



Town of Amherst  
Committee of the Whole  
Agenda

Date: **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**  
Time: **4:00 pm**  
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

---

|           |  | Pages   |
|-----------|--|---------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Call to Order</b>   |         |
|           | 1.1 <b>Territorial Acknowledgement</b>   |         |
|           | “I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in (MEEG-MA-GEE), the traditional, unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi’kmaw people. I would also like to acknowledge that Nova Scotia has another unique people. These are the Indigenous Blacks of Nova Scotia whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people.” |         |
|           | 1.2 <b>Approval of Agenda</b>  |         |
|           | 1.3 <b>Approval of the Consent Agenda</b>  | 1 - 1   |
|           | 1.4 <b>Acceptance of Minutes</b>   |         |
|           | 1.4.1 <b>January 20, 2025</b>  | 2 - 6   |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Presentations</b>   |         |
|           | 2.1 <b>Property Valuation Services - 2025 Assessment Roll - Paul Beazley and Laura MacLean</b>   | 7 - 24  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Council Direction Requests</b>  |         |
|           | 3.1 <b>Sidewalk Curb Construction Policy - Bourgeois</b>   | 25 - 28 |
|           | 3.2 <b>Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy - LeBlanc</b>   | 29 - 36 |
|           | 3.3 <b>Themed Crosswalks - Pike</b>  | 37 - 38 |
|           | 3.4 <b>Living Museum - MacDonald</b>   | 39 - 39 |
|           | 3.5 <b>Military Museum - MacDonald</b>   | 40 - 40 |

|      |   |           |
|------|---|-----------|
| 3.6  | Anson Avenue CN Crossing Train Whistle - Bourgeois    | 41 - 42   |
| 4.   | Information Items                                     |           |
| 4.1  | Stadium PA System - Bourgeois                         | 43 - 44   |
| 4.2  | Free Exercise - Bristol                               | 45 - 45   |
| 4.3  | Bylaw Officer Capacity - Pike                         | 46 - 47   |
| 4.4  | Police and Mental Health - Pike                       | 48 - 49   |
| 4.5  | Reward for Development - Fisher                       | 50 - 50   |
| 4.6  | Tourism Strategy Development - Bacon                  | 51 - 118  |
| 4.7  | 'A' Special Day - MacDonald                           | 119 - 119 |
| 4.8  | Egress from Council Chambers Procedure - LeBlanc      | 120 - 121 |
| 4.9  | Wind Turbine - Bourgeois                              | 122 - 122 |
| 4.10 | Chamberlain / South Albion Street Intersection - Pike | 123 - 125 |
| 4.11 | Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) - Bourgeois    | 126 - 128 |
| 4.12 | CAO Task Report - MacDonald                           | 129 - 129 |
| 5.   | Monthly Reports                                       |           |
| 5.1  | Community Living                                      | 130 - 130 |
| 5.2  | Corporate   | 131 - 131 |
| 5.3  | Cumberland Business Connector                         | 132 - 135 |
| 5.4  | Financial Services                                    | 136 - 137 |
| 5.5  | Fire Services   | 138 - 138 |
| 5.6  | Human Resources                                       | 139 - 140 |
| 5.7  | Operations  | 141 - 143 |
| 5.8  | Planning & Economic Development                       | 144 - 146 |
| 5.9  | Police Services                                       | 147 - 149 |

**6. Closed Session**

**6.1 Approval of Closed Session Agenda**

**6.2 Acceptance of Closed Session Minutes**

**6.2.1 January 20, 2025**

**6.3 MGA 22(2)(e) - contract negotiations**

**7. Adjournment**

---



Town of Amherst  
Committee of the Whole  
Tuesday, February 18, 2025

**Consent Agenda**

**MOTION:**

**That Council approve the following items as part of the consent agenda:**

- 1.4 Acceptance of Minutes**
- 4.1 Stadium PA System**
- 4.2 Free Exercise**
- 4.3 By-Law Officer Capacity**
- 4.4 Police and Mental Health**
- 4.5 Reward for Development**
- 4.6 Tourism Strategy Development**
- 4.9 Wind Turbine**
- 4.10 Chamberlain/South Albion Street Intersection**
- 4.11 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**
- 4.12 CAO Task Report**
- 5.1 Community Living Monthly Report**
- 5.2 Corporate Monthly Report**
- 5.3 Cumberland Business Connector Monthly Report**
- 5.4 Financial Services Monthly Report**
- 5.5 Fire Services Monthly Report**
- 5.6 Human Resources Monthly Report**
- 5.7 Operations Monthly Report**
- 5.8 Planning and Economic Development Monthly Report**
- 5.9 Police Services Monthly Report**

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

**Date:** January 20, 2025  
**Time:** 4:00 pm  
**Location:** Council Chambers, Town Hall

**Members Present** Mayor Rob Small  
Deputy Mayor Hal Davidson  
Councillor Charlie Chambers  
Councillor Nic Furlong  
Councillor Terry McManaman  
Councillor Dwayne Ripley  
Councillor Kathy Wells

**Staff Present** Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer  
Aaron Bourgeois, Director, Operations  
Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Strategic Initiatives  
Jeff Bacon, Business Development Officer  
Dwayne Pike, Chief, Police Services  
Greg Jones, Director, Fire Services  
Kim Jones, Director, Corporate Communications  
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources  
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance  
Denise Smith, Finance Manager  
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living  
Sean Payne, Corporate Communications Officer  
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk  
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

---

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Small called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement**

Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

**1.2 Approval of Agenda**

**Moved By Councillor Furlong**

**Seconded By Councillor McManaman**

**That the agenda be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda**

**Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson**

**Seconded By Councillor Chambers**

**That the consent agenda be approved as circulated.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**1.4 Acceptance of Minutes**

**1.4.1 December 16, 2024**

The minutes of the December 16, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting were accepted as included in the agenda package as part of the consent agenda.

**1.4.2 January 8, 2025**

The minutes of the January 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting were accepted as included in the agenda package as part of the consent agenda.

**2. Presentations**

**2.1 Healthcare Recruitment - Janneke Gradstein**

The Committee received a presentation on Healthcare Recruitment and the Community Navigator position. Information item only.

**2.2 Cumberland Business Connector - Jonathan McClelland**

The Committee received a presentation from the Cumberland Business Connector. Information item only.

**3. Council Direction Requests**

**3.1 Expense Reimbursement Policy**

**Moved By Councillor Furlong**

**Seconded By Councillor Wells**

**That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, the proposed amendments to the Expense Reimbursement Policy # 3000-07 for approval.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.2 Hospitality Policy**

**Moved By Councillor Chambers**

**Seconded By Councillor Ripley**

**That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, the proposed amendments to the Hospitality Policy # 3000-08 for approval.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.3 Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy**

**Moved By Councillor Chambers**

**Seconded By Councillor McManaman**

**That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, the Audit Committee Terms of Reference Policy to be re-adopted as recommended by the Audit Committee.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.4 Council Remuneration and Benefits**

Further to the memo included in the agenda package, discussion ensued around a review of Council remuneration and benefits. The Committee agreed they would like to maintain status quo at this time.

**3.5 Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy**

Further to the memo included in the agenda package, discussion ensued around Council attendance at the annual FCM Conference and Tradeshow, particularly how many members are permitted to attend as per policy. The Committee agreed they would like to maintain status quo at this time, permitting three members to attend when the Conference is held outside of the Maritime provinces.

**3.6 Anson Avenue CN Rail Crossing**

**Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson**

**Seconded By Councillor Chambers**

**That staff investigate the feasibility of removing the CN crossing train whistle at the Anson Avenue crossing.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3.7 2025 Meeting Dates**

**Moved By Councillor Ripley**

**Seconded By Councillor Chambers**

**That Council forward to the January 27, 2025 regular meeting, approval to change the February 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, February 17, 2025 to Tuesday, February 18, 2025 due to the Heritage Day holiday, change the April 2025 Committee of the Whole date from Monday, April 21, 2025 to Tuesday, April 22, 2025 due to the Easter holiday, change the May 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, May 19, 2025 to Tuesday, May 20, 2025 due to the Victoria Day holiday, change the December 2025 Committee of the Whole start time from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and further change the December 2025 Council meeting date from Monday, December 22, 2025 to Monday, December 15, 2025 due to the holiday season.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. Information Items**

**4.1 Esther Cox Schoolhouse**

The Committee considered a request to move the historic Eastville Schoolhouse, which it is believed Esther Cox attended, to Amherst. Consensus of the Committee was that they did not wish to pursue this.

**4.2 ATV Trails**

Chief Pike presented the memo included in the agenda package. Information item only.

**4.3 Accessibility Report Card**

Sharon Bristol presented the memo included in the agenda package. Information item only.

**Moved By Councillor Ripley  
Seconded By Councillor Furlong  
To continue the meeting past 6:00 p.m. as per policy.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson  
Seconded By Councillor Furlong  
To continue the meeting until 7:00 p.m.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.4 Medical First Responder Services**

**Moved By Councillor Ripley  
Seconded By Councillor Furlong  
That staff contact EHS to request they give a presentation to Council  
regarding Medical First Responder Services.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Moved By Councillor Furlong  
Seconded By Councillor McManaman  
To present members of the Amherst Fire Department with a poll to indicate  
their desire for providing medical first responder services.  
Against (7): Mayor Small, Deputy Mayor Davidson, Councillor Chambers,  
Councillor Ripley, Councillor Wells, Councillor Furlong, and Councillor  
McManaman**

**MOTION DEFEATED**

**Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson  
Seconded By Councillor Ripley  
That no decision be made without consultation with members of the  
Amherst Fire Fighters Association.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4.5 IT Security**

The CAO gave a verbal update on IT Security, advising that if anyone ever has any reason to question the validity of an email, that they contact IT and ask for guidance. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

**4.6 CAO Task Report**

Information item only.

**5. Monthly Reports**

The following monthly reports were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- 5.1 Business Development Monthly Report
- 5.2 Community Living Monthly Report
- 5.3 Corporate Communications and IT Monthly Report
- 5.4 Cumberland Business Connector Monthly Report
- 5.5 Financial Services Monthly Report
- 5.6 Fire Services Monthly Report
- 5.7 Human Resources Monthly Report
- 5.8 Operations Monthly Report
- 5.9 Planning and Strategic Initiatives Monthly Report

- 5.10 Police Services Monthly Report
- 5.11 Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Monthly Report

- 6. **Closed Session**  
**Moved By Councillor Furlong**  
**Seconded By Councillor Wells**  
**That the Committee move to a closed session.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

- 7. **Adjournment**  
There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the meeting.

---

Natalie LeBlanc  
Municipal Clerk

---

Robert Small  
Mayor



Property Valuation Services  
Corporation

A truly valued Nova Scotia

# PVSC 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL

TOWN OF AMHERST



February 18, 2025



# NOVA SCOTIA'S PROPERTY ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION SYSTEM

# ABOUT PVSC



Created under the *Property Valuation Service Corporation Act* and responsible for assessing all real property in Nova Scotia as per the *Nova Scotia Assessment Act*



Municipally funded, not-for-profit



Governed by a Board of Directors



Approximately 130 employees across 62 communities around Nova Scotia

# WHAT WE DO & DON'T DO

## PVSC does:

- Deliver an Assessment Roll to all 49 NS municipalities.
- Deliver ~650,000 Assessment Notices to NS property owners.
- Administer the Capped Assessment Program (CAP) and Seasonal Tourist Business Designation program on behalf of the NS government.

## PVSC does NOT:

- Have the authority to:
  - Set tax rates;
  - Collect taxes;
  - Create tax policy;
  - Provide tax relief; or
  - Determine land ownership.

