

Amherst
NOVA SCOTIA

Strategic
Plan



2024 - 2028

Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

Mayor's
Message

03

Town Council

04

Chief
Administrative
Officer's
Message

05

Our
Organization

06

Our Vision,
Mission,
Guiding
Principles

07

Our Strategic
Priorities

Economic Prosperity
Vibrant Community

08 - 18

Our Strategic
Initiatives

19

Administrative
Initiatives

Introduction



Amherst is a vibrant town that beautifully blends history, community spirit and a welcoming atmosphere.

Whether you're visiting or calling Amherst your home, we offer a blend of tradition, charm and warmth that leaves a lasting impression.

Amherst is a place where community comes first, and our residents take pride in our history and our future.

This plan is designed to ensure sustainable growth, address challenges, and create a thriving community for current and future residents.

By defining our long term goals and vision, this plan offers direction for development while preserving our community's unique identity and values, as well as fostering collaboration and unity.

Our goal is for Amherst to grow in a way that is sustainable, inclusive and true to our character. By setting and achieving goals, our plan is intended to build pride in our accomplishments and foster optimism for the future.

Mayor's Message



On behalf of all of Amherst Town Council I am very proud to present the Town of Amherst's newly developed strategic plan. As a newly elected Council we took what we heard during the recent municipal election and met with our management team to develop a strategic plan that will guide our actions and work for the next four years.

This Council is committed to build on the strength of our residents, community groups and business community to propel Amherst forward as a growing, dynamic and inclusive community which grows in an environmentally friendly and financially responsible manner.

This plan establishes Economic Prosperity and a Vibrant Community as our two main priorities. The plan includes a number of outcomes and initiatives that are established to work toward these two main priorities. Specific items to be brought forward for Council consideration include a decision on a new community centre, the feasibility of a new transit system, a new communications plan and numerous initiatives to reduce barriers and make our community accessible and equitable to all.

I am very thankful for the hard work and dedication of all members of Council and senior management in developing this strategic plan. Collectively, our team will work collaboratively to realise our vision of a healthy, prosperous, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community in which people of all ages, abilities and cultures are engaged and proud to live, work and play.

Finally, I would like to point out that this is a 'living document' one which can be adjusted and altered as conditions warrant.

Mayor, Robert Small

Town Council



Hal Davidson



Charlie Chambers



Nic Furlong



Dwayne Ripley



Terry McManaman



Kathy Wells

Chief Administrative Officer's Message



This strategic plan outlines the Town's vision, mission and guiding principals that guide our day-to-day collective decision-making processes. Our strategic outcomes define what our goals are for the Town while our strategic initiatives focus our efforts to reach those outcomes. This plan is in effect a road map for staff and Council to guide our path over the next four years.

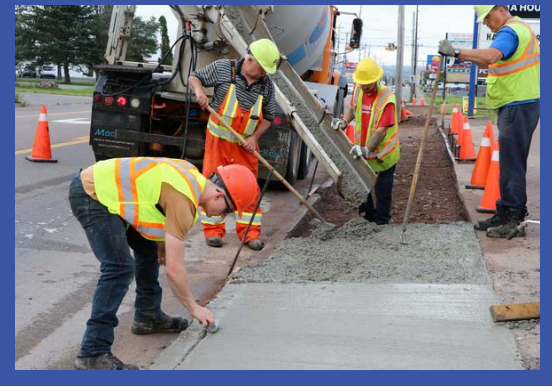
Through this plan we will work collaboratively with all community groups, business and government partners to ensure our strategic priorities of Economic Prosperity and a Vibrant Community are met. In doing this work we will always keep in mind our Mission which is to “provide quality leadership, services, opportunities and resources for the benefit of our citizens, and in support of our growth and development in our community in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.” In addition, we will be guided by our established Principles of Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability, Inclusivity, Evidence-based decision making and Sustainability.

Our administrative priorities continue to focus on improving service delivery, sound financial management and fostering a creative, safe and dynamic workforce dedicated to the wellbeing of our citizens and growth of our community. I am extremely proud of our team of dedicated staff that go above and beyond to keep us safe and secure, that build community partnerships, put on events, and keep the water and traffic flowing.

I am honoured and look forward to working with our Mayor, Council and Town Staff to implement this newly developed strategic plan which will guide the growth of our community in an environmentally friendly, fiscally responsible and socially equitable manner.

Jason MacDonald

Our Organization



Mayor &
Council



CAO



Police

Fire

Human
Resources

Operations

Planning

Finance

Community
Living



Our Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

Vision

Our vision is to be a healthy, prosperous, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable community in which people of all ages, abilities, and cultures are engaged and proud to live, work and play. **See Why We Love It!**

Mission

We provide quality leadership, services, opportunities and resources for the benefit of our citizens, and in support of our growth and development in our community in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.

Guiding Principles

Respect - Integrity - Collaboration - Accountability - Inclusivity - Evidence-based Decision Making - Sustainability



Strategic Priorities

Economic Prosperity



Vibrant Community





Economic Prosperity

Amherst will be a prosperous, growing, vibrant and welcoming community.

*Priority
Outcomes:*



Economic Growth

Opportunities are seized to promote and maximize growth and minimize barriers for new and existing businesses to thrive.



Destination Community

By investing in infrastructure and hosting signature events, we will promote Amherst as the best place to live, work and play showcasing our unique culture, history and location.



Talent Attraction and Retention

Focus on attracting, developing and retaining a skilled and diverse population to meet the needs of Amherst's growing economy.



Housing Availability

We will deliver diverse housing opportunities, along the entire housing spectrum, to meet the needs of a growing workforce and attract new residents.



Environment

Amherst is committed to growing as an environmentally sustainable urban community.

Economic Prosperity Strategic Initiatives

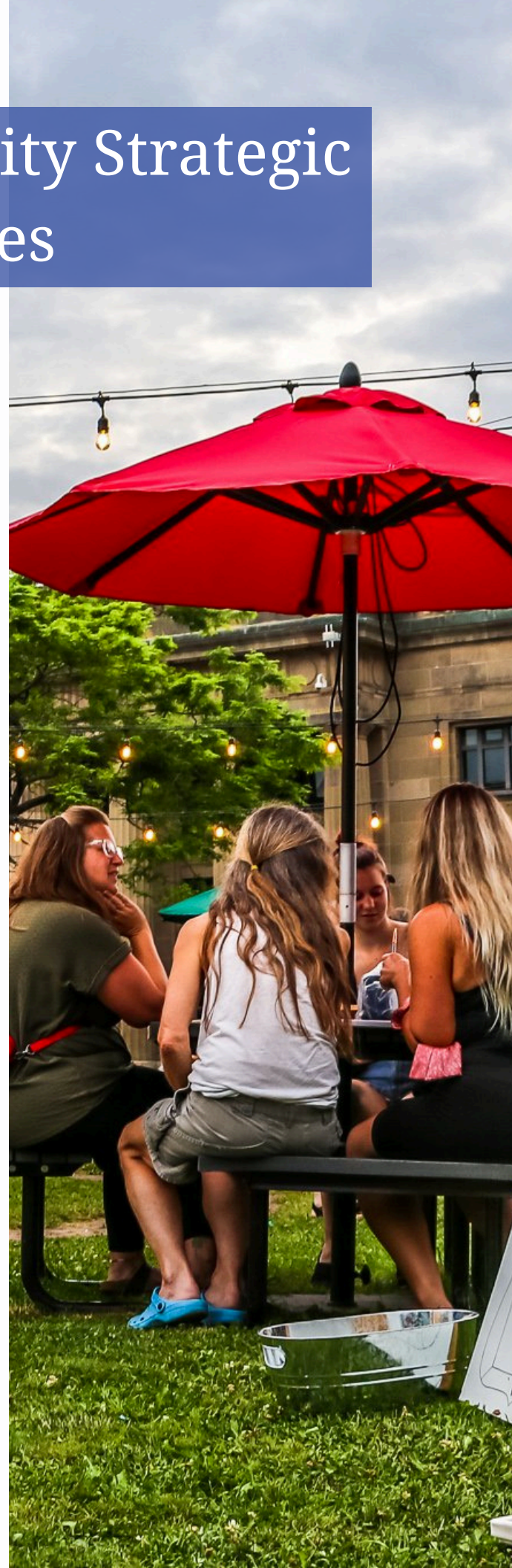
Economic Growth

- Collaborate with our economic development partners to host two economic development forums within four years. October 2025 / 27.
- Develop a plan and decide on the expansion of the industrial park. October 2025.
- Develop new marketing/branding strategies and materials to promote Amherst as an economic destination. December 2025.
- Identify barriers to businesses growth and create opportunities/incentives to overcome such barriers. December 2025.
- Consider environmental factors in all of our development decisions.

Economic Prosperity Strategic Initiatives

Destination Community

- Invest in infrastructure to host inclusive and accessible signature events which attract visitors and residents.
- Develop a business case for a community market with input from partners. June 2025.
- Make a decision on the development of a new community centre (Rink, etc.). March 2025.
- Develop a branding strategy for Amherst as a destination community. December 2025.
- Develop a Town beautification strategy that actively engages community participation. October 2025.





Economic Prosperity Strategic Initiatives

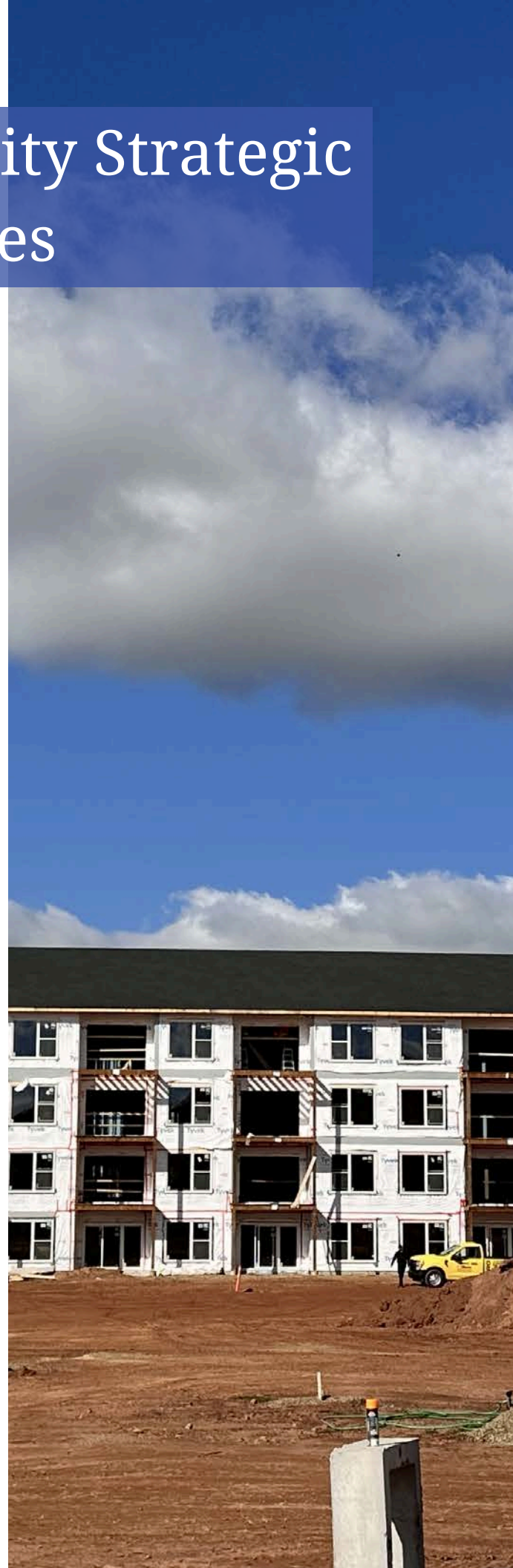
Talent Attraction and Retention

- Develop a strategy to target specific demographics to move to Amherst. December 2025.
- Listen to, and engage youth in the community to keep them here. Develop three new engagement opportunities for youth. June 2025.
- Work with community educators (i.e. NSCC) to provide programs/training customized to the needs of employers and the community. June 2027.
- Work with NS Health recruiters to attract health care professionals. March 2027.

Economic Prosperity Strategic Initiatives

Housing Availability

- Streamline the development process to eliminate red tape and barriers to new developments. Adoption of new Municipal Planning Strategy. September 2025.
- Advertise Amherst strengths and opportunities to business and developers. (i.e. small town advantages, no commute, etc).



Vibrant Community

Amherst will be an engaged, supportive, inclusive, progressive and vibrant community.

Priority Outcomes:



Housing

Housing opportunities are available for residents and newcomers along the entire housing spectrum.



Safe Community

Collaboration with applicable agencies to enhance community safety and services.



Transportation

Foster safe and accessible options for movement within the Town.



Accessible and Inclusive

Infrastructure, programming, information and services are available that reduce barriers and make Amherst accessible and equitable to all.



Engaged Community

We listen to and seek input from all demographics of our community. We continually communicate with the public.

Vibrant Community Strategic Initiatives



Housing

- Facilitate the construction of 400 housing units. December 2027.
- Develop partnerships that will lead to increased housing opportunities along the entire housing spectrum.
- Plan and ensure we can provide quality municipal services for an ever-increasing population.
- Review parks and greenspace usage and allocation to accommodate growth and changing trends. October 2025.
- Support organizations that develop affordable housing.
- Develop a registry of developers to work and communicate with. September 2025.
- Ensure Amherst grows as an environmentally sustainable urban community.

Vibrant Community Strategic Initiatives



Safe Community

- Collaborate with agencies (police, social services, mental health addictions, etc.) to enhance community safety.
- Determine the feasibility of a live fire training solution. March 2025.
- Complete the Amherst Police Department Strategic Plan. June 2025.
- Continue active participation with the Regional Emergency Management Organization.
- Support community initiatives such as neighborhood watch. October 2025.
- Communicate crosswalk safety to pedestrians and motorists. March 2025.
- Ensure long term viability of the Amherst water supply. September 2025.
- Advocate for the protection of the Chignecto Isthmus.

Vibrant Community Strategic Initiatives



Transportation

- Review the Active Transportation Strategy to determine next actions. June 2025
- Determine the feasibility of a transit system ('A' Bus). October 2025.
- Develop a mobility strategy. March 2026.

Vibrant Community Strategic Initiatives



Accessible and Inclusive

- Develop infrastructure, programming, information and services that reduce barriers and make our community accessible and equitable to all.
- Combine IDE and Accessibility Committees and Strategies. April 2025.
- Make a decision on the continued use of brick sidewalks downtown. March 2025.
- Develop a plan for an Accessible Playground. June 2025.
- Prioritize developments that fast-track housing for social equity deserving groups.

Vibrant Community Strategic Initiatives



Engaged Community

- Foster community engagement on a wide range of leisure, social, cultural, recreational issues.
- Seek input from all demographics of the community, particularly newcomers and equity deserving groups.
- Actively promote volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition.
- Build and maintain strong relations with community organizations for festivals and events, explore naming partners.
- Investigate options to form a Volunteer Committee / Liaison / Database / Event Action Group. November 2025.
- Promote environmental initiatives to our town residents and businesses.
- Develop a Communications Plan / Strategy. December 2025.

A person wearing a blue patterned long-sleeve shirt, a grey cap, and a climbing harness is climbing a red rock wall. The wall has several climbing holds. The person is seen from the back, reaching up with their right hand.

Administrative Initiatives

Amherst will be the best place to work.

- Comprehensive human resources plan.
- Internal communications plan.

Amherst will be financially sound.

- Sound financial management.
- Ongoing financial projections.

Commitment to safety.

- Up to date policing standards.
- Ensure adequate training of all staff.
- Commitment to emergency preparedness.

