

Strategic Vision Statement for the Pontiac Regional County Municipality

June 2021



Note

This document was written using the epicene writing in order to be inclusive and reflect all gender identities.

Important Dates

Adoption of the draft Strategic Vision Statement: February 19, 2020

Tabling of the public consultation report: June 16, 2021

Final adoption of the Strategic Vision Statement: June 16, 2021

Coming into force of the Strategic Vision Statement: June 16, 2021

Table of Contents

Word from the Warden and Chair of the Advisory Committee

Introduction

1. Quality Living Environments and Local Services
2. Sustainable Mobility
3. Cultural Land Planning
4. Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Species at Risk
5. Safety and Resilience
6. Agriculture and Agritourism
7. Tourism Development
8. Entrepreneurship and Innovation
9. Forest and Wood Processing

Strategic Vision Statement

Conclusion

Word from the Warden and Chair of the Advisory Committee

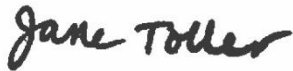
Dear Pontiacers,

The Strategic Vision Statement is an opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of the Pontiac and to bring more employment and new people, as well as improve the quality of life for everyone.

The Pontiac is unique in various ways, well situated across the river from Ontario, and rich in resources (fertile soil, beautiful landscapes, dynamic entrepreneurship, minerals, and forest). We need to be in the driver's seat in order to stand out and be successful. We can do that by seizing opportunities and developing niche markets.

I am excited and optimistic about the future of our region. This Strategic Vision Statement will lay the groundwork to realize our potential.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Toller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jane Toller

Introduction

The strategic vision of a territory represents a unique opportunity for a community to express its aspirations for its future. This is what is proposed in the Pontiac Strategic Vision Statement, which will lead to two other steps regarding the future of the Pontiac, namely the new Strategic Development Vision 2020-2030 and the revision of the Land Use and Development Plan 2020-2040.

For each of the nine themes identified, the Strategic Vision Statement provides answers to the following four questions:

- Where Are We Now?
- Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?
- Where Do We Want to Go?
- How Do We Achieve What We Want?

The final statement, for its part, includes vision elements for each of the nine themes in order to make it a unifying and promising vision for the Pontiac. This statement will guide the priorities, actions, and projects of the Pontiac in order to achieve the desired vision for the future.

1. Quality Living Environments and Local Services

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ An essentially rural, village and natural territory
- ❖ A large majority of dwellings are made up of isolated residential dwellings
- ❖ Low diversity of dwellings other than isolated residential
- ❖ A large majority of households own their homes
- ❖ Low availability of rental housing
- ❖ A lack of quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of households
- ❖ Difficulty of access to services in English from the Quebec Government for English-speaking people
- ❖ Difficulty of access to services in French at some Pontiac businesses for French-speaking people
- ❖ A fragility of existing local services and few new services
- ❖ A lack of diversification of recreation and sports offer
- ❖ A lack of diversification of the cultural offer
- ❖ A lack of diversification of community resources offer
- ❖ Major facilities to be renovated (schools, arenas) or built (indoor swimming pool)
- ❖ A significant proportion of restaurants consisting of snack shacks, few restaurants offering a healthy menu, and trips mainly made using motorized vehicles, which are opposite to a healthy lifestyle
- ❖ Overall health of individuals (mental health, physical health, and healthy lifestyle) is lower on average than in other territories

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will see a decrease in its population, especially young people, and will welcome a population that is not very diversified, elderly, and includes few new people who have

settled here. There will be a loss of local services, school closures, a lack of post-secondary education facilities, closures of health care facilities (including the Shawville Hospital), and closures of places of worship. The Pontiac will experience a loss of identity and community spirit, a lack of people involved in volunteering, a lack of opportunities for the youth, aging infrastructure, a lack of dynamic villages or places to socialize, only negative impacts of cottage country, a significant gap between the wealthiest and the poorest, social (social exclusion), economic (low household incomes) and environmental (lack of exposure to nature and natural areas) poverty, as well as poor overall health of individuals (mental health, physical health, and healthy lifestyle).

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will see a stabilization of its population, while welcoming new people to the territory. Local services will be maintained and new businesses will open. Schools and healthcare facilities (including the Shawville hospital) will be maintained. College level programmes will be offered in the Pontiac, in both English and French. The Pontiac will keep its identities and community spirit, offer more opportunities for the youth, upgrade its infrastructure, offer dynamic villages and places to socialize, achieve a balance in cottage development, reduce social (social exclusion), economic (low household income), and environmental (lack of exposure to nature and natural areas) poverty, and improve the overall health of individuals (mental health, physical health, and healthy lifestyle).

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By being welcoming, open, and inclusive towards diversity and new people moving to the territory
- ❖ By creating a territorial marketing campaign
- ❖ By creating more opportunities for the youth

- ❖ By beautifying the villages
- ❖ By revitalizing the main streets
- ❖ By attracting new local businesses and services and supporting existing ones
- ❖ By offering and developing quality, affordable housing that meets the needs of households
- ❖ By creating places of socialization, including for the youth
- ❖ By developing recreation and sports offer
- ❖ By developing the cultural offer
- ❖ By developing community resources offer
- ❖ By promoting the overall health of individuals (mental health, physical health, and healthy lifestyle)

2. Sustainable Mobility

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ A significant proportion of people working in Ottawa, Pembroke, Renfrew County, and Gatineau, and travelling there mainly by car
- ❖ A minimal and inflexible public transport offer (Transcollines intercity bus)
- ❖ A transportation service upon request offered under some conditions (TransporAction)
- ❖ The existence of some taxis
- ❖ A loss of rail transport service
- ❖ Active mobility within villages
- ❖ A pedestrian-cyclist infrastructure that is part of Route verte No. 1 (PPJ Cyclopark)
- ❖ Emerging planning of active mobility infrastructure on the territory

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will not have a public transit system nor a rail transportation system (passenger and freight). People will have few transport options available, active mobility infrastructure will be underdeveloped, and the passenger car will continue to dominate the modal share of transport and cause many social (physical inactivity, stress, reduction in quality time, road accidents, serious injuries, deaths), economic (operating costs, insurance, congestion, lost time and productivity, road repair costs) and environmental (greenhouse gas emissions, natural resources required for vehicle production) costs. Regarding the PPJ Cyclopark (Route verte No. 1), it will have suffered from a lack of investment.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will have a public transit system and will have analyzed the possibility of having a rail transportation system (passenger and freight). People will have more transportation options available (public transit, adapted transport, taxi, access to park and ride), active mobility infrastructure will be more developed, and the passenger car will occupy a smaller modal share of transport. Investment will have been made in the PPJ Cyclopark (Route verte No. 1). Furthermore, universal accessibility will be considered in future mobility and active mobility infrastructure projects.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By establishing a public transit system
- ❖ By developing active mobility infrastructure
- ❖ By investing in the PPJ Cyclopark (Route verte No. 1)

3. Cultural Land Planning

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ Quality landscapes and a diversified cultural heritage
- ❖ Weak protection and enhancement of landscapes, cultural heritage, cemeteries, and places of worship

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac's cultural heritage will crumble and become more threatened. Although there are some writings on the subject, the memory and history of the places are largely transmitted through oral tradition. Without a concern for heritage, some buildings, places, objects or traditions will be demolished or lost, particularly because of a lack of awareness on this issue. In addition, some natural and cultural landscapes will be altered due to a lack of protection and enhancement. In the end, it is the cultural identities of the Pontiac that will disappear.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will see its cultural heritage protected and enhanced. Buildings, places, objects, or traditions will be the object of special attention thanks to a better awareness on this issue. Natural and cultural landscapes will also be protected and enhanced. In the end, it is the Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural identities of the Pontiac that will be celebrated.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By putting forward traditional Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis knowledge
- ❖ By wishing that the Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis Nations may achieve, if not already done, a community mapping of traditional place names
- ❖ By enhancing the inventories of the Pontiac's built heritage
- ❖ By protecting and enhancing the Pontiac's cultural heritage (buildings, places, objects, traditions, natural and cultural landscapes) in partnership between the local community and the Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis Nations

4. Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Species at Risk

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ A ubiquitous natural environment
- ❖ Weak protection and enhancement of wetlands, bodies of water and natural areas
- ❖ A rich biodiversity on the territory
- ❖ Weak protection of species at risk
- ❖ Weak integration of climate change into land and urban planning documents
- ❖ An Action Plan aiming to Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in effect on the territory (2015)

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will be affected by the negative effects of climate change. There will be a loss of biodiversity and species at risk due to the reduction or alteration of wildlife and plant habitats. Wetlands and natural areas will be partially altered.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will have contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It will also have seized some opportunities related to climate change. In addition, it will have protected biodiversity, species at risk, wildlife and plant habitats, as well as wetlands and natural areas.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- ❖ By adapting to climate change
- ❖ By protecting biodiversity, species at risk, habitats, as well as wetlands and natural areas

5. Safety and Resilience

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ An approximate floodplain mapping and normative framework with a complexity of application for municipalities and understanding for people
- ❖ A map of areas potentially exposed to landslides that is slow to be updated and a transitional normative framework
- ❖ Variable protection of drinking water sources, both surface and groundwater
- ❖ Mineral exploration activities on the territory and a temporary suspension of the granting of new claims in some areas
- ❖ A Waste Management Plan in effect on the territory (2016)
- ❖ Challenges in the collection and treatment of waste (no door-to-door collection for some municipalities, use of plastic bags for some recycling collections, no compost collection, no three-way collection in public spaces)
- ❖ High costs associated with the transportation of waste

- ❖ A Fire Safety Cover Plan in effect on the territory (2017)

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will continue to be significantly affected by flooding. Environmental contamination, watercourse pollution, contamination of surface and groundwater drinking water sources, shoreline erosion, invasive species, and wildfires will also affect the Pontiac. In the absence of succession, the territories to be covered by emergency services will be very large and civil protection will face challenges.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will have put forward measures to reduce the vulnerability of communities to natural and human-induced constraints. Awareness and some actions will make it possible to reduce environmental contamination, watercourse pollution, contamination of surface and groundwater drinking water sources, shoreline erosion, invasive species, and wildfires. Furthermore, emergency services will have adapted to the lack of succession in this field.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By putting forward measures to reduce the vulnerability of communities to natural and human-induced constraints
- ❖ By considering the implementation of an energy-from-waste facility for the Greater Canada's Capital Region

6. Agriculture and Agritourism

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ Agriculture constitutes the main field of employment on the territory

- ❖ Undeveloped agri-food and agritourism sectors
- ❖ Emerging sectors, such as hops, vineyards and microbreweries
- ❖ Difficulty for alternative agriculture and small productions to obtain the necessary authorizations from the Quebec Farmland Regulation Board (CPTAQ)
- ❖ A hop solidarity cooperative offering a high-quality granulation service (Pontiac Hop Solidarity Cooperative)
- ❖ A slaughterhouse offering greater proximity for some livestock farms (Pontiac Meats)
- ❖ An Agricultural Zone Development Plan in effect on the territory (2014)
- ❖ A support service for young farmers (Land Bank, now L'Arterre)
- ❖ Existing farmers' markets during the summer period
- ❖ An application for collective scope in effect on the territory allowing residential construction in some sectors of the agricultural zone

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the number of Pontiac farms will decrease. There will be little farm succession and farm transfers (related and unrelated) will be rare. Alternative agriculture will not have succeeded in establishing itself. There will be a significant relocation of farmland owners, reducing local farm governance. Cash crops and monocultures will occupy a significant proportion of agricultural activities. Seedlings from large companies will continue to be widely used, reducing crop genetic diversity. Pesticides will still be used extensively, affecting the health of ecosystems. The agricultural sector will be significantly affected by climate change. Agri-food processing, agritourism, and gourmet tourism will only be marginal activities, despite an increase in public interest for these types of activities. Local purchasing and short food circuits will be underdeveloped.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will benefit from a dynamic new generation of farmers. Alternative agriculture will have an important place in the community, as well as traditional agriculture. Some pesticides will be banned in an effort to improve the health of ecosystems. The agricultural sector will have adapted to climate change. Agri-food processing, agritourism, and gourmet tourism will occupy an important place thanks to an increase in public interest for these types of activities. Local purchasing and short food circuits will be further developed, including through an online purchasing platform and the various farmers' markets.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By training and supporting current farmers and the new generation of farmers
- ❖ By encouraging agri-food processing, agritourism, and gourmet tourism
- ❖ By favouring local purchasing and short food circuits

7. Tourism Development

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ Limited tourism development compared to its great potential
- ❖ Limited tourism accommodation capacity, both in terms of available accommodation units and types of accommodation offered
- ❖ A tourism route present on the territory since 2017 (Waterways)
- ❖ No signage of the tourism route in the western portion of the territory
- ❖ Opportunities for access to water in several places promoting water sports and water tourism

- ❖ A significant presence of cottagers, mainly during the summer season
- ❖ Many opportunities to practice hunting and fishing as well as motorized recreation (summer ATVs, winter ATVs, snowmobiles)
- ❖ A limited range of outdoor activities (road biking, mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowshoeing)
- ❖ A solidarity cooperative aimed at developing the outdoor offer on the territory (L'Hélianthe Outdoor Solidarity Cooperative)

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will not have taken the necessary actions to develop the tourism attraction offer, develop the tourism accommodation offer (diversity and number), develop a culture of hospitality, and develop tourism marketing targeting major urban centres. In terms of outdoor activities, recreational opportunities in this sector of activity will continue to be limited, existing trails will have suffered from a lack of investment, and few new trails will have been developed.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will have developed its tourism attraction offer, its tourism accommodation offer (diversity and number), a culture of hospitality, and tourism marketing targeting major urban centres. In terms of outdoor activities, recreational opportunities in this sector of activity will be greater, investment will have been made in existing trails, and new trails will have been developed.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By developing the tourism attraction offer
- ❖ By developing the tourism accommodation offer (diversity and number)

- ❖ By developing a culture of hospitality
- ❖ By developing tourism marketing targeting major urban centres
- ❖ By investing in current trails and by developing new trails for outdoor activities

8. Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ A lack of quality jobs on the territory
- ❖ A lack of reliability, coverage, and performance of Internet, landline phone, cellphone, and hydroelectric connections
- ❖ Entrepreneurial diversity contributing to community vitality and job creation
- ❖ One-third of business owners are considering leaving management by 2022, according to a 2017 study by Zins Beuchesne & Associates
- ❖ A challenge to attract new businesses
- ❖ A challenge to attract and retain the workforce
- ❖ A presence of a few cooperatives on the territory (Caisse Desjardins des Rivières de Pontiac (financial institution), Pontiac Hop Solidarity Cooperative, L'Hélianthe Outdoor Solidarity Cooperative)
- ❖ Vulnerability of communities to large business closures involving the loss of many jobs

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will still face a critical need for the creation of new quality jobs, just as businesses and organizations will face major challenges in recruiting and retaining the workforce. The lack of people willing to invest, the lack of innovation, the lack of diversification, the lack of entrepreneurial succession, the artificial intelligence and automation of jobs in some businesses, the lack

of workforce training, the closure of businesses, the challenges faced by local businesses in the face of consumer culture to go shop in major centres, and the problems and reliability of Internet, landline phone, cellphone, and hydroelectric connections will be part of the Pontiac reality.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will contribute to the creation of new quality jobs. Businesses and organizations will be innovative, diversified, and creative in responding to major recruitment and retention challenges. The Pontiac will benefit from a dynamic new generation of entrepreneurs. Collaborative economy and social economy will have developed. Local purchasing will favour local businesses. The reliability, coverage, and performance of Internet, landline phone, cellphone, and hydroelectric connections will be significantly improved.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By promoting the creation of quality jobs
- ❖ By offering mentorship and by supporting current entrepreneurs and the new generation of entrepreneurs
- ❖ By encouraging entrepreneurial culture among the youth
- ❖ By showing innovation, diversification, and creativity
- ❖ By promoting the economic potential of the territory
- ❖ By improving the reliability, coverage, and performance of Internet, landline phone, cellphone, and hydroelectric connections

9. Forest and Wood Processing

Where Are We Now?

- ❖ The forest is a living environment for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and it is an integral part of someone's culture

- ❖ The forest contributes to someone's health and wellbeing, and many related opportunities remain untapped
- ❖ Most of the forestry companies have closed their doors
- ❖ A lack of entrepreneurship and investment in the forest sector
- ❖ A lack of new forest workers
- ❖ A lack of local forest products processing plants
- ❖ Aging and deficient forestry equipment
- ❖ Projects to reopen local plants currently under analysis
- ❖ An organization created and aimed at reviving the territory's forest industry (Fibre Pontiac)

Where Are We Going if Nothing is Done?

If current trends continue, by 2040, the Pontiac will not have been able to develop more varied uses of the forest and different from logging, and will not have been able to focus on wood processing projects.

Where Do We Want to Go?

By 2040, the Pontiac will be involved in forest management, will have developed more varied uses of the forest, will be able to count on a qualified workforce and renewed, state-of-the-art forestry equipment, and will have relied on new products for wood processing projects using state-of-the-art equipment.

How Do We Achieve What We Want?

- ❖ By developing a variety of forest uses
- ❖ By focusing on new products and markets for all forest uses, including for the processing of pulpwood (pulp and biomass) and lumber using white pine and red pine
- ❖ By upgrading existing local processing plants
- ❖ By modernizing forestry equipment
- ❖ By welcoming investment in the forestry sector

- ❖ By training and supporting current forest workers and the new generation of forest workers
- ❖ By getting involved in the management of the public forest through the Pontiac local forest project (community forest)

Strategic Vision Statement

By 2040, the Pontiac will be welcoming towards new people moving to the territory, local services will be maintained and new businesses will open, more opportunities will be available for the youth, villages will be dynamic and promote socialization, there will be more cultural, community, sports, and recreational opportunities, and the individuals will have a better overall health (mental health, physical health, and healthy lifestyle). A public transit system will be in place, people will have more transportation options available, and active mobility infrastructure will be more developed. Cultural heritage will be better protected and enhanced.

By 2040, the Pontiac will have contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and will have protected biodiversity, species at risk, wildlife and plant habitats, as well as wetlands and natural areas. Measures will be put forward in order to reduce the vulnerability of communities to natural and human-induced constraints.

By 2040, agriculture, tourism, entrepreneurship, and the forest will continue to be key sectors for the Pontiac. Alternative agriculture, agri-food processing, agritourism, gourmet tourism, local purchasing, and short food circuits will be further developed. Tourism attraction offer, tourism accommodation offer, and new trails for outdoor activities will be developed. Businesses and organizations will be innovative, diversified, and creative in responding to major recruitment and retention challenges. The reliability, coverage, and performance of Internet, landline phone, cellphone, and hydroelectric connections will be significantly improved. Forest uses will be more varied, forest equipment

will be cutting-edge and renewed, and new wood processing projects will go forward.

Conclusion

The Strategic Vision Statement is the future desired by the Pontiac. To achieve its realization, it will have to be appropriated by the population and by all the people who interact with the territory. This process is thus an opportunity to look to the future of the Pontiac with optimism and to begin work on the new Strategic Development Vision 2020-2030 and on the revision of the Land Use and Development Plan 2020-2040.