



**Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole**

Date: **Tuesday, May 22, 2018**
Time: **4:00 pm**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

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**Amherst Town Council
Committee of the Whole
Minutes**

Date: April 23, 2018
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Mayor David Kogon
Deputy Mayor Sheila Christie
Councillor Jason Blanch
Councillor Vince Byrne
Councillor Darrell Jones
Councillor Wayne MacKenzie
Councillor Terry Rhindress

Staff Present Greg Herrett, CAO
Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO
Ian Naylor, Police Chief
Vince Arbing, Treasurer
Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation
Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer
Tom McCoag, Corporate Communications Officer
Shelley Rector, Chief Financial Officer
Kim Jones, Municipal Clerk
Natalie LeBlanc, Deputy Clerk

1. Call to Order - 4:00PM

Mayor Kogon called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Councillor Blanch

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Christie

That the agenda be approved with the additions from Councillor Blanch for the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

1.2 Approval of Minutes

1.2.1 20180319 COW Minutes

Moved By Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded By Councillor Rhindress

That the minutes of the March 19, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

1.2.2 20180326 COW Minutes

Moved By Councillor Jones

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Christie

That the minutes of the March 26, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

2. Presentations

2.1 Fibre Arts Festival

Denise Corey made a presentation on behalf of the Fibre Arts Festival. Copy of the presentation included as part of the post-meeting agenda and the meeting file.

2.2 Cumberland Energy Authority

Hailie Tattrie made a presentation on behalf of the Cumberland Energy Authority. Copy of the presentation included as part of the post-meeting agenda and the meeting file.

3. In Camera

Moved By Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded By Councillor Byrne

That the Committee move to an In Camera session.

MOTION CARRIED

4. Council Direction Requests

4.1 Blair's Lake

Moved By Councillor Blanch

Seconded By Councillor MacKenzie

That Council direct the Recreation Department to engage in research and planning to implement an aspect of Amherst's Recreation Programming at Amherst's property on Blair's Lake. Research would include reaching out to the NS Department of Environment for permits and water quality assessments as well as inviting the County to partner in developing programs, (particularly programs related to Canoeing, Kayaking and Stand Up Paddle boarding.)

MOTION CARRIED

4.2 Mandatory Helmets

Moved By Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded By Councillor Jones

That Council forward approval of the Ice Helmet Police #72300-10 for the Amherst Stadium effective August 15, 2018, to the April 30, 2018 regular meeting of Amherst Town Council.

Against (1): Deputy Mayor Christie
MOTION CARRIED

4.3 CWWF Reservoir Replacement Project - Mobile Generator Purchase

Moved By Councillor Byrne

Seconded By Councillor Blanch

That Council refer approval of the updated purchase price of a new mobile generator, included in the Willow Street Reservoir CWWF project, to the April 30, 2018 regular meeting of Amherst Town Council.

MOTION CARRIED

4.4 North Tyndal Wellfield Source Water Protection Plan

Moved By Councillor MacKenzie

Seconded By Councillor Jones

That Council refer the new North Tyndal Wellfield Water Source Protection Strategy to the April 30, 2018 regular meeting of Council for consideration and approval.

MOTION CARRIED

Due to time constraints, the remaining agenda items, 5. Information Reports and 6. Monthly Reports were deferred to April 30, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Councillor Jones

Seconded by Councillor Byrne

To adjourn the meeting at 6:20 PM and defer Information Items and Monthly Reports to the April 30, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Kimberlee Jones
Municipal Clerk

David Kogon, MD
Mayor

**Amherst Town Council
Committee of the Whole
Minutes**

Date: April 30, 2018
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Mayor David Kogon
Deputy Mayor Sheila Christie
Councillor Jason Blanch
Councillor Darrell Jones
Councillor Wayne MacKenzie
Councillor Terry Rhindress

Members Absent Councillor Vince Byrne

Staff Present Greg Herrett, CAO
Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO
Ian Naylor, Police Chief
Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation
Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer
Tom McCoag, Corporate Communications Officer
Andrew Fisher, Manager of Planning & Strategic Initiatives
Shelley Rector, Chief Financial Officer
Kim Jones, Municipal Clerk
Natalie LeBlanc, Deputy Clerk

Staff Absent Greg Jones, Fire Chief

1. Call to Order

Mayor Kogon called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Councillor Jones

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Christie

That the agenda be approved with addition of 2.2a) PACE Program.

MOTION CARRIED

2. Council Direction Requests

2.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

Moved By Councillor Blanch

Seconded By Councillor Jones

That Council direct staff to develop a policy establishing the use of territorial acknowledgements at the beginning of all Town of Amherst meetings and gatherings. This policy will include the exact acknowledgment being read and the specific times and locations it would be read.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Community Solar Program

Moved By Councillor Blanch

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Christie

That Council direct staff to connect with the Cumberland Energy Authority to explore the possibility of having the Town of Amherst be included in their application to the NS Department of Energy's Solar for Community Buildings Program, and further to this that staff research the PACE Program.

MOTION CARRIED

3. Information Items

3.1 Quarterly Procurement Report

Information item; no direction given or action required.

3.2 Mill Street

Information item; CAO to respond to the letter in writing.

4. Monthly Reports

4.1 Corporate Services

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.2 Operations

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.3 Police Services

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.4 Recreation

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.5 Fire Services

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.6 Planning & Strategic Initiatives

Information item; no direction given or action required.

4.7 Economic Development

Information item; no direction given or action required.

5. Adjournment

**Moved By Councillor Jones
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Christie
To adjourn the meeting at 6:40 PM.**

MOTION CARRIED

Kimberlee Jones
Municipal Clerk

David Kogon, MD
Mayor



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2018089

Date: May 22, 2018

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Shelley Rector, CFO

DATE: May 22, 2018

SUBJECT: **Moving Funds from the Capital Reserve to General Operating Fund**

ORIGIN: Budget and Operating from 2015-16. These funds were provided to the Town in the 2015-16 budget year.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) 3.14(h)

RECOMMENDATION: That Council refer approval the resolution to withdraw \$5,276.79 from the Capital Reserve and transfer to the General Operating Fund.

BACKGROUND: The FRIIP project 01-14—0242 Terrace Street Flooding Mitigation was completed in 2015-16. The Province advanced funds based on expected expenditures for the project. Actual expenditures of \$19,430.41 were less than the budgeted amount by \$5,276.79. The project is complete and there will be no further expense on this project. The Town attempted to return the funds to the Province previously but there were issues with their system. As of April, 2018 everything was resolved and payment can now be accepted.

DISCUSSION: We owe the funds to the Province and need to process the payment of \$5,276.79 as soon as possible. The funds are being held in the Capital Reserve Fund and there is no bottom line impact to the Town. This is very simply a “housekeeping” issue.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: No additional cost to the Town.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: None

ALTERNATIVES: We could withhold payment which may impact our relationship with the Province.

ATTACHMENTS: None

Report prepared by: Shelley Rector
Report and Financial approved by: Shelley Rector





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2018090

Date: May 22, 2018

TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Shelley Rector, CFO

DATE: May 22, 2018

SUBJECT: **Moving Funds from Operating Reserve to General Capital Fund**

ORIGIN: Budget and Operating from 2016-17 carried forward to year end 2017-18.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) 3.16(d)

RECOMMENDATION: That Council refer approval of the resolution to withdraw \$619,645 from the Operating Reserve and transfer it to the General Capital fund for the 2016/17 Community Credit Union Business Information Center and Mill Street Capital Projects effective March 31, 2018.

BACKGROUND: At March 31, 2017 there were two projects that had long term debt as part of their funding sources on the capital budget, these projects were:

• Community Credit Union Business Information Center	\$470,314
• Mill Street	\$149,331
Total	\$619,645

For year-end purposes these projects were bridge financed with long term debt anticipated to be borrowed in the fall of 2017.

The surplus at March 31, 2017 for sewer was \$95,356 and general was \$682,380 for a total overall surplus of \$777,736. The surplus funds were transferred to Operating Reserve in a separate G/L named Reserve – surplus funds.

In September/October, 2017 a decision was made to not participate in the fall debenture issuance for the CCUBIC and Mill St projects. Since our surplus was significant enough to cover the capital costs of these two projects and still have funds left over, we decided not to borrow.

As we did not borrow, these projects are currently in the General Capital fund not fully funded. We need a resolution from Council to withdraw the funds from Operating Reserve and transfer to the General Capital fund.

DISCUSSION: We currently have projects in our General Capital Fund which are not fully funded. This resolution would allow us to ensure proper matching of the funds with the expenditures before the audit of the 2017-18 fiscal year commences.



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: By financing the projects from surplus funds, it allows the Town to save approximately \$210,000 in interest that would be paid if the debt were financed over a fifteen year period through the Municipal Finance Corporation. In addition, paying cash for these projects from the Operating Reserve is a furtherance of our long term strategy to avoid debt where possible.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: None

ALTERNATIVES: Leave the projects unfunded another year. May result in issues during the audit.

ATTACHMENTS: None

Report prepared by: Shelley Rector
Report and Financial approved by: Shelley Rector

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council
From: Councillor Jones
Date: May 22, 2018
Subject: Senior Walking Time

It has been brought to my attention that we should have a walking time specifically designated at the stadium walking track for seniors and people who use walkers.

When the weather conditions are unsuitable, it is difficult for the aging population to find a safe destination where they can exercise that does not cost them anything. It would also benefit this population if there was transportation arranged for them to and from the stadium. Most of our seniors are on fixed incomes and have difficulty buying groceries or paying for cabs to get to appointments and paying for transportation to go somewhere for exercise would not be a priority. Even a trial period of providing transportation for 10-12 people to see if there is interest. Community partners who work with this age group could assist with finding people who might enjoy getting out. As well, they would need assistance in getting comfortable with walking through the doors and to the elevator. The duration could be 60 minutes, maybe three times a week. If Town officials wanted to develop a social time afterwards, this would also give seniors who are isolated a chance to socialize and meet new people.

MOTION

I move that Council direct staff to investigate a plan, in cooperation with our community partners, as to the feasibility of implementing a Senior Walking Program at the Amherst Stadium, and report back to Council in June.

TOWN OF AMHERST



Crosswalk Review

Introduction

There are currently 177 crosswalks within the Town of Amherst. Requests for additional crosswalks or improvements to existing pedestrian crossing controls are reviewed by the local Traffic Authority. The Traffic Authority for the Town is the Chief of Police. Section 90(1) of the Motor Vehicle Act provides the authority for the Traffic Authority to “...establish and designate and may maintain, or cause to be maintained, by appropriate devices, marks or lines upon the surface of the highways, crosswalks at intersections where, in their opinion, there is particular danger to pedestrians crossing the highway, and at such other places they may deem necessary.”

In 2017 during the review of a request for a crosswalk, it became clear there was a lack of consistency in application of pedestrian crossings within the Town. The Traffic Authority was tasked by Council to conduct a review of the current process to oversee the application of pedestrian crossing controls, the process used to assess requests for crosswalks and provide a report to Council with findings and recommendations. Upon presentation to Council the process would seek public engagement and feedback.

A Crosswalk Review Committee was subsequently formed. Members of the Committee were Chief Ian Naylor, S/Sgt Scott White, Aaron Bourgeois Public Works Operations Manager, and Brandon Leblanc. (Brandon Leblanc is an engineering student enrolled at Universite de Moncton, employed with the TOA during the summer of 2017)

OBJECTIVES

The Committee was to assess the existing crosswalks within the Town and provide recommendations on the retention, removal, installation of new crosswalks, and the type of pedestrian controls. The Committee was responsible to develop a set of criteria based on best practices. The criteria is to take into consideration local priorities, values, and goals.

PROCESS

Each location was viewed through a site visit and through the use of Google Maps. An evaluation sheet was completed for each location. Data collected by the evaluation sheets included description of the location, # of lanes, speed limit, vehicle and pedestrian volume estimates, school zone (Y/N), markings and signage.

The committee assessed each location using the data collected, the *Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide*, and the criteria developed by the committee.

Legislation – the Motor Vehicle Act

Defining a Crosswalk

A crosswalk is defined by the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act as “*that portion of the roadway ordinarily included within the prolongation or the connection of curb lines and property lines at intersections or any other portion of a roadway clearly indicated for pedestrian crossings by lines or other markings on the surface.*” It can be interpreted from this definition and Section 125 of the ACT “unmarked” **crosswalks exist at every intersection** and that pedestrians have the right of way in these locations.

Despite the provision that crosswalks exist at every intersection, there are areas where additional devices and markings are helpful, both to draw driver attention to a crosswalk and to encourage pedestrians to cross at a preferred location.

Section 125 – Pedestrian and Vehicle Rights of Way

125 (1) Where pedestrian movements are not controlled by traffic signals,

- (a) the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian lawfully within a crosswalk or stopped facing a crosswalk;
or
- (b) where the traffic on a highway is divided into separate roadways by a median, the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian lawfully within a crosswalk or stopped facing the crosswalk on the roadway on which the vehicle is travelling.

(2) Where a vehicle has stopped at a crosswalk to yield to a pedestrian pursuant to subsection (1), it is an offence for the driver of any other vehicle approaching from the rear to overtake and pass the stopped vehicle.

(3) A pedestrian shall not leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle that is so closely approaching that it is impractical for the driver of the vehicle to stop.

(4) Where a pedestrian is crossing a roadway at a crosswalk that has a pedestrian-activated beacon, the pedestrian shall not leave a curb or other place of safety unless the pedestrian-activated beacon has been activated.

(5) A pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than within a crosswalk shall yield the right of way to vehicles upon the roadway.

(6) This Section does not relieve a pedestrian or a driver of a vehicle from the duty to exercise due care. 2007, c. 45, s. 9.

Section 125 sets out the following requirements for drivers and pedestrians:

Drivers:

- Stop for pedestrians crossing a crosswalk or stopped at a crosswalk waiting to cross.
- The Act recognizes there will be times when it is impractical for the driver to stop the vehicle is due to close proximity when a pedestrian first arrives at the crosswalk.







Pedestrians:

- Have a responsibility to assess whether an approaching vehicle is so close it is impractical for the driver of the vehicle to stop. If so they shall not walk into the path of the vehicle.
- Where a pedestrian walk light, amber flashing lights, or other "*pedestrian-activated beacon*" is present they shall not cross at a crosswalk unless it is activated.
- May cross a street at any location where there is no crosswalk but must yield the right of way to approaching vehicles. It is a common belief that unless you cross a street at an intersection you are jay walking. This is incorrect. If you can cross without requiring a vehicle to slow down, stop or swerve to avoid you can legally cross the street.

Regulatory Signage



Uniform use of regulatory signs is very important to notify the driver of the presence of a marked crosswalk. These signs are detailed in the Nova Scotia Traffic Signs Regulations and are shown below. To ensure uniformity and consistency, the use of regulatory signs for crosswalks other than those shown below is not permitted.

Table 2: Regulatory Signs

		The <i>Pedestrian Crosswalk</i> sign (RA-4) is black on white and is used to indicate the location of a pedestrian crosswalk. The sign is installed on both sides of the road (RA-4L on the left side, RA-4R on the right side) such that the pedestrian symbol on each sign is walking toward the centre of the road. On two-way roads, the signs are mounted back-to-back such that they appear the same from each approach.
		The <i>School Crosswalk</i> sign (RA-3) is black on white and is used to indicate the location of a school crosswalk. The sign is installed on both sides of the road (RA-3L on the left side, RA-3R on the right side) such that the pedestrian symbol on each sign is walking toward the centre of the road. On two-way roads, the signs are mounted back-to-back such that they appear the same from each approach.
		The <i>Pedestrian Crosswalk overhead</i> sign (RA-5) is white on black and is used to indicate the location of a pedestrian crosswalk in areas where shoulder mounted signs alone are not considered to be adequate. Two signs are installed for each crosswalk, centered over the approach lane. These signs are internally illuminated and also cast down-lighting positioned just ahead of the crosswalk area for each vehicular approach to illuminate pedestrians.