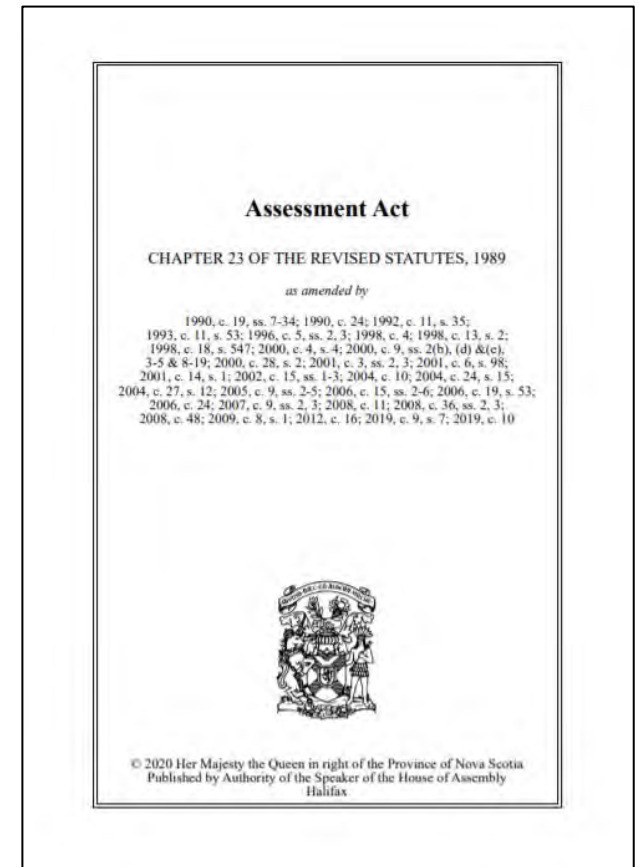
# MARKET VALUE

The *Nova Scotia Assessment Act* requires that we assess property at market value:

*“... the amount which in the opinion of the assessor would be paid if it were sold on a date prescribed by the Director in the open market by a willing seller to a willing buyer”*

**AND**

*“The assessment shown on the roll shall be the assessment that reflects the state of the property as it existed on the first day of December immediately preceding the filing of the roll”*



# MASS APPRAISAL

- PVSC uses mass appraisal to determine the value of all real property in Nova Scotia each year
- Property assessments based on market evidence
- PVSC measures market value assessment accuracy, uniformity, and fairness against the *Assessment Act* and the internationally accepted standards of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO)

MASS APPRAISAL:  
The process of valuing a group of properties as of a given date using common data, standardized methods and statistical testing.

# ROLL QUALITY STANDARDS

- PVSC uses advanced statistical analysis to conduct an in-depth examination of market trends and indicators for every assessment roll
- Assessments are rigorously tested for accuracy and uniformity to ensure compliance with the Assessment Act and industry standards set by the International Association of Assessing Officers

## QUALITY MEASUREMENTS

- Valuation Approach Selection
- Mass Appraisal Statistics
  - Level of Assessment
  - Fairness of Assessments
  - Equity Between Groupings

# MASS APPRAISAL DATA SOURCES

- Discussions with property owners
- NS Land Registry
- Sales reviews & real estate websites
- Municipal building permits
- Income and expense information
- Typical cost data
- Aerial photography
- Field inspections



# THREE APPROACHES TO DETERMINING VALUE

PVSC uses three internationally accepted valuation methods:

## Sales Comparison

Analyze sales of comparable properties to determine value and adjust for local market conditions

## Income

Determine the income a property can earn (after expenses) and convert net operating income to market value

## Cost

Calculate land value and current cost to replace buildings, then deduct for depreciation

# COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SALES

## Q: Are all sales considered in your analysis?

- Not every sales in included in our market analysis. The sale price is simply the dollar amount paid for a property in a particular transaction. A sale price does not have to meet any predetermined set of criteria so it may or may not reflect actual market value.
- Sale investigations are an especially important activity in mass appraisal – to ensure that sales used in our analysis are between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an open market.

## Q: When a house sells, does that price become its assessed value?

- Mass appraisal involves the analysis of **many** sales to determine the market value of properties.
- Not every house sells every year, so if we simply based assessments on the last sale price, some properties wouldn't have their assessment updated in years, or decades.

# COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SALES

## **Q: How are market areas determined?**

- By analyzing how the market transacts in different areas we can determine homogeneous market areas. Some market areas might be large, such as in a rural area, while others might be a neighbourhood or a street in a city or town.

## **Q: What happens when you don't have enough sales in a market area?**

- In areas that have few or no sales, we expand the analysis to include sales from similar areas nearby or use an industry best practice called time trending, which effectively measures the influence of time on sale prices and trends them to a specific point in time (the base date).

# THE CAPPED ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- PVSC administers the Capped Assessment Program (CAP) on behalf of the Nova Scotia Government.
- The program places a 'cap' on the amount that the taxable assessment for eligible residential property can increase year over year based on the Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index (CPI) in October.

| 2024 PROPERTY ASSESSMENT |   |   |       |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|-------|---|
| Classification           | Assessed Value  | *Capped Assessment  | Acres | Taxable Assessed Value  |
| RESIDENTIAL TAXABLE      | \$192,600<br><div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Assessed value reflects the market and state of the property</div> | \$153,000<br><div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Capped assessment reflects the NS CPI in October</div> |       | \$153,000<br><div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 5px auto;">Taxable assessed value is what is used to determine property taxes</div> |
| <b>2024 TOTAL</b>        | <b>\$192,600</b>  |   |       | <b>\$153,000</b>  |

1.5% CAP  
for 2025

# 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL

- The 2025 assessment roll reflects a property's market value as of January 1, 2024, based on market evidence from 2023.
- The 2025 assessment also consider a property's physical state as of December 1, 2024, including new construction, renovations, and demolitions.

April 20, 2023

all Nova Scotia

**Clouds over home building beginning to clear**

November 29, 2023

CBC

**Housing crunch must be treated as a once-in-a-generation challenge**

April 5, 2023

all Nova Scotia

**Office Vacancies Up**

July 7, 2023

all Nova Scotia

**Home prices climbing as listings shrink**

# AMHERST: 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL



Total 2025 Assessment Roll= **\$918 M**

---

Residential Property Assessment:

**\$ 697 M** total assessed value

**4,061** accounts

Residential assessed value with CAP = **\$ 537 M**

Total residential accounts with CAP = **3,037**

---



Commercial Property Assessment:

**\$ 221 M** total assessed value

**449** accounts

# AMHERST: 2025 ASSESSMENT ROLL



**160**

Permits  
2024



**169**

Property  
Transactions



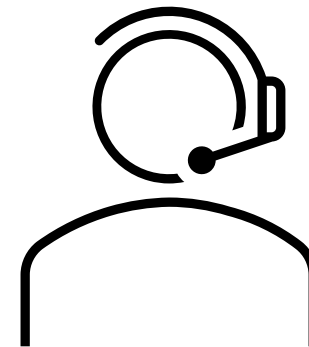
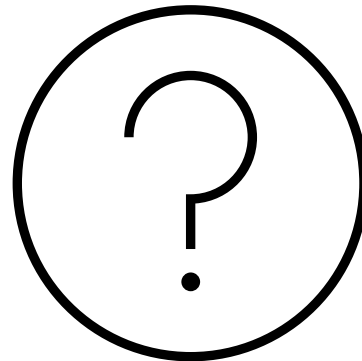
**78**

Appeals in  
2024

# THE APPEAL PROCESS

- Each property owner receives a notice of assessment which indicates an assessed value for their property.
- Should a property owner disagree with their assessed value they can file an appeal.
  - Assessment appeals must be received within 31 days (i.e. February 13, 2025).
  - Instructions on how to file an appeal are included on the assessment notice.
- There are three levels of appeal:
  - PVSC initial assessor review
  - Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal (NSAAT)
  - Utility and Review Board (UARB)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

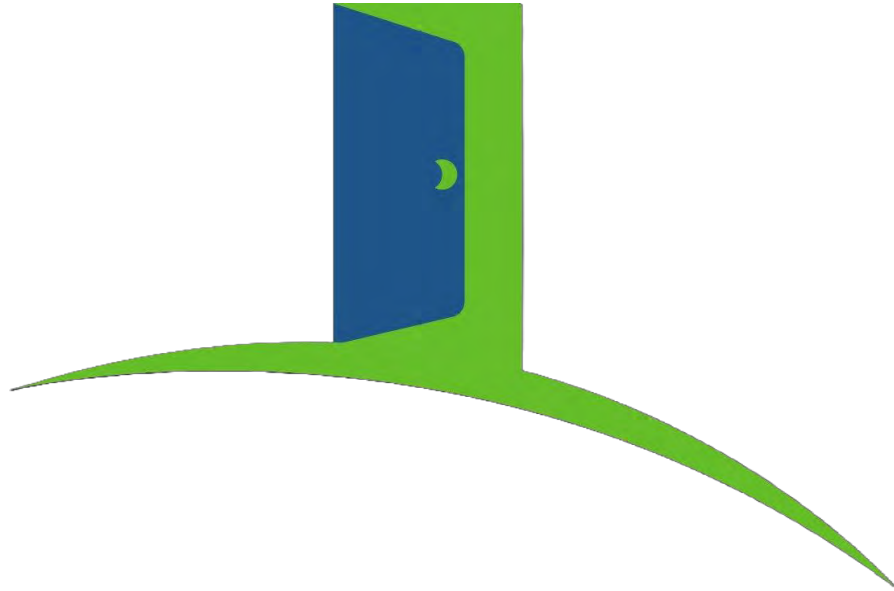


Please direct constituents with questions about property assessment to our Contact Centre, where they can connect with our knowledgeable and expert staff.

1-800-380-7775

[inquiry@pvsc.ca](mailto:inquiry@pvsc.ca)

[pvsc.ca](http://pvsc.ca)



THANK YOU.  
QUESTIONS?

---

**TO:** Mayor Small and Members of Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **Sidewalk and Curb Construction Policy**

---

**ORIGIN:** This policy was reviewed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** MGA section 47(1) states; The council shall make decisions in the exercise of its powers and duties by resolution, by policy or by by-law.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council forward to the February 24, 2025 regular meeting, approval of the amendments to the Sidewalk and Curb Construction Policy.

**BACKGROUND:** This policy was reviewed at the January 8, 2025 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Following some discussion the following motion was made:

**That the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend to Council that the language of the Sidewalk and Curb Construction Policy be updated to include replacing existing brick pavers with concrete to improve accessibility.**

**DISCUSSION:** The brick paver sidewalks in the downtown core will soon be in need of replacement or significant repairs due to age and the effects of seasonal freeze thaw cycles.

Brick pavers also present a challenge for wheelchair users and persons with limited mobility. Amending the policy so that all reconstructed sidewalks are replaced with concrete regardless of the materials used in the original construction will greatly improve the accessibility of our sidewalk network, especially in the downtown core. Language has also been added to include the use of tactile warning indicator plates where required.

If approved, staff will prepare a brick paver replacement plan and include brick paver replacements in future capital budgets for consideration.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** Replacing brick pavers with concrete will realize some savings as concrete is approximately 15% cheaper than traditional interlocking pavers.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** Replacing the brick pavers with concrete will improve the accessibility of our downtown sidewalks for all users but in particular those persons with limited mobility or persons using a wheelchair or scooter.





