



Strategic Plan

The Village of South River

2025



STRATEGIC VISION

The Village of South River will be a safe, green, healthy, attractive and economically vibrant community that plans for its future in a financially sustainable and economically responsible manner.

Ginny Ball



MISSION STATEMENT

The Council of the Village Of South River will work collaboratively and supportively with citizens, community groups, visitors, and neighbours from other communities to ensure that the Strategic Vision is achieved.

Don McArthur



VILLAGE OF SOUTH RIVER COUNCIL

Mayor Jim Coleman
Councillor Bill O'Hallarn
Councillor Teri Brandt
Councillor Brenda Scott
Councillor Robert Brooks

Ginny Ball

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Strategic Plan Legend

Responsible Parties

CC	Committee of Council	S	Staff	BP	Business Partners
C	Council	SI	Special Interest	OP	Outside Professionals
JC	Joint Council	O	Organizations	ACED	Almaguin Community Economic Development

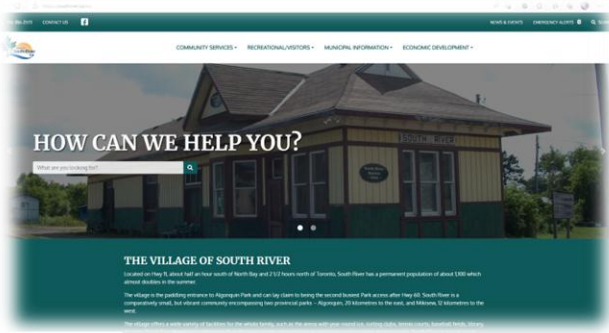
Types of Goals

ST	Short Term	LT	Long Term	OG	On Going
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1 South River Communications

1.1 South River Website

The Village of South River website is the primary medium to keep people informed of events and issues in the Village. This includes the Village Facebook page. Administration will ensure that



effective methods to keep both the Village Website and Facebook are well maintained, relevant and up to date.

This will include the promotion of any Village events, communication that is of interest to the residents, visitors and others.

Strategies will be developed to encourage all local groups to promote any local events on our website. Residents and groups will be encouraged to upload photographs that promote the beauty of our area and celebrate events that

have taken place. A disclaimer for the use of submitted pictures to the Village will be developed. Links to Explore South River, ACED, and Chamber of Commerce will be maintained on this website.

The electronic communications of the Village will be reviewed annually to improve communications wherever possible.

Council, Staff
Short Term, Ongoing

1.2 Village Newsletter

“Ripples”, the Village of South River bi-monthly newsletter, provides residents with reminders, local events, Council updates, and municipal news. This will be maintained and continue to be used to keep people informed as to what is happening in the Village.

Council, Staff
Ongoing

1.3 Village Letter to New Residents

A letter will maintain for all new residents, welcoming them to the Village, directing them to our web site, and containing appropriate links to the Bylaw Officer, and Joint Building committee.

2 Economic Development

2.1 Economic Development Strategy

1. Inclusive and Accessible Community Transit

- Develop a reliable community ride-share system to improve connectivity within South River and the broader Almaguin Highlands.
- Ensure the service is inclusive and affordable for seniors, youth, newcomers, and workers.
- Collaborate with regional partners to integrate transit with business attraction and tourism.
- Leverage the return of the Ontario Northlander passenger rail in 2026 by positioning South River as a connected regional hub.

2. Green Energy Transition

- Invest in solar energy projects on municipally owned buildings to mitigate hydro costs and reduce long-term municipal expenditures.
- Explore grant opportunities (provincial, federal, utility rebates) for renewable energy projects.
- Prioritize converting municipal properties (arena roof, train station, and other facilities) into solar-powered assets.
- Align with the South River Power Generation Station Corporation to expand local renewable energy production.

3. Adaptive Reuse of Municipal Properties

- Create alternative business plans for the village-owned multipurpose building (former brewery) and the renovated Train Station.
 - Options include leasing to private enterprises, shared co-working or retail spaces, or municipally operated ventures (e.g., tourism office, cultural hub, maple syrup or craft production).
- Market these assets as opportunities for entrepreneurs, contributing to job creation and new revenue streams.

4. Experiential Tourism and Recreation

- Position Tom Thomson Park as an experiential tourism hub, focusing on stargazing events, dark-sky activities, and cultural programming.
- Work with Explorer's Edge and local businesses to promote South River as a gateway destination for outdoor and cultural experiences.

5. Partnerships, Collaboration, and Outreach

- Strengthen collaboration with regional organizations, local businesses, and community groups to advance sustainable development.
- Build strong networks with tourism, cultural, and economic stakeholders to align strategies and share resources.
- Launch community outreach initiatives that highlight South River as a welcoming place to visit, live, and do business.

- Produce promotional videos (tourism, events, lifestyle) and distribute them widely through Facebook, YouTube, and other digital channels to increase awareness and attract visitors.
- Work with settlement organizations and community partners to help retain newcomers and foreign skilled workers in the area, ensuring they are supported and integrated into the local workforce and community life.

2.2 Economic Development Officer

The Village of South River recognizes that strong, sustainable economic development requires dedicated leadership. To achieve this, the Village intends to establish a dedicated Economic Development Officer (EDO) position responsible for implementing and monitoring the economic development strategy. The Village will actively seek funding opportunities to support and retain this position, ensuring continuity in advancing projects and partnerships.

2.3 Almaguin Community Economic Development (A.C.E.D)

The Almaguin Community Economic Development delivers economic development services throughout the Almaguin Highlands providing:
Business and entrepreneurial support by connecting businesses with support and funding opportunities, professional network development, marketing and promotion of tourism including local events, regional economic planning, research and analysis, and offering support to the municipalities.



While this organization has been successful in obtaining government grants to assist with funding, this is not annualized funding. The Village has supported increased financing in principal and will have to ensure that funds are available if this is needed.

Joint Council, Council, Staff, Special Interest
Short Term, Long Term, On-Going

2.4 Happy Landing Commercial Court

The Village of South River has been successful over the last 10 years with the development of the former site of the Happy Landing. South River Brewery, NAISA, and South River Pharmacy



have or had businesses on the property. As well the Village has worked with a local planner and surveyor to lay out suitable property parcels and commercial streets within the Happy Landing Commercial Court. The Village will actively promote the development of the property by seeking business plans from interested parties, which will contribute to the development of this community. As we have ACED to assist us, we will endeavor to keep them apprised of the commercial properties that we have available for sale.

Council, Staff, Business Partners
Short Term, Long Term, On-Going

2.3 New Places to Live

South River will need additional places for people to live for new staff to support the expansion of our local businesses. The Village needs to look at local properties that are presently owned by the Village and develop a plan to make those properties available for sale. Some are not presently accessible, so sale of this land will be a long-term project.

The Village will work with local land owners to encourage development of new building lots, rental units, and new apartments in the Village. They will also make people aware that granny flats are now legal and encourage their use where appropriate. The Village will work with property owners to encourage development on sites that are presently vacant by assisting with appropriate zoning changes as required.

There are properties outside the Village that could be developed into housing units for people wishing to move to the area. (e.g. former high school). The Village will investigate how we can work with provincial and federal bodies, local municipalities and business partners to assist in the development of these properties.

The Village will investigate ways to increase the footprint of the Village so that more housing can be made available, especially affordable and low-income housing.



Council, Staff, Business Partners, Special Interest, Organizations
Short Term, Long Term, On-Going

3 **Community Improvement**

3.1 **Community Improvement Plan**

Developing community pride and presenting tidy, well cared for properties and park lands will encourage new families to want to move into our Village and provide a pleasing backdrop to visitors visiting or vacationing in the area.

We have developed a CIP incentive plan for businesses that expand based on increases as determined by MPAC. This has assisted some local businesses in growing. The Village will review that use of the CIP funding annually and determine if it is meeting the needs of the businesses that want to do business in the Village.

The Village will also investigate supports or assistance that could be made available to homes that do not meet the property standards.



Council, Staff
Short Term, Long Term

3.2 **Community Gardens**



Council of the Village of South River has created and improved community garden plots on land across the tracks from the train station, providing vegetable planters boxes for interested residents to grow some food. The gardens have been improved annually at Village expense and through the use of volunteers. Demand for the use of the gardens continues to increase. At present, the primary challenges being addressed relate to water access and incidents of theft.

Council, Staff, Special Interest
Short Term, On-Going

3.3 Beautification

Council will investigate funding to assist with the greening of municipal properties in communities along its rail lines. The Village will also explore other funding sources to purchase climate appropriate shrubs, trees and fruit trees to increase the “curb appeal” of the village. A dedicated gardener has been hired to oversee the care and enhance gardens throughout the community. Council will continue to fund the planter boxes, municipal flower beds and ensure attractive landscaping at Municipal buildings and along our municipal streets.



Council, Staff, Special Interest, Organizations
On-Going

3.4 Ontario Northland Passenger Rail Service

The planned return of the Ontario Northland Passenger Rail Service in 2026 with a scheduled stop in South River represents a significant regional economic opportunity. The Village will seek to maximize these opportunities for personal, business, commuter, and tourism travel and associated spin-off businesses.



Train Station

The South River Train Station has been fully restored and has now been offered for lease through a Request for Expressions of Interest (REI). While the Ontario Northland passenger rail service is scheduled to return in 2026, the station building itself will not be used for passenger operations. Instead, the Village is focusing on securing tenants whose activities complement tourism, business development, and community growth. The REI invites proposals for uses such as a café or food service, artisan or retail outlet, or professional office space, with the goal of creating a vibrant and sustainable hub that enhances the local economy. By marketing the site to entrepreneurs and organizations that align with South River’s tourism and business strategies, the Village will ensure the Train Station remains an active and revenue-generating asset while supporting long-term economic development.

Council, Committee of Council, Special Interest
Short Term, Long Term, On-Going

4 South River Culture and Recreation

4.1 Culture and Recreation Committee

The Village will attempt to establish a culture and recreation committee.

Council, Staff, Joint Council, Special Interest
Short Term

4.2 Events Calendar

An events calendar will be established and maintained on the SR Website and included in Ripples

Staff
Short Term, On-Going

4.3 Soccer

The Village of South River will continue to run the summer soccer program.

Staff, Committee of Council
Short Term, On-Going

4.4 Beach Volley Ball

The Village will continue to maintain the beach volleyball courts for use by interested groups

Staff, Committee of Council
On-Going





4.5 Pickle ball and Tennis

The Village and staff will continue to maintain the tennis courts and facilitate their use for both tennis and pickle ball

Staff, Committee of Council, Organizations
Long Term

4.6 Volunteers

The Village will work to encourage the use of volunteers where ever possible. This will include a program to document needs, recruitment, training and policies for volunteer use.

Staff, Council
Short Term, On-Going

4.7 Skateboard Park

The Village will maintain the existing skate board park and pump track and investigate possible expansion as use determines.

Staff, Council, Business Partners
On-Going



4.8 Disc Golf

The Village will continue to maintain the present disc golf facilities and discuss future needs with the Disc Golf Association.

Staff, Special Interest
On-Going



4.9 Youth
Curling

The Village will work with the SR Curling Club to determine if we can assist the club with expanding the club’s ability to sponsor curling for our young people.

Short Term
Council

4.10 Seniors Activities

The Village will continue to support the South River Friendly Circle Seniors Centre.

Council, Staff, Special Interest
On-Going



4.11 Major Events

The Village will work with interested organizations to establish and encourage major events in the Village. Though a wide variety of events may be considered such as Arts, Music or Cultural festivals, the Village would like to host annual events that showcase the talent in the area, bring in visitors and provide entertainment events for the public. An intern has been appointed to lead and coordinate these activities, taking responsibility for planning and delivering events in partnership with community groups and stakeholders.



Council, Staff, Special Interest, Committee of Council, Special Interest, Joint Council, Organizations

Long Term



4.12 Tom Thomson Park

Tom Thomson Park continues to be promoted as a multi-use recreational and cultural space, offering amenities such as the boat launch, disc golf course, picnic area, sound stage, and year-round access for residents and visitors. The concrete platform has been completed and is actively used for events, including disc golf tournaments, the annual Car Show, Canada Day celebrations, and the recently launched Star Party.

Building on these successes, the Village is pursuing designation of Tom Thomson Park as an Urban Dark Sky Park, creating opportunities for astronomy-based programming and experiential tourism. By developing astro-tourism and enhancing event offerings on the park grounds, the Village is positioning Tom Thomson Park as both a community gathering place and a regional destination.

Council, Staff, Special Interest, Outside Professionals

On-Going

4.13 Things for Kids

Council wants to encourage existing groups; figure skating, minor hockey, gazelles, and others, to allow the creation of more things for children to do in the village. The Village will also maintain and investigate new playground equipment.

Council, Staff, Special Interest

On-Going

4.14 Mini Golf

Look into the Village building a mini golf course possibly on vacant land behind 309 HWY 124.

Council, Special Interest
Short Term, On-Going



4.15 Summer Camp

Work with the Hockey Opportunity Camp to continue the summer camp for local children.

Council, Staff, Business Partners
Short Term



4.16 Creating Active and Inspired People

South River has a limited tax base, but we have Tom Thomson Park and other spaces that could be used by youth and seniors for outdoor recreation, increasing people's physical fitness and resilience. Establish a Walking Trails Master Plan, that would link the downtown to Tom Thomson Park and other walking paths throughout the Village. Determine the suitability of all trails including the new one from Ottawa Ave to Tom Thomson Park. The Village will investigate the hiring of a sports and recreation trainer (possibly kayaking, disc golf, or yoga).

Council, Staff, Outside Professionals
Long Term



5 South River Machar Community Centre

The Village of South River will create a capital and operating plan for the community center that builds reserves, maximizes the use of grants, and creates equitable funding with our partners, in order to maintain the high level of service that we currently offer to our residents and region.

Council, Staff, Special Interest, Business Partners
Short Term, Long Term



6 South River Public Works

6.1 Staff Retention

Council is committed to ensuring that staff are available as needed and that we maintain a pool of trained qualified staff to perform the duties required of the public works department.

Council, Staff, Committee of Council
Short Term, On-Going

6.2 Water

The Village of South River's goal is to provide clear, high quality water to all residents. South River has completed two phases of water main and road replacement ahead of schedule. The Water Plant requires upgrading and Council supports applying for grants for capital upgrades of the plant.

Council, Staff, Committee of Council, Business Partners
Short Term, Long Term, On-Going



6.3 Sidewalks

Two recent phases of expansion of the sidewalk network are complete. The next priority is ensuring good maintenance of existing sidewalks to ensure we are promoting safe, healthy living for the residents of and visitors to the Village.

Council, Staff, Committee of Council
On-Going

6.4 Streets and Roads

The Village will take every opportunity as funds become available to resurface and replace roads. The priorities for upgrading the east end of Ottawa Ave and Howard St.

Council, Staff, Committee of Council, Business Partners
Long Term





6.5 Waste and Recycling

The Village will continue to work with our present business partner regarding pick up of garbage and recycling. As the laws and regulations change about recycling, the Village will work to ensure affordable recycling plans. The Village will continue to work the City of North Bay for the disposal of hazardous waste and seek to better promote the year-round North Bay access.

Council, Staff, Business Partners

On-Going



6.6 Snow Removal

Village will maintain the present standards, review annually, and make appropriate adjustments

Council, Staff, and Committee of Council

On-Going

6.7 Winter Walkways

The Village will plow a winter walkway to allow residents to walk safely to the grocery stores on Highway 124, this walkway will be kept plowed by public works. The winter walkway at Tom Thomson Park will be maintained.



Council, Staff, Committee of Council

Short Term

6.8 Compost

Public works will maintain the new system to collect and compost organic waste at the public work yard to divert it from our garbage collection system. The development of organic compost is a possibility.



Committee of Council
Short Term

7 South River Machar Medical Centre

Continue to support the shared service partnership and expand services with the Powassan Family Health Team where possible.

Staff, Council
Long Term



8 South River Machar Union Library

Continue our shared co-funding with our partners

Staff, Council
Long Term



9 **South River Power Generation Station Corporation**

Meet annually with the board of SRPGC and look at opportunities for expansion of our production of green energy.



10 **South River Machar Fire Department**

10.1 **Joint Fire Committee**

Council will continue collaborating with our Shared Services partners to ensure the fire department has the necessary resources and funding to meet the community's needs. This will be achieved by maintaining a community risk assessment, ensuring fire protection decisions align with the community's requirements.

Council, Staff, Joint Council
Short Term

10.2 **Training and Examination Issues**

As mandatory certification requirements continue to expand, the demands on firefighters to maintain the current level of service have increased. The Village remains committed to supporting firefighters by seeking cost-effective solutions that help them meet these requirements while respecting their time and dedication.

Council, Staff, Joint Council
On-Going



10.3 Fire Hall

To meet the current and future needs of the fire department, Council will continue exploring options to upgrade the existing facility or relocate the fire hall to a new site in the most cost-effective manner.



Council, Staff, Joint Council
Long Term

10.4 Hydrant Flow Tests

Recent upgrades to the village's water mains have significantly improved flow rates for firefighting. Currently, all hydrants provide adequate fire flow for single-family homes, and many meet the requirements for commercial properties. The Village remains committed to further seek opportunities to enhance flow rates for larger and industrial buildings while maintaining hydrants and conducting regular flow tests within the municipal water distribution system.

Staff and Committee of Council
Short Term

10.5 Emergency Planning

The Village is committed to preparing for large-scale, complex emergencies that could significantly impact public health, community well-being, and the environment. Council recognizes that ensuring sufficient resources for such events requires strong partnerships with neighboring municipalities. The Village will continue to build on the successes of the joint emergency management program to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

Staff, Committee of Council, Business Partners and CEMC Partners
Short Term

11 South River Cemetery

11.1 Alternatives

The South River Cemetery has a limited number of plots available for sale. New options need to be explored including land acquisition, alternate forms of burial, such as cremation, memorial walls etc. The mortuary is slated for demolition.



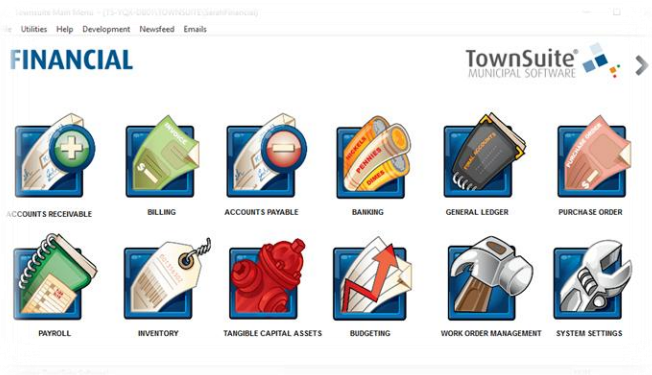
Staff, Council, Business Partners, Special Interest
Short Term

12 General Administration

12.1 Asset Management Plan

An asset management plan that meets present legislation has been developed to manage our assets into the future. The Village is committed to an annual review of the plan and continue to look to the future needs with 5 and 20 year plans.

Staff, Council
Short Term, On-Going



12.2 Computer System Updates

The Village has hired Townsuite to update our computer systems. Council and staff are committed to completing this update in the near future.

Staff, Council, Business Partners
Short Term

12.3 Electronic Meetings

Council will continue to make meetings available via the internet.

Staff, Council
Long Term

12.4 Updated Lighting in Village Properties

Most lights in our building have been converted to energy efficient LED systems. The Village will continue to look at energy savings with LED or other energy efficient alternatives wherever possible.

Staff, Council, Business Partners
Short Term

12.5 Art Collection Policies

The Village has acquired artwork of various sorts over the years. Some are displayed in the Council Chambers and some outdoors on Village property. An inventory needs to be completed. As well policies need to be developed as to the acquisition of artwork in the future, maintenance of the existing collection, and how the Village will dispose of any art that is no longer wanted.

Staff, Council
Short Term





12.6 Green Energy and Environmental Stewardship

Council is committed to embedding environmental responsibility into municipal operations by improving energy efficiency in buildings, transitioning the vehicle fleet to hybrid and electric options as replacements are needed, supporting active transportation through better walking and cycling routes, and expanding carpooling infrastructure to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use. These measures will reduce the Village's environmental footprint and demonstrate leadership in sustainable day-to-

day operation.

Staff, Council
Long Term