WARNING SIGNS

The Warning signs used for crosswalks in Nova Scotia are as follows:

		The <i>Pedestrian Crosswalk Ahead</i> sign (WC-2) is black on yellow and is typically installed where there is limited visibility of the crosswalk area or in advance of a crosswalk where overhead signs are used. Normally, only the WC-2R sign is installed on right side of the road such that the pedestrian symbol on the sign is walking toward the centre of the road. On one-way or divided streets, the WC-2L may also be installed on the left side or in the median.
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Criteria

“A complete street is one that adequately provides for all road users, including bicyclist, pedestrians, transit riders and motorists, to the extent appropriate to the function and context of the street. Knowing and understanding desire lines (i.e., the walking paths that pedestrians will choose from an origin to a selected destination) that are typically created by land use type and location, roadway cross section and geometry, and traffic control devices can lead to effective and safer management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.”¹

A general criteria for all crosswalks can be summarized as follows:

- A marked crosswalk is deemed required where traffic volumes are so high that there are not enough gaps in the traffic stream to allow pedestrians to cross safely in a timely manner.
- Marked crosswalks are not installed at locations with restricted sight distance or in close proximity to signalized intersections.
- Mid-block crosswalks are installed only when absolutely necessary.

The committee developed a set of criteria which was used in this review, and the committee is recommending it be used by the Traffic Authority as a decision support tool going forward.

The **Transportation Association of Canada (TAC)** “*Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide*”, was referenced in the development of the criteria.

TAC is a not-for-profit membership association. The TAC does not set standards; establish regulations or work to influence government policy. The information provided in the Guide is not mandated requirements; it is recommended guidelines developed through the review of best practices.

The main objective of the guide is to promote uniformity across the country with respect to the approach used in the provisions of pedestrian crossing control. This is done through the development of a decision support tool to assist in the decision making process when:

1. Establishing the need for controlling the traffic to enable pedestrians to cross the roadway safely.
2. Identifying the type of traffic control device that would be most suitable for the location.

The TAC Guide provides a set of **seven guiding principles** to assist the decision-making process. **The goal is that when providing pedestrian crossing control, the professional will choose the device that meets all or most of these guiding principles.**

While safety of all road users is the paramount goal, professionals are often challenged to find **the balance among the guiding principles when designing the road systems.**

¹ TAC Pedestrian Control Guide 2012

It is recommended that the guiding principles be met during the decision-making process, while still taking into considerations the **priorities, values, and specific goals of each jurisdiction.**

7 - Guiding Principles²

Safety - This is the key objective in providing pedestrian crossing control and other supporting facilities and devices. It is fundamental that the road system protect pedestrians and other vulnerable road users by achieving a high level of compliance from drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians, and by minimizing pedestrian exposure to vehicular traffic. To address pedestrian control problems, it is important to understand their characteristics and the potential role of pedestrian crossing control devices in collision prevention.

Delay – Delay experienced by pedestrians attempting to cross the road should be carefully managed. As pedestrian delay increases, the likelihood of pedestrians making risky or non-compliant crossings also increases. This reduces the efficiency and safety of crossing for both pedestrians and vehicle occupants. Pedestrian delay increases as traffic volume increases because crossing opportunities become less frequent.

Equity – The demographics of the pedestrian population as well as the mix of road users at different time periods should be considered, and crossing facilities and control devices should be designed accordingly. As the population changes, a “design pedestrian” should be considered to ensure the accessibility of all road users and not only those with good visual, mental, and physical capabilities. The design pedestrian will determine the walking and crossing speeds for the planning and design of these facilities. Furthermore, establishing equal access to the system by providing for the movement of people as for vehicular traffic is fundamental.

Expectancy - The presence of a pedestrian crossing system should not violate driver expectancy, thereby increasing the likelihood of drivers responding to situations correctly and quickly. The crossing location and any waiting or crossing pedestrian should be clearly visible. In the event that driver expectancy is not met, driver workload and visual limitations may result in drivers not noticing a pedestrian until it is too late. The positive guidance approach should be used in design, considering driver limitations and expectations. This approach has four traits: primacy (signs are placed according to the importance of their information, and in such a way as to present the driver with information when and where it is essential); spreading (information is given in small amounts to reduce the information load on the driver); coding (color and shape coding of traffic signs); and redundancy (information is repeated)

Consistency - The approach to pedestrian crossing facilities and control should be consistent and uniform across the transportation system. Consistency helps ensure that installations and devices are recognized, comprehended, and used effectively by all road users.

² TAC Pedestrian Control Guide 2012

Connectivity - Effective crossing opportunities should be provided to ensure system connectivity for pedestrians, while considering driver workload and expectation, proximity to other crossings, and the safety of pedestrians. Facilitating connectivity between crosswalks and sidewalks, and/or trail networks involves understanding and monitoring “*pedestrian desire lines*”, which evolve as a function of land use, the location of pedestrian generators and attractors, and **proximity to existing crossing facilities**. (emphasis added)

“Pedestrian Desire Line: Preferred pedestrian travel routes based on convenience of movement from one location to another. These are affected by local land uses like homes, schools, parks, commercial establishments, and others.”

Pragmatism – Consider the practical issues or consequences associated with the provision of pedestrian crossing control. The pragmatic selection of pedestrian crossing control devices involves consideration of costs, effectiveness of the device in local conditions, ease of installation and maintenance of the device, particularly in winter, when maintenance due to snow and ice can be challenging. The professional must realize that when a device is provided it should be functional year-round, unless it is intended to be used only temporarily.

Local Criteria

The following charts list the local criteria used to help guide the assessment process to determine the need for a pedestrian crossing control. Each criteria has been assigned a letter or number. An explanation is provided for each criteria and the applicable “*guiding principle(s)*” is listed in **bold**.

The first chart lists criteria which may support a pedestrian crossing control, while the second lists criteria which may NOT support a pedestrian crossing control.

CRITERIA TO RETAIN/INSTALL A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING CONTROL

A.	Through highway joining sidewalks	Connectivity. Required to cross a street which is through highway (no Stop or Yield sign) to continue accessing the sidewalk. i.e. Rupert @ Agnew, Regent @ Agnew, Lusby St @
B.	Senior’s facility	Equity. Recognition of increased mobility issues in seniors which may require additional time to cross a street, i.e. – Centennial Villa
C.	Youth facility	Equity. Children/youth are higher risk pedestrians. Locations designed/used for events for children/youth see an increased number of children/youth, along with an increase of vehicle traffic during events, which in turn increases the pedestrian crossing risk. (YMCA, Little League, Sponge Park, Splash Park)
D.	School Zone	Equity. Similar to C above. Significant pedestrian and vehicle volumes at start and end of school day. The “School Zone” may include more than the area within the school zone signage. Each school has been assessed to determine the area to be designated.
E	Event Site (within designated radius)	Safety. Significant pedestrian and vehicle volumes at locations where events are held can increase pedestrian risk. Locations considered include the Amherst Stadium, Curling Club, Little League field.

F	High vehicle volumes	Delay. Locations with the highest traffic volumes. Downtown core, South Albion St, Robert Angus Drive. High vehicle volumes can increase pedestrian delays.
G	Multi Lane or complex intersections	Safety. The more complex an intersection the more distractions for drivers and pedestrians. The more distractions the greater the risk for errors. Examples: 6 way stop @ East Pleasant/Croft. Robert Angus Dr @ Church. (3 lanes on Robert Angus Dr. flashing red light and stop signs.)
H	3 and 4 Way Stops to connect sidewalks	Connectivity. Crosswalks installed to join sidewalks. Must be sidewalk at each end. i.e. Hickman @ Cornwall, Cornwall @ Anson, Spring @ Church, Spring @ Willow.
I	Designated Downtown Zone	Connectivity. Crosswalks in the downtown do meet the minimum pedestrian and vehicle volumes. While some crosswalks are less than 100 meters from another traffic control device, (traffic control device includes other crosswalks, and controlled intersections) the historical pedestrian desire lines support a need for system connectivity. Church @ Prince Arthur Church @ Victoria Victoria @ Lawrence Victoria @ Havelock Victoria @ TD Trust

J	Traffic lights with Pedestrian Control Lights	Consistency. Crosswalks are installed at all locations with pedestrian control lights.
K	Pedestrian volumes (<i>15 adult units per hour or 100 over 7 hours</i>)	Consistency/Delay. The TAC guide provides a “ <i>Decision Support Tool</i> ” (DST) to assist in assessing whether a site is a candidate for a pedestrian crossing. The DST provides recommended minimums for pedestrian and vehicle volumes.
L	Vehicle volumes (<i>1,500 per day</i>)	Consistency/Delay. The TAC guide provides a “ <i>Decision Support Tool</i> ” (DST) to assist in assessing whether a site is a candidate for a pedestrian crossing. The DST provides recommended minimums for pedestrian and vehicle volumes.

CRITERIA TO REMOVE EXISTING OR DENY REQUEST FOR A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING CONTROL

1.	Crosswalk ends at curb. No sidewalk	Connectivity. Crosswalk that starts at a sidewalk but ends at the side of the road.
2.	Pedestrian volumes (<i>less than 15 adult units per hour or 100 over 7 hours</i>)	Delay. The TAC guide provides a “ <i>Decision Support Tool</i> ” (DST) to assist in assessing whether a site is a candidate for a pedestrian crossing. The DST provides recommended minimums for pedestrian and vehicle volumes.

3.	Vehicle volumes (<i>less than 1,500 per day</i>)	Delay. The TAC guide provides a “ <i>Decision Support Tool</i> ” (DST) to assist in assessing whether a site is a candidate for a pedestrian crossing. The DST provides recommended minimums for pedestrian and vehicle volumes.
4.	Proximity within 100 meters of another traffic control device.	Expectancy. The TAC guide recommends a minimum distance between 100 and 200 meters from a crosswalk to another traffic control device. A traffic control device includes a traffic signal or another pedestrian crossing control device.
5.	NOT within school zone.	Safety. Related to item D in the criteria for retention/installation. Special consideration for installing a crosswalk
6.	Mid-block crossing	Expectancy. Crossing on a through highway that is not at an intersection. Mid-block crossings are not recommended. Drivers tend to take note of intersections as there is an expectancy of possible vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
7.	Street being crossed is at an intersection with a through highway and has a Stop or Yield sign.	Consistency. There are a large number of intersections which have a through highway with either a ‘T’ intersection or a 4 way intersection. There is no requirement to have a crosswalk to cross the street that has the traffic control device unless other criteria exist, i.e. within a school zone, event site.

8.	Inconsistent with similar locations	Consistency/Expectancy. “The presence of a pedestrian crossing system should not violate driver expectancy thereby increasing the likelihood of drivers responding to situations correctly and quickly.
9.	Other crossing within reasonable proximity	Connectivity. When crosswalks are in close proximity to one another it may eliminate the connectivity need for one of the locations.
10	Not a street. Entrance to private property or parking lot.	Consistency/Expectancy. Crosswalks are not installed at the entrances of parking lots or private property. Drivers would not expect a crosswalk at these locations and they would be inconsistent with the application within the Town.

Findings and Recommendations

FINDINGS

A total of 177 existing crosswalks were reviewed.

The following issues were identified:

1. Lack of consistency in the application of pedestrian crossings.
2. Some crosswalks actually compromise pedestrian safety.
3. There are locations without crosswalks which meet the criteria developed by the committee.
4. Several of existing crosswalks do not meet the criteria developed by the committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Removal of 67 existing crosswalks
2. Re-location of 1 existing crosswalk
3. Installation of 3 new crosswalks
4. Zebra style crosswalks to be utilized for all crosswalks within close proximity to a school.

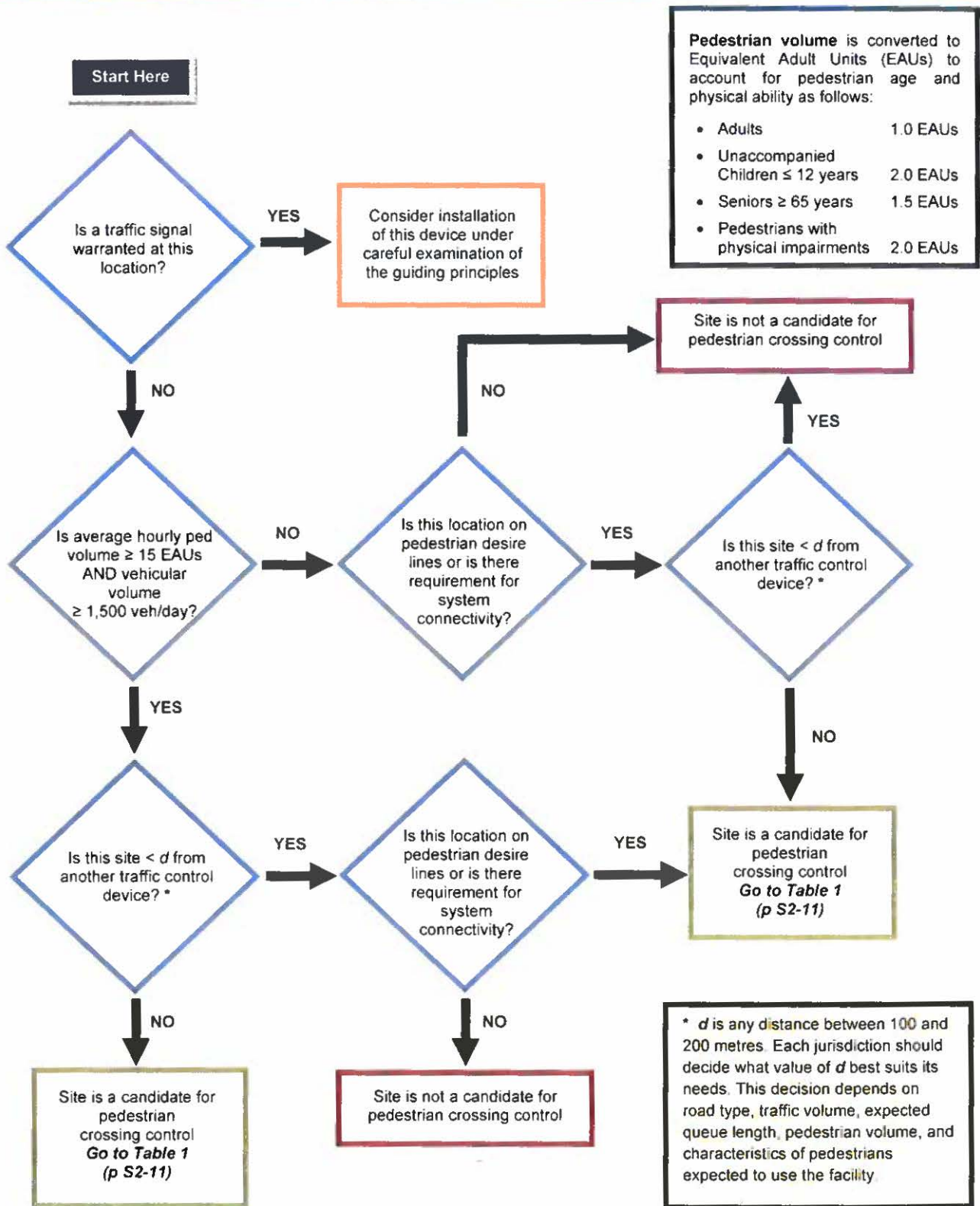


Figure 6: Decision Support Tool – Preliminary assessment.