**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**CDR# 2025016**

**Date: February 18, 2025**

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** There are no environmental implications associated with this decision.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** There is no community engagement contemplated at this time.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Direct staff to draft further changes to the policy;
2. Do not adopt any changes to the policy.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Sidewalk / Curb Policy 31600-18 - AMENDED

---

Report prepared by: A. Bourgeois  
Report and Financial approved by:



---

**TITLE:                                 SIDEWALK / CURB CONSTRUCTION POLICY**  
**SECTION:                            ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS**  
**POLICY NO.:                        31600-18**

---

**APPROVAL DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_                                 **CAO Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to define materials to be used for sidewalk and curb construction or maintenance.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Sidewalk construction is an important part of the Town of Amherst infrastructure. ~~The following will be used by staff when developing plans for sidewalk and curb reconstruction or construction. Materials used in the construction of all new sidewalks in the Town of Amherst will be recommended by staff, and reviewed and approved by Amherst Town Council during the capital budget process.~~

**1.        New Sidewalk Construction**

Materials used in the construction of all new sidewalks in the Town of Amherst will be **concrete and include the installation of tactile warning indicator plates as needed.** ~~Other construction materials may be~~ recommended by staff and reviewed and approved by Amherst Town Council during the capital budget process.

**2.        Repair of Existing Sidewalks**

Existing concrete, asphalt or interlocking brick paver sidewalks will be repaired using the same materials used in the original construction.

~~Construction material for replacement of entire sections of sidewalks (i.e. between two parallel streets) shall be at the discretion of Council.~~

**3.        Reconstruction of Existing Sidewalks**

**When entire sections of existing concrete, asphalt or interlocking brick paver sidewalks are replaced the material used for reconstruction shall be concrete and include the installation of tactile warning indicator plates as needed**

**4.-3.    New Curbs**

All new curbs will be concrete with barrier curbs required on arterial streets to provide safety relative to higher speed traffic. Roll over curbs will be installed on local and collector streets except at tee intersections and sharp corners where barrier curbs will be used to reduce the possibility of vehicles sliding into the sidewalk.

**TITLE:                                 SIDEWALK / CURB CONSTRUCTION POLICY**  
**SECTION:                            ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS**  
**POLICY NO.:                        31600-18**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

| Title/Role                    | Responsibilities   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Director of Operations</b> | Ensure policy is reviewed on a regular basis to determine if any updates / changes are required. |
|                               |  |

For Administrative Use Only:

**VERSION LOG**

| Amendment Description  | Policy Owner                      | Approved By | Approval Date |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Amended policy language; brick pavers will be replaced with concrete when reconstructing downtown sidewalks</b> | Director of Operations, Bourgeois | Council     |               |
|  |                                   |             |               |

Minutes Reference Dates:

25 June 2007                                 29 June 2010



## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025017

Date: February 18, 2025

---

**TO:** Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions

---

**ORIGIN:** Recent review of Council Committee appointments

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** Section 24 of the Municipal Government Act provides the statutory authority to Council with respect to standing, special and advisory committees.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council forward to the February 24, 2025 regular meeting, approval of the proposed amendments to the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committee & Commissions Policy.

**DISCUSSION:** Following the municipal election in October, Council completed a review of external Boards, Committees and Commissions to which they appoint members of Council. Appendix A of the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy needs to be amended to reflect these appointments.

As per section 9 of the policy, attached is also a list of Council members who sit on a body that is not an appointment of Council. This is being provided simply for information purposes and to ensure accuracy with the list.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** There are no financial implications arising from these amendments.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Letters have been sent to all organizations advising of the Council appointments to their board, committee or commission, as well as to those organizations where Council agreed to no longer appoint a member.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** There are no environmental implications with amending this policy.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** There are no social justice implications with amending this policy



**ALTERNATIVES:**

- Do not approve the policy as amended and recommend alternative amendments.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Appointment of Members of Council to External Board, Committees & Commissions with proposed amendments.

---

Report prepared by: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

---

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS,  
COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  
**SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS**  
**POLICY NO: 10350-28**

---

**APPROVAL DATE:** June 24, 2024      **CAO Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Short Title**

1. This Policy may be known as the *Appointments of Members of Council to External Bodies Policy*.

**Purposes**

2. The purposes of this Policy are to determine:
  - (a) when Council may appoint or decline appointment of Members to external bodies;
  - (b) the reporting requirements regarding other bodies on which Members may choose to serve without the appointment of Council.

**Interpretation**

3. In this Policy:
  - (a) "CAO" means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality;
  - (b) "Clerk" means the Clerk of the Municipality, and includes a person acting under the direction or supervision of the Clerk;
  - (c) "Council" means the Council of the Town;
  - (d) "External body" means any board, commission, committee, body or local authority of any kind established to exercise or exercising any power or authority under any general or special Act with respect to any of the affairs or purposes of a municipality or parts thereof or of two or more municipalities or parts thereof, or to which a municipality or municipalities are required to provide funds.
  - (e) "Member" means a member of Council, including the Mayor; and
  - (f) "Municipality" means the Town of Amherst.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

4.
  - (a) Only Council may appoint Members to external bodies.
  - (b) Any appointment by Council of Members to external bodies shall be made pursuant to section 8 of this Policy.
5. Council shall only make appointments to external bodies after having received and considered the terms of reference from external bodies.
6. The Clerk shall keep a list of the appointments of Members to external bodies made by Council, known as Appendix A.

---

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS,  
COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  
**SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS**  
**POLICY NO: 10350-28**

---

**External Bodies**

7. Council shall not be bound by the by-laws or articles of incorporation adopted by an external body providing for the appointment of a Member to such body.

**Council Appointments to External Bodies**

8. (1) Council may appoint Members to external bodies as required by enactment, by-law or agreement:
- (a) in accordance with any enactment of the Government of Canada or Province of Nova Scotia;
  - (b) in accordance with the By-laws of the Municipality or an agreement to which the Municipality is a party; or
  - (c) as otherwise directed by Council.

- (2) Council may appoint Members to bodies, including external bodies, which in the opinion of Council are community organizations providing a service to the community and which:
- a. the Municipality is providing funding; and/or
  - b. where Council determines that municipal involvement is required or beneficial.

- (3) An external body Council considers meets the purpose of subsection 1 or 2 of this section shall be named in Appendix A. Council may amend Appendix A to add or remove the name of an external body.

(4) Reporting

Councillors appointed to external bodies will submit a report to regular Council meetings. Information that generally should be included in the report includes:

- a. Governance issues;
- b. Financial issues;
- c. Requests to Council; and
- d. Service delivery capacity.

These reports are intended to provide important information to Council regarding the operation of the external body and are not intended to be a medium to promote issues / events to the general public.

**External Bodies Without Council Appointment**

9. (1) A Member who sits on a body that has not been appointed to such body by Council shall advise the Clerk of the name of the body on which he or she sits.

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS,  
COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  
**SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS**  
**POLICY NO: 10350-28**

---

(2) The Clerk shall retain a list of the names of the bodies provided by the Members pursuant to subsection 1 of this section and the list shall indicate the name of the Member and the name of the body provided.

(3) The Clerk shall retain the list created pursuant to subsection 2 of this section in the Office of the Municipal Clerk as a public record.

(4) The Clerk shall provide the list annually to the Members for their review and the Members shall advise the Clerk of any errors or omissions on such list.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

10. (1) All members of Council are encouraged to consider the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act in all matters that come before them in their duties as a public representative on any group in which they serve in a capacity other than formally appointed by Council.

(2) If you feel you are in a position where you may be in a direct, indirect or even perceived conflict you should:

- As soon as practicable after the commencement of the meeting disclose the interest and the general nature thereof; then withdraw from his/her place as a member and
- In the case of a closed meeting, leave the room in which meeting is held for the duration of the consideration of the matter, and
- In the case of a meeting that is open to the public, leave his/her seat and take a seat in the public gallery until the matter is concluded.

(3) When in doubt, Councillors are encouraged to err on the side of caution and declare a conflict.

#### **Appendices**

11. Any Appendix attached to this Policy shall form part of the Policy.

- Appendix A – External Bodies to which Members are appointed pursuant to section 8

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS,  
COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  
**SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS**  
**POLICY NO: 10350-28**

**Appendix A  
External Bodies to which Members  
are appointed pursuant to Section 8**

| <b>Board, Committee or Commission</b>     | <b>Members Appointed</b>      | <b>Act, Legislation, By-Law, Agreement or Membership</b>  |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Cumberland Public Libraries Board         | 1 Member appointed            | By-laws of Board  |
| Regional Emergency Management             | 2 Members appointed           | Intermunicipal Agreement                                  |
| Northern Region Solid Waste               | 1 Member appointed            | Intermunicipal Agreement                                  |
| Cumberland YMCA                           | 1 Member appointed            | Contribution Agreement                                    |
| LA Animal Shelter                         | 1 Member appointed            | Contribution Agreement<br>Capital Funding                 |
| <del>Cornerstone Board of Directors</del> | <del>1 Member appointed</del> | Contribution Agreement                                    |
| <del>Municipal Alcohol Project</del>      | <del>1 Member appointed</del> | By Request of Organization                                |
| Senior Safety Advisory Committee          | 1 Member appointed            | By Request of Organization                                |
| GFL Community Liaison Committee           | 1 Member appointed            | Residential Three Stream Solid Waste Collection Agreement |

**TITLE: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  
**SECTION: EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS**  
**POLICY NO: 10350-28**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Title/Role     | Responsibilities   |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Council</b> | Appoint members to external boards, committees and commissions. Notify Clerk of any boards, committees or commissions to which they are members of without Council appointment |
| <b>Clerk</b>   | Ensure Appendix A of this policy, as well as the list of boards, committees and commissions council are members of without Council appointment, is kept up to date.            |

For Administrative Use Only:

## VERSION LOG

| Amendment Description   | Policy Owner   | Approved By | Approval Date |
|---|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Amend Appendix A to reflect current Council appointments</b>   | Clerk, LeBlanc |             |               |
| <b>Include a provision that states: The report should include any matters that affect the organizations governance, financial structure, or service delivery capacity, remove Appendix B and C.</b> | Clerk, LeBlanc | Council     | June 24, 2024 |

Minutes reference date: February 26, 2018 February 22, 2021 April 25, 2022 June 24, 2024



# MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: Themed Crosswalks – Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture”

---

During the last several years there has been an interest in themed crosswalks. In the fall of 2022, I had conducted a review of the governing legislation and other studies. This included a review of the relevant sections of the TAC (Traffic Association of Canada) Manual, the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act, and studies conducted in Halifax and the United States. The TAC Manual confirmed that, at minimum, marked crosswalks require one of two things:

1. 2 white or yellow lines that traverse the road that are minimum 2.5 metres apart, and are between 0.2 Metres to 0.3 Metres thick;(See Figure 1) or
2. ‘zebra’ style crosswalk with each stripe being minimum 2.5 metres across, 0.6 metres thick and 0.6 metres apart from each other (See Figure 2)

Fig 1



Fig 2



There are several issues to consider when making decisions to enhance crosswalks with designs or paint:

1. Paint can make the surface slippery when wet for bicycles/motorcycles and pedestrians, especially in areas where traffic is turning or travelling at higher speeds.

2. There is a belief that painted/decorative crosswalks can increase visibility and alert motorists, especially when bright colours are used. Recent studies have conflicting conclusions on this point.
3. Section 94 of the Motor Vehicle Act prohibits the use of any 'sign, signal or device' that interferes with the effectiveness of any official traffic sign or signal.

The conclusions at the time were that crosswalk art was permissible as long as slip resistant paint is utilized, surface areas painted are minimal, it is only installed on straight roadway areas, that it is done in lower speed areas and designs are not distracting or interfere with the required white traverse lines that indicate the existence of a crosswalk.

