

Project Charter

1.0 Project Identification

Name of Project

Fostering a Vibrant River District

Sponsor

(Accountable) Tim Simmonds and Pamela Coulter

Project Manager

(Responsible) Viveca Gravel

Project Team Members (Responsible or Consult)

Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works & Engineering
Manager or Supervisor, Public Works and Engineering
Eckhard Pastrok, Manager of Parks & Open Spaces
Bradey Carbert, Manager of Corporate Services

Approved Budget

Existing annual operating budgets and project specific capital budgets

2.0 Business Need

The City's Official Plan identifies the River District as the primary economic, commercial, financial, cultural, tourism, and employment hub for Owen Sound and the surrounding region. The area faces challenges related to aging streetscape elements, cleanliness, and perceptions of safety, particularly in connection with homelessness.

3.0 Project Objectives (Purpose)

Revitalize the River District as a safe, vibrant, and welcoming downtown core that reflects its role as the City's cultural and economic heart. Increase foot traffic, perception of safety and decrease vacancy rate.

4.0 Project Scope

In Scope: Coordination, planning, service standards, stakeholder engagement, partnerships.

1. Expand River District Coordinator role to lead and integrate initiatives.
2. Develop a Revitalization Plan for infrastructure renewal.
3. Establish Service Level Standards for cleanliness, safety, amenities, and programming.
4. Update the River District Action Plan (Nov 2025 → implement 2026).
5. Update governing Bylaw to align with revitalization priorities.

Out of Scope: Direct delivery of social services

5.0 Stakeholders

Name	Consult or Inform
Tim Simmonds, City Manager	Consult
Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services	Consult
Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works & Engineering	Consult
Eckhard Pastrik, Manager of Parks & Open Spaces	Consult
Bradey Carbert, Manager of Corporate Services	Consult
Grey County (Housing, Social Services, Paramedics and Economic Development and Tourism)	Consult
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk	Consult
River District Board of Management	Consult
River District Membership	Inform
Social Service Providers (i.e., OShare, United Way)	Consult & Inform
Chamber of Commerce	Inform
Residents in River District	Consult and Inform
Owen Sound Police Services	Consult and Inform

6.0 High Level Deliverables / Milestone Dates

Item	Deliverables / Milestones	Date
1.	Updated River District Action Plan	Q 2 2026
2.	Prepare RFP and retain Landscape Architect	Q 1 2026
3.	River District Revitalization Plan Approval	Q 2 2026
4.	Define Service Level Standards	Q 2 2026
5.	Bylaw Updates	Q 2 2026

7.0 Risks

Severity	Description	Mitigation Tactic
High	Funding Gaps	Pursue external grants, partnerships, phased implementation
High	Competing City Priorities	Assign clear responsibilities, integrate River District initiatives into departmental workplans, and maintain leadership oversight.
Medium	Stakeholder fatigue	Maintain transparent communication, celebrate quick wins, and engage regularly to sustain momentum.
Medium	Safety perceptions lag	Coordinate closely with Police Services and social service agencies to address safety concerns while fostering inclusion.
Medium	Delays in consultant deliverables or project approvals	Set clear timelines, milestone tracking, and early engagement with City departments and external consultants to ensure accountability.
Medium	Public opposition or negative perception	Maintain consistent, transparent communication, provide opportunities for stakeholder input, and highlight visible “quick wins” to build confidence.
Low	Weather or seasonal impacts on construction/maintenance	Schedule works with seasonal considerations in mind and plan for temporary mitigations (e.g., snow removal, temporary lighting).
Low	Insufficient staffing or resource constraints	Clearly define roles, consider temporary staffing support or partnerships, and monitor workloads to prevent bottlenecks.

8.0 Key Results for Success (Must Be Measurable or Quantifiable)

1. Revitalization Plan
 - Plan completed by Q2 2026
 - Includes short/medium/long-term actions + 3+ major streetscape upgrades
2. Infrastructure Renewal
 - 100% asset deficiencies mapped by end of Q1-2026
 - 25% of deficient assets replaced within 3 years
3. Service Level Standards
 - Standards adopted by Q1 2026
 - 90% compliance by end of 2026
4. Bylaw & Property Standards
 - 1 new Bylaw Officer in place by 2026
 - Quarterly audits + published results
 - 15% reduction in complaints by 2027
5. Public Washrooms
 - Options report by Oct 2025 to City Council and Actions stemming from report implemented in 2026.
6. Economic & Cultural Vitality
 - 12+ cultural events/year in River District
 - 10% annual increase in foot traffic
 - 70%+ business satisfaction by 2027
7. Partnership & Engagement
 - 4 stakeholder meetings/year with 80%+ participation
8. Retail and Office Occupancy
 - Reduce total sq.ft commercial vacancy by 10% by 2027