Crosswalks Recommended to be Removed – May 10, 2018

#	Location	Comments
1	Spring Street @ Regent	1,2,5
2	Lusby @ Victoria	3,5,7,8
4	Victoria @ Mill	2,8,9
5	Terrace St. @ Victoria	2,3,5,7,8
7A	Lawrence @ LaPlanche St. (South side of intersection)	8,5
7B	Lawrence @ LaPlanche St. (North side of intersection)	1,2,5,6,8
8	Lawrence @ Erncliffe	1,2,5,8
9	Lawrence – Midblock by Shear Impressions	2,4,5,6,8
10	LaPlanche – Midblock approx. 30 ft north of Dale St.	2,5,6,8
11	Dale St. @ Eddy	2,3,5,7,8
12	Eddy @ Dale	1,2,3,5,8
13	Copp Ave. @ Victoria	2,3,5,7,8
14	Victoria @ Copp Ave.	2,5,8

#	Location	Comments
28	Agnew @ Regent	2,3,5,7,8
30	Agnew @ Rupert	2,3,5,7,8
39	Queen @ Academy	2,7,8
44	Havelock @ Clifford	1,3,5,8,9
45	Clifford @ Havelock	2,5,7,8
46	Havelock @ Belmont	1,2,5,8
47	Belmont @ Havelock	3,5,8
49	Agnew @ Havelock	2,3,5,7,8
52	Havelock @ Princess	5,8,9
53	Princess @ Havelock	5,7,8
55	King @ Havelock	3,5,7,8
56	Ratchford @ Havelock	3,5,7,8
57	Ratchford @ Acadia	3,5,7,8
59	Acadia @ Four Father's Library	2,5,6,8
60	Prince Arthur @ Acadia X 2	2,5,8,9

#	Location	Comments
61	Acadia @ Prince Arthur	2,4,5,7,8
63	Robie @ Church	3,5,7,8
64	Belmont @ Church	3,5,7,8
66	Clifford @ Church	3,5,7,8
69	Queen @ Church	3,5,7,8
71	Dickey @ Church	3,5,7,8
73	Beacon @ Church	3,5,7,8
80	Church @ East Pleasant	1,3,5,8,9
83	Academy @ East Pleasant	2,3,5,7,8
84	Charles @ East Pleasant	2,3,5,7,8
89 X 2	Croft @ Spring	2 Crosswalks. 1 on north side and 1 on south side of intersection 2,3,5,7,8
95	Albion @ Spring	1,5,8
96	Queen @ Albion	3,5,7,8,
97	Albion @ Queen	1,2,5,8,
101	Ottawa @ South Albion	3,5,7,8

#	Location	Comments
102	Admore @ South Albion	3,5,7,8
103	Edgewood @ South Albion	3,5,7,8
107	Clinton @ South Albion	2,5,7,8
119	Chamberlain @ Newton	1,2,5,8
121	Hickman @ Mission St. x 2	1,9
122	Mission @ Hickman x 2	1,3,9
127	Minto @ Hickman	2,3,5,7,8
128	Hickman @ Minto	2,4,5,9
129	Dundonald @ Hickman	2,3,5,7,8
139	Crescent @ Albion	3,5,7,8
147	Maple @ East Victoria	3,5,7,8
158	Acadia @ Victoria	5,7,8
160	Herbert @ Victoria	3,5,7,8
161/ 162	Private Entrance @ 122/131 East Pleasant	Former sight of Highland View Regional Hospital. 2,3,5,8,10

#	Location	Comments
163 X2	Entrance to Superstore @ South Albion	1st location is beside Tim Horton's. 2nd location is located by the gas station. Has a separate entrance and exit lanes. 5,8,10
165 X6	South Albion private property Entrances, Cumberland Honda, Old Bordertown, Wendy's/Tim Hortons	2 @ Cumberland Honda. 2 @ former Border Town building. 2 @ Tim Horton's 10

New Crosswalks being recommended:

1. Cornwall @ Anson (West side) Criteria: H
2. Croft @ Beacon (south side) Criteria: C,E
3. *Beacon @ Croft x2 (east and west) Criteria: C, E (*would require installation of 2 landing pads)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Kogon and Council
FROM: Shelley Rector, CFO
DATE: May 22, 2018
SUBJECT: Report on Financial Condition Indicators

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Municipal Affairs, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Government and Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), annually compiles municipal indicators that focus on financial matters, administration of the municipality and characteristics of the community called Financial Condition Indicators (FCIs). There were changes made this year to the indicators and the report itself:

1. Revisions to the indicators included:
 - a. removal of Commercial Property Assessment indicator;
 - b. replacing the 5-Year Capital Purchases and 5-Year Contributions indicators with a Combined Reserve indicator;
 - c. changes to the Outstanding Debt indicator to align with outstanding operating borrowing limits per the Municipal Government Act; and
 - d. a minor inclusion of recoveries to Debt Service indicator.
2. The two previous reports, the Financial Condition Index, and the Municipal Profile reports have been combined into one report called the "Municipal Report" which is attached for Council's reference which gives an overall snapshot for each municipality.

It is also worth noting that the numbers used in the report are net of the Town's contribution to Education, Corrections and Housing but include CJSMA.

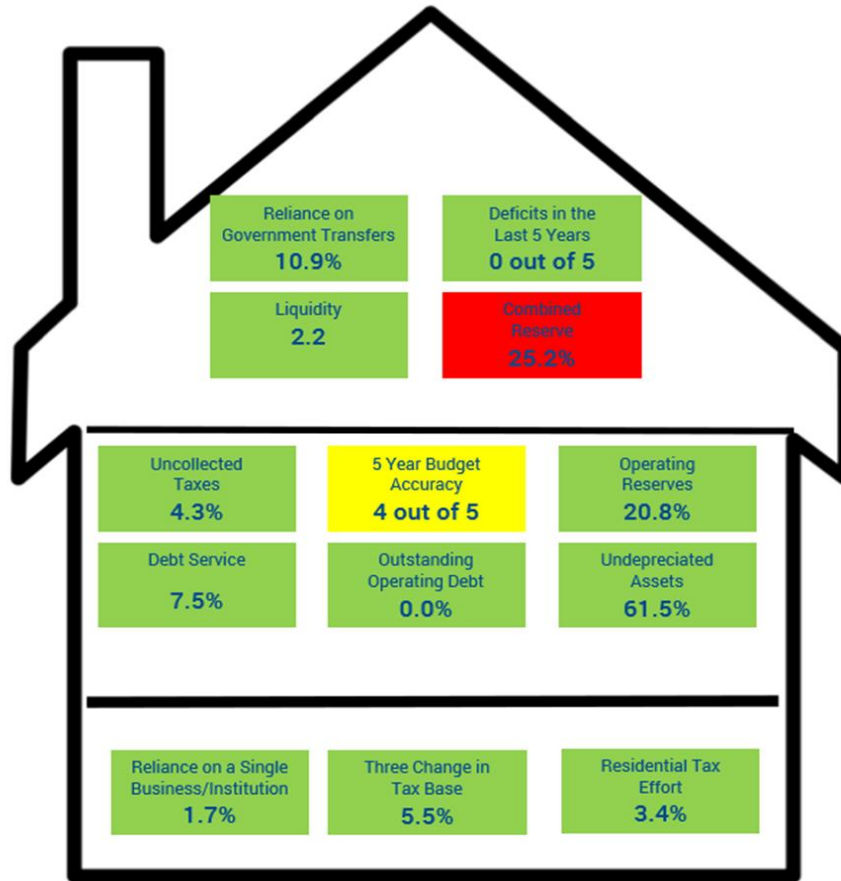
The report examines financial, demographic and administrative indicators to provide insight into the financial condition and health of all Nova Scotia communities. A full copy of the report is attached for your reference.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT FOR AMHERST

The report highlighted Amherst's successes in the areas of liquidity, prudent debt levels, strong operating reserves, effective tax collection and asset management.

It also provided the town with comments on possible improvements in the areas of building capital reserves and in budget accuracy, although it noted that the town has not recorded any deficit in the past five years.

The follow excerpt from the Municipal Report for Amherst (attached) highlights the indicators for Amherst:



To further understand success or focus areas, please refer to page 5 of the report. For detailed results and comparative

The 13 indicators in the report are color coded to indicate overall risk level (low risk is green, moderate risk is yellow and high risk is red).

As it has in the past, the Town of Amherst scored well in the most recent report. It received 11 green indicators, one yellow and one red indicator. The report for the Town of Amherst, as well as other Nova Scotia municipalities, can be found at <https://novascotia.ca/dma/finance/indicators.asp>.

Part of the Town of Amherst's success is due the strong management around finances. For example, the Town maintains and updates 10-year operating projections and a 10-year capital investment plan. This allows for planning and the ability to take advantage of funding from other levels of government when it becomes available.

Other items of Note:

1. Only 4.3% of annual taxes outstanding; and
2. Healthy operating reserves

The lone moderate risk (yellow) indicator on budget accuracy was an indication of a number of recent budget surpluses which mostly resulted from a number of vacant staff positions that have now been filled.

The one indicator that shows high risk relates to combined reserves. This can be better understood when considering the approach to infrastructure investments and related funding. The town follows a strategy of planning for capital investment on a long-term basis, using current year resources (capital from revenue) and the gas tax as the major funding sources. Then when funding from other levels of government becomes available, capital investments are funded using a combination of that funding and a prudent amount of debit, with the term matching the useful life of the assets being put in place.

By following this strategy, the town minimizes the use of the capital reserve and therefore the funding of the reserve as well. Although the combined reserves are less than the threshold, the strategy used by the Town is a sound one and has been implemented in an informed and intentional manner that has allowed for updated infrastructure at minimal cost to the town.

COMPARED TO OTHER TOWNS AND CUMBERLAND NEIGHBORS

Town staff regularly compares Amherst's results with those of other larger towns in the province. While results for Truro are not available, the report scores Amherst favorably with the towns of Bridgewater, New Glasgow and Yarmouth. See the attached summary.

Take for example, the residential tax effort score (an indication of how much of a household's income is required to pay the average tax bill). In Amherst it was 3.4%, which is significantly lower than all of the aforementioned units.

In addition, Amherst continues to have a strong performance within the Cumberland County group.

CONCLUSION

The results for Amherst are very positive and are indicative of the efforts of staff and the management team with the support of council to implement the strategies necessary to ensure the strong financial condition and health of the Town over the long term.

Financial Condition Indicators 4 Year Trend

Updated: Monday, February 12, 2018

Mun Name	Reporting Year	Class	REVISED*			Reliance on Government Transfers	Uncollected Taxes	Three-Year Change in Tax Base	Reliance on Single Business/ Institution	Residential Tax Effort	Deficits in the Last 5 Years	# of Budget Accuracy not within + or - 5%	Liquidity	Operating Reserves**	Debt Service	Outstanding Operating Debt	Undepreciated Assets	Combined Op & Cap Reserves**	
			Red	Yellow	Green														
Amherst	2014	Town	0	2	9	● 11.1%	● 1.5%	● 8.9%	● 2.5%	● 3.4%	●	●	0	● 1.1	● 11.5%	● 6.0%	N/A	● 64.2%	N/A
Amherst	2015	Town	0	1	10	● 11.1%	● 3.6%	● 9.3%	● 2.1%	● 3.9%	●	●	0	● 1.8	● 10.8%	● 8.0%	N/A	● 63.0%	N/A
Amherst	2016	Town	0	1	10	● 11.0%	● 3.0%	● 6.9%	● 1.8%	● 3.9%	●	●	0	● 1.8	● 12.6%	● 7.4%	N/A	● 62.5%	N/A
Amherst	2017	Town	1	1	11	● 10.9%	● 4.3%	● 5.5%	● 1.7%	● 3.4%	●	●	1	● 2.2	● 20.8%	● 7.5%	● 0.0%	● 61.5%	● 25.2%

NEW - Yellow Threshold - Same for all municipal units	15 to 20%	10% to 15%	Less than actual change in CPI	10 to 15%	4 to 6%	1 or more ①	1	1 to 1.5	10 to 20%	10 to 15%	25 to 50%	35 to 50%	30 to 40%
NEW - Red Threshold - Same for all municipal units	Greater than 20%	Greater than 15%	Negative Growth	Greater than 15%	Greater than 6%	1 or more ②	Greater than 1	Less than 1	Less than 10%	Greater than 15%	Greater than 50%	Less than 35%	Less than 30%

① Yellow if one or more deficits in the last 5 years.

② Red if one or more in the last 2 years with one material (0.5% of Total Operating Expenses) deficit.

* For comparative purposes, we have revised your 2014, 2015 and 2016 indicators to reflect the new risk thresholds.

** Please note the result may not reflect an impact of PSAB related liabilities*** that are recorded only in the consolidated financial statements.

*** The PSAB related liabilities may include but not limited to Pension Liabilities, Landfill Closure and Post Closure Liabilities, or Deferred Gas Tax Revenue.

Peer Towns Financial Condition Indicators for 2016-17

Mun Name	Class	Base Indicators			Structure Indicators							Roof Indicators		
		Reliance on Single Business/ Institution	Three-Year Change in Tax Base	Residential Tax Effort	Uncollected Taxes	# of Budget Accuracy not within + or - 5%	Operating Reserves**	Debt Service	Outstanding Operating Debt	Undepreciated Assets	Reliance on Government Transfers	Deficits in the Last 5 Years	Liquidity	Combined Op & Cap Reserves**
Amherst	Town	1.7%	5.5%	3.4%	4.3%	4	20.8%	7.5%	0.0%	61.5%	10.9%	0	2.2	25.2%
Bridgewater	Town	5.1%	8.7%	4.4%	4.2%	3	20.0%	8.2%	0.0%	51.7%	5.2%	1	2.0	34.7%
New Glasgow	Town	3.2%	7.6%	4.0%	11.3%	5	5.2%	9.8%	23.6%	54.3%	9.0%	0	1.2	8.4%
Truro	Town	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Yellow Red		10% 15%	3% 0%	4% 6%	10% 15%	4 3	20% 10%	10% 15%	25% 50%	50% 35%	15% 20%	1 2	1.5 1.0	40% 30%
Thresholds for Moderate Risk		10 to 15%	Less than actual change in CPI (3% for 2017)	4 to 6%	10% to 15%	4	10 to 20%	10 to 15%	25 to 50%	35 to 50%	15 to 20%	1 or more ^①	1 to 1.5	30 to 40%
Thresholds for High Risk		Greater than 15%	Negative Growth	Greater than 6%	Greater than 15%	Less than 4	Less than 10%	Greater than 15%	Greater than 50%	Less than 35%	Greater than 20%	1 or more ^②	Less than 1	Less than 30%

① Yellow if one or more deficits in the last 5 years.
 ② Red if one or more in the last 2 years with one material (0.5% of Total Operating Expenses) deficit.
 ** The result may not reflect an impact of PSAB related liabilities (e.g. Pension Liabilities, Landfill Closure and Post Closure Liabilities, or Deferred Gas Tax Revenue) that are recorded only in the consolidated financial statements.
 N/A means the municipality did not submit the required information needed to calculate the Financial Condition Indicators.