There are currently 3 crosswalks in Amherst that have themes attached to them:

1. The Pride Crosswalk that traverses Victoria Street in the downtown core
2. Veteran themed crosswalk at Victoria Street at the Cenotaph
3. Veteran themed crosswalk at Havelock/Laplanche Street in front of Afghan Memorial

There is a plan in place for a 4<sup>th</sup> themed crosswalk to celebrate our Indigenous peoples and culture.

All of these crosswalks are in areas where vehicle speeds are greatly reduced because of traffic signs/signals as well as traffic patterns. Upkeep for these areas results in an increased workload each year to maintain the design as not distracting nor do they interfere with the functionality of the crosswalk.

It is recommended that themed crosswalks not be used outside the downtown core, kept at a minimum and not be expanded beyond those that currently exist or are already planned for.

With Council input and Direction, staff will prepare a policy for Council consideration.

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council  
**From:** Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**Subject:** Living Museum - Strategic Priorities "Points to Capture"

---

One of the Points to Capture was "**Living Museum**". Staff are not sure exactly what this means.

Staff are seeking clarification and direction.

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council  
**From:** Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**Subject:** Military Museum - Strategic Priorities "Points to Capture"

---

One of the Points to Capture was "**Military Museum**".

As Council is aware, there is a military museum located at the Amherst Armories. There is a proposal being developed to convert the armories into housing for veterans which includes a new, updated space for the Military Museum. Council is scheduled to have a presentation on this proposal on February 24<sup>th</sup>, prior to the regular Council session.

Staff are seeking further clarification and direction, if required.

# MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: Anson Avenue Train Whistle

---

At the January 20, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting Council passed the following motion:

**That staff investigate the feasibility of removing the CN crossing train whistle at the Anson Avenue crossing.**

Staff reached out to the Transport Canada railway safety inspector for this area for direction on the process to cease the train whistle at the Anson Avenue crossing. This crossing may meet all of the requirements for whistling cessation since the warning system has been upgraded and gates have been installed. To determine if this is possible, the Town in collaboration with the railway (CN) will need to assess the crossing and determine if all the requirements have been met.

The process to cease the use of a train whistle at a grade crossing includes:

1. **Citizen or community group expresses interest**  
The municipality receives a request to stop train whistling at a specific area (one crossing or multiple crossings) along a railway corridor.
2. **Municipality consults with railway company**  
To find out if the request is feasible, the municipality checks with the company that operates the railway line.
3. **Municipality notifies the public**  
The municipality:
  - notifies all relevant associations or organizations, this includes railway workers unions and a number of railway users such as the Canadian Propane association
  - issues a public notice, which says it intends to pass a resolution to stop train whistling at a railway crossing
4. **Municipality and railway company assess the crossing**  
This assessment determines whether or not the area meets whistling cessation requirements in section 104 of the *Grade Crossings Regulations* and Appendix D of the *Grade Crossings Standards*. The municipality and railway company may hire a professional engineer to help complete the assessment.

**5. Municipality and railway company agree the crossing meets requirements**

If the municipality and the railway company do not agree that the crossing meets these requirements, they should try to resolve the conflict.

o **5a. (optional): Municipality and railway request a final decision from Transport Canada**

If the disagreement continues, the municipality and the railway company can ask Transport Canada for a Ministerial Decision on whether the crossing meets the requirements in section 104 of the *Grade Crossings Regulations* by contacting Transport Canada. Transport Canada's decision on the issue is final.

Staff have reached out to CN to ask for their opinion on whether or not they think this request is feasible. At the time of writing this memo, I have not received any feedback from CN.

Should Council wish to cease the train whistle at the Anson Avenue crossing, and to minimize any potential future liability associated with ceasing the train whistle, staff are recommending the following:

- Hire a professional engineer or other qualified person familiar with railway safety to complete the required assessments on behalf of the Town.
- Direct staff to include \$10,000 in the proposed 2025/26 operating budget to pay for the required assessments.

# MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: Amherst Stadium Public Address (PA) System – Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture”

---

Staff and Council have received complaints regarding the quality of the Public Address (PA) system at the Amherst Stadium as sometimes the patrons of the stadium say they cannot hear or understand what is being broadcast over the PA.

The issue is not with the equipment as much as it is improper use of the microphone and audio controls. To minimize issues with the PA system stadium staff are going to coordinate a training session for the user groups that frequently use the system and are also going to post detailed instructions on how to properly use the microphone and audio controls. The training will take place before the end of the month and the microphone instructions have already been posted in the announcer’s booth.

A copy of the microphone instructions is attached.

# Stadium PA System Instructions

## 1. Microphone Handling & Positioning

- **Microphone Placement:** Keep handheld mic **2-3 inches from mouth**. Avoid too close or too far to prevent distortion or low volume.
- **Use of Stand:** Adjust stand to mouth level, if possible, to avoid holding the mic.
- **Angle:** Hold mic slightly off to the side of your mouth to reduce breathing noises.

## 2. Volume & Audio Control

- **Test Volume:** Ensure mic volume is clear and balanced before starting. Adjust for crowd noise and necessary loudness.
- **Crowd Noise Management:** Speak louder if needed but avoid shouting, which can distort your voice.

## 3. Speech Clarity & Delivery

- **Speak Clearly & Slowly:** Enunciate words and maintain steady pace. Speak slowly do not rush.
- **Emphasize Key Info:** Highlight important moments (e.g., “GOAL!” or “Final Score”).
- **Keep it Concise:** Limit announcements to essential details to keep audience engaged.

## 4. Microphone Etiquette

- **Mute When Not Speaking:** Turn off or mute mic when not in use to prevent unnecessary noise.
- **Avoid Handling Noises:** Don't tap, bump, or move the mic unnecessarily.
- **Don't Block Mic:** Ensure mic is not obstructed by your hand or body.

## 5. Engaging the Audience

- **Project with Energy:** Use an enthusiastic tone, especially during key moments (e.g., goals, scores, player intros).
- **Pause for Crowd Reactions:** After big moments, let the crowd react before continuing.

## 6. Emergency Announcements

- **Be Calm & Clear:** For emergencies (e.g., weather delays, lost child), remain calm, clear, and authoritative.
- **Urgency with Clarity:** Deliver important information in a clear but urgent manner when necessary.

## 7. Monitor Audio Feedback

- **Listen for Feedback:** If possible, monitor live audio to ensure good quality and make adjustments as needed.

By following these guidelines, you ensure clear, effective communication while keeping the audience engaged and informed.

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Amherst Town Council  
FROM: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living  
DATE: February 18, 2025  
SUBJECT: Town of Amherst Free Exercise – Strategic Pories “Points to Capture”

---

The Town of Amherst offers multiple options for residents to move/exercise/participate in sport. Included in the Town of Amherst Active Living Strategy goals is to foster opportunities for people to increase movement in their daily lives. Our Active Living Coordinator seeks out new opportunities daily to provide or partner with agencies to accomplish this.

Currently we offer an adult/senior NS walks program, afterschool skate, tennis and pickle ball for youth, public skating, volleyball for teens, All kids bike and scooter program and equipment loan for free. In the summer we offer Yoga and PiYo in the park also free of charge.

During the year we offer Multisport, Friday Night Fun at the Y (swimming and unstructured gym play) Summer swim lessons, and Parks program for a minimal cost.

We also take every opportunity to partner with the schools for activities that include exercise such as winter carnival, scarecrow stroll, truth and reconciliation day (walking, strolling, sledding). Also, outside groups such as Veterans Walk, Heartland Tour, Striders and Community Health Board to enhance participation in athletic activities.

Our walking track at the Stadium, tennis courts, and outdoor spaces remain free for public use year round as applicable.

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: By-Law Officer Capacity – Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture”

---

Part of our Police Department resources include a full-time By-Law Officer. This position is considered a ‘Special Constable’ under Section 88 of the Nova Scotia Police Act and their authority is limited only to when they are working and engaged in the course of their duties and functions as a Special Constable and their jurisdiction is restricted to the Town of Amherst.

As per their appointment, our By-Law Officer has the authority to lay charges under various parking sections of the Motor Vehicle Act and have authority to enforce Town By-Laws that include:

- Town of Amherst Discharge of Firearms By-Law #C-02
- Town of Amherst Loitering By-Law #C-03
- Town of Amherst Companion Animal By-Law #C-4
- Town of Amherst Fires and Burning By-Law #C-7
- Town of Amherst Taxi By-Law #C-9
- Town of Amherst Vending By-Law #C-10
- Town of Amherst Smoke-Free Recreational Places By-Law #C-12
- Town of Amherst Snow Removal By-Law #D-1-C
- Town of Amherst Grass Maintenance By-Law #D-21

While this position initially was primarily parking and by-law enforcement, over the last 20 years, as a result of increasing requirements to address administrative functions and shortages in dispatch, many of these roles fell to the By-Law Officer as they could not be carried by a Police Officer or another administrative position. These additional functions include:

- Fingerprinting persons charged with criminal offenses – scheduled for Wednesdays from 9:30am until 3:00pm, 7 slots which are usually full;
- Civil fingerprinting for employment and other reasons (may be scheduled on Wednesdays, but not always);
- Maintenance for the LiveScan system;
- Purging and destroying hard copy files in line with PROS mandated purge dates;
- Filing all hard copy files and documents in the appropriate location;
- Departmental deliveries (Court and Crown files, disclosure, town hall, etc);
- Shredding documents and papers and coordinating pick up of shredded materials;
- Any other administrative duties that may come up that others cannot do or if they need help with priorities or to ensure that deadlines are met (collecting stats, etc);
- Minor building maintenance, changing lightbulbs, etc;
- Snow clearance;
- Some responsibilities in regards to fleet maintenance, tracking mileage, delivering vehicles for equipment installation or repairs, often to Halifax or out of Town;
- Local purchases (cell block materials, vehicle accessories, and other regular purchases that need to be made for required materials or equipment);
- Guard training.

As a trained dispatcher, our By-Law Officer has been our primary backup when dispatch is short due to illness, leave or other shortages, often resulting in changing his schedule to weekends and nights in line with the dispatch schedule for 24-hour coverage. As we commonly have shortages in dispatch and due to the time frame to hire, train and schedule new employees, this is often an issue. Unfortunately, it has not been uncommon for this position to be utilized in dispatch in excess of a month.

Traditionally, this position also covered breaks and lunches for dispatchers each day, or when dispatch gets extremely busy. This issue has somewhat changed as we have moved the person in *Criminal Record Checks* into our Dispatch office and they are now responsible for these functions.

The By-Law Officer is also often utilized when we are unable to get a jail guard. People in custody must be monitored. If a guard is not available, this often falls to the By-Law Officer position or even a Police Officer because of the liability and risk.

We have made some changes to mitigate the impact of dispatch priorities on the By-law Officer position. This includes:

- Movement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Criminal Records Check person into the dispatch office: This provides a second person between 11:00am and 6:00pm to cover breaks, lunches and busy times, minimizing the need to utilize the By-law Officer or other administrative positions.
- We have hired a new part-time dispatcher who is still currently training and is scheduled to start working solo on February 17<sup>th</sup>. Once trained, this person can likely cover the shortages as opposed to utilizing the By-law Officer position.

With these recent changes, we are expecting that the By-Law Officer should be able to focus on the core responsibilities of his position, most notably, downtown parking.

# MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: Police and Mental Health - Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture”

---

It is common knowledge that police resources have been impacted by mental health issues and illness in our communities. Over the past two decades, police have been utilized more and more to address mental health issues in the community. This has resulted in additional stress on police resources as traditional mental health resources are not often available or not equipped to deal with certain risk factors that mental health complaints often pose.

While many of our police occurrences deal with elements of mental illness, police are often the primary resource when dealing with mental health well-being checks or suicidal persons. Under the *Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA)*, police play a role in detention, transportation and guarding of persons who pose a risk to themselves or others as a result of a psychiatric disorder, often waiting for hours for a subject to be seen by a doctor or a mental health specialist. These issues are part of a larger conversation with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Department of Justice as there may be an opportunity for other public safety resources to be engaged to assist.

While police are not medical or mental health specialists, we have accumulated a considerable amount of training over the last 20+ years. This includes in-person training such as Mental Health First Aid, numerous on-line courses and most recently, Crisis Intervention Team training (CIT). We also have individual officers, that as a result of their position in the department, maintain additional training. This includes Cst Michelle Harrison, our School Resource Officer, who consistently meets, trains and is involved in discussions around suicide, especially as it pertains to youth. *ASSIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)* focuses on recognizing when someone is considering suicide and working with them to develop a plan that keeps them safe and guiding them towards proper resources. *ASSIST* is used often within a school setting to help youth through difficult times.

The CIT Program (Critical Incident Team) is a partnership between Mental Health and Police, combining mental health training with a procedure for addressing and approaching mental health calls. The majority of our department is certified in CIT. The training is provided by Nova Scotia Mental Health and has expanded to include a committee that consists of Sgt Aaron Graham and representatives from mental health who not only regularly discuss policy and procedure, but also explore new initiatives and local case studies and files.

All of our members also recently completed “Military Veterans Wellness Program” training, a program that was developed by a member of the Toronto Police Service, who is also a military veteran. This program focuses on recognizing the unique challenges that our veterans face and how to assist them with accessing resources available to them. This program has been used locally and has seen some success thanks to Sgt Graham and Justin McKay.

In addition to training, the Amherst Police Department and Cumberland RCMP Senior Management meets regularly with representatives from Nova Scotia Mental Health, the Cumberland Regional Hospital, EHS, Hospital Security and other related parties to discuss issues and opportunities regarding the IPTA and related incidents. Discussions are often about policy and procedure and understanding each-others role and how we can all support each other, but also includes discussion and reviewing specific incidents. This committee has been in place in excess of 15 years.

There are also new mental health programs, such as the newly announced funding for our area to provide mental health resources that will support and supplement police on mental health calls, especially in regards to making decisions under the IPTA and access to appropriate resources. This would not only help to alleviate the strain on physical police resources, but would provide a medical professional who is in a better position to make decisions and referrals for those in need. Additionally, the new *Integrated Youth Services* program will also provide additional resources for youth and access to professionals.

The challenges that our officers face in relation to mental health issues in our community are real, but there are more programs and resources being allocated to assist with these challenges, and faith that we are doing better because of the partnerships and the resources that are being made available to us.

# MEMO

**TO:** Mayor Small and Members of Council

**FROM:** Andrew Fisher, Director, Planning & Economic Development

**DATE:** February 18, 2025

**RE:** Commercial Development Support (Phase-in) Bylaw – Strategic Priorities  
“Points to Capture”

---

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Commercial Assessment Phase-In program in Amherst as a follow up to the point to capture “Reward for Development”.

In 2016, the province amended the Municipal Government Act giving municipalities the ability to phase-in a commercial assessment increases over a period of up to 10 years, as the result of an investment. In the ten years following the investment, the owner would save up to 50% of tax paid as a result of the increased assessment. The original intent of the amendment was to provide municipalities with a tool to incentivize investment by establishing ‘Commercial Development District(s)’, which are areas that might be less attractive to investment, such as traditional downtowns or brownfield sites. Each municipality can decide to what areas the Commercial Development District (CDD) applies so long as the properties are commercially assessed and serviced by municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.

In 2017 the Town’s ‘Commercial Development Support Bylaw P-9’ became effective. The Bylaw applies to all properties with a commercial assessment, which includes all areas designated Commercial, Industrial and Comprehensive Development District. To be eligible, the property must undergo a development, defined as a new building or building expansion or renovation with a minimum project cost of \$25,000. An application for the phase-in must be submitted before a Building Permit is issued.

There are currently about 13 participants in the program. The chart below shows the total rebates issued each year to-date and estimated out to 2026, at which time approximately \$2 million in tax revenue will have been rebated.

| 2019/20  | 2020/21  | 2021/22   | 2023/24   | 2024/25   | 2025/26   |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| \$33,759 | \$30,068 | \$346,129 | \$412,286 | \$426,516 | \$360,590 |

In 2023 Council undertook a review of the Commercial Development Support Bylaw and did not make any changes.

# MEMO

**TO:** Mayor Small and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Jeff Bacon, Economic Development Officer  
**DATE:** February 18, 2025  
**RE:** Tourism Strategy Development – Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture”

---

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to council on the Tourism Strategy development efforts as part of council’s strategic priorities.

In 2019, Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland Councils adopted the Joint Cumberland Region Tourism Development Strategy, as recommended by the Cumberland Tourism Steering Committee. Made up of municipal units and industry stakeholders, the committee established goals and objectives for tourism industry growth in the Cumberland Region. In the early years after adoption, significant implementation was curtailed due to staff shortages; however, an important deliverable was the creation of the ExploreCumberland brand and website. It has become the region's leading tourism website tying directly into TourismNS's website sharing imagery and content. Led by the Municipality of Cumberland, concerted attention has been given to the website to develop new content, marketing materials, and blogs to build its awareness and popularity. The major effort to ensure all tourism businesses are accounted for and showcased on the website was also completed.

Parallel to the build-up of the ExploreCumberland brand, each municipality has been promoting and developing content for their communities. Guided by the strategy, Town staff have initiated or advanced numerous activities to bring visitors to Amherst. Here’s what we’ve been doing:

- Magazine Advertising – Articles and Ads have been placed in Regional, National and International magazines that reach readers in print and digital formats. Content and ad runs have been placed in Saltscapes Magazine, SEA Nova Scotia, BusinessView Magazine, Saltscapes Food, and Travel Guide, and Canada Travels magazines.
- Workshops – In collaboration with our partner business development agencies, information workshops are routinely offered to Tourism businesses to learn about ways to grow their operations.
- Literature – Guided events, relocation, shopping, dining, visitor Information, promotional maps, and more have been developed and are routinely updated. These documents are available in digital and print form and distributed to visitor information centers and local businesses and public locations.
- Billboards – Upgrades to Gateway Park, located at the foot of the Nova Scotia Border Visitor Information Center, included a refresh of Amherst’s promotional billboard as well as a new kiosk hosting a Town of Amherst information panel of attractions to visit.
- Social Media – The ongoing posting on our social media platforms of the many events and programs happening in our Town not only reach our residents in the area but friends and neighbours from away.

In recent years, Town staff have strengthened the relationship with TourismNS and have brought their attention to our region. From this partnership, staff have received training, hosted public engagement sessions and upgraded Amherst's presence on novascotia.com, seen by millions of potential visitors. We successfully completed two TourismNS partner programs, the Emerging Destination Marketing Program and the Digital Content Marketing Program.

Under the Emerging Destination Marketing Program, a social media influencer and a couple spent two days in Amherst generating professional content. Also, an editor from the digital publication, the GATE, spent a week in Amherst and the Cumberland Region developing a vast collection of videos, images and articles posted across multiple social media platforms.

The Digital Content Marketing campaign arranged two visits by a Media Production Firm to collect content during summer and fall with two different couples as models. A highly successful digital marketing campaign capitalized on this new content with scheduled advertising on social media platforms over the Summer and Fall campaign periods. All the content created through these programs is used to refresh the Town's image in current and new marketing products.

In November 2022, the Province passed legislation giving municipalities authority to implement an Accommodations Marketing Levy. With funding assistance from ACOA, the Town partnered with the Municipality of Cumberland to hire a consultant to perform a Tourism Feasibility Study of the Cumberland Region. The consultant conducted an environmental scan and best-practice analysis, reviewed regional assets, engaged community stakeholders and audited the region's online presence.

The feasibility study recommendations will be presented to Council in the near term, but in essence the consultant recommended that more foundational work is needed in order to ready the industry for increased attractions and the management of the levy funds. Before requiring visitors to pay a fee and asking accommodation providers to remit this money, a plan to use the funds and an organization to manage them will need to be established. As previously noted, staff intend to bring the study to Council to seek further direction on some of the recommendations.

# cumberland region

Tourism Development Strategy  
2019-2022

***DRAFT***



Tourism Nova Scotia- Fox Harb'r Resort, Northumberland Shore Photographer: James Ingram

# Table of Contents

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| <b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....   | 1     |
| <b>2. MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE</b> .....                                    | 2     |
| <b>3. INTRODUCTION</b> .....  | 6     |
| <b>4. METHODOLOGY</b> .....   | 8     |
| <b>5. SITUATION ANALYSIS</b> .....  | 10    |
| What is Tourism?  | 11    |
| National Context  | 12    |
| Provincial Context  | 13    |
| Cumberland Region Context   | 14    |
| Factors and Trends Influencing Tourism in the Cumberland Region               | 16    |
| Cumberland Region Target Markets  | 19-21 |
| Cumberland Region Key Markets   | 22    |
| <b>6 . EXPERIENCE THE CUMBERLAND REGION</b> .....                             | 23    |
| Demand Generators   | 24-25 |
| Demand Supporters   | 26    |
| Other Important and Unique Experiences  | 28    |
| <b>7. SWOT Analysis : Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats</b> ..... | 29-34 |
| <b>8. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b> .....   | 35    |
| <b>9. VISION</b> .....  | 36    |
| Goal  | 38    |
| Strategy  | 39    |
| Objectives  | 40    |
| Action Plan   | 41-52 |
| <b>9. NEXT STEPS</b> .....  | 53    |
| <b>10. APPENDIX: Visitor Exit Survey</b> .....                                | 54-61 |
| <b>References</b>   | 62    |

# Executive Summary

Tourism is key to the economic health of the region and is a platform for building long term economic growth. The region accounted for 2% of provincial tourism-related revenues in 2017 which translates to \$194,000,000. The intent of the strategy is to take a more strategic approach to the growth and development of tourism in the region that is partner-based and designed to enhance the competitiveness of the Cumberland region as a visitor destination, to grow visitation, meet visitor expectations, and generate economic and social benefits for communities within the region.

The strategic vision for tourism in the region is, “to be recognized as a four-season tourism destination through facilitating the development, enhancement, preservation and collective marketing of our natural, historic and cultural assets, leading to an improved economy and quality of life.”

In the Cumberland region we are aligning with Tourism Nova Scotia’s strategic plan to do our part in helping reach the provincial goal set out in the “Now or Never an Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians” report by the Ivany Commission, which is to reach \$4 billion in tourism revenues annually by 2024. Our goal is to increase the visitors length of stay in the region by two days resulting in the average length of stay by “pleasure visitors” to 8.3 days and increase tourism revenues by 1% by 2024 which will result in an additional \$27 million in revenues entering the local economy.

The following strategic pillars identified by the committee will guide the implementation, and increase our efforts towards reaching the goal-

- 1) Collaborative tourism leadership structure
- 2) Branding and marketing
- 3) Sustainable tourism asset development
- 4) Communication, engagement, and outreach
- 5) Extend shoulder season & develop winter

This strategy sets out the strategic direction for the tourism industry in the Cumberland region for the next three years. The strategy was developed jointly between the three municipal units in the Cumberland region and supports the 2014 Community Economic Development Strategy and aligns with Tourism Nova Scotias 2018-2022 strategy, Driving Export Revenue.

# Message From The Tourism Strategic Planning Committee

Recognizing the opportunity to develop tourism in the Cumberland region, a steering committee was formed to develop a strategy with the objective being to, “maximize the value of tourism in the Cumberland region.”

Together we researched, brainstormed and held community engagement sessions. Through a series of community consultations, tourism representatives, municipalities, and community residents shared their thoughts on how to develop tourism in the region and one constant message was, “working together”. This transparent process ensured that the feedback we received informed the results of our work and that the strategy is accountable to the people in the Cumberland region.

Tourism provides the region with sustainable, diversified growth that balances economic development with environmental, community and cultural values. We are in the early developmental phase of tourism planning and see the real potential in growing tourism in the region. It makes sense to align our efforts and work together to create a new vision for the future of tourism in Cumberland. Working together, we embrace sustainability, and diversity and align ourselves with Tourism Nova Scotia who are leaders in research and in identifying new opportunities.

The vision is not to encourage mass tourism and increase visitation at all cost. Instead, we will aim to attract a high-yield visitor and provide visitors with reasons to stay longer and spend more. Finding the perfect balance between encouraging tourism development and supporting economic growth, while also enjoying and protecting our natural environment are vital to the success of the strategy and sustainable tourism. Celebrating our art, authentic cultures, heritage, internationally significant geology and unique identity and pride of place are important. The SWOT analysis will be our guide and we will refer to it as we work to develop and grow tourism.

Together, we are working to share and celebrate the region’s rich and diverse heritage in a meaningful and authentic way. Building strong, healthy communities is at the heart of our work, while ensuring the benefits of tourism exist to include any community that wishes to pursue tourism development. Inclusivity is the cornerstone of our shared journey forward, because none of us can succeed alone. Now is the time to encourage and welcome all stakeholders to join us. By joining together, we can lead the way forward with a new vision for sustainable tourism. Our path ahead acknowledges the challenges, but more importantly, the promise of a strengthened tourism industry. Working together will help achieve the vision for tourism in the region.

The Cumberland Tourism Development Strategy Steering Committee

# The Tourism Strategic Planning Committee



The Tourism Strategic Planning Committee Chair– Town of Amherst Councillor Darrell Jones  
The Tourism Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson Vice Chair - Gregor Wilson– Ski Wentworth  
Town of Oxford - Deputy Mayor– Rick Draper  
Town of Amherst - Deputy Mayor- Sheila Christie  
Municipality of Cumberland - District 10 Councillor– Don Fletcher  
Municipality of Cumberland - District 5 Councillor - Lynne Welton  
Town of Amherst - Business Development Officer - Rebecca Taylor  
Municipality of Cumberland - Administrative Assistant to Community Development– Melanie Prendergast  
Municipality of Cumberland - Tourism Development Officer - Stephanie Moreau  
Joggins Fossil Institute- Director of Operations - Jordan LeBlanc  
Fundy Geological Museum- Co-ordinator of Public Programs– Pat Welton  
The Bicycle Specialist– Owner/Operator– Basil Hicks  
Anne Murray Centre- Executive Director– Wanita Shay  
Fox Harb’r Resort– President– Kevin Toth  
Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network– Board Member- Joe Michaels  
Tourism Nova Scotia- Tourism Development Advisor - Nick Fry





Tourism Nova Scotia -The Three Sisters, Eatonville Photographer: Scott Munn

# Guiding Principles

**The following guiding principles were embraced throughout the strategy development:**

- 1) Research drives product development which drives marketing.
- 2) The strategy aligns with Tourism Nova Scotia's 2018-2023 strategic plan– Driving Export Revenue.
- 3) The strategy is enabled by and activated through partnerships, and the maximization of all available resources. Only through the cooperation of all parties (including local communities), will the strategy succeed.
- 4) Visitors are generally attracted to compelling destinations, icons, attractions, etc. and do not recognize administrative boundaries.



# Introduction

This strategy sets out the strategic direction for the tourism growth in the Cumberland Region. It has been developed to increase visitation to the region and support community economic development. The strategy also supports Goal #14 of the Now or Never an Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians report; Tourism Expansion. This goal states that “as Nova Scotia’s leading source of service sector exports, gross business revenues from tourism will reach \$4 billion by 2024.” The strategy also supports Tourism Nova Scotia’s strategic plan and is created in alignment with the provincial tourism goals. We aim to increase overall revenues to 3% by 2024 resulting in an additional \$27 million in tourism revenues entering the region.

## **The Importance of tourism to the Cumberland region**

Tourism is something the entire region can and should get behind. Developing tourism assets throughout the region will help create vibrant communities, generate increased revenues for existing businesses to support growth and create conditions that support opportunities for new innovative business development. Tourism is an important component to supporting a healthy, sustainable, diverse, thriving local economy.

After four consecutive years of non-resident visitation growth and a record-breaking 2017, it is estimated that tourism is a \$2.7 billion industry in Nova Scotia. According to Nova Scotia’s Department of Finance and Treasury Board, that equates to \$158 million in provincial government revenue that can be reinvested in programs that Nova Scotians depend on, like health care and education. It is also estimated that the industry creates more than 39,000 jobs in rural and urban communities across Nova Scotia.

In 2017, the Cumberland Region accounted for 2% of overall tourism revenues for Nova Scotia. Tourism operators and small businesses throughout the region benefit greatly from visitor expenditures, and the local economy will experience a spin-off effect of new money entering communities throughout the region.

In addition to the economic benefits, tourism provides an opportunity to explore and increase knowledge of local assets, share the region’s, distinctive natural and cultural assets with visitors and strengthen the economic and social value of these assets. The development of our cultural richness within the region - particularly of Indigenous peoples, Acadian and African Nova Scotian ancestry will also strengthen the Region’s ability to enhance the visitor experience while providing the opportunity to improve the quality of life and well-being of local residents.

# Planning for Sustainable Tourism Growth – Planning For Generations

Understanding the value of tourism to the Cumberland region requires a clear map for all stakeholders– the three municipal organization’s (Cumberland, Amherst and Oxford) tourism operators, community organizations, and all other businesses who contribute to the visitor experience. By creating a shared vision, common goals and objectives we can create an experience for the visitor that contributes to strategic growth.

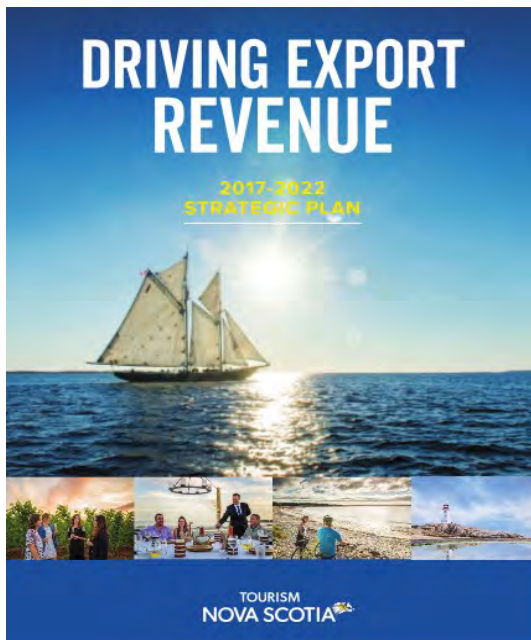
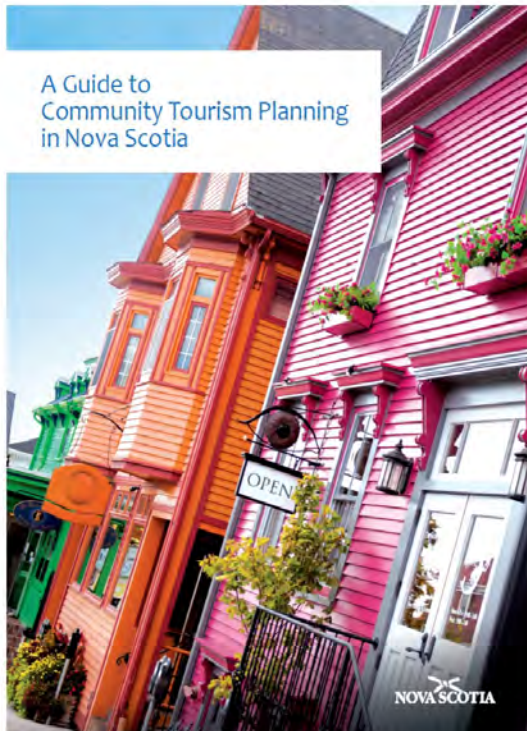
Through this collaborative approach to tourism development, we have a greater opportunity to experience long-term success and increase in visitation to the region. Collectively we will highlight the strengths of the region through the development of a common brand, collective promotion and marketing the region and work with stakeholders on product development.

The strategy outlines a consensus based vision, developed by the tourism strategic planning committee, stakeholders and representatives from the Cumberland Region and takes a visitor-centric approach to tourism planning. The strategy builds on current strengths while simultaneously identifying opportunities and performance targets to encourage growth.

The implementation of this strategy is not the responsibility of one organization, but is based on the recognition and understanding that we are all in the tourism business and all play a role in enhancing the visitor experience.



Tourism Nova Scotia - Cape d'Or Photographer: James Ingram



## The Process of Developing The Tourism Strategy

- Followed the process set out in the document - “A Guide To Community Tourism Planning”
- Tourism committee began meeting in May 2018
- Extensive research and creation of a full tourism asset inventory of the Cumberland region.
- Alignment 2018-2023 Provincial Tourism Strategy “Driving Export Revenue”
- Familiarization with Nova Scotia’s Culture Action Plan
- Review of Federal Tourism Vision– Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Review of comparable destination’s strategies
- Review of Tourism Nova Scotia’s priority target markets
- Review and familiarization of EQ ( Explorer Quotient) Profiles
- Understanding of EQ profiles contributed to strategic decision making specifically in regards to identifying our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.
- Presentations to the committee Tourism Nova Scotia provided insights into visitor statistics related to the Cumberland Region and the province.
- Attendance of conferences and workshops regarding tourism trends, experiential tourism.
- 5 stakeholder engagement sessions were held throughout the Region with the purpose of conducting SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to be used to aid the tourism committee in the decision making of strategic goals and objectives.
- Ongoing workshops and brainstorming sessions, and discussions by the committee



Tourism Nova Scotia - Isle Haute Photographer: Patrick Rojo

# Situation Analysis

Assessing the existing situation was a crucial first step, and one of the more time-consuming tasks involved in preparing the strategy but you can't plan for the future without having a solid understanding of the past and the present.

The outcomes involved in the situation analysis provided the committee a full understanding of:

- The value of tourism to the region
- The role of tourism from a national and provincial context
- Who is visiting and what experiences they are looking for?
- Factors and trends influencing tourism in the Cumberland region.
- What the assets are, including the demand generators, supporters and hidden gems
- Who is our ideal visitor?
- SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.



Community Engagement Session in Joggins 2018



Community Engagement Session in Wallace 2018

# Situation Analysis

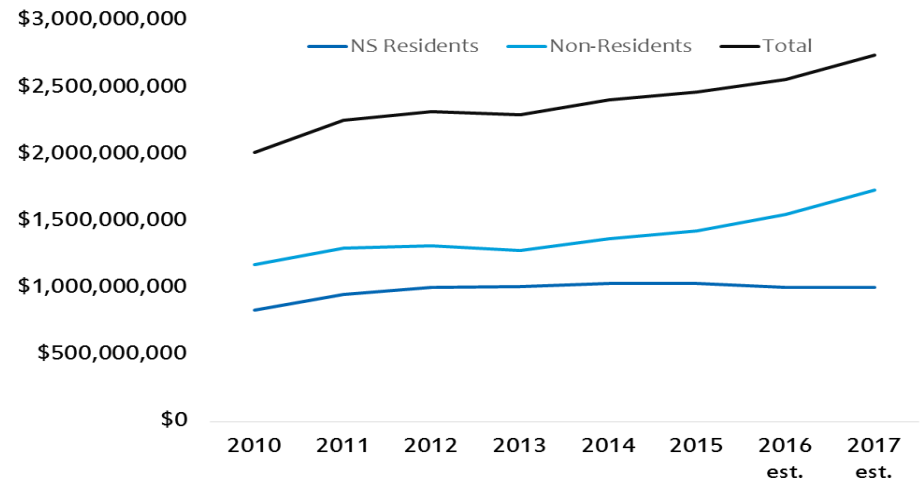
Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure.

## TOURISM REVENUES

### Revenue Categories

- Accommodations.
- Food and beverage.
- Transportation.
- Travel agency and other reservations services.
- Cultural services.
- Recreation and entertainment.
- Other travel-related purchases.

### Annual Tourism Revenue Results



The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) identifies tourism as “...one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world.” According to the UNWTO, tourism accounts for 10% of global gross domestic product (GDP), and for many developing countries, tourism is the most important sector. In 2016, global tourism increased by 3.9% and accounted for \$1.4 trillion USD in revenues.

## National Context

Tourism is one of Canada's largest economic drivers. Canadians may be surprised to learn that tourism is one of the nation's largest economic sectors, generating total revenues in the order of \$98 billion annually, and accounting for 2% of Canada's GDP. The sector contributed an estimated \$27 billion in tax revenues across all levels of government in 2017. It is also one of Canada's most geographically diversified sectors, with a significant presence in all of Canada's provinces and territories.

Tourism is a rich source of jobs for Canadians. With a presence from coast to coast to coast, nearly 1 in 10 jobs in Canada is tied to tourism. Many jobs in the sector are skill-intensive, high-paying jobs, including management roles at hotels and airlines, data analysts, organizational travel managers, and meeting and event planners. These jobs exist across a range of industries such as food and beverage services, accommodation, transportation, recreation and entertainment, and travel services. Most tourism jobs are also resistant to automation, requiring a high degree of human involvement for the foreseeable future. The sector offers ample entry-level opportunities for young people looking to start their careers. For new immigrants, employment in tourism can be a pathway to integrating into the Canadian workplace.

Tourism also offers significant entrepreneurial opportunities. Small and medium-sized enterprises make up 99% of the companies in Canada's tourism sector. There are further opportunities to grow tourism businesses in many communities across the country, including urban centres and rural areas, considering that there are relatively few barriers to entry. Tourism is a particularly noteworthy opportunity for Indigenous-owned enterprises, as international travelers are seeking authentic, unique tourism products tied to the land and its peoples.

## Provincial Context

Tourism plays a major role in Nova Scotia's economy. Nova Scotia's tourism industry had its best year in history in 2017 and its fourth consecutive year of growth. In all, a record 2.4 million visitors came to the province in 2017 and tourism revenue is estimated at \$2.7 billion.

For comparison, 2017 saw about 195,000 more visitors than 2016 – an increase of nine per cent. Tourism revenue increased by over \$100 million – seven per cent more than the year before.

2017 highlights include:

- highest visitation growth came from Ontario, up 16 per cent, or 84,000 more visitors, compared to 2016
- visitation from Western Canada was up 19 per cent, or 32,000 more visitors
- visitation by air, which on average brings higher-spending travelers, rose by 13 per cent
- visitation by road increased seven per cent
- licensed room nights sold in 2017 increased by two per cent to 2.8 million.

Tourism Nova Scotia continues to reach toward the Ivany Report “Stretch” goal to reach \$4B by 2024. The strategic pillars for the provincial crown corporation are:

- Invest in markets of highest return.
- Target higher-spending travelers in key geographic markets who are motivated to experience what Nova Scotia offers.
- Focus on world class experiences. Collaborate with private sector businesses, governments, and communities to develop compelling tourism experiences that will make people want to visit Nova Scotia.
- Attract first-time visitors to the province. These visitors are most likely to be influenced by marketing activities and if successful, chances are they’ll be back again and
- Build tourism confidence by helping Nova Scotians understand what visitors are looking for in a vacation experience; while coaching and guiding partners to develop the kinds of experiences that will motivate travel and spur new tourism investment in the province. Confidence is a catalyst for growth.

## Cumberland Region Context

In 2017, it was reported by Tourism Nova Scotia that the Cumberland region accounts for 2% of overall tourism revenues within the province. It was also reported that 56% of non-resident overnight visitors to the region were “pleasure” visitors which is 11% higher than the provincial average. (Appendix I)

### Outdoor Activities – Pleasure Visitors

The top outdoor activities that pleasure visitors look to experience are the following; coastal sightseeing– 62%, visiting a beach– 59%, hiking– 45%, nature observing– 41%, viewing the worlds’ highest tides– 35%, whale watching– 11%, cycling or biking– 9%. (Appendix II)

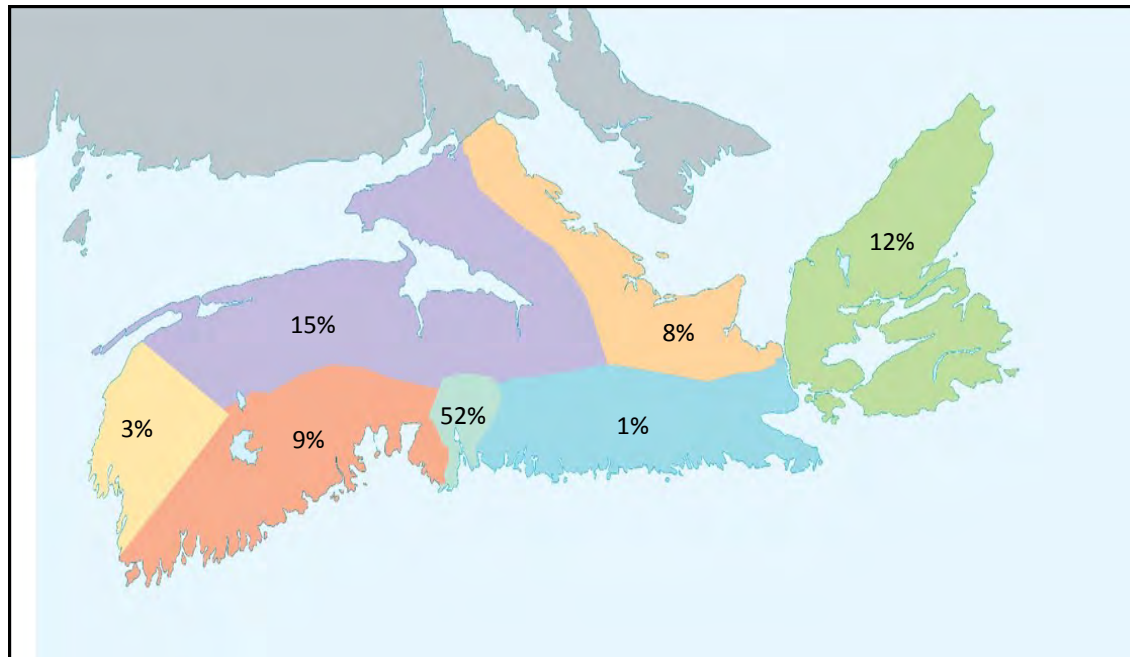
Based on our assets, as a region, we are very well suited to be able to offer the pleasure visitor most all of the experiences they are looking for.



# Situation Analysis

Percentage of visitor parties by origin to the Cumberland region is as follows: Atlantic Canada– 38%, Quebec– 7%, Ontario– 26%, Western Canada– 13%, New England 4%, Middle Atlantic 2%, Other US 6%, and Overseas– 5%. (Appendix III) The average party size visiting the Cumberland region is 2.4 people. (Appendix IV) The average length of stay by visitor parties within the Cumberland region is 6.1 nights which is over that provincial average by 1 night. (Appendix VI) The majority, 43% reported as staying in a hotel, 38% reported staying with family or friends, and 32% reported as staying at “other fixed roof” (Appendix VII)

The overall expenditure per party in the Cumberland region was \$1,850 which is above the provincial average of \$1450. (These figures excluded major purchases.) (Appendix VIII)



Cumberland County accounts for 2% of overall tourism revenues for Nova Scotia.

It is important to consider where visitors come from, and how they get to Nova Scotia, it has a direct impact on revenues.

Atlantic Canada is Nova Scotia’s biggest visitor market. However, Atlantic Canadian visitors are among the lowest spending and least likely to be influenced by Tourism Nova Scotia's advertising efforts.

## Factors and Trends Influencing Tourism in the Cumberland Region.

While tourism continues to be one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world and growth is anticipated to remain at over 3% per annum through to 2030, there is a variety of factors and trends that influence the growth of the industry and the attractiveness of destinations.

Tracking and monitoring industry trends will be a focus and will be reported to the tourism steering committee for the purpose of partnering to providing training and educational opportunities via workshops for tourism operators so they are better able to adapt and make changes to their businesses to reflect these trends in order to meet or exceed visitor expectations and address potential challenges. Some of the challenges include the aging population, migration, technology and experiential tourism.

### **Aging Population**

The population of the Cumberland region is aging. In 2015, youth under the age of 14 comprised 13% of the population, down from 17% in 2001. Seniors (residents 65+) comprised 25% of the population in 2015, while in 2001, they comprised 18%. The percentage of seniors is higher in Cumberland than both the provincial (19%) and national (16%) averages.

### **Migration**

Between 2001 and 2015, despite a growth from international immigration, there has been a significant overall decline in population of 3,123 people. This is due to an aging population and migration of Cumberland residents to other parts of the country and province.

### **Technology**

This is an area of change that is having wide spread impact on the tourism industry in terms of the visitors “path to purchase”, it’s ability to enhance the destination experience, and its role in the activities of tourism businesses and destination marketing organizations. To be competitive there is a need to leverage the use of technology in the creation of compelling experiences and in the management and marketing of the region. Today, nobody doubts technology’s importance in tourism and how it has influenced and continues to shape, the way we travel: from the vacation destination we choose, all the way to what we do once we're there and even in the time after we've come back from our adventure. It is so prevalent, that according to a Google Travel study, 74% of travelers plan their trips on the Internet, while only 13% still use travel agencies to prepare them.

# Situation Analysis

## Experiential Tourism

Today's visitors are seeking deep, authentic and memorable experiences that allow them to connect emotionally with a destination and to interact with its residents. This requires a traveler-centric approach that looks at the region's assets within the context of the benefits to our identified priority travel markets, combined with their attitudes, values, motivation for travel and their demographic profile. A 'pretty, friendly destination' doesn't cut it anymore. Travelers want to visit places that can offer them something different than they can find elsewhere, something that appeals to their interests and passion, something that can captivate, entertain, educate and provide lasting memories. These experiences, and their scope, intensity, uniqueness and appeal will contribute strongly to the decision by travelers to visit and spend time and money.

In addition to the above, there will be ongoing research regarding current and emerging trends that could impact the region. Some of these trends include; growth in short term rentals, rise of female and solo travelers, and conscious travelers (According to Booking.com, 2019 will see more conscious visitors roam the world as 49% feel social issues in possible travel destinations are of real importance when choosing where to go and 58% choose not to go to a destination if they feel it negatively impacts the people who live there).



