Rock Folk Festival. Quinte West organizes a summer concert series in two of its waterfront areas. North Grenville is focusing on a waterfront access strategy.

## Action 3.3:

### Revitalize Dryden's downtown core

#### Tactics and Steps

**A. Encourage retail development in the downtown.**

- Support fairs and markets taking place in the downtown.
- Work with property owners, entrepreneurs, and community organizations to increase retail and restaurants in the downtown.
- Develop a retail development value proposition for the downtown or draft an initial business concept that acts as a first step for a business to become operational

**B. Support increased visitation to the downtown.**

- Renew and update gateway and wayfinding signage to draw visitors downtown.
- Support pop-up one-time evening events in the downtown.

#### Examples:

**Downtown Revitalization:** Communities such as [Bolton](#) and [Prescott](#), Ontario, are very committed to downtown revitalization initiatives.

## Action 3.4:

### Advocate for expanding housing and workforce

#### Tactics and Steps

**A. Encourage the development of a childcare capacity expansion plan.**

- Continue to endorse the Kenora District Services Board and explore ways the City of Dryden can encourage continued expansion in childcare capacity, as well as before- and after-school programs.
- Capture Dryden's share of new childcare spaces announced for the Kenora District through the KDSB

**B. Prepare a residential development strategy to enable a diverse housing mix.**

- Identify priority areas for infrastructure servicing.
- Prepare a supply chain analysis for the residential construction sector.
- Review municipal application processes to expedite residential development

**C. Collaborate with partners to implement recommendations contained in other studies and strategies.**

- For example, the talent attraction strategy in the Community Capacity Study (i.e., fill the gap of early childhood educators, child and youth workers, and counsellors), and the air service attraction strategy in the Airport Strategic Plan (i.e., engage with scheduled air service providers in Northern Ontario and Manitoba to support air service development at the Airport), etc.

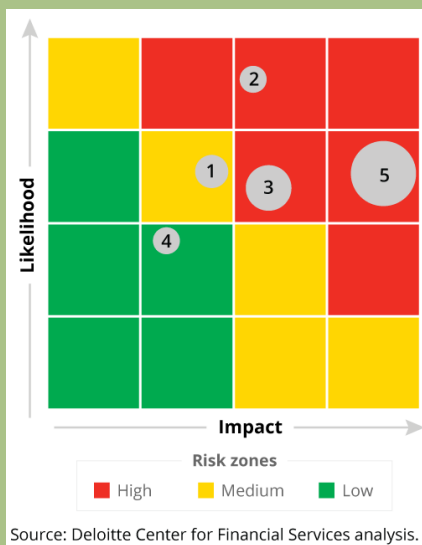
## Action 3.5: Diversify the local economy

### Tactics and Steps

- A. Prepare a risk assessment heat map for vulnerable industry sectors, businesses, and places in Dryden.
  - Chart specific economic development issues and portfolios in terms of likelihood and impact of risk (e.g., economic downturn, loss of a specific employer, inaccurate data, environmental disruption)
  - Prepare monitoring plans for low-risk concerns, and response plans for high-risk concerns.
  - Internal review of the risk assessment heat map annually
- B. Gather and share information about economic diversification programs.
  - Learn from professional associations and regional peer support groups.
  - Stay informed about regional and provincial government economic development and tourism programs.
  - Communicate opportunities with local businesses and community groups

### Examples:

**Risk Assessment Heat Map:** Future Resilience Practices have been identified through research by Deloitte LLP. A practical guide for organizations to thrive – before, during and after adversity – is available at [deloitte.com](https://www.deloitte.com). An example of a risk assessment heat map is in the figure below.



## Action 3.6:

### Prepare for tomorrow's growth

#### Tactics and Steps

- A. Consistently communicate with organizations that may have significant economic development projects in the area.
  - Stay up to date on timelines of projects, economic impact forecasts, workforce requirements, and supply chain planning to ensure that the city can retain potential economic development opportunities (e.g., NWMO, Treasury Metals, Canadian Northern Corridor, etc.).
  - Develop an internal assessment that actively monitors and assesses the potential impact of new projects on the city's infrastructure, services, environment, and housing.
  - Advocate for funding from provincial and federal government to ensure that the City of Dryden is positioned to accommodate future growth opportunities.
- B. Explore options to resolve revenue challenges.
  - Seek Council approval to study various options to boost the City's advocacy efforts, e.g., collaborating with other Northern Ontario municipalities and the Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) and other bodies to lobby senior levels of government on municipal tax reform, supporting the Northern Policy Institute's Regional Districts initiative, exploring the concept of adjusting municipal boundaries, and pursuing innovative sources of municipal revenues.

#### Examples:

**Significant Economic Development Projects:** The Municipality of South Bruce is considering a regional collaborative for economic development, in response to the NWMO opportunity. A recently released report on the Canadian Northern Corridor highlights Dryden's inclusion in this potential opportunity.

**Municipal Advocacy:** Organizations such as the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have tackled advocacy at senior levels of government, including the topic of municipal tax reform. The Northern Policy Institute published a report in 2021 containing 12 recommendations that encourage the creation of Regional Districts. Recent examples of boundary adjustments in Ontario (through approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs), include annexation of land from Central Elgin to St. Thomas, and land from Southwest Oxford to Ingersoll.





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