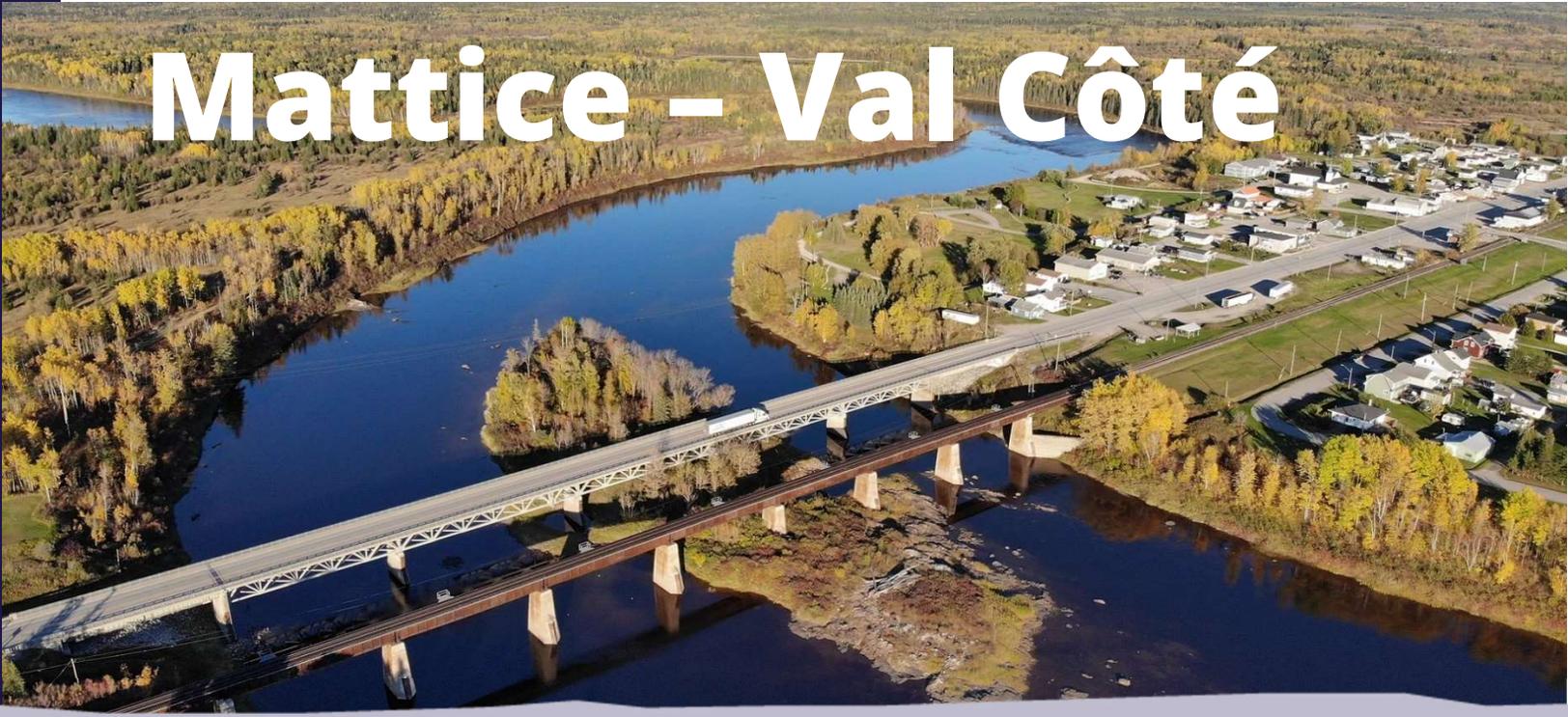
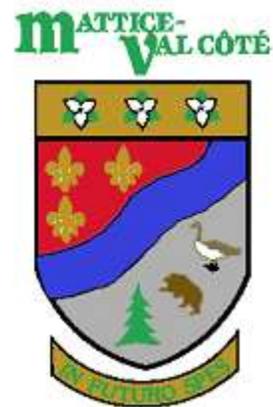


Mattice – Val Côté



Strategic Plan

2024-2028



Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario

Federal Economic Development
Agency for Northern Ontario

Final version

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In collaboration with



ESPACE STRATÉGIES

Mayor's message



During my first mandate as Mayor of the Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté, the Municipal Council was called upon to react to a financial crisis resulting from a considerable loss of tax revenue. Difficult but necessary decisions had to be made to get us through this crisis.

From the very start of my second term as Mayor, Council members were adamant that it was time to move on to something more positive and motivating, namely the development of our plan for the future of Mattice – Val Côté. To reinvent ourselves, to rethink the economic and community development of Mattice – Val Côté, we needed a strategic plan to guide us towards the realization of concrete projects.

As a result of the numerous hours devoted by Council members to this process and thanks to the participation of our community, it gives me great pleasure to present you our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. This document will be reviewed regularly, and its content will undoubtedly change over the years, but for now, it shows us the path we should follow.

Marc Dupuis, Mayor

Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté

A message from Council



The strategic committee: Joyce Malenfant, Councillor; Justine McIntyre, Espace Stratégies; Gilles Matko, Nord-Aski General Manager; Marc Dupuis, Mayor; Sophie Gagnon, Councillor; Steve Brousseau, Councillor (absent from the photo: Réginald Manning, Councillor).

We are very pleased to have before us a concrete plan that will guide our decision-making and help us determine the priority issues that need to be addressed.

This strategic plan would not have been possible without the funding provided to us by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor). We are very grateful to them. We would also like to thank the consulting firm Espaces Stratégies for their support throughout this project.

One of the important components in developing a community's strategic plan is obtaining input from its citizens. We thank you wholeheartedly for responding to the call in such large numbers, either by taking part in a guided interview, by participating in the citizen consultation evening, by preparing a drawing or by responding to the survey.

Have a good read everyone!

- Steve Brousseau
- Marc Dupuis
- Sophie Gagnon
- Joyce Malenfant
- Réginald Manning

Introduction

The Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté, incorporated in 1975, is the result of a merger between the villages of Mattice and Val Côté. Located in the heart of the Missinaibi River basin, in the Cochrane District, Mattice – Val Côté constitutes one of the stops along Highway 11, the long ribbon of road which follows the railway, dotted by cities and municipalities of northern Ontario, from Thunder Bay to North Bay.

The Missinaibi River occupies a central place both in the history of the development and in the current identity of the municipality. The municipal web site logo, representing Fred Neegan "guardian of the Missinaibi"¹, as well as its motto, confirm Mattice - Val Côté's position "in the heart of the Missinaibi".

The site was an important meeting place for the First Nations living in the region. The establishment of a Hudson's Bay Company trading post in 1905 and the construction of the railway, which began that same year, were the driving forces behind its development as a site for the fur trade and the forest products industry, opening the territory to the establishment of a permanent community of inhabitants of European descent². The municipality now has 542 residents³ and has the distinction of being recognized as "the most French-speaking village in Ontario" with 96.3% of its population able to sustain a conversation in French⁴.

¹ To read more about Fred Neegan, consult the page dedicated to his story on the municipal website: <https://www.matticevalcote.ca/en/grands-personnages>

² Information taken from the municipality's website. You can read more about the history of the Municipality by consulting the same: <https://www.matticevalcote.ca/en/à-propos-de-nous>

³ Statistics Canada, 2021 Population Census

⁴ See the article entitled « Au cœur du nouveau village le plus francophone de l'Ontario » by Jimmy Chabot, published on September 7, 2023 by Radio-Canada – ICI Nord de l'Ontario. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2008357/mattice-val-cote-ecole-st-francois-xavier>

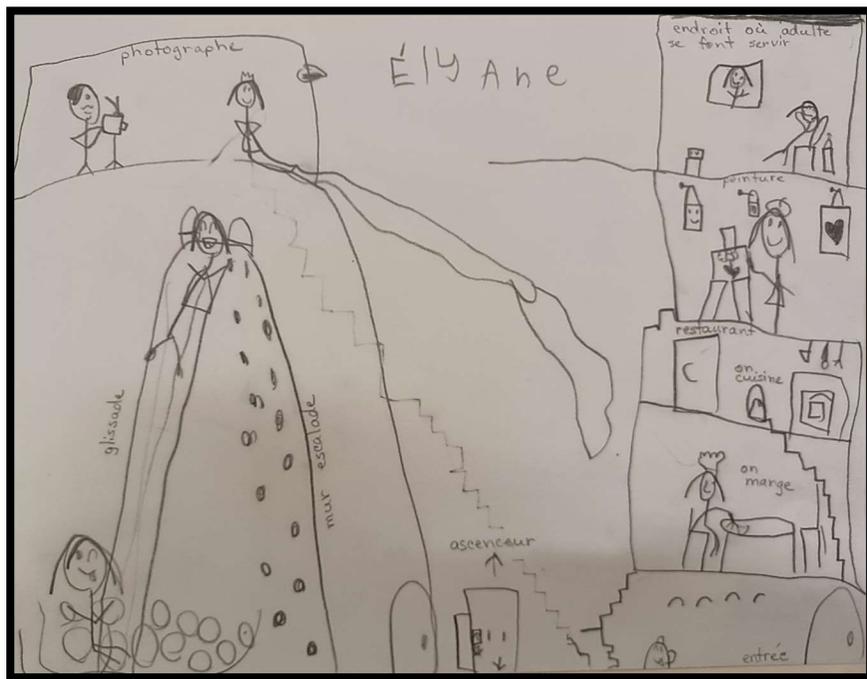
Over the last three decades, the population of Mattice – Val Côté has been decreasing, a trend that is consistent across northern Ontario municipalities. More recently, the decision of a large energy transportation company to remove industrial equipment from a building brought on a significant loss in property taxes for the municipality, representing 20% of its annual budget and forcing the latter to reduce certain services while imposing an important tax increase.

It is in this context of cutbacks, and with a stated desire to seek means of revitalization, that the municipality launched a strategic planning exercise in 2023.

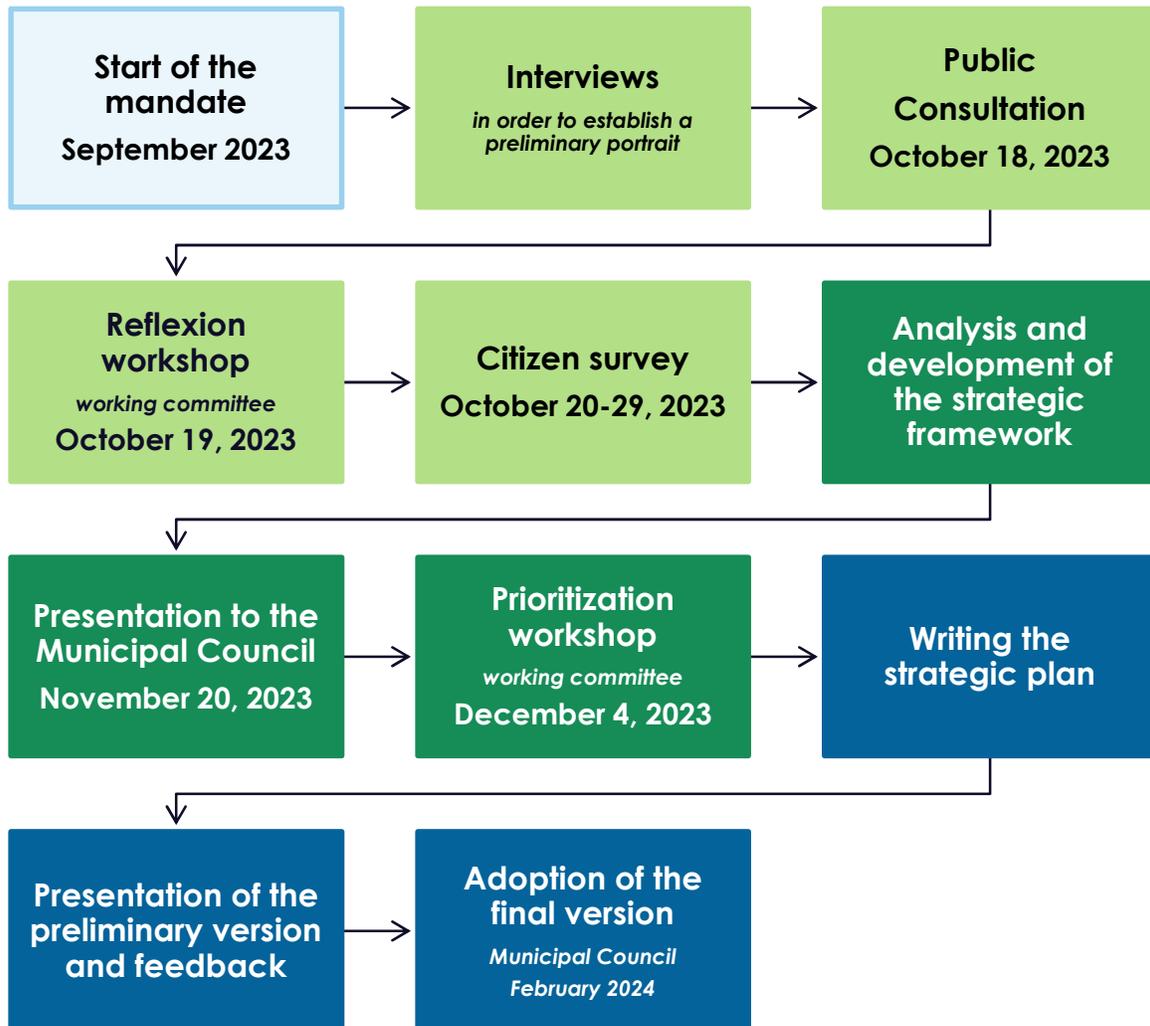


About the strategic planning process

The Strategic Plan of the Municipality of Mattice – Val Côté is the result of a participatory approach to which the population was invited to contribute, including students from the St-François Xavier Catholic elementary school. They contributed by drawing their vision of the future for their municipality. A selection of drawings is shared throughout this Plan to enhance the text and to remind us that the decisions we make collectively today will shape their reality tomorrow. The process of developing the strategic plan took place over a period of months, from September 2023 to January 2024, and followed the main stages outlined on the next page.



The main stages of the strategic planning process



Citizen Consultation

The citizen consultation took place on October 18th, 2023. The citizens of Mattice - Val Côté were invited by the municipality to this major consultation activity to collect their perspectives on the identity of their municipality, their vision of the future and the projects they would like to see happening. More than sixty people contributed their ideas by participating in the consultation or by answering the survey, launched following the citizen consultation. Students from St-François Xavier Catholic elementary school were invited to contribute with drawings representing their vision for Mattice - Val Côté.

Word cloud built from the responses to the survey question: What reasons would you give a friend to convince him or her to move to Mattice - Val Côté? (The bigger a word is, the more recurrent it was in the answers. Note that responses were primarily in French, which is reflected in the word cloud)



This identity must be strengthened and protected in order to preserve **the distinctive elements of the municipality and what they bring to its community.** The strategic identity of Mattice – Val Côté is structured around three major themes.



A warm and welcoming population

In this community, mutual assistance is part of everyday life. There is a strong sense of belonging, and pride in who we are and where we come from.



A peaceful living environment, in harmony with the Missinaibi

Residents enjoy a quiet lifestyle. Access to the river, to hunting and fishing, and to snowmobiling trails are an important part of their daily life.



A well-rooted community

As the French language and nordicity are strong elements of its identity, so is the resilience of this community. Resiliency is also demonstrated in the municipality's capacity to provide services to its population.

The pillars of our vision

During the consultation and strategic reflection process, citizens and members of the working committee were invited to think about the future they want for Mattice – Val Côté. This reflection led to the identification of four main pillars of the vision. These pillars then made it possible to elaborate the development vision, which reflects the municipality's ambition for the coming years.



Issues affecting the territory

In the strategic planning development process, identifying priority issues is essential, since it makes it possible to determine the challenges that currently hinder the achievement of the vision and to put in place the solutions required to overcome them.

The various workshops and consultations rendered possible the identification of the main factors limiting the development of Mattice – Val Côté. Issues affecting the municipality are often interrelated and should be addressed holistically. In particular, following budget cuts and the increase in municipal taxes, economic and demographic vitality are closely linked to the municipal capacity to deliver the services demanded by the population.



Population retention (-16,4% from 2016 to 2021)



Loss of local businesses and services



The closure of the ice rink, in light of its significant operational costs



Housing supply (number of private housing: 260)



Development of the local economy



Responsibilities passed on to municipalities by the province without equivalent financial support



Limited sources of income, being mindful of taxpayers' ability to pay

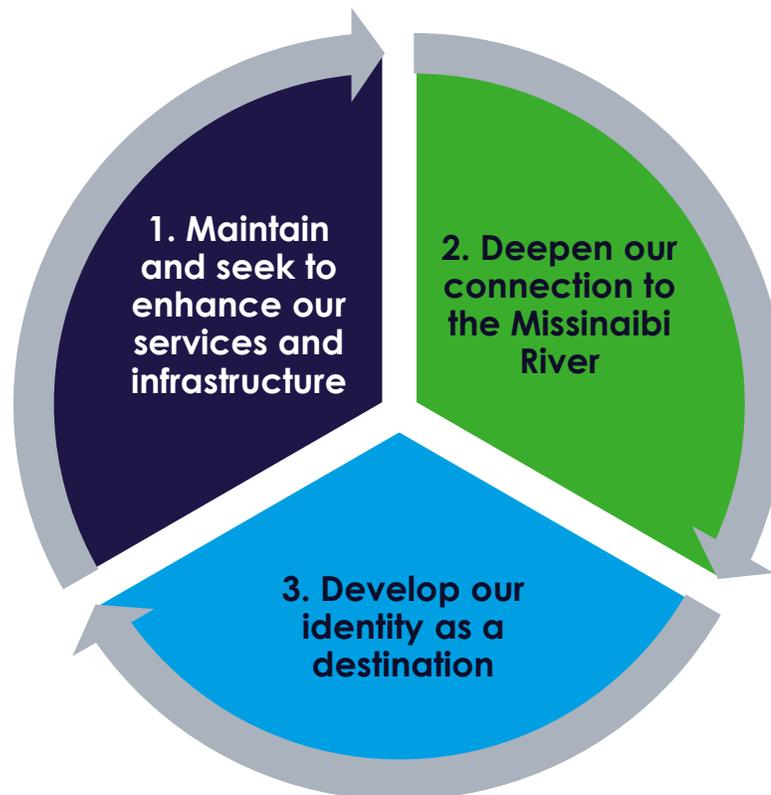
Strategies 2024-2028

Strategic orientations and objectives

The **strategic orientations** and objectives constitute the backbone of strategic planning and represent the major priorities of the organization over the entire duration of the plan.

The **strategic orientations** must make it possible to address the identified issues, while also supporting the achievement of the development vision. At the same time, we find the **underlying objectives** which enable the achievement of each of the identified orientations.

The Mattice – Val Côté strategic plan is therefore broken down into **three interdependent strategic orientations** (presented below) which will guide the development of the municipality over the next five years, along with seven underlying objectives (presented on the next page) to which strategic projects will be associated.



ORIENTATION 1: Maintain and seek to enhance services and infrastructure to make the municipality more attractive for residential and commercial development

Objectives

- 1.1 Stimulate economic development
- 1.2 Increase the housing supply
- 1.3 Maintain and seek to enhance our services and infrastructures

ORIENTATION 2: Deepen the connection between Mattice – Val Côté and its river, take advantage of its position as a halfway point on the canoeists’ route to develop a center of tourist attraction, education and community gathering

Objectives

- 2.1 Improve our hospitality and the interpretation services around the river
- 2.2 Highlight the river

ORIENTATION 3: Develop our identity as a destination to experience the north by creating an atmosphere of warmth, pleasure and wellness, with a franco-ontarian flavor

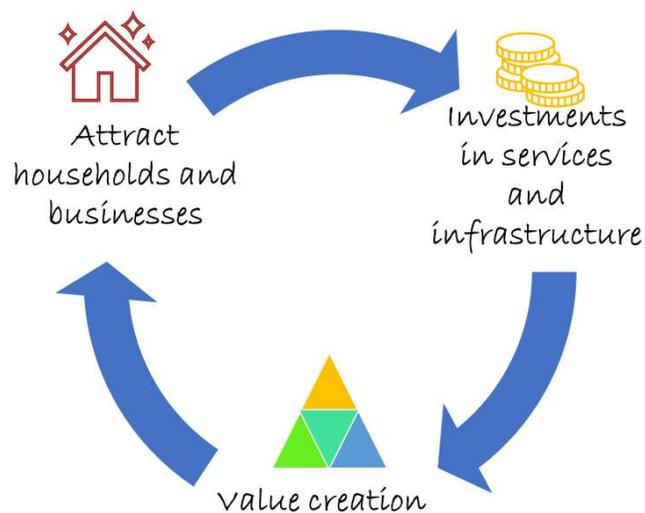
Objectives

- 3.1 Implement and support beautification initiatives
- 3.2 Promote and communicate the Mattice – Val Côté attractions

Courses of action

The courses of action are the concrete projects or actions linked to the defined orientations and the underlying objectives. All the ideas brought forward by the participants in the citizen consultation, by the survey respondents, and by those who took part in the workshops were compiled and taken into consideration. The courses of action found in the table below were selected through a process of evaluating their relevance in relation to the chosen orientations and prioritization, taking into account their feasibility and the resources required for their realization.

In a **revitalization cycle**, investments associated with strategic projects are prioritized according to their leverage effect for attracting households and businesses.



ORIENTATION 1: Maintain and seek to enhance services and infrastructures to make the municipality more attractive for residential and commercial development

Objective 1.1 Stimulate economic development

- a. Prepare an inventory of sites that can accommodate new economic activities to be able to present these opportunities to interested stakeholders.
- b. Start taking steps to attract one or more companies or industries – for example, a forest industry processing company.
- c. Explore the possibility of hiring an economic development intern.
- d. Act as a partner in a regional community agriculture project overseen by the provincial government.
- e. Explore the possibility of developing energy self-sufficiency with a green/renewable energy project.
- f. Make representations to improve the internet network connection, a condition of success for attracting entrepreneurs.

Objective 1.2 Increase the housing supply

- a. Make an inventory of available properties in the villages which can be redeveloped into housing or commercial properties, particularly those with abandoned houses.
- b. Promote the development by a private developer of the tiny-house project for residents.

Objective 1.3 Maintain and seek to enhance our services and infrastructures

- a. Determine, clarify and communicate the vocation of the sports complex as a multifunctional leisure center.
- b. Offer support to local organizations that serve the population of Mattice – Val Côté.

ORIENTATION 2:

Deepen the connection between Mattice - Val Côté and its river, take advantage of its position as a halfway point on the canoeists' route to develop a center of tourist attraction, education and community gathering

Objective 2.1 Improve our hospitality and the interpretation around the river

- a. Continue to rent the kayak equipment required to enjoy the river.
- b. Invite the creation of educational activities for all generations around the river – open a dialogue with the *Nishnawbe Aski Nation* indigenous community as a potential partner.
- c. Encourage school boards to implement an innovative “natural” education project that strengthens young people’s relationship with the river – for example, history or geography lessons taking place around the river.

Objective 2.2 Highlight the river

- a. Undertake discussions aimed at attracting a partner to develop a concept that would promote the river (e.g. brewery, restaurant-inn, souvenir shop).

ORIENTATION 3: Develop our identity as a destination to experience the north by creating an atmosphere of warmth, pleasure and wellness, with a franco-ontarian flavor

Objective 3.1 Implement and support beautification initiatives

- a. Beautify Hwy 11 and the two village centers with decorative elements promoting well-being and the northern character of the municipality – for example, seasonal and festive flags, unique lighting.
- b. Implement a greening plan for the main street and the entrance to the villages (planting trees, flowers, etc.) in order to visually mark the arrival at the village(s).

Objective 3.2 Promote and communicate the Mattice – Val Côté attractions

- a. Develop the territorial brand (the unique signature of the municipality) for the implementation of decorations, to establish a theme.
- b. Promote municipal festivities beyond the region, as an authentic franco-ontarian northern experience.
- c. Develop and promote the attractiveness of the Indian Cemetery site.
- d. Explore the possibility of building an outdoor ice rink.

Conditions for success

In order to encourage buy-in and support for the strategic plan from the population, elected officials of the municipal council and municipal employees, it will be necessary to ensure that the conditions for success are put in place. These will ensure the monitoring of projects and the achievement of the vision.

- Make the plan a reference document for decisions to be taken regarding current projects and opportunities that will arise;
- Disseminate the strategic plan to the population, and invite them to follow the progress of future projects;
- Equip yourself with mechanisms for monitoring the plan in order to be able, if necessary, to readjust orientations or reprioritize projects, particularly with a mid-term evaluation of the plan and work meetings to identify blocking points and monitor the progress of the plan;
- Bring the plan to life by communicating on the progress of projects and highlighting successes (big and small).