Cumberland County Financial Condition Indicators for 2016-17

Mun Name	Class	Base Indicators			Structure Indicators							Roof Indicators		
		Reliance on Single Business/ Institution	Three-Year Change in Tax Base	Residential Tax Effort	Uncollected Taxes	# of Budget Accuracy not within + or - 5%	Operating Reserves**	Debt Service	Outstanding Operating Debt	Undepreciated Assets	Reliance on Government Transfers	Deficits in the Last 5 Years	Liquidity	Combined Op & Cap Reserves**
Amherst	Town	1.7%	5.5%	3.4%	4.3%	4	20.8%	7.5%	0.0%	61.5%	10.9%	0	2.2	25.2%
Oxford	Town	24.2%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%	5	14.5%	13.9%	0.0%	51.9%	9.8%	0	1.9	18.5%
Cumberland	Rural	2.3%	12.6%	2.1%	13.7%	4	16.1%	2.9%	14.7%	77.4%	7.7%	2	1.2	38.8%
Yellow Red		10% 15%	3% 0%	4% 6%	10% 15%	4 3	20% 10%	10% 15%	25% 50%	50% 35%	15% 20%	1 2	1.5 1.0	40% 30%
Thresholds for Moderate Risk		10 to 15%	Less than actual change in CPI (3% for 2017)	4 to 6%	10% to 15%	4	10 to 20%	10 to 15%	25 to 50%	35 to 50%	15 to 20%	1 or more ①	1 to 1.5	30 to 40%
Thresholds for High Risk		Greater than 15%	Negative Growth	Greater than 6%	Greater than 15%	Less than 4	Less than 10%	Greater than 15%	Greater than 50%	Less than 35%	Greater than 20%	1 or more ②	Less than 1	Less than 30%

① Yellow if one or more deficits in the last 5 years.

② Red if one or more in the last 2 years with one material (0.5% of Total Operating Expenses) deficit.

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N/A means the municipality did not submit the required information needed to calculate the Financial Condition Indicators.



Municipal Report



Town of Amherst

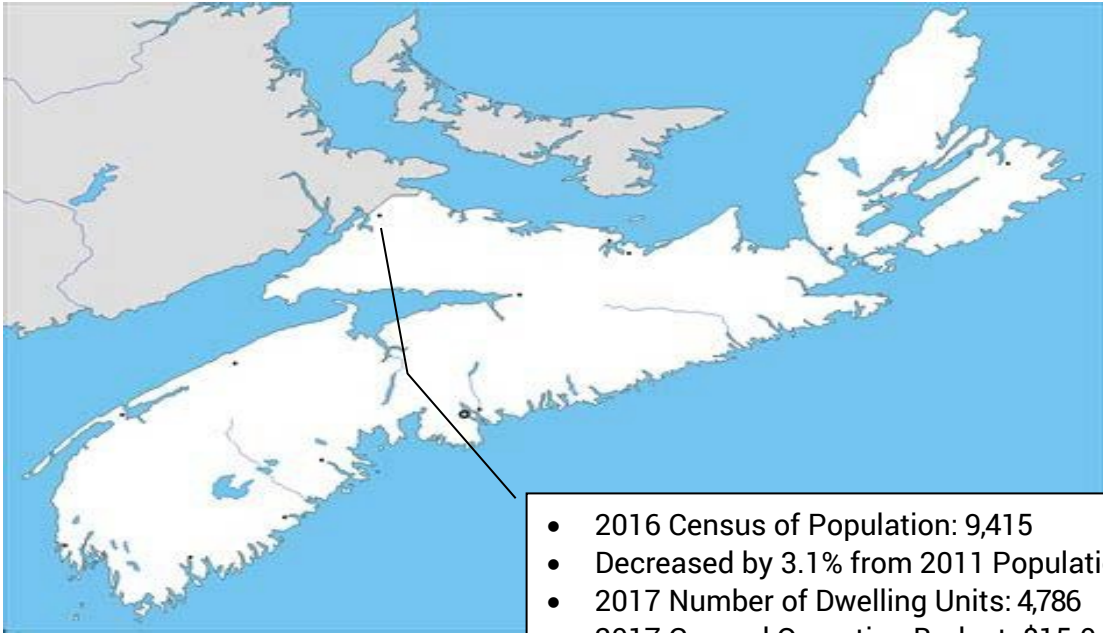
Department of Municipal Affairs

Municipal Profile and
Financial Condition Indicators Results

2017

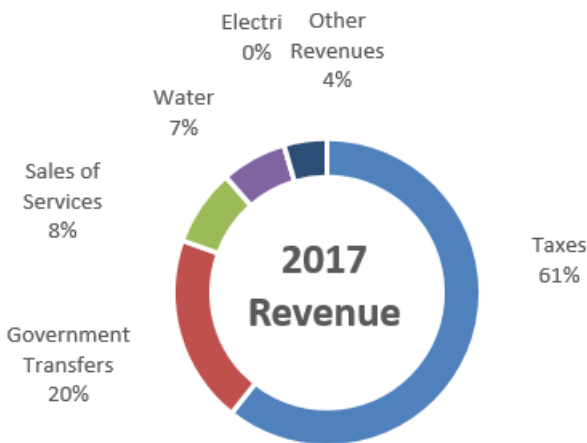
At a Glance

Amherst, is a town in northwestern Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. Amherst is located at the northeast end of the Cumberland Basin, an arm of the Bay of Fundy. Some specifics about the Town are shown below and other general information can be found on page 8.

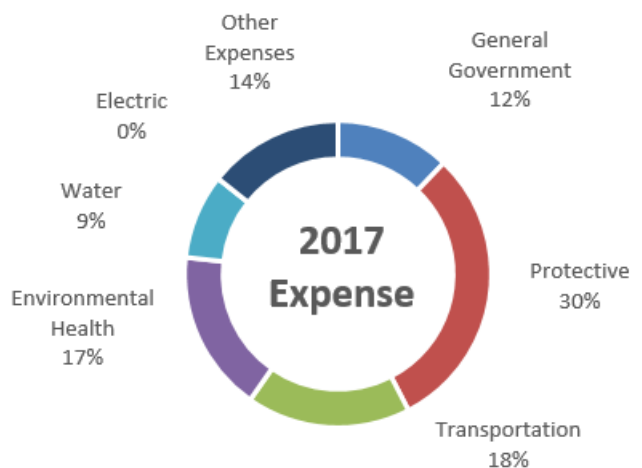


- 2016 Census of Population: 9,415
- Decreased by 3.1% from 2011 Population
- 2017 Number of Dwelling Units: 4,786
- 2017 General Operating Budget: \$15.0 M
- 2017 Consolidated Revenue: \$19.7 M

Financial Highlights



Source: Consolidated Schedule of Revenues (FIR_CR) for the year ended March 31, 2017



Source: Consolidated Schedule of Expenses (FIR_CE) for the year ended March 31, 2017

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Introduction

The Department of Municipal Affairs, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Government and Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), compiles municipal indicators that focus on financial matters, administration of the municipality and characteristics of the community.

Prior to 2017, this information was structured into two separate reports – the Financial Condition Index and the Municipal Profile reports. This report brings together both sets of statistics (financial and demographic) to give an overall snapshot for each municipality.

You can use this report to:

- ▶ better understand the administrative and operational performance of a municipality;
- ▶ better understand key characteristics about the municipality;
- ▶ inform the decision-making process; and
- ▶ help community members better understand the municipality in which they live.

For example

Community members can use the residential tax burden indicator to compare their property taxes with property taxes in other municipalities.

Municipal councilors can use the change in population indicator to understand whether their community's population is growing or declining.

Financial Condition Indicators

The Financial Condition Indicators were developed in collaboration with both the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and AMANS. Thirteen indicators are examined to provide a general picture of municipal financial condition. While the Indicators cannot provide a comprehensive assessment of financial condition, they can provide indication of strengths, trends and risk areas where a municipality should focus.

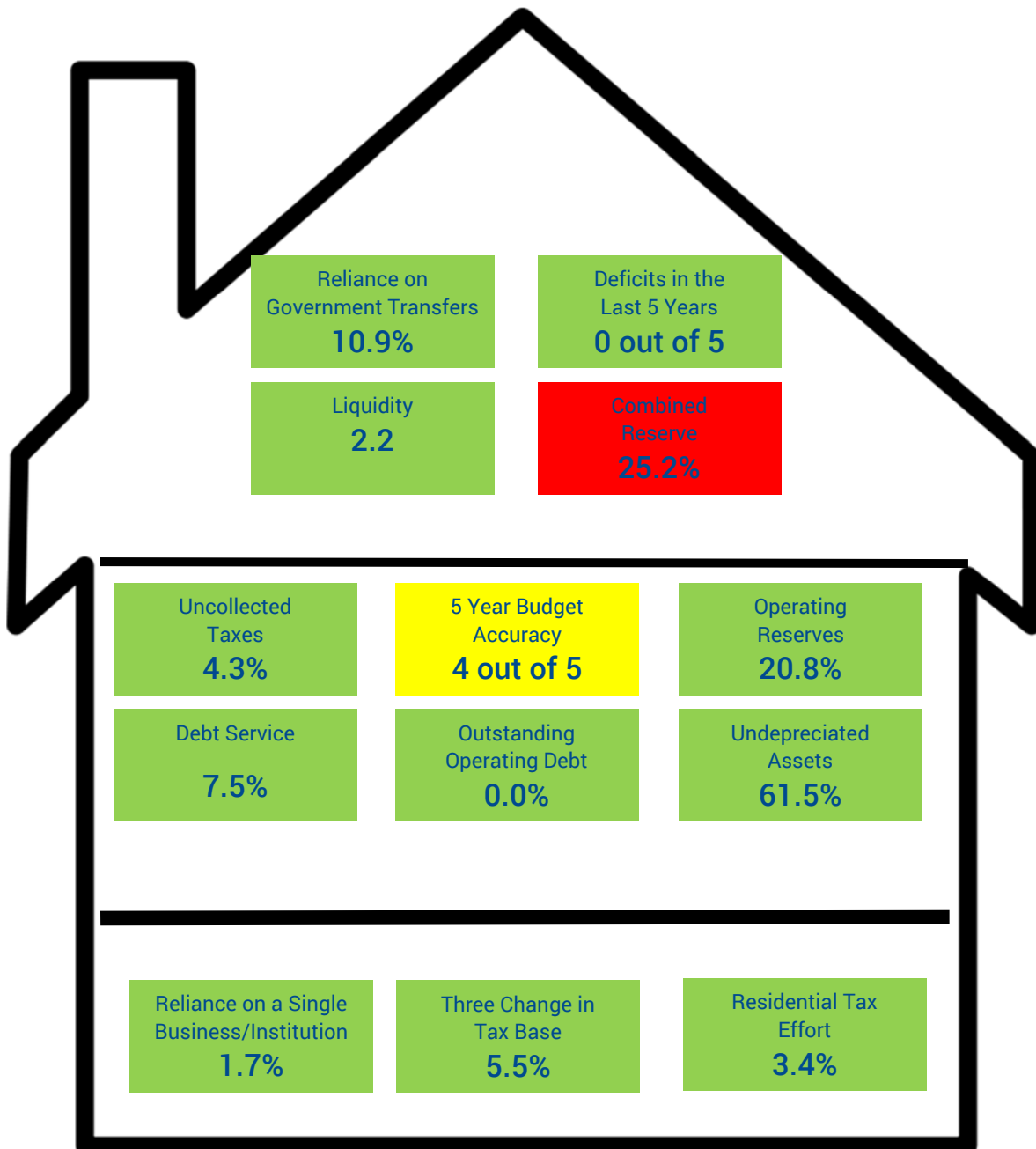
The municipality's general financial condition is graphically represented on the following page by a 'House' format.

- ▶ **Roof** – The key performance indicators are located at the roof or top of the house. Four indicators measure the achievement of the overall objectives for assessing financial health.
- ▶ **Structure** – Indicators located in the middle are key elements that impact the overall financial condition objectives (leading measures).
- ▶ **Base** – The indicators located on the bottom (base) are indicators that although the municipality may not have a direct control over all elements for the indicator, the indicator can have a significant impact on the financial health of the municipality.

Financial Condition Indicators Graph

Reading the Graph

The House graphic presents Indicators scores and are colour coded to indicate overall risk level. (Low risk is green, moderate risk is yellow and high risk is red.) The graph allows users to graphically pinpoint priority areas for actions as well as areas of success.



To further understand success or focus areas, please refer to page 5 of the report. For detailed results and comparative information (prior year and rural average), please refer to page 11.

Highlight from the House Graph

Top Success Areas

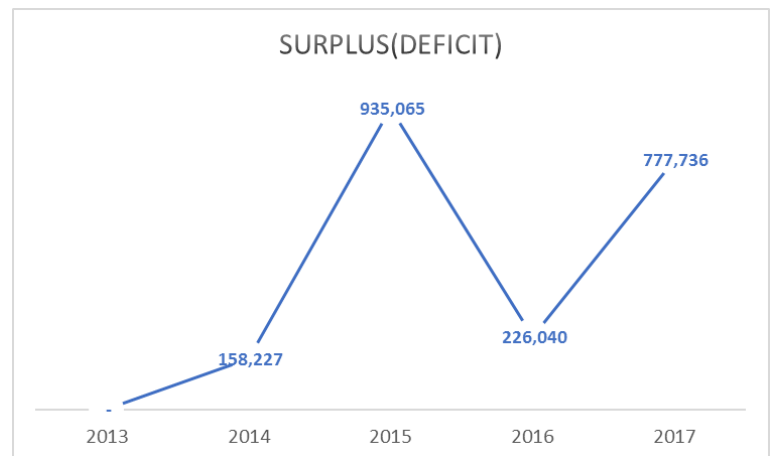
1. Liquidity Position
2. Prudent Debt Level
3. Strong Operating Reserve
4. Effective Tax Collection
5. Asset Management

Top Focus Action Area

1. Building Combined Reserves
2. Budget Accuracy

FCI Key Indicators Trends (The Roof)

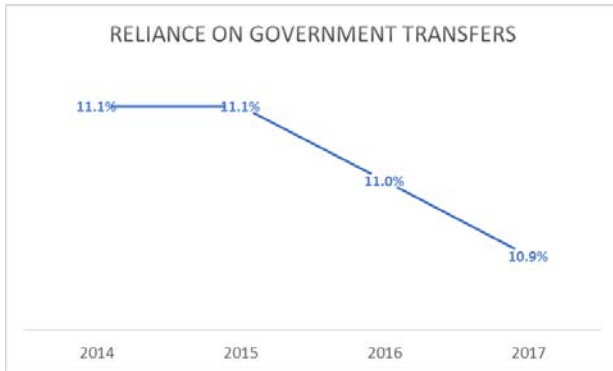
Number of Deficits - A deficit occurs when a municipality's expenditures exceed their revenues. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2017, the Town of Amherst incurred a surplus of 777.7 thousand. In the last five years, Amherst has not incurred a deficit. Due to the surpluses, Amherst was assessed at a low risk.



Amherst's Surplus (deficit) Trend

Source Financial Information Return(FIR) from 2013 to 2017

FCI Key Indicators Trends (The Roof)

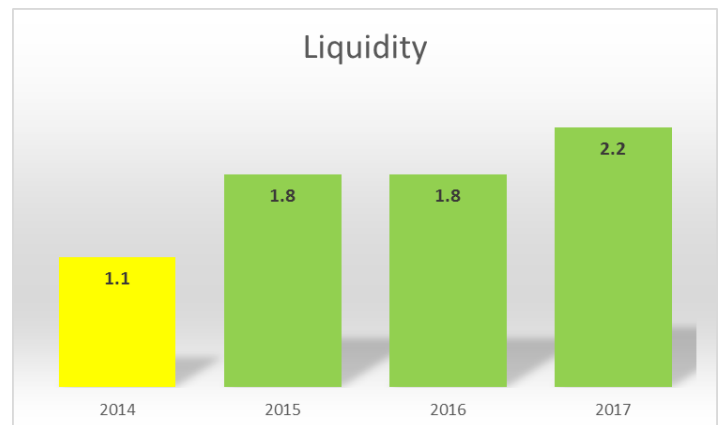


Reliance on Government Transfers - This ratio measures the extent of funding received from the other governments. A municipality is vulnerable if a municipality is reliant on revenue sources beyond its direct control or influence. The Town of Amherst's transfers as a percentage of total revenue by 0.1 percentage points from the previous year to 10.9 percent. A municipality would be considered in a high exposure to funding risk if their percentage was above 20%. Amherst is in a moderate risk zone.

Amherst's Reliance on Government Transfers

Source: Financial Information Return (FIR) from 2014 to 2017

Liquidity - This ratio measures the extent a municipality has enough cash to pay bills as they are due. The Town of Amherst's liquidity position has been in a strong 1.1 to 2.2 range for the last four years. In 2016-2017, Amherst's liquidity ratio increased by 0.4 from the previous years to 2.2. A municipality would be considered in a high risk if the liquidity ratio was below 1. The preferred range is 1.5 and above.

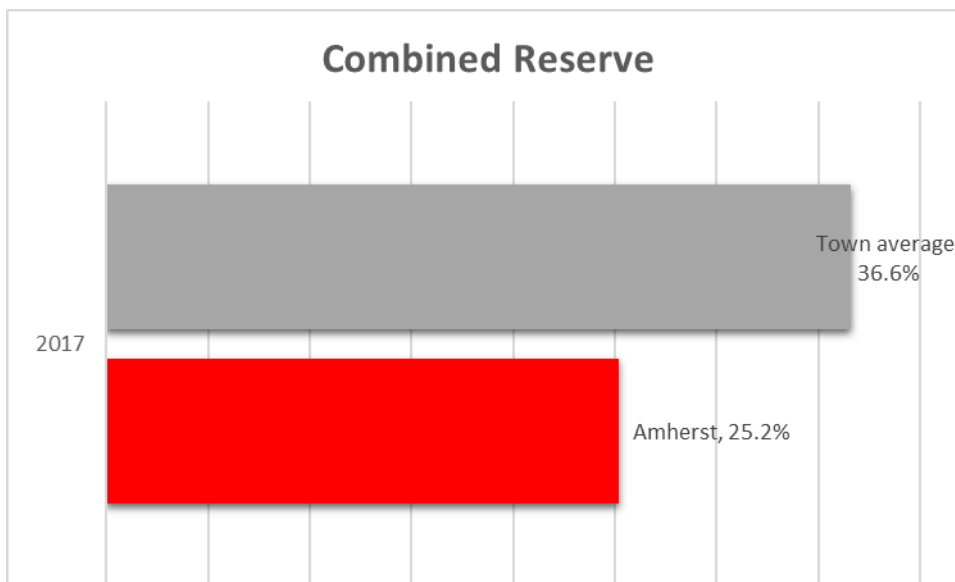


Amherst's Liquidity

Source Financial Information Return (FIR) from 2014 to 2017

FCI Key Indicators Trends (The Roof)

Combined Reserves - Reserves are monies set aside for planned future needs such as capital infrastructure or unexpected costs. Municipalities are vulnerable if they have limited flexibility to offset unexpected revenue losses, increases in expenses, or have an inadequate capital replacement funds. The combined reserve ratio measures the percentage of the combined reserves to the operating and amortization costs. The Town of Amherst's combined reserves as a percentage of total operating and amortization costs is 25.2 percent. A municipality would be considered vulnerable and in a high-risk zone if the municipality's combined reserve was below 30.0 per cent.



*Amherst's Combined Reserve compared to the average for towns
Source 2017 Financial Information Return (FIR)*

Detailed Results

General Information

	2017	2016	+/-	2017 Town Avg.
Number of Elected Officials	7	7	0	7
Geographic Area (km²)	12	12	0	10
Number of Dwelling Units	4,786	4,748	38	1,985

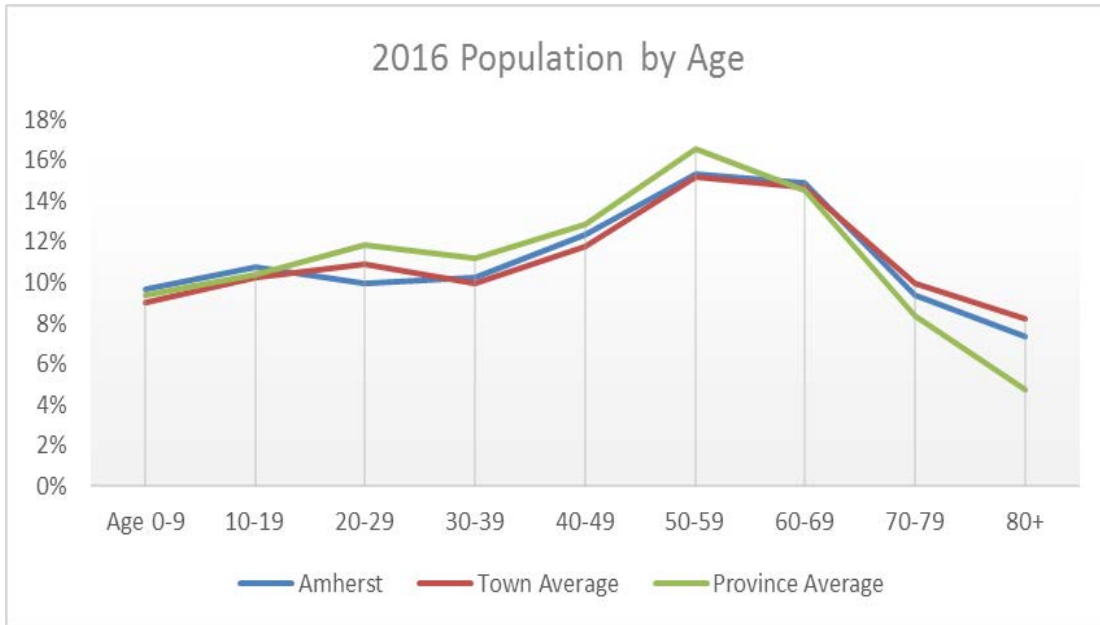
Source: Department of Municipal Affairs

	2016 Census	2011 Census	+/-	2016 Town Avg.
Median Household Income	\$46,677	\$41,027	\$5,650	\$48,880
Employment Rate	50%	51%	-1%	48%
Education Beyond High School	45%	47%	-2%	52%
Population	9,415	9,717	-302	3,750

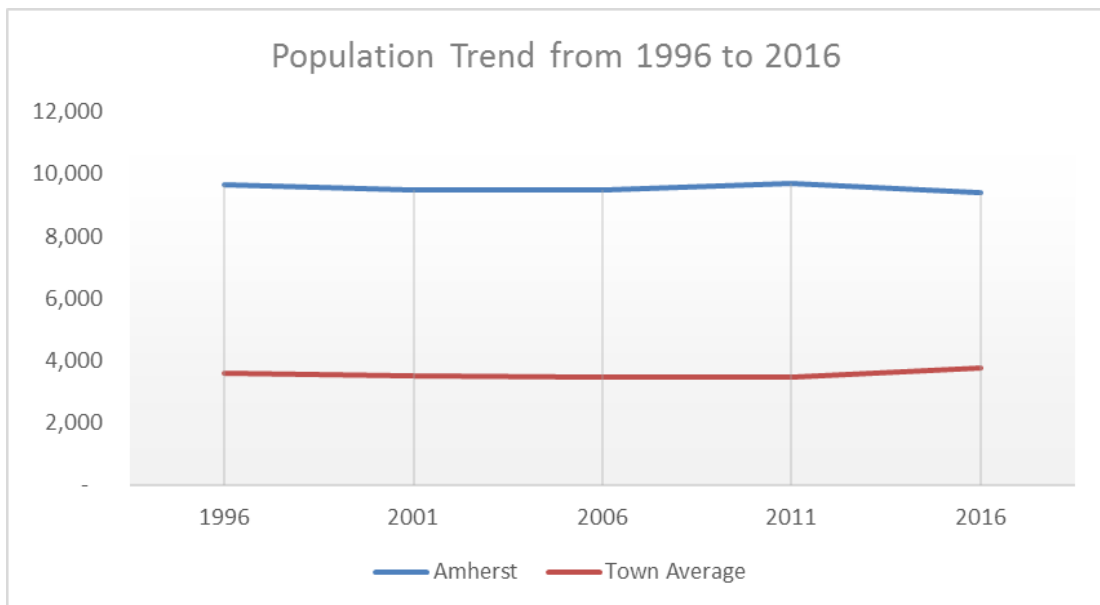
Source: 2011 and 2016 Statistics Canada Census

Detailed Results

Population



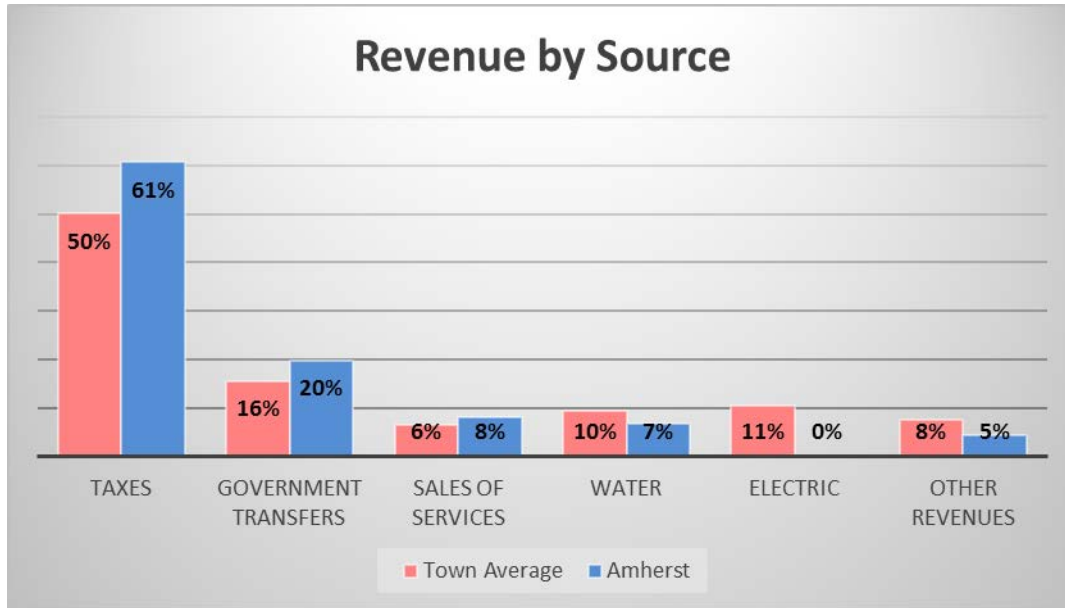
Source: 2016 Statistics Canada Census



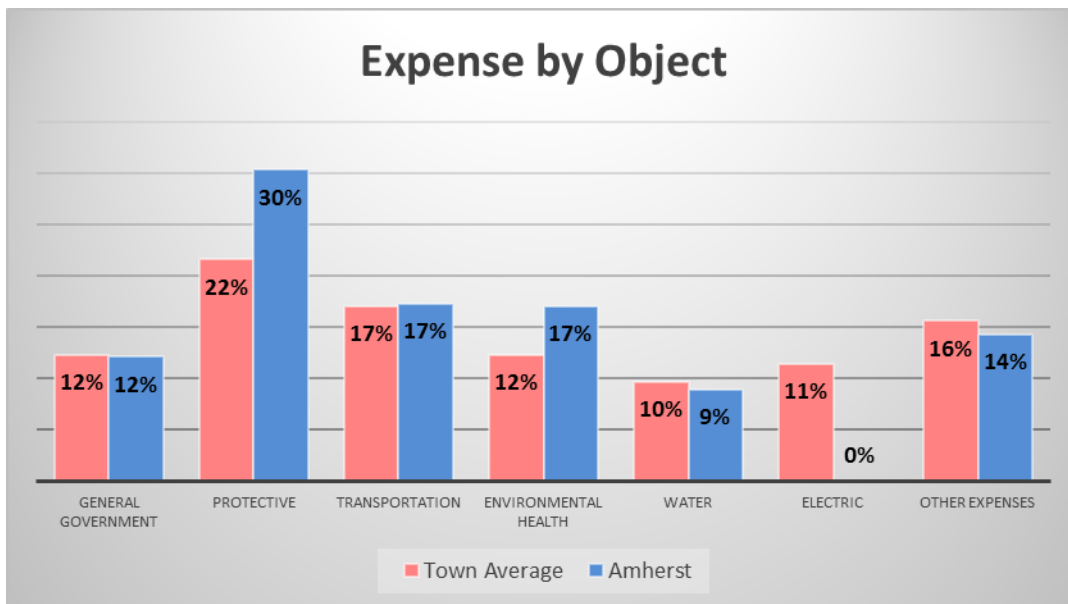
Source: 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 & 2016 Statistics Canada Census

Detailed Results

Revenue and Expense Comparisons



Source: Consolidated Schedule of Revenue (FIR_CR) for the year ended March 31, 2017



Source: Consolidated Schedule of Revenue (FIR_CE) for the year ended March 31, 2017

Detailed Results

FCI – Base Indicators

Indicator	2017	2016	+/-	2017 Town Avg.
3-year Change in Tax Base: This indicator measures how a municipality's tax base keeps pace with inflation.	● 5.5%	● 6.9%	-1.4%	6.9%
Reliance on a Single Business or Institution: This indicator speaks to the municipality's reliance on one employer for a significant portion of their tax base. Over reliance on any source of revenue can represent a vulnerability.	● 1.7%	● 1.8%	-0.1%	6.1%
Residential Tax Effort: Residential tax effort is the average property tax burden per household in the municipality. This indicator speaks to the municipality's flexibility to increase taxes if additional revenue is required.	● 3.4%	● 3.9%	-0.5%	3.7%

Source: Financial Information Return (FIR) for the year ended March 31, 2017

● Low Risk ● Moderate Risk ● High Risk

Detailed Results

FCI – Structure Indicators

Indicator	2017	2016	+/-	2017 Town Avg.
<p>Uncollected Taxes: This indicator speaks to a municipality's success in collecting revenues owed. Failure to collect taxes can significantly impact actual revenue, cash flow, and thereby could hinder their ability to provide services.</p>	● 4.3%	● 3.0%	1.3%	7.3%
<p>Budget Accuracy: This indicator speaks to the municipality's success at projecting the revenue required to maintain a balanced operating budget.</p>	● 4/5	● 5/5	N/A	3.9/5
<p>Operating Reserves: this indicator speaks to whether the municipality is setting aside funds to address unforeseen circumstances.</p>	● 20.8%	● 12.6%	8.2%	14.5%
<p>Debt Services: This indicator speaks to how much of municipal revenue is going towards paying off debt.</p>	● 7.5%	● 7.4%	0.1%	6.9%
<p>Outstanding Operating Debt: This measure calculates the municipality's borrowing limit per the MGA Section 84.</p>	● 0.0%	N/A	N/A	4.4%
<p>Undepreciated Assets: This indicator speaks to the age of the municipality's existing capital assets (in relation to useful life).</p>	● 61.5%	● 62.5%	-1.0%	52.4%

Source: Financial Information Return (FIR) for the year ended March 31, 2017

● Low Risk ● Moderate Risk ● High Risk

Detailed Results

FCI – Roof (Key) Indicators

Indicator	2017	2016	+/-	2017 Town Avg.
<p>Deficits in the Last 5 Years *: This indicator speaks to the number of deficits a municipality experienced in the last 5 years. A high number of deficits may indicate a municipality is struggling to meet services. If there is a deficit, further investigation would be required to determine the size and cause of the deficit.</p>	● 0/5	● 0/5	N/A	0.4/5
<p>Liquidity: This indicator speaks to whether the municipality has enough cash to pay bills as they come due. This indicator can highlight any cash flow problems or signal concerns in other areas such as potential revenue collection.</p>	● 2.2	● 1.8	0.4	2.7
<p>Reliance on Government Transfers: This indicator speaks to municipality's reliance on transfers from other government(s).</p>	● 10.9%	● 11.0%	-0.1%	6.1%
<p>Combined Reserve **: This indicator speaks to whether the municipality is investing enough to keep pace with the aging of existing assets, and unforeseen circumstances.</p>	● 25.2%	N/A	N/A	38.0%

Source: Financial Information Return (FIR) for the year ended March 31, 2017

Note: * Moderate Risk (Yellow) if one or more deficits in the last 5 years/ High Risk (Red) if one or more deficits in the last 2 years with one material deficit (0.5% of Total Operating Expense) .

** The result may not reflect an impact of PSAB related liabilities (e.g. Pension Liabilities, Landfill Closure and Post Closure Liabilities, or Deferred Gas Tax Revenue) that are recorded only in the consolidated financial statements.

● Low Risk ● Moderate Risk ● High Risk

Appendix I – FCI Thresholds

FCI – Base Indicators

● Low Risk
 ● Moderate Risk
 ● High Risk

Indicator Name / Rationale	Thresholds	Interpretations
<p>3-year Change in Tax Base</p> <p>This indicator illustrates the growth in property assessment. Municipalities rely heavily on the property tax to fund services; therefore, healthy growth in property tax is important to a municipality's financial position. If growth in assessments does not keep pace with inflation, it is a sign that the municipality may have trouble maintaining the current service levels without raising the tax rate.</p>	<p>Equal or Greater than Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate - 3% for 2017 year.</p> <p>●</p>	<p>◆ A percentage lower than the CPI rate indicates property assessments are growing slower than the inflation.</p> <p>◆ A percentage higher than the CPI rate indicates property assessments are growing faster than the inflation.</p> <p>◆ A negative percentage indicates a decrease in assessment value, which usually indicates serious economic concerns in the region, either because of the loss of a major employer or persistent economic and demographic decline.</p>
	<p>● Less than CPI</p>	
	<p>● Negative Growth</p>	
<p>Reliance on a Single Business or Institution</p> <p>This indicator shows how much a municipality's tax base depends on a single commercial or institutional account. Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends that municipalities are aware of any reliance on a single industry or employer when making financial plans including budgeting and establishing reserves.</p>	<p>● Less than 10%</p>	<p>◆ A low percentage indicates that the municipality may not rely on a single business or institution for a large part of its tax revenue.</p> <p>◆ A high percentage indicates that the municipality may have a greater reliance on a single business or institution for its tax revenue. Often a large tax account will be a key part of the local economy, so a major operational change or business closure can have a significant impact on the municipality and the community's economic health.</p>
	<p>● 10% to 15%</p>	
	<p>● Greater than 15%</p>	
<p>Residential Tax Effort</p> <p>This indicator shows how much of a household's income is required to pay the average tax bill. This indicator combines two other indicators: residential tax burden and median household income to provide a comparison for relative tax burden rather than simply comparing property tax rates. Measures of tax burden and effort are important so that council can assess the affordability of taxes in relation to service levels when setting a municipality's budget.</p>	<p>● Less than 4%</p>	<p>◆ A lower result suggests the municipality may have more flexibility to increase the tax rate.</p> <p>◆ A higher result suggests that the municipality may have less flexibility to increase the tax rate, if additional revenue is required.</p>
	<p>● 4% to 6%</p>	
	<p>● Greater than 6%</p>	

Appendix I – FCI Thresholds

FCI – Structure Indicators

● Low Risk
 ● Moderate Risk
 ● High Risk

Indicator Name / Rationale	Thresholds	Interpretations
Uncollected Taxes This indicator measures how much of current and previous years' taxes were not collected at year end, compared to the current taxes billed. Failure to collect taxes can significantly impact actual revenue, cash flow, and thereby could hinder their ability to provide services. The potential lost or delayed tax revenue could threaten the financial health of the municipality.	● Less than 10%	◆ A low percentage indicates the municipality is managing tax revenue collection. ◆ A high percentage may indicate the municipality is having trouble monitoring and collecting overdue tax accounts.
	● 10% to 15%	
	● Greater than 15%	
Budget Accuracy It is important that municipalities can accurately project revenues and expenditures. Difficulty projecting revenues and expenditures may lead to future deficits, and can make longer term budgeting decisions and strategic planning challenging.	● All budgets within +/-5% of actuals in the last 5 years	◆ The larger the number (either positive or negative), the bigger the discrepancy between budgeted and actual expenditures. ◆ A negative number means that actual expenditures were greater than budgeted. ◆ A positive number means that actual expenditures were less than budgeted.
	● One budget not within the +/-5% of actuals in the last 5 years	
	● Two or more budgets not within the +/-5% of actuals in the last 5 years	
Operating Reserves This indicator shows the total value of funds held in operating reserves compared to a single year's operating budget. Reserves can play an important role in prudent budget planning.	● Greater than 20%	◆ A high percentage indicates more funds are held in operating reserves, which indicates higher flexibility to address unexpected events in the future. ◆ A low percentage indicates less flexibility to address unexpected events in the future, which could put the municipality in a deficit position.
	● 10% to 20%	
	● Less than 10%	

Appendix I – FCI Thresholds

FCI – Structure Indicators (continued)

● Low Risk ● Moderate Risk ● High Risk

Indicator Name / Rationale	Thresholds	Interpretations
<p>Debt Service</p> <p>Municipalities are not allowed to incur debt because of operating deficits, but they can borrow funds to purchase/construct capital assets. The debt service result provides an indication of how much of a municipality's revenue is devoted to debt repayment. Own source revenue is used instead of total revenue to allow analysis of only the revenue within council's control.</p>	<p>● Less than 10%</p> <hr/> <p>● 10% to 15%</p> <hr/> <p>● Greater than 15%</p>	<p>◆ A low number may indicate that the municipality has deferred capital projects to keep the debt load low. This may also indicate that the municipality has prudent financial debt management.</p> <p>◆ A high number may indicate the municipality has borrowed a large amount of debt. This could limit its ability to borrow in the future, and paying the debt expense will tie up operating revenue. However, it is important to note that a municipality with an aggressive debt repayment schedule will have a higher debt service indicator due to the larger principal payments.</p>
<p>Outstanding Operating Debt</p> <p>This measure calculates the municipality's borrowing limit per the MGA Section 84. A municipality may borrow to cover the annual current expenditures of the municipality that has been authorized by the council, but their borrowing can not exceed 50% of the combined total of the taxes levied and government transfers.</p>	<p>● Less than 25%</p> <hr/> <p>● 25% to 50%</p> <hr/> <p>● Greater than 50%</p>	<p>◆ A low percentage may indicate that a municipality is covering the annual current expenditures without a high reliance on borrowing.</p> <p>◆ A high percentage may indicate that a municipality has a high debt load relative to their revenue base.</p>
<p>Undepreciated Assets</p> <p>This indicator provides an estimate of the useful life left in the municipality's capital assets. Municipalities across Canada are facing significant infrastructure challenges. Therefore, it is important to keep informed of the age and condition of its capital assets to ensure they are making timely and appropriate investments.</p>	<p>● More than 50%</p> <hr/> <p>● 35% to 50%</p> <hr/> <p>● Less than 35%</p>	<p>◆ A lower percentage indicates older infrastructure. It does not necessarily indicate the condition of the assets. Some older assets still could be in a good working condition.</p> <p>◆ A higher percentage indicates newer infrastructure.</p>

Appendix I – FCI Thresholds

FCI – Roof (Key) Indicators

● Low Risk
 ● Moderate Risk
 ● High Risk

Indicator Name / Rationale	Thresholds	Interpretations
Deficits in the Last 5 Years Deficits are an important indication of financial health for municipalities. All municipalities are required to prepare balanced operating budgets. Any operating deficits incurred are required to be repaid in the following budget year.	● None in the last 5 years	◆ Several deficits in a 5-year period may indicate financial difficulty. However, results should be interpreted in context; unpredictable events beyond the control of a municipality can significantly affect its budgeted revenues or expenditures. Further investigation is required to determine the size and cause of any deficit.
	● One or more in the last 5 years	
	● One or more in the last 2 years with one material (0.5% of total operating expenses)	
Liquidity Liquidity is a key short-term financial performance indicator. Low liquidity can indicate a cash flow problem, and may indicate concern in other areas such as revenue collection.	● Greater than 1.5	◆ A liquidity below 1.0 indicates that the municipality has less cash and assets that are easily converted to cash on hand than the amount required to pay current obligations.
	● 1 to 1.5	◆ A municipality with an exceptionally high liquidity may be better served by investing in instruments that will earn interest revenue.
	● Less than 1	
Reliance on Government Transfers This indicator measures how much of total revenues come from government transfers. This assesses a municipality's level of independence in making decisions.	● Less than 15%	◆ A low indicator may indicate higher self-sufficiency; therefore, might provide council increased autonomy in making decisions.
	● 15% to 20%	◆ A high score may indicate a higher dependency on government transfers which could limit councils' autonomy in making decisions.
	● Greater than 20%	
Combinded Reserves This indicator provides the total value of funds aside for planned future needs (e.g. capital projects), to smooth expenses (e.g. winter road maintenance reserve) or for the unexpected expenses.	● More than 40%	◆ A low percentage may indicate the municipality has limit flexibility to offset unexpected losses or increases in expenses.
	● 30% to 40%	◆ A high percentage indicates would indicate that a municipality is setting aside money for future needs.
	● Less than 30%	

Appendix II – Additional Resources

Nova Scotia Government's Open Data Portal

Nova Scotia Government's Open Data Portal officially launched February 5, 2016. This portal provides access to various government data in a free, accessible, machine-readable format. The financial datasets currently published through the Nova Scotia Government's Open Data Portal are:

- ▶ Financial Condition Indicators by Municipality;
- ▶ Municipal Fiscal Statistics- Consolidated Revenues and Expenses by Municipality;
- ▶ Municipal Fiscal Statistics- Operating Fund Summary of Revenue and Expenses by Municipality;
- ▶ Municipal Fiscal Statistics- Operating Fund Expenses -10 Year Summary;
- ▶ Municipal Fiscal Statistics- Operating Fund Revenue -10 Year Summary;
- ▶ Municipal Property Tax Rates;
- ▶ Nova Scotia Equalization Program;
- ▶ Nova Scotia Power Grant In Lieu; and
- ▶ Uniform Assessment.

Open Data Portal Link: data.novascotia.ca

Municipal Website

A municipality's website can be a helpful resource to access various financial information. Currently, most municipal websites provide:

- ▶ audited Financial Statements; and
- ▶ approved Operating Budget.

Amherst Website: amherst.ca

About Us

For more information, support in action plan development or to obtain a guide on action plan development, please contact:

Katharine Cox-Brown
Director, Municipal Finance
Municipal Finance & Operating Grants
Municipal Affairs

Katharine.Cox-Brown@novascotia.ca
902.424.4643



MEMORANDUM

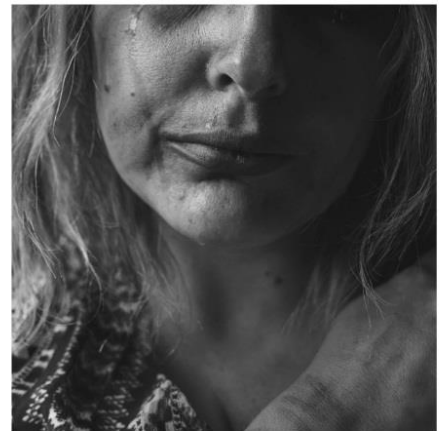
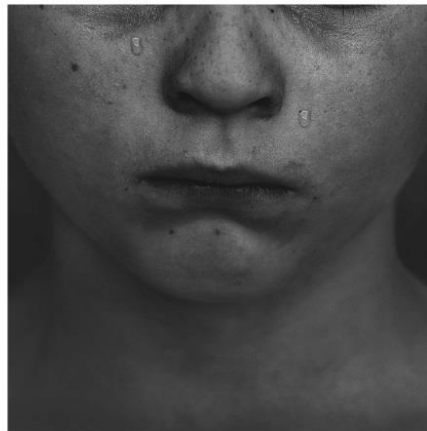
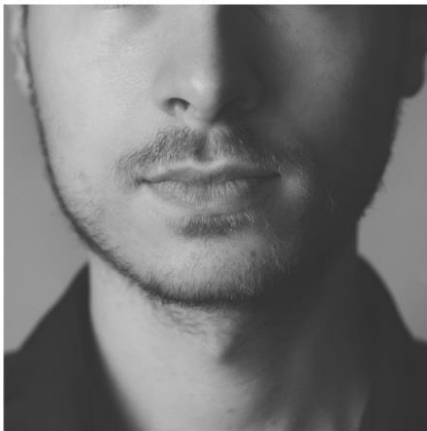
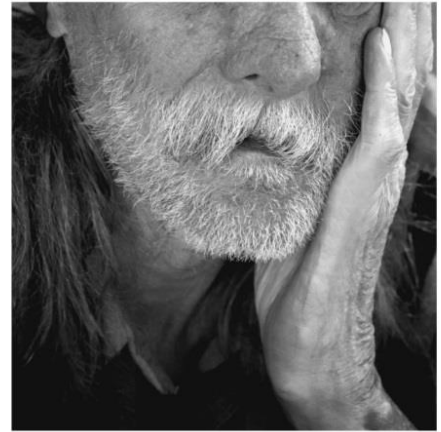
TO: Mayor Kogon and Members of Council
FROM: Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation
DATE: May 22, 2018
SUBJECT: Vimy Ridge Mural Update

Following the decision of Council to create a new North Nova Highlanders mural to be mounted on the side of Town Hall, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #10 requested the Town consider creating a mural in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge on the remaining wall space at Town Hall.

At the time of the request the champion of the concept was Jack Perry. Preliminary research suggests that the cost of a Vimy Ridge Mural mounted on the side of Town Hall would be in the \$20-\$25,000 range. Through conversations with Mr. Perry, it was suggested that the Legion would meet as a group to look at possible funding opportunities. It was also suggested in terms of timing that the priority would be the North Nova Highlander Mural.