Tourism Nova Scotia— Advocate Harbour Photographer: Patrick Rojo

## Understanding Your Visitor

Explorer Quotient®, also known as EQ, was developed by Destination Canada (the Canadian Tourism Association) in partnership with Environics Research Group. EQ is a proprietary market segmentation system based on the science of psychographics. Rather than marketing to or developing products for travelers based on traditional segments, such as demographics (e.g. age, gender, income, etc.) and/or geography, EQ emphasizes the importance of traveler segmentation based on their psychological characteristics, such as their attitudes, beliefs, values, motivations, and behaviors. When various psychological characteristics are combined, different types of travelers emerge. These are known as Explorer Types.

### There are nine EQ explorer types:

- Free Spirits
- Cultural Explorer
- Authentic Experiencer
- Personal History Buff
- Rejuvenator
- Gentle Explorer
- No Hassle Traveller
- Virtual Traveller



The **Tourism Strategic Planning Committee** with their deep knowledge of Cumberland region's tourism assets; products, services and experiences, agreed that the region was well-positioned and best suited to attract and host the following three priority EQ market segments;

***Cultural Explorers, Authentic Experiencers and Free Spirits.***

## Cultural Explorers

Cultural Explorers seek constant opportunities to embrace, discover, and immerse themselves in the entire experience of the culture, people and settings of the places you visit. Not content to just visit historic sites and watch from the sidelines, they want to participate in the modern-day culture as well. They often attempt to converse with locals, attend local festivals, or go off the beaten path to discover how people truly live.



- They are:
- positive
  - open-minded
  - curious
  - risk-taker
  - flexible
  - easy-going

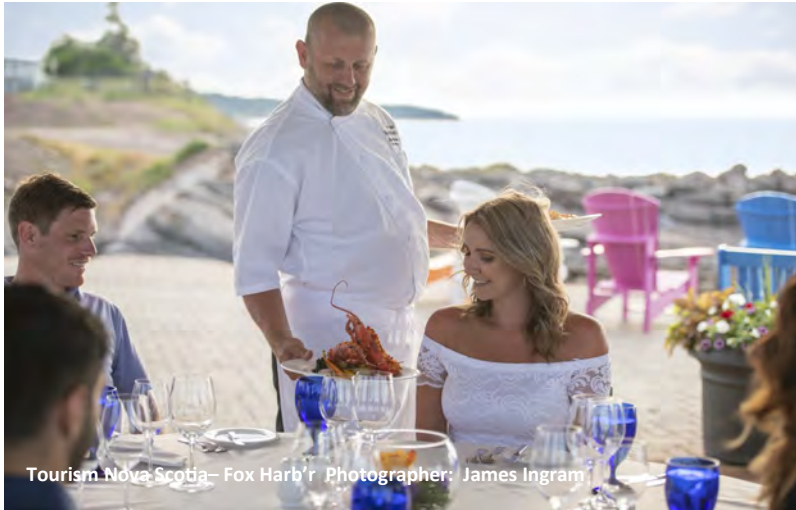
Most likely to be seen at: heritage sites, cultural events, museums, festivals, B&Bs, hostels

### Travel values

- companion experiences – prefer traveling with like-minded people
- living history/culture – enjoy ancient history and modern culture
- learning travel – seek to learn everything about a place, time, or culture
- constant exploration – always plan for the next outing

## Free Spirits

Something of a thrill-seeking hedonist, travel satisfies their insatiable need for the exciting and the exotic. They like the best of everything and want to be surrounded by others who feel the same way. They have a lot of energy and want to see and do everything. It all adds to the fun! Young, or young-at-heart, they travel for the thrill and emotional charge of doing things. They just can't stay at home. Why would they?!



- They are:
- open-minded
  - ambitious
  - enthusiastic
  - fun-loving
  - adventurous
  - curious
  - social

Most likely to be seen at: luxury hotel, tourism hot spot, top restaurant, night club, group tours

## Travel values

- sample travel – like to see and experience a bit of everything
- constant exploration – always plan for the next trip
- companion experiences – prefer traveling with like-minded people
- indulgence – seek the best you can afford

## Authentic Experiencers

In the world of explorers are Authentic Experiencers. With a foot in both worlds, they appreciate the understated beauty of natural and cultural environments. They enjoy using all of their senses when they explore and really get to know the places they visit. They quickly adapt to personal challenges and risks, easily figuring out how to make the most of every situation. They want to be fully immersed in their travel experience and tend to stay away from group tours and rigid plans.



Tourism Nova Scotia - Cape d'Or Photographer: Patrick Rojo

- They are:
- spontaneous
  - discrete
  - ethical
  - eco-conscious
  - independent
  - open-minded
  - curious

Most likely to be seen at: nature reserves, world heritage sites, hiking trails, museums, home-stays, campsites

## Travel values

- learning travel – like to learn everything about a place, time, or culture
- nature – enjoy vast natural settings and wonders
- cultural immersion – prefer integrating into the local culture
- personal development – seek self-improvement through understanding others

## Key Markets

In addition to targeting the three priority EQ market segments; Cultural Explorers, Authentic Experiencers and Free Spirits, we will focus our marketing efforts towards reaching a national audience in the following key markets:

- Atlantic Canada
- Ontario
- Quebec



Tourism Nova Scotia is successfully attracting international visitors from the following key markets:

- Northeastern United States
- Germany
- China
- United Kingdom



We will partner with Tourism Nova Scotia and the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia with the goal of sharing relevant information and research via training and workshops for tourism operators in order to be better prepared in meeting the needs of our international visitors to increase international visitation to the region and drive repeat visitation.

# Experience the Cumberland Region



Tourism Nova Scotia Jost Vineyard

## Demand Generators

Experiences, attractions, events and activities can, on their own, motivate a stop or a visit for some market segments. These are demand generators or travel motivators.

Based on the tourism strategic planning committee's work and research regarding the Cumberland region's tourism assets, industry trends, stakeholder engagement sessions, and understanding our three priority travel types, (the Authentic Experiencer, the Cultural Explorer and the Free Spirit) six categories were identified as areas of focus regarding tourism products and experiences that have the greatest potential to drive demand and increase visitation.

**These six categories as selected by the committee are:**

- Regional culinary products and experiences
- Outdoor adventure
- Scenic trails and nature viewing
- Festivals and events
- "World class" experiences and products
- Local arts, culture and heritage

# Top 5 Demand Generator For Each Travel Type



Following several meetings covering identifying and discussing the regions demand the tourism strategic planning committee narrowed down the lists further by voting on their top five demand generators for each travel type as shown below.

## Top 5 Demand Generators For Each Travel Type as Identified by the Committee:

### Cultural Explorer

- Landscape & Unique Geology
- Fundy Geological Museum
- Bay of Fundy– Worlds Highest Tides
- Nova Scotia Fiber Arts Festival
- Plein Air Festival

### Authentic Experiencer

- Cape d’Or
- Two unique shorelines
- NS Gem & Mineral Show
- Joggins Fossil Institute
- Fall Festival of Colors - Ski Wentworth

### Free Spirit

- Cape d’Or
- Wild Caraway
- Fox Harb’r
- Jost Vineyards
- “Tidal Reveal”-Dig for Canada’s Oldest Dinosaurs– Fundy Geological Museum

# Demand Supporters

Other experiences and things to do may not be the main motivator for visiting but contribute to the overall appeal of the destination. Visitors can add these other experiences to their agenda while they are there, helping to extend stays and increase spending.

Some of Cumberland Region's demand supporters identified by the committee include:

- Ship's Company Theatre
- Regional food
- Oxford "Wild Blueberry Capital of Canada"
- Golf courses
- Cape Chignecto
- Museums- Age of Sail Heritage Museum, Springhill Miners' Museum
- Dayle's Grand Market
- Birkinshaw's Tea Room & Coffee House

To be successful, a destination needs to have a 'critical mass' of demand generator/travel motivator and demand supporter experiences in place to make it worth a visit or a stop (along with basic services and amenities).



Wild Blueberry Festival in Oxford with the Kilted Chef



Town of Amherst Summer Night Market

# Other Important and Unique Experiences

As a final step, the committee looked at about what else the Region has to offer that might have potential to help you develop tourism. These assets may be something ordinary or out-of-the-ordinary that could become a tourism experience. For this session, the committee broke into two groups and brainstormed hidden gems in the Region and they results of this session is as follows:

- Old Growth Forests (Oxford, Wentworth, Chignecto Park),
- Special beaches (Chignecto Hanging Valley Beach, Northumberland Parks
- Waterfalls
- Birding– Folly Gap, Parrsboro Gap, Bird Sanctuary
- Lower Cove (Joggins)
- Four Fathers
- The Alphabet Store (GJDE Enterprises in Oxford)
- Arlene Collins Gallery
- NS Highlander Regional Museum
- Heritage walking tours in Amherst
- Pugwash Estuary boardwalks
- Pugwash Estuary boardwalks
- Great Canadian Trail
- Driftwood Park Beach
- Sea Glass Hunting
- Chase’s Lobster Pound
- Capitol Theatre Oxford
- Bubbling tides at Ottawa House (Parrsboro)
- Sport fishing
- High Head
- Celebrity Anne Murray
- Glooscap -Partridge Island
- Wharves (Wallace, Malagash, Advocate, Pugwash, Parrsboro)
- Maccan Tidal Bore (Gordon Boss), River Hebert Tidal Bore
- Tidnish Dock, Tidnish Suspension Bridge
- Tidnish Gallery
- Blue Heron Gallery, Band Day (Parrsboro)
- Minudie Days
- Old fashioned Saturday Night
- Bay Enterprises
- Dulsing
- Foraging
- Forest bathing
- Four Fathers of Confederation

# SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) analysis was conducted to provide focus and to help guide the strategic priorities outlined in this strategy. SWOT is a structured planning method that relates the tourism objectives for the Cumberland region to internal and external factors that are favorable or unfavorable.



Five stakeholder engagement sessions were held in communities throughout the Cumberland region at the following locations; Joggins Fossil Institute, Wallace Community Centre, Springhill Community Centre and two in Amherst at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre in Amherst.

The purpose of these stakeholder sessions was to brainstorm the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in regard to tourism in the region.

# SWOT Analysis

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified through the consultation process.

## STRENGTHS

- Authentic, rural Nova Scotia hospitality- welcoming, friendly people.
- Rich history- traditional way of living/lifestyle- shipbuilding, fishing, agriculture, mining
- Two distinct shorelines
- Access to a variety of regional locally grown/produced food i.e. - maple syrup, blueberries, seafood, wine, craft breweries, produce, farm markets.
- Bay of Fundy– worlds highest tides
- Rich in natural/ecological assets and scenic landscapes - flora & fauna. Wildlife, lakes, oceans, waterfalls, old growth forests, salt marshes
- Museums and Heritage sites- Joggins Fossil Institute, Age of Sail, Fundy Geological Museum, Springhill Miner’s Museum, etc.
- Arts & Culture- Festivals- e.g.Fibre Arts Festival, Plein Air Festival, Harbour Fest
- Music- Open Mic, Community Hall events and social gatherings, theatre
- Unique geology of international significance– “Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark”
- Safe, relaxing pace of life, a sanctuary
- Outdoor adventures
- Architectural structures (sandstone buildings)





Tourism Nova Scotia— Joggins Fossil Cliffs, UNESCO World Heritage Site

# SWOT Analysis

## