



MERRICKVILLE-WOLFORD
Jewel of the Rideau

Public Meeting
Municipal Council Chambers
317 Brock St. W.
Merrickville, Ontario

March 18, 2024
7:00 pm. to 9:00 pm.

Purpose: Entertain engagement with the Public to determine where their priorities for Merrickville-Wolford may lie, with the focus spanning over the next decade.

Facilitator: Nigel Bellchamber

Structure: A combination of presentation and group discussions focused on broad questions related to the environmental scan and a SWOT analysis undertaken by Council and Staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN	S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS
Demographics	Strengths
Social	Weaknesses
Technological	Opportunities
Political	Threats
Economic	
Physical Environment	

Did they get it right?

Social Environment

- Older residents have different social network needs and expectations than younger residents.
- Recreational needs and delivery mechanisms are changing.
- Municipal services such as local and transportation differ with age.
- Accessibility is a major issue.
- Climate change, regardless of source, is now widely acknowledged as a social issue as well as environmental.
- Reduction in civil public discourse
- Disparity between high- and low-income earners is growing.

Political Environment

- Municipalities are constrained by provincial policies and decision making, including revenues.
- Senior governments have yet to acknowledge municipal financing “gap.”
- Province continues to download on municipalities by “stealth.”
- World governments seem to be moving right of centre.

Technological Environment

- Electrification is rapidly increasing.
- Rural broadband continues to be a problem.
- Change is rapid and needs to be welcomed and embraced in service delivery.
- Tech change will affect how our farm community functions.
- Business is continually improving its economic outreach.
- Artificial Intelligence applications are increasing exponentially.

Economic Environment

- Housing prices continue to be high for younger families.
- Municipalities maintain 65% of service producing government assets on 10% of the total government revenue.
- Agriculture will be affected by national and international forces.
- Parks Canada spending.

Physical Environment

- Climate change is here.
- Stormwater events will be higher and more frequent.
- Freeze/Thaw events will be more frequent.
- M-W includes within it a UNESCO world class Heritage Designation

The above are by no means all of the factors that could be considered but were considered important ones.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

- UNESCO designation for the Canal
- Significant recent housing growth within both high density urban and rural portions of the municipality
- Access to skilled community volunteers
- The built fabric of the original Village is extremely attractive to tourism.

Weaknesses

- Village is approaching limits on water and sewer services.
- Lack of long-range planning for recreation services
- Lack of engineering-based decision making for road investments
- Accessibility to all services in the former village area

Opportunities

- Schools are an attraction for young families.
- Baby boom is not over yet.
- Millennials can be targeted.

Threats

- Unknown result for agriculture and other businesses in Canada from US Election
- Lack of services/opportunities strategically directed to people we wish to attract.
- Parks Canada Funding changes
- Provincial change often overlooks impact on smaller municipalities.

Next Steps:

Compilation of input for presentation to Council.

Council selects 3-6 key areas of focus, including measurable goals.