



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

MEMO

To: Ticonderoga DRI Project Managers (NY DOS)
From: Camiros, Ltd.
Date: June 28, 2023
Re: Refined Vision + SWOT + Draft Goals & Strategies

VISION (Additional refinement per LPC #1.5 Discussion – Revisions from first refinement shown in redline)

Downtown Ticonderoga will be a vibrant regional business and cultural hub that looks to the future while recognizing its identity as the heart of a historic community. Blending Downtown is a year-round hub of activity in the community, blending a variety of charming specialty shops and restaurants, a mix of heritage tourism and pop culture venues, arts and entertainment attractions, and contemporary services with the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of the LaChute riverfront and other public open spaces. Downtown Ticonderoga offers a truly unique experience for visitors to the Adirondack and Champlain Valley region and enhances the quality of life for residents.

SWOT ANALYSIS (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths:

- *Historic:* Downtown Ticonderoga holds a captivating blend of American history and Native American heritage. From the significant role it played during the 7-Years War and American Revolutionary War, to its roots in Native American settlements, Ticonderoga stands as a testament to the diverse layers of its past. By showcasing and sharing this rich heritage, downtown Ticonderoga establishes itself as a compelling destination that invites visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of its past.
- *Natural Beauty:* Downtown is surrounded by natural assets, including the LaChute River and numerous active and passive recreation opportunities, all easily accessible from the center of Downtown.
- *Civic Pride:* Downtown Ticonderoga is host to numerous local events, festivals, and downtown civic associations that foster a distinct identity and sense of place.
- *Unique Businesses:* Downtown has a variety of unique businesses, including boutiques, restaurants, and local artisan and craft shops. Downtown Ticonderoga is also home to the Star Trek Experience, which adds to the unique and memorable experiences available to residents and visitors.
- *Walkability:* Downtown is centered on Montcalm Street, making it easy to explore Downtown on foot. The direct connection to the LaChute River Trail further enhances the area's walkability, offering a scenic and enjoyable pathway for pedestrians that immerses them in the beauty of the surrounding natural features.
- *Connections:* There are numerous regional and local transportation connections in the area, such as the airport, the ferry, and the train station.

Weaknesses:

- *Limited Economic Diversity:* The economy in Downtown Ticonderoga relies on the paper industry, which serves as the primary source of economic activity. While tourism and seasonal activities make modest contributions to the local economy, reliance on a predominant single industry can result in limited economic opportunities during off-peak periods.
- *An Early Town:* The Downtown has been characterized as “rolling up the sidewalks at sunset;” an area that comes alive only during the late spring through early fall and is unable to maintain the same level of activity and vibrancy throughout the year.
- *Limited Cultural Offerings:* While the town's history is an undeniable strength, there is a need to diversify cultural offerings to attract a broader range of visitors and residents, particularly in the area of cultural arts.

- *Family-Oriented Activities:* Downtown Ticonderoga lacks a range of attractions and activities that cater specifically to families with children. There is a need for more family-friendly venues and experiences that engage and entertain visitors of all ages.
- *Lack of Accommodations:* A major barrier for Downtown Ticonderoga and the broader area is the lack of local lodging options, particularly during seasonal periods such as “Mill shutdown” at the Sylvamo facility.
- *Last (Couple) Miles:* While transportation connections abound, (the airport, the ferry, the train station) the ability to reach Downtown from these points is difficult without a car.

Opportunities:

- *Tourism Growth:* By capitalizing on the synergy between the area's history and natural features, Downtown Ticonderoga has the potential to boost its tourism industry. Leveraging the area's rich historical significance, diverse outdoor recreational activities, and unique offering of local experiences, a cohesive branding strategy could be developed with the aim of attracting a larger influx of visitors throughout the year. Positioned within proximity to popular tourism destinations such as Fort Ticonderoga and the scenic Adirondack Mountains, Downtown Ticonderoga can serve as a hub for visitors to immerse themselves in the area's captivating recreational, cultural, and culinary offerings. Additionally, by promoting outdoor winter sports opportunities like snowmobiling and cross-country skiing, the town can effectively tap into the winter season, enticing visitors seeking winter adventures.
- *Lodging Expansion:* Downtown Ticonderoga has an opportunity to expand its lodging options in response to a growing number of tourists visiting the region. By attracting investments and encouraging the establishment of hotels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rentals like Airbnb or Vrbo options, the town can enhance its ability to accommodate a larger number of visitors year-round. Such expansion could support the tourism industry and extend the duration of visitor stays, providing a boost to local businesses and generating increased economic activity in the Downtown.
- *Adaptive Reuse:* The reuse of underutilized Downtown historic buildings can maximize their potential and contribute to the revitalization of downtown by preserving the town's historical character and promoting economic development. This approach could serve to breathe new life into significant historical structures and provide opportunities to generate new economic activity and job opportunities that attract businesses, residents, and visitors.
- *Cultural Hub:* Downtown Ticonderoga has the potential to establish itself as a thriving arts and culture hub for the region. Revitalizing performing arts spaces within the downtown area can attract visitors to the Town seeking cultural offerings within the region. Additionally, efforts should be made to attract performing arts festivals and expand upon the success of the Town's existing events and festivals. By developing a robust cultural hub, the town can create a year-round attraction that appeals to individuals seeking diverse and enriching cultural experiences. This enhancement will contribute to the overall appeal and vibrancy of the destination.
- *Marketing/Rebranding:* Ticonderoga is currently engaged in marketing and rebranding efforts. A strong brand identity is crucial for Downtown Ticonderoga to establish its unique character, highlight its attractions, and position itself as a distinct destination within the region. In this process, it will be important to develop a fresh and memorable brand that showcases the town's rich heritage, outdoor experiences, and cultural offerings.
- *Remote Work:* Ticonderoga can create a supportive environment for remote workers by addressing housing needs and increasing options through adaptive reuse of Downtown buildings. Positioning Ticonderoga as an ideal destination for remote professionals seeking work-life balance and a change of scenery can attract a talented workforce, contributing to the local economy.

Threats:

- *Seasonal Fluctuations:* Reliance on seasonal tourism makes the local economy vulnerable to fluctuations in expected visitors, especially during off-peak seasons.
- *Competition from Nearby Areas:* Nearby communities, both within New York and Vermont may create competition for visitors and businesses within the region.
- *Changing Consumer Preferences:* Shifting consumer preferences and trends, such as the rise of e-commerce and changing travel patterns can present difficulties for local businesses and services unable to adapt.

- *Out-Migration*: Ticonderoga has seen a pattern of “brain-drain,” or young people leaving the town after graduating from high school, and not returning to the community. This poses a significant challenge for the town as it results in a loss of talent, skills, and potential economic growth. It may also lead to a lack of diversity and innovation in the community, as young individuals often bring fresh perspectives and ideas.
- *Climate Change*: The threat of climate change poses significant risks to Ticonderoga's natural environment and local economy. The viability of the area's natural and tourist attractions may be impacted due to extreme weather events. Additionally, the health of Adirondack forests and water bodies is at risk, impacting outdoor recreational activities and natural resources that drive the local economy. The increased energy demand and the need for sustainable practices further add to the economic challenges posed by climate change.

GOALS + STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Enhance Economic Diversity and Year-Round Activity in Downtown Ticonderoga

Strategy 1: Diversify the Local Economy

- Attract businesses that can thrive in Downtown throughout the year.
- Provide incentives to encourage new businesses that offer a diverse range of products and services.
- Foster partnerships to promote entrepreneurship and the development of innovative startups.

Strategy 2: Create Year-Round Attractions and Activities

- Develop a year-round calendar of events that includes a variety of activities, festivals, and cultural events catering to different demographics and interests.
- Collaborate with local and regional organizations, artists, and performers to host regular art events, live music, theater productions, and interactive workshops.
- Promote outdoor recreational opportunities across seasons, such as guided nature walks, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and cross-country skiing, to attract visitors during the winter months.

Strategy 3: Expand Accommodation Options

- Attract investors and developers to establish new lodging options in Downtown, including hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, and vacation rentals.
- Explore partnerships with existing businesses or property owners to repurpose historic buildings into boutique hotels or unique accommodations that showcase the town's heritage.
- Explore the opportunity for a retreat destination within Ticonderoga that offers specialized accommodation and amenities focused on nature and wellness.

Strategy 4: Promote Mixed-Use Rehab of Existing Commercial Buildings

- Assess existing commercial buildings in Downtown to identify opportunities for mixed-use development.
- Promote the benefits of mixed-use development to property owners, emphasizing the potential for increased property value, additional revenue, and a more vibrant downtown environment.
- Facilitate partnerships between property owners, developers, and community organizations to leverage funding opportunities to support the development of mixed-use units.

Goal 2: Cultivate a Cultural Scene in Downtown

Strategy 1: Diversify Cultural Offerings

- Encourage the establishment of art galleries, maker studios, and cultural institutions that exhibit the works of local and regional artists and craftspeople.
- Support the creation of cultural programs and workshops that provide opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in hands-on experiences and learn about the town's heritage.
- Foster collaborations between local artists, performers, and educational institutions to develop mentorship programs, artist-in-residence initiatives, and community-led cultural projects.
- Collaborate with local historians, cultural experts, and community members to curate compelling narratives that highlight the unique heritage and cultural significance of Downtown Ticonderoga.
- Attract regional and national performing arts organizations and productions to Downtown Ticonderoga.

Strategy 2: Revitalize Performing Arts Spaces

- Renovate and restore existing Downtown venues.

Goal 3: Enhance Downtown Aesthetics and Connectivity

Strategy 1: Create a Cohesive and Inviting Urban Form

- Seek out financial assistance and resources to business owners for facade improvements, architectural enhancements, and signage upgrades that contribute to the overall visual appeal of Downtown.
- Encourage public art installations that celebrate the town's history, natural beauty, and cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and interest among residents and visitors.

Strategy 2: Improve Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Invest in infrastructure improvements, including pedestrian-friendly features such as benches, bike racks, and street lighting.
- Develop a comprehensive wayfinding system that guides pedestrians to key attractions including the LaChute River, parking areas, and amenities within Downtown.
- Incorporate landscaping elements to create a visually appealing and inviting environment for pedestrians to enjoy while exploring Downtown.

Strategy 3: Activate the Rear Side of Buildings Facing the LaChute River Trail

- Encourage and support the development of restaurants, cafes, and other food establishments that utilize the rear side of buildings facing the LaChute River Trail.
- Work with building owners and local businesses to identify opportunities for creating inviting entrances and outdoor seating areas along the trail-facing side of the buildings.
- Collaborate with local artists and designers to enhance the visual appeal of buildings that face the river trail.
- Improve and beautify the roadways and pathways located between the buildings and the river trail to create a safe and inviting environment.

Goal 4: Foster a Vibrant Downtown Community for Ticonderoga Residents

Strategy 1: Support Local Businesses and Services

- Foster an environment that encourages the growth and success of local businesses, including retail stores, restaurants, and service providers.
- Encourage the development of shared spaces and co-working environments that advance collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Provide resources and support to help local entrepreneurs start or expand their businesses within the Downtown.

Strategy 2: Enhance Downtown Services for Local Residents

- Attract a diverse mix of businesses and services that cater to the daily needs and preferences of residents, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, healthcare clinics, and essential service providers.
- Collaborate with existing businesses to diversify their products and adapt to the changing needs and preferences of residents.
- Develop and promote opportunities and activities that align with the skills and aspirations of young residents.