There have been some changes within the volunteer group at the Legion. Mr. Roy Porter, President will be the contact going forward. Mr. Porter has indicated he will be discussing the Vimy Ridge Mural in the near future with Legion members.

On a side note, for information, the Legion has taken on the project of dedicating personalized street pole banners to Veterans. It is expected these banners will be ready for Remembrance Day 2018.



POVERTY LIVES HERE

A MUNICIPAL FORUM ON POVERTY

Presented by the Town of Amherst, NS on March 22, 2018

SUMMARY REPORT

Presented by:



Purpose and Goal for the Day

Amherst Town Council identified Poverty Reduction as a strategic priority. Organizing the first municipally-led forum on poverty is a first step in the process. The forum theme “Poverty Lives Here” was created to provide participants with a greater awareness of the significant level of poverty in our community. Invitations targeted those with influence on policy, including elected municipal representatives, town senior management, stakeholders and community champions.



We engaged a facilitator to lead participants through a process designed to help raise awareness of poverty. Speakers included Robert S. Wright MSW RSW and Dr. Christine Saulnier, The Nova Scotia Director for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Four participants agreed to share their firsthand accounts of the challenges of living in poverty.

50 participants registered which was robust considering we were hit with the biggest snowstorm of the season.

Participants were asked to complete a pre and post forum survey with identical questions about opinion and several additional questions pertaining to the forum to determine if awareness of the issue had changed.

The Survey: What We Learned

There was an 80% response rate to the survey and the comparison between the pre- and post-survey results clearly show there was an increased awareness about the existence of poverty in Amherst, a greater understanding about the effect of poverty on the entire community and the responsibility lies with many.

SURVEY RESULTS		
QUESTIONS	PRE-SURVEY	POST-SURVEY
Strongly agree that poverty exists in Amherst	65%	88%
Strongly agree that poverty affects the health of the community	78%	88%
Poverty is the responsibility of the individual	41%	31%
Poverty is the responsibility of charitable organizations	20%	14%
The goal of the day was to raise awareness about poverty and it's affects in our community. The Goal of the day was met.	-	91%
The Conversation should continue at the municipal level	-	100%

When asked if the municipality was to consider the development of future policy to reduce the effect of poverty, the top four suggested priorities included:

- Housing
- Food security
- Public transportation
- No charge inclusive recreation



Table Conversations

Throughout the afternoon participants were separated into five small table conversations around some difficult first voice scenarios.

The groups were asked to read their scenario and consider a day in the life of the person in the story. Following very rich discussions each group was tasked with considering;

If the municipality was going to look at the development of future policy to reduce the effects of poverty on the community, rank your top three priorities.

The themes that emerged were:

- Housing
- Food Security
- Transportation
- Inclusive recreation programming particularly for youth
- Employment
- Communication
- Advocacy



Housing

“43% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.”

Statistics Canada 2016

Housing was a priority in every conversation identifying the need for several types of supports including transitional, emergency, safe and affordable housing. The need for a homeless shelter that could accommodate people regardless of age or gender was a priority

There is so much stigma and far too many barriers attached to being homeless or being on the verge of homelessness. These are a few examples shared during the forum: not knowing where to go, no phone, no constant address, no IDs, no money, no food, no shelters available, no transportation to even look for a home, lack of family support or social isolation and lack of communication, lack of credibility/reputation, addiction, mental health and suicide risk, anxiety because of no income, fear of physical safety, embarrassment, having only short term, one off options, constantly worrying and wondering who can I stay with.

Housing can be particularly difficult for teens as many landlords aren't prepared to rent to them and they aren't able to find accommodations within their budget as it is often difficult for them to access income assistance. Some rent supplements should be earmarked specifically for young families through Cobequid Housing and individuals in crisis should be pushed up to the front of the housing waitlist.

Food Security

“72% of female lone parent families with children 0 to 5 years live in poverty.”

Statistics Canada 2016

Food insecurity is a reality for many in our community. People face extremely difficult decisions daily around buying food or paying for utilities like heat and lights. That stress alone leads to a cycle of poor health, potential for more illness, and lost time from work.

Lack of access to food was a concern because there is no longer a downtown grocery store. It was also noted that our food bank has limited hours that may not be practical for many and the pantry may not be accessible to all because of the location.



There is a need more barrier-free services so we can eliminate the requirement for youth and families living in poverty having to complete several forms before accessing benefits.

There needs to be a place for youth to go to be out of the cold where they can eat and share their stories without fear of judgement.

A universal school food program makes sense. According to some of the data up to 47% of school kids are hungry and although most, if not all, schools in Cumberland County have some sort of breakfast and or lunch program they are not all equal.

More money needs to be earmarked into programs and services that increase community supports such as Maggie’s Place and the YMCA.

Transportation

“I don’t own a car so my children and I walk everywhere – this is extremely difficult and dangerous for my family when the sidewalks are snow-covered and icy and I have to walk on the road pushing a stroller.”

First Voice Story

Transportation came up as a concern in every table conversation. Lack of affordable transportation impacts the ability to access food, health services, employment, education and social opportunities.

A bus route that operates on a regular basis through town and out to the hospital should be a priority. Taxis are expensive and Cumberland County Transit Society (CCTS) can be inconvenient and/or impractical as you have to call at least one day in advance to book transportation.

Groups suggested an active transportation policy that includes a walkability plan, bike routes and a bike share program. We heard stories about people having to walk on the road because sidewalks were not cleared. Making sidewalks and walkways a priority for snow clearing and repair would allow much safer access to resources.



Inclusive Youth Programming Recreation

“34.7% of all Amherst youth 17 and under live in poverty.”

Statistics Canada 2016

Fear, shame and stigma were a big part of every table conversation. When discussing youth, isolation and not knowing where to turn were added to the list.

It is important to improve supports for youth so they can stay in school. Free childcare programs, fair access to youth income assistance and more resources for the SchoolsPlus program would all go a long way to help.

Lack of community supports and networks for people without family or friends within the area only increases the sense of isolation and loneliness. Funding should be increased for programming that provides individuals and families with barrier free activities allowing them to be more connected to their community. Build a greater sense of belonging.

Employment

*“A job is not an automatic ticket out of poverty.
86% of those making minimum wage are 20 or older.”*

Christine Saulnier



The first voice stories we heard and the broader perspective shared by Christine Saulnier all highlighted the inequity of poverty. There are higher rates of poverty among women, visible minorities and people with disabilities. Many are unemployed or under-employed.

In order to have an impact, it is important that employers consider our hiring policies. There is a need for a process that will help those most impacted acquire jobs.

Employers should prioritize hiring employees within the community not just for a single position but also for contract work such as building contracts, consultants etc.

There should be supports in place and enable individuals to complete their education in order to increase the likelihood of obtaining employment. Encourage employers and community groups to offer inclusive volunteer opportunities that can help individuals gain experience and enhance social skills to improve their employability.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS - WE DID THE MATH:

<http://behindthenumbers.ca/2017/10/04/15-minimum-wage-in-nova-scotia/>

Communication

“If you do not have internet or phone, you cannot access 211, or contact a support service without finding a way to get there and without money...”

Forum Participant

All five groups cited communication as a concern. When living in poverty there was often no access to phones or internet to reach out for services or help. Without these services that many take for granted, people cannot access 911, 811 or 211 let alone contact family doctors or other professionals. It was suggested that more payphones be available and more access to free internet.



Along with lack of access to phone and internet, there is also a need for a better way to share knowledge. Many are not aware of services that are available to them or who to call when they need help. Several groups suggested a navigator for the county to help link services. The library may be a great place to maintain lists of available services. The town could consider taking a leadership role in pulling partners together.

There should be a place a person can go when they find themselves in a crisis to obtain access to phone and internet.

Advocacy and Awareness

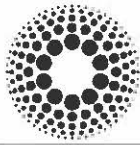
“There is a lack of community supports and networks for people without families/friends within the area makes.”

Forum Participant

Throughout the afternoon conversations sparked lots of idea around the need for advocacy at different levels of government. Participants noted they would like to see the municipality advocate for:

- Increased SchoolsPlus programming.
- Addiction services for youth particularly around smoking.
- Fair processing of youth applications for DCS.
- Increase CPP, guaranteed living wage.
- Uniform school food programs.
- Fluoride in water.
- Access to health care including prenatal services, mental health and addictions.
- Sensitivity training for first responders to help reduce personal bias and judgement.
- Education system that can prepare individuals for a career change help people earn a living wage.
- A DCS navigator that would enable people to get the benefits they are entitled to and feel they have someone advocating for them. This navigator could also point them toward other programs that could be useful in their particular circumstance.
- Shift the culture of poverty; suspend judgement.





NSFM Vision: Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities

NSFM Mission: To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia's communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education and collaboration

1. Partnership Framework

Description/Update

The Ministers Roundtable met on May 2, 2018. At that meeting, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the President of NSFM signed a revised Partnership Framework Agreement that incorporates four of the five NSFM 2017 Resolutions. Both organizations agree to work together on the CAP issue, Roads, Internet, and a review of the DMA Operating and other grants for municipalities. In addition, the NS Health Authority is working with NSFM to address the recruitment of physicians.

A progress report of the 2016 Partnership Framework was also provided. Three projects were completed: the consultation guideline, the Accountability and Transparency work around expense claims, and the revision of the financial indicator index.

A proposed MOU on Age Friendly Communities was also discussed, as was the 12-month notice letter and cannabis.

2. Cannabis Legalization

Description/Update

The province has tabled two relevant pieces of legislation, one dealing with the sale of cannabis through the NS Liquor Stores, and one amending the Smoke Free Places Act to include the smoking of cannabis.

The NSFM/AMA Municipal Cannabis Working Group has been meeting to discuss the implications to NS municipalities. Municipalities will be able to enact further restrictions for public consumption through by laws. Concerns remain around public safety, enforcement and costs. There will be a presentation at the NSFM Spring Workshop with up-to-date implications and suggested actions.

NSFM has supported FCM financially in the development of a guide for municipalities, and this guide should be released in mid to late April. It deals with planning and other issues, but not directly with policing. It is anticipated the province will table legislation in the spring sitting, and more will be known at that time.

3. Fire Services Review

Description/Update

The Board approved appointments to the NS Joint Municipal Fire Services Committee Phase I. Those appointed to represent NSFM are: Councillor Jennifer Daniels, District of West Hants, and Councillor Wayne Thorburne, Bridgewater. All committee members have now been appointed, and the first meeting was held February 28th, 2018.

4. Accessibility Act

Description/Update

Municipalities will need to implement the requirements under the new Act. A Joint Provincial/Municipal Committee is being formed to assist municipalities in fulfilling their requirements under the Act. The NSFM Board appointed Councillor Laurie Cranton, County of Inverness, Mayor Jeff Cantwell, Town of Wolfville, and Councillor George MacDonald, CBRM, to the committee. Work is underway to develop tools for municipalities in developing their advisory committees and action plans. For now, municipalities are encouraged to begin documenting their existing assets for accessibility. For those looking for guidance on standards, the Accessibility Directorate refers you to the Rick Hansen Foundation website.

5. Asset Management

NSFM continues to support municipalities with asset management planning, as a requirement of the 2014-24 Gas Tax Fund Agreement. NSFM recently submitted its Progress Report for the funding it received from FCM from the [Municipal Asset Management Program](#) to provide basic training and skill development resources to Nova Scotia municipalities. The Progress Report was approved by FCM and it will disburse \$33,480.77 to UNSM for the work completed to date, which represent approximately 40% of the total funding. NSFM completed its 6 training courses at the later part of 2017 and is currently developing an online course for elected officials on the basics of asset management. The final initiative NSFM will produce with the FCM funding is an online module based on the Province of Nova's asset management pilot project "how to" guide for collecting data and completing condition assessments for linear assets.

6. Upcoming Events

- [The Atlantic Active Transportation Summit](#) - May 23-24, 2018, Halifax Central Library, Halifax, NS
- [FCM Conference](#) - May 31 - June 3, 2018, Halifax Convention Centre, Halifax, NS
- NSFM Board Meeting – June 8, 2018

Monthly Report

Corporate Services

May 2018

FINANCIAL - 2018/19 operating and capital budgets have been presented to council. Documents have been prepared for council approval. Staff will have the information prepared to ensure a quick turn around once approved. It is anticipated that the operating and capital budgets will be approved at the May council meeting. With our fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, staff are now busy getting ready for the year-end audit.

2018 SPRING TAX SALE – A Tax Sale will be held Tuesday May 22, 2018 at 10 a.m. There is one property remaining on the list which has a 6 month right of redemption:

1. 91 East Victoria Street – J.G Jewellers

2018/19 INTERIM PROPERTY TAX BILLS – Staff have been busy processing payments for the interim tax bills which are due on Thursday, May 31.

2018 ASSESSMENT APPEALS - Assessments were mailed out mid-January by PVCS. The appeal deadline was February 15, 2018 at midnight. As of May 1, 2018, there were 72 appeals, and 1 complete. This is unchanged from last month.

	# of Accounts Appealing	Total Assessment Value Being Appealed	Appeal Completed as of May 1/18	Pending as of May 1/18	Withdrawn as of May 1/18	Outstanding Appeals as of May 1/18	Appeals Successful as of May 1/18	Loss of Assessment Value	Amount of Revenue Reduction	Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal
Residential/Resource	54	12,851,500	0	0	0	54	0	\$ -	\$ -	0
Commercial	18	29,687,400	1	0	0	17	0	\$ -	\$ -	0
TOTAL	72	\$42,538,900	1	0	0	71	0	\$ -	\$ -	0

As of May 1, 2018 there were 72 appeals, 1 complete. - No Change

WATER/SEWER COLLECTIONS – The water/sewer bills were issued with a due date of June 30 which is a Saturday. Since Town Hall is not open on Saturday's, payments will be accepted on the next business day without penalty. Staff are working on ensuring collections for water/sewer are completed. Staff will be starting the process of notification for overdue accounts leading to potential shut off for those accounts which have been outstanding for long periods and no payment arrangement has been made or customers have failed to honor the agreement.

HUMAN RESOURCES – Interviews have been completed for the IT Manager and a business student to assist with strategic priorities. Offers are expected to be completed by the end of May.

PROCUREMENT – Procurement stats for the month of April (as of April 30) are as follows:

	In Discussion/Draft	Released	Closed	Awarded Council	Awarded PAR
April 2018	12	9	5	0	3
RFQ	3	5	3	0	3
RFP	6	1	1	0	0
TENDER	2	2	1	0	0
OTHER	1	1	0	0	0

Regular monthly work continues for WCB compliance checks, general insurance checks and NSCSA for specific projects.

Work has started on the items identified by Council early in the budget process as sure to be approved. RFPs for the stadium improvements, East Pleasant, the Highway Signs, and the Line Painter are expected to be all out and completed before the end of June.

Monthly Report

Operations

May 2018

Public works crews were extremely busy during the month of April with typical spring time activities including:

- Street sweeping started in early April
- All sidewalks were swept to remove remaining traction sand
- Lawn damage from snow plowing was repaired
- Patching potholes has continued
- Outdoor rink was dismantled and stored
- Servicing of lawn mowers to get them ready for spring
- Water meter reading was completed
- Broken traffic signs were replaced

Other activities carried out by Public Works in April were:

- Solid waste collection from on-street bins began on April 1
- Dog park at Robb's was dismantled at the end of April
- Assisted recreation staff with the removal of the ice at the stadium
- Installed dog waste stations at various locations throughout Town

Sewer crew responded to one call for a plugged sewer at 69 East Pleasant Street. The cause of the issue was tree roots in the lateral.

There was a broken water main repaired at 70 Agnew Street in April.

The snow plows and blowers were removed from the equipment and stored for the summer. The mechanic also worked on servicing and repairs of the recreation department's mowers and service trucks.

Operations staff have also been working on preparations for the upcoming Municipal Public Works Association of Nova Scotia (MPWANS) conference which is being hosted by the Town of Amherst on May 23-25 at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre. There will be approximately 60 public works managers from Nova Scotia and PEI in town for 2 days of technical sessions.

Our new solid waste collection contract has commenced, with a fairly seamless transition. We are now picking up one bulky item from each residence on a bi-weekly basis. So far, no issues have been reported.

The new water reservoirs came online in April and are functioning as expected. We are now carrying out various tests to ensure the new infrastructure works as designed.

Monthly Departmental Report

Amherst Police Department

May 22, 2018

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Senior Police Administration Course (SPAC): Deputy Chief Dwayne Pike attended the Canadian Police College for 3 weeks on the Senior Police Administration course. This course is designed for police managers/leaders and covers a variety of topics and areas of police management and leadership. The main project was the completion and presentation of a business case. The course also consisted of various group research projects/presentations, and presentations that included "Understanding the Future Policing Landscape", "Emotional Intelligence", "Performance and Conflict Management", "Strategic Planning", "Leading High Performance Teams", "Ethics in Policing" and "Political Accountability".

PERSONNEL

Hiring – Dispatchers. The department has hired two new dispatchers. In the past we have operated with 4 full time and 1 part time dispatcher. We have had significant difficulties with retention of the PT position. We have decided to combine the PT hours with one of the full time positions and share them equally. We estimate each dispatcher will work approximately 1,600 – 1,700 hours a year. The PT dispatcher was only working 600 – 700 hours per year. David Andrews and Joshua Fletcher both of Amherst, were the successful candidates. They will be attending PROS training in May. They must successfully complete 4 weeks of OJT before being able to work on their own.

CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER/YOUTH & SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Vital Signs. On April 18th, Cst Wood met with community representatives at Mental Health in regards to the "Vital Signs" initiative which taps into local knowledge to measure community vitality and to enhancement of quality of life. At this initial stage, the focus group is developing questions to pose to the community to get a sense of community health.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month: April was sexual assault awareness month and both Cst Wood and Cst Harrison participated in several activities that included a checkpoint with the RCMP to kick off the month on April 4th, a meeting at Autumn House on April 6th, and checkpoints on Robert Angus Drive on April 19th.

Opioid Council: Cst Wood attended a presentation by the Opioid Council in relation to the opioid issue in Nova Scotia communities, including Amherst. A recent study found that there was very few resources for those battling addiction issues. As a result of these findings an active needle exchange program has been initiated and a needle drop off box is located behind Breakfast at Britneys.

Dreams Take Flight. The department participated in the Dreams Take Flight program again this year. Dreams Take Flight is a national volunteer charitable organization dedicated to providing the trip of a lifetime to medically, mentally, physically, socially or emotionally challenged children. With the aid of Air Canada, other national and local organizations and businesses, money is raised to make the dream a reality in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. The children are flown to Disney World in Florida and are provided with VIP passes for the day. They are accompanied by volunteers, who are from various agencies, such as police, Family and Childrens services. The trip is down and back over a 24 hour period. Four children from Cumberland County were selected to participate this year. Cst. Jason Galloway is responsible for APD's participation in this program. He became aware of the program a few years ago and is the coordinator. This year he was one of the volunteer chaperones and it was a very rewarding and emotional experience.

Police Week. Police Week 2018 runs from May 13th – 19th. APD and the RCMP will be hosting our annual Police Week display on May 17th. It will be held at the Amherst Center Mall from 10:00 until 3:00. Several of our community partners are participating again this year.

OPERATIONAL

Code Blue Meeting Spring Street Academy. Cst. Harrison attended a staff meeting at Spring Street Academy and provided a presentation on Code Blue. Code Blue is the term used for the lockdown procedure at local Schools. Police work with school officials to develop a plan specific for each school.

Radio Link. We have been experiencing some issues with our radio system. The radio system has two repeaters which require a “link” function in order for the repeaters to function as one. The link function has failed again in April. We have had issues in the past. The link is currently achieved through antennas. Issues with the cables, and connections have caused the past problems. We are in the process of pricing a “hard wire” link which will basically be an internet connection. Bell Radio believes this would eliminate our link issues.

OPERATIONAL STATS

April 2018

Occurrences: 423	Criminal Code Charges: 60
Impaired by Alcohol: 3	CDSA: 6
Impaired by Drug: 0	Traffic Written Warnings: 31
Traffic Tickets: 45	LCA: 4
Vehicle Checks: 179	Bike Patrol Hours: 0
Foot Patrol Hours: 52h 51m	

Focused Enforcement

Focused enforcement for April was speeding violations. Members committed over 37 hours towards this initiative which resulted in 6 speeding tickets, 12 warnings and 8 tickets for other violations.

Monthly Report

Recreation / Culture / Programming / Communications

May 2018

Active Living/Healthy Community

Try Ringette Sessions average attendance was 22 youth of the 3 sessions. A parents meeting was held during the last session to discuss the future of Ringette in Amherst. Parents seemed keen on participating in a program in the fall. No one has stepped forward yet stating they would like to start/coach themselves.

Meetings were held with Tennis NS, Sport NS, Spring Street Phys Ed Teacher and West Highland Phys Ed teacher to discuss the Tennis in schools initiative. Local schools are going to take part, teaching Tennis for 2 sessions in class. A Rookie Rally Tour hosted by Tennis NS will follow in June with invited participants from the classes taking part. A community Tennis meeting was held to discuss the future of Tennis in Amherst with potential for a Club to be formed. 7 People attended the meeting and were enthusiastic about growing Tennis in Amherst. The Active Living Coordinator attended a Tennis Training Workshop at the YMCA hosted by Tennis NS. Youth Tennis lessons will be part of the Summer Program this year.

A Bike week meeting was held with Cumberland County representatives including APD, RCMP, County Office, Oxford, Springhill and Public Health. This year's Bike Week activities will take place from June 15-24. The active living coordinator attended the staff First Aid Training.

Culture/Events & Marketing Coordinator

Participated in the Users Focus Group Ice Pilot meeting where discussions were had on the successes and challenges of the Project.

Coordinated and attended our Town's Volunteer Appreciation and Athletic Achievers Ceremonies. The events had great turnouts and positive feedback was received from many participants. The community really appreciates the effort the Town puts into the events and being appreciated and recognized is uplifting and motivating for our community.

Attended the Grant Seeking Workshop, assisted on the Risk and Community Youth Development Workshops. Met with the Program Representative from Canadian Heritage on the Celebrate Canada in Amherst Project. Plans and meetings held with community members and vendors with research done on the initial stages of the Events. More to come!

Meetings were also had and are continuing on the Fundy Senior Games. Discussions and collaboration with the "Fun day Team" on the planning of activities with Amherst hosting a Fundy Golf Tournament in June.

Met with many community members on upcoming town events and activities including Bordertown Biker Bash, Children's Wish Foundation, Cumberland YMCA, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Horticulture/Green Spaces

April was a busy month cleaning up after winter's end. Spring Maintenance was carried out in many of our parks and greenspaces. Litter was picked up, sods were flipped back over, winter damage repaired, and flowerbeds were tidied.

Our first Communities in Bloom Committee meeting was held to gather members who were interested in learning more and joining in support to continue on with the enhancements throughout the town. Our Earth Day event was a great success with many schools, businesses and community members coming on board to help tidy up Amherst.

Facilities

Parks and Green Spaces

All parks have been prepared for Spring openings. Dickey Park washroom remains open daily for citizens from 9:00am to 6:00pm. Parks and trails are accessible but weather may cause some issue. With nicer weather than usual we were able to start the process of park cleanup.

Amherst Stadium

The Amherst Stadium had a busy month. In April 2018 CCMHA used 36 hours compared to 32 hours used in 2017. Amherst Figure Skating used 31.25 hours, in 2017 Amherst Figure Skating used 25 hours. Total program skating hours for April is 58.5 hours, compared to 42 hours in 2017. The ice was used for a total of 208.5 hours, compared to 166 hours used in April 2017. Ongoing maintenance and cleanliness is a high priority at the Amherst Stadium.

One special event under the No Fee Ice Pilot Project. On April 5, 6, 7, and 8 we hosted the Bantam AA Provincial Hockey Tournament. Through the no fee ice pilot project they received 36 hours of free ice. The event was successful seeing participants from all over NS. The ice plant was turned off on Sunday, April 22 in the afternoon. With the assistance of Public Works the ice was removed on Tuesday, April 24. The walking track was closed at the Amherst Stadium from April 23 to May 1.

Robb Complex

The Off Leash Dog Park was open daily from 7:00am to 10:00pm. This facility is equipped with garbage cans, waste receptacle, porta pottie, shelter, benches and a holding area. April was the final month for the pilot project.

Monthly Report

Fire Department

May 2018

Responses

Town of Amherst – 17 events

- 3 Smoke alarm activations
- 4 Monitored alarm activations
- 1 Dumpster fire
- 1 Motor vehicle accident
- 2 Structure fire
- 2 Flue fire
- 1 Oven/Stove (Kitchen) Malfunction
- 2 Open burn / Wildland fire
- 1 Hazardous material

Contract area (District 2) – 4 events

- 1 Smoke alarm activations
- 2 Open burn / Wildland fire
- 1 Flue Fire

Fire inspections

6 fire inspections were completed during this period.

Professional development

On April 14th and 15th, 4 members of the fire department completed their final exams for the Basic Fire Fighter Training Program. On April 21st, Chief Jones attended a five-day fire investigator training program and from April 29th to May 4th - 2 members attended level 2 fire inspector training. On April 28th, 8 members of the department attended an elevator rescue course in Sackville, NB. This training was arranged in partnership with the Sackville Fire Department.

Fire prevention

During the month of April, the fire department met with the Amherst Girl Guides group to discuss how the fire department conducts fire, arson and explosion investigations. Members also completed a fire truck tour with the YMCA childcare group at the YMCA and participated in McHappy Day. Preparations have started for a monthly fire prevention theme on social media.

Fire Flow Review

On the evening on May 10th the fire department, in co-operation with the water utility, tested the hydrant flows in various parts of the town for approximately 20 minutes. The testing was conducted to ensure that water flows are adequate for fire protection in the case of a major fire. Testing was conducted at four separate locations: Fire Station, Helicopter Pad, Town Hall and Robb's Complex.

Personnel

During the month of April six volunteer firefighter applications were received and interviews conducted.

Monthly Report

Planning and Strategic Initiatives

May 2018

With the arrival of spring Planning is experiencing the usual uptake in requests for information around development related issues. There are at least four facilities in the Industrial Park that are currently, or in the planning stages of an expansion. Planning will continue to work with Business Development to ensure the Commercial Development Support Bylaw is promoted and utilized.

Planning also continues to provide planning and development services for the Town of Oxford.

In addition, Council's 2018 Strategic Priorities are now ready for adoption, with the intention to provide Council a progress update in June. The final draft of the Active Transportation Plan is ready for adoption, and implementation and communication of the plan will also start to roll out in June. Discussions are being undertaken with the Cumberland Energy Authority around the potential to partner on both the FCM Staff Grant, and the Community Buildings Solar Programs. The VIA Station transfer is still under active negotiation.

The Planning Advisory Committee will hold a Public Participation Session on June 4th in consideration of a request to change the zoning of the former General Homes Manufacturing Plant on Upper Church Street from Industrial to Commercial. The request is being made to allow a portion of the existing office space to be used for residential purposes. There is no change being proposed for the warehouse and storage use of the building.

Monthly Report

Economic Development

May 2018

“Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotia” identifies tourism as an important driver of economic prosperity. The report called for Nova Scotians to double tourism revenue. To do this, we need to draw a greater portion of the 1.4 million visitors who enter Nova Scotia by road at the edge of our town. With this in mind, the department’s focus has been tourism.

Develop tourism product

The Business Development Officer is working with local organizations to develop a costumed historic walking tour that will be delivered every Thursday at 1:00 pm and 7:00 pm starting in Victoria Square. The plan is to develop excellent tours that we can promote as an attraction to tour bus companies for the 2019 season. Possibilities for packaging the walking tour with a dinner theatre option are also being developed.

Improve and increase online presence

Most people who are thinking about visiting Nova Scotia use online resources to plan their trip. The most popular source of information is NovaScotia.com, which was visited by 3.91 million unique users in 2017. The site includes listings for tourism businesses and attractions, suggested itineraries for a variety of travellers, and a listing of events.

A review of the site in early April revealed that Amherst is not well-represented. None of the itineraries that were developed by Tourism Nova Scotia included a visit to Amherst. There were no Amherst restaurants listed at all. Only four of Amherst’s shops and attractions were listed. Anyone planning a trip to Nova Scotia would not find many reasons to visit Amherst.

With tourism season approaching quickly, an earnest effort is underway to provide Tourism Nova Scotia with information for the website. To date, three events have been added: Cumberland Car Club Show & Shine (June 24), Herbie the Love Bug’s 50th Birthday Party (July 12), and the Bordertown Biker Bash (July 13-15). We have submitted listings for several local attractions and events, which should appear on the website soon. These include:

- North Nova Scotia Highlanders Regimental Museum
- Maritime Mosaic, Focal Point Gallery
- Bike rentals at The Bicycle Specialist
- Splash Pad at Dickey Park, Skatepark,
- The Bordertown Jam (Wednesday evenings)
- Weekly historic walking tours (Thursdays at 1:00 and 7:00)
- The Great Amherst Antique Show and Sale (June 21-25)

Work with local businesses to develop new experiences

Travellers aren't interested in looking at things; they want to try new experiences. To help local businesses create new "experiences" that will draw more visitors and increase revenue, we have invited Tourism Nova Scotia to host a Tourism Experience Workshop at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre on May 22. The free workshop will be attended by 25 local tourism businesses. Once developed, new experiences will be added to NovaScotia.com

Develop a customer-driven marketing program

Nothing beats a recommendation to attract new customers. Even online reviews are powerful, with 88% of people trusting them as much as personal recommendations. Reviews are more effective than print, radio, or television ads. TripAdvisor, which uses visitor reviews to rate attractions, restaurants and accommodations, is visited by more than 455 Million visitors every month. The more reviews a business gets, the more customers they get, and the higher they rise on recommendation lists.

In mid-April, not many Amherst businesses were listed on TripAdvisor, and many of those that were listed had very few reviews. In total, there were 2,254 reviews of restaurants, accommodations, and attractions. To make it to the "Top 10" places to visit in Nova Scotia, we need more reviews than places like Digby (6,429), Yarmouth (5,103) and Truro (7,744).

To reach that goal, we have created a customer-driven marketing program that begins with submitting listings for Amherst businesses, restaurants, and attractions that aren't already on TripAdvisor. Businesses and attractions are then asked to invite customers to leave reviews of their visits.

To facilitate this, businesses will be provided with point-of-sale displays filled with customized reminder cards that include instructions and details about the business. People will also be encouraged to write reviews through a social media campaign and a newspaper article. We are also encouraging people to leave reviews on Facebook and Google.

A customer-driven marketing program also helps businesses develop a stronger customer service focus in order to provide an exceptional experience and generate positive reviews. These principles were presented to a group of 17 participants at a free training session offered by the Business Development Officer on May 8 at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre