



PETAWAWA
DYNAMIC BY NATURE



Town of Petawawa

Dec. 2025

Economic Action Strategy 2026 – 2029

Economic & Community Development in Petawawa



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2026-2029

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GOALS & PRIORITIES

- 1 SUPPORT & RETAIN**
- 2 ATTRACT**
- 3 GROW**
- 4 CONNECT**





Executive Summary



Economic & Community Development in Petawawa

Nestled along the Ottawa River and surrounded by the scenic natural beauty of the Ottawa Valley, the Town of Petawawa stands as one of Ontario's most dynamic and rapidly growing communities. Home to Canada's largest army base, Garrison Petawawa, and in immediate proximity to Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), the Town blends military strength, entrepreneurial spirit, diverse cultures, and outdoor adventure into a unique and resilient local economy. Building on the success of the 2018 Economic Action Strategy, this three-year plan (2026–2029) sets a clear path for continued growth and diversification. The strategy reflects community aspirations for a balanced, sustainable, and connected Petawawa. One that welcomes new residents, supports business innovation, and enhances the quality of life for all who live, work, and visit here.

Through consultation, research, and collaboration with residents, business leaders, and key partners, four strategic goals have been defined to guide the Town's economic development agenda:

- **Support & Retain:** Strengthen and expand existing businesses.
- **Attract:** Facilitate new investment and job creation.
- **Grow:** Support workforce development and housing solutions.
- **Connect:** Advance branding, marketing, and communications tools.

This three-year strategy sets clear timelines and actions that help Petawawa stay strong, competitive, and welcoming. The result of these actions is to prepare Petawawa for the future while staying true to the values that make it "Dynamic by Nature."

“

Petawawa's economy is strongly supported by the Garrison and military community, which provides stability and drives growth for local businesses. We're committed to working alongside military families and local entrepreneurs to create opportunities and strengthen our community for everyone.”

- Christine Mitchell
Manager of Economic Development
Town of Petawawa



Dynamic By Nature
Dynamic By Business



Methodology

The findings and recommendations in this strategy are based on a mix of trusted data sources, local insights, and continuing department outreach. Businesses and community engagements were conducted through interviews, surveys, and focus sessions, including the **2021 Community Improvement Plan (CIP)**, **2024 First Impression Community Exchange**, **2024 Re-Branding Engagements**, **2025 Wayfinding Consultations and Review**, and **2025 Business Retention and Expansion** surveys. This strategy also builds on the recommendations and achievements from the 2018 Economic Action Strategy, which was tailored to Petawawa's unique strengths and opportunities.



DATA ANALYSIS



Statistics Canada

This tool provided information on demographics, immigration, housing, labour, and income from the 2021 census.



Rural Ontario Institute (ROI)

This tool was used to gather information on metrics such as employment, housing, major industries, education, occupations, and job postings.



Business Retention & Expansion Study

The 2025 survey provided insights on the local business landscape.



Environics Analytics

Environics was useful for sourcing population demographics.

Selecting Petawawa means partnering with a dedicated team committed to your success. When you choose Petawawa, our team will ensure you receive the most accurate and actionable insights, enabling informed decision-making.

Engagements, Inputs, & Statistics

- A total of 51 commercial businesses operating in the Town of Petawawa participated in the 2025 BR+E study.
- Information and actions from the 2018 Economic Action Strategy helped guide the 2026-2029 plan.
- Analysis of Stats Canada along with other economic development tools provide insights to local economy.
- The Community Profile and Petawawa Housing Needs Assessment were analyzed with information helping to guide this forward thinking strategy.

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Economic Development Goals & Priorities

23

Strategies & Areas of Focus

43

Individual Actions or Tasks

Help Shape the Future of Petawawa's Economy

Support local businesses, shop in town, attend community events, and promote Petawawa as a great place to live and work.



What is Economic Development?

"Economic Development is programs, policies or activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. What "economic development" means to you will depend on the community you live in. Each community has its own opportunities, challenges, and priorities."

-Government of the Province of British Columbia



Giesebricht General Store



The Town of Petawawa was founded on the strength of its natural resources, its strategic military role, and the vibrancy and energy of its residents. The Township of Petawawa was incorporated in 1865.

Eugene Giesebricht is known as one of Petawawa's pioneer entrepreneurs. In 1910, he opened a store and restaurant in the fledgling village of Petawawa. His business grew into the first general store and post office, where he manufactured ice cream, soft drinks and cement blocks. In 1934, he became one of the first Pepsi Cola franchisees in Canada.

From its roots in nature, Petawawa has grown into a thriving, vibrant, and resilient town. As much as ever, we are now "history in the making"... and we invite you to become a part of our story!

Goals & Priorities #1

Support & Retain

Recognizing that established businesses are the foundation of the community, Petawawa will continue to collaborate with industry partners, business networks, and regional stakeholders to sustain and strengthen local success. With 88% of surveyed businesses rating Petawawa as a good or excellent place to do business and 63% indicating plans to expand within 18 months, maintaining open communication and support is critical.

This strategy centers around advocacy that drives actions to reduce barriers to growth, ensuring that supports and partners are informed and engaged in opportunities that address key community concerns. These priorities include land and building availability, infrastructure constraints, and workforce capacity across all industry sectors.

Strategy #1 - Strengthen and expand existing businesses

1. Strengthen Business Relationships

1.1.1 Conduct regular sector BR&E engagements.

1.1.2 Develop regular business and industry visitation programs to strengthen relationships and identify emerging needs.

2. Improve Commercial & Retail Vitality

1.2.1 Support clean, welcoming commercial streetscapes with plantings, lighting, public art, and rest amenities.

1.2.2 Establish consistent Wayfinding Signage throughout the community

3. Improve Retail Spaces

1.3.1 Expand and promote market programs (Container Market) as an incubation cluster for small businesses and community gathering spaces.

1.3.2 Collaborate and work with partners to diversify the amount of appropriately sized commercial spaces.

1.3.3 Support revitalization of underdeveloped commercial spaces (Victoria Mall).

4. Support Workforce Skills Development

1.4.1 Work with industry and education partners to expand training aligned with workforce demand and in-demand skills.

1.4.2 Foster new investment and job creation while maintaining environmental stewardship and high quality of life.

5. Facilitate Communication, Marketing, and Funding Access

1.5.1 Create and support joint marketing programs among local businesses.

1.5.2 Maintain consistent business communications featuring funding opportunities, success stories, and local resources.

1.5.3 Pursue federal and provincial funding opportunities (e.g., ROD, OMAFRA, FedDev) that enable infrastructure and broadband investment, workforce training, and business development.

6. Review and Promote Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

1.6.1 Update the CIP program to ensure alignment with business needs, new legislation, and the County HYPE.

1.6.2 Encourage broader participation in the CIP initiatives to enhance business visibility and curb appeal and community pride.

Goals & Priorities #1

Support & Retain



Strategy #1 - Strengthen and expand existing businesses

Task List	Task Team	2026				2027				2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1.1 Regular BR+E	E.D. P.B.A.N									Target Q2			
1.1.2 Business Visitation Program	E.D. P.B.A.N			Target Q2							Target Q2		
1.2.1 Streetscaping and Amenities	E.D. R.C.T. C.P./P.W.		Ongoing			Ongoing				Ongoing			
1.2.2 Establish Consistent Wayfinding Signage	E.D. R.C.T. C.P./P.W.			Target Q2									
1.3.1 Expand Container Market	E.D. R.C.T. C.P./P.W.	Ongoing											
1.3.2 Support Fit-for-Purpose Commercial Spaces	E.D. P.B.	Ongoing											
1.3.3 Support Revitalization of Commercial Spaces	E.D. P.B.	Ongoing											
1.4.1 Expanded Workforce Training	O.O. E.D.		Partner Led										
1.4.2 Investment Attraction	County E.D. P.B.				Target Q4								
1.5.1 Joint Marketing Programs	E.D. R.C.T. County	Target Q1			Target Q1			Target Q1					
1.5.2 Consistent Business Communication	E.D. P.B.A.N.				Start Q1								
1.5.3 Pursue Funding Opportunities	E.D.	Ongoing											
1.6.1 Review & Update CIP	E.D. P.B. P.B.A.N		Start Q2										
1.6.2 Expand CIP Uptake	E.D. County P.B.A.N				Start Q4								



Department Acronyms

*for purpose of this report

County: Renfrew County EcDev & OVTA
 C.P. : Civic Properties
 E.D. : Economic Development
 P.W. : Public Works
 P.B. : Planning & Building
 R.C.T. : Recreation, Culture & Tourism
 PBAN: Petawawa Business Advisory Network
 O.O. : Outside Organizations

Tasks will be monitored with KPI's reported to Council annually.



Goals & Priorities #2

Attract

Petawawa's economy is positioned for growth. Nearly two-thirds of businesses anticipate expansion, yet limited available land and rising construction costs present real barriers. To remain competitive, the Town must actively plan, prepare, and promote serviced land and redevelopment opportunities that meet market demand and encourage private investment.

Strategy #2 - Facilitate new investment and job creation

1. Strategic Land Development

- **2.1.1.** Identify and market priority lands for commercial and light industrial use.
- **2.1.2.** Where feasible, pursue municipal land acquisition, site preparation, or partnerships to stimulate planned development and attract new employers.

2. Retail Diversification

- **2.2.1.** Entice anchor retailers to support land development opportunities that retain local spending while expanding consumer choice.
- **2.2.2** Encourage niche and underrepresented businesses to establish in the community (e.g., apparel, specialty food, or lifestyle brands).

3. Market Retail Opportunities

- **2.3.1.** Develop and maintain an inventory of available retail and commercial spaces with a prospectus to be investment responsive.
- **2.3.2.** Promote redevelopment and infill of underused parcels to create vibrant, mixed-use commercial nodes.

4. Develop Investment Tools & Promote Competitive Advantages

- **2.4.1.** Implement a concierge-style investment model to simplify an 'Investor's path' through the development processes and facilitate advocacy throughout the various stages of the development process.
- **2.4.2.** Showcase Petawawa's competitive strengths to attract and inspire business investment. Key assets include: its young, skilled workforce, strong household incomes, exceptional quality of life, rich recreational amenities, and proximity to the National Capital Region.

5. Leverage the Visitor Economy

- **2.5.1.** Position Petawawa as a shopping, dining, and tourism destination by connecting retail areas to trail systems, parks, and accommodations.
- **2.5.2.** Support partnerships that integrate tourism experiences with local business offerings.



Goals & Priorities #2

Attract



Strategy #2 - Facilitate new investment and job creation

Task List	Task Team	2026				2027				2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2.11 Commercial Land Strategy	E.D. P.B.			Target Q2	●								
2.12 Pursue Local Employment Land	E.D. P.B. County					Start Q4	●						
2.2.1 Market Town to big-box and retailers	E.D. County							Target Q1	●				
2.2.2 Target Niche or Boutique Retail	E.D. O.O.							Target Q1	●				
2.3.1 Develop Investment Tools	E.D. P.B. County		Target Q1	●									
2.3.2 Promote Infill on Underused Lots	E.D. P.B.						Target Q1	●					
2.4.1 Simplify Investors Process	E.D. P.B.			Target Q1	●								
2.4.2 Promote Competitive Advantages	E.D. R.C.T. O.O.				Target Q2	●							
2.5.1 Leverage Visitor Economy	R.C.T. E.D.					Ongoing	●						
2.5.2 Integrate Tourism & Business Offerings	E.D. R.C.T. P.B.A.N.						Target Q3	●					



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Goals & Priorities #3

Grow

A thriving community is built on the strength of its people. Attracting dynamic and diverse talent is key to Petawawa's continued prosperity. With 77% of businesses citing hiring challenges and many emphasizing housing availability and affordability as barriers, coordinated action is needed to grow both the workforce and community livability. Petawawa offers an exceptional quality of life: a place where residents can live, work, and play in harmony with nature. The community's vibrant organizations, recreational amenities, and family-friendly environment form a powerful attraction tool for new residents and skilled talent.

Strategy #3 - Support workforce development and housing solutions.

1. Align Training with Employment Needs

- **3.1.1.** Collaborate with Garrison Petawawa, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, Algonquin College, and local industries to align education and training programs with current and emerging employment opportunities

2. Expand Housing & Mixed-Use Development

- **3.2.1.** Support workforce and mixed-use housing projects that enable employees and new residents to live locally.
- **3.2.2.** Expand commercial development into neighbourhoods expanding beyond Petawawa Boulevard.

3. Improve Transportation & Accessibility

- **3.3.1.** Advocate Highway 17 and Petawawa Boulevard improvements and explore local transit or shuttle pilot programs to connect residents, commercial, and employment areas.
- **3.3.2.** Increase public parking access and signage to improve connectivity and convenience.

4. Enhance Livability & Recreation

- **3.4.1.** Integrate housing and retail development to create vibrant, walkable neighbourhoods.
- **3.4.2.** Strengthen access to outdoor, cultural, and recreational assets by connecting retail nodes, the Algonquin Trail, and local parks to support healthy, active living.

5. Sector Growth

- **3.5.1.** Participate and leverage opportunities from industry forums and networking engagements that support defence related industries, skilled trades, construction and tourism sectors.

6. Support Workforce Integration and Diversity

- **3.6.1.** Partner with employers and organizations to support mentorship and newcomer programs for veterans, transitioning military families, and new residents.
- **3.6.2.** Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, fostering inclusive workplace cultures and expanding opportunities for women and underrepresented groups in trades and technical fields.

Goals & Priorities #3

Grow



Strategy #3 - Support workforce development and housing solutions.

Task List	Task Team	2026				2027				2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1.1 Align Training with Local Needs	O.O. E.D.	Partner Led											
3.2.1 Expand Affordable Housing Options	P.B. E.D. O.O.	Ongoing											
3.2.2 Expand Commercial Beyond Pet. Blvd.	E.D. P.B. O.O.					Ongoing							
3.3.1 Investigate Transit Options	P.W. E.D. O.O.	Ongoing											
3.3.2 Increase Public Parking Options	P.B. E.D. P.W.					Start Q1							
3.4.1 Integrate Housing with Retail	P.B. E.D.	Ongoing											
3.4.2 Strengthen Access to Active Living	R.C.T. E.D.	Ongoing											
3.5.1 Support Sector Specific Growth	E.D. O.O. P.B.A.N.			Start Q2									
3.6.1 Mentorship Supports	E.D. O.O. P.B.A.N.	Start Q1											
3.6.2 Advance DEI Projects	O.O. E.D. P.B.A.N.			Partner Led									



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Goals & Priorities #4

Connect

Petawawa is a place where people and businesses thrive. Its rich natural surroundings and strong sense of community provide a powerful foundation for shared identity and pride. Through enhanced branding, storytelling, and placemaking, the Town will strengthen its identity as a community that is truly Dynamic by Nature. The 2025 Business Retention & Expansion survey identified communication, visibility, and marketing as key opportunities for improvement, along with enhanced signage, beautification, and coordinated promotion. Petawawa will act on these insights to strengthen its presence, pride, and sense of place.

Strategy #4 - Advance branding, marketing, and communications tools.

1. Strengthen Petawawa's Brand Identity

- **4.1.1.** Celebrate Petawawa's identity as a community defined by strength, adventure, and opportunity, bringing the "Dynamic by Nature" brand to life across communications, signage, and public spaces.

2. Enhance Wayfinding & Placemaking

- **4.2.1.** Implement initiatives that improve wayfinding, branding, public art, and streetscaping to elevate community attractiveness, reinforce local identity, and enhance quality of place.

3. Market Petawawa as a Year-Round Destination

- **4.3.1.** Develop tourism brand and visitor guide highlighting shopping, dining, recreation, and events.
- **4.3.2.** Promote Petawawa through digital advertising, hotel partnerships, and social media campaigns.
- **4.3.3** Expand and promote signature events such as the Petawawa Ramble and Holiday Market to increase visitor engagement and retail activity.

4. Enhance Visitors Experience

- **4.4.1** Integrate public art, lighting displays, and cultural installations that celebrate Petawawa's heritage and identity.
- **4.4.2** Partner with Indigenous and local artists to create meaningful cultural storytelling and unique outdoor experiences.

5. Promote Local Success Stories

- **4.5.1** Showcase local entrepreneurs, leaders, and initiatives through storytelling platforms, social media campaigns, media collaborations, and other spotlights that highlight innovation and community pride.

6. Modernize Communication Tools

- **4.6.1** Refresh the Town's municipal website and enhance the economic development portal to feature investment opportunities, Shop Petawawa campaigns, and interactive business resources.

Goals & Priorities #4

Connect



Strategy #4 - Advance branding, marketing, and communications tools.

Task List	Task Team	2026				2027				2028			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1.1 Grow Petawawa Brand Identity	E.D. R.C.T.	Ongoing											
4.2.1 Wayfinding & Placemaking	E.D. R.C.T.	Ongoing											
4.3.1 Tourism Brand & Visitors Guide	R.C.T. E.D.	Ongoing											
4.3.2 Market Petawawa to Visitors	R.C.T. E.D. O.O.	Ongoing											
4.3.3 Expand Signature Events	E.D. R.C.T. P.B.A.N.	Ongoing											
4.4.1 Art & Cultural Installations	E.D. & PBAN R.C.T. C.P./P.W.		Target Q2										
4.4.2 Storytelling in Outdoor Spaces	R.C.T. O.O. E.D.			Start Q2									
4.5.1 Highlight Business Success Stories	E.D.	Target Q1		Target Q1		Target Q1							
4.6.1 Update Municipal Website	L.S. E.D.	Ongoing											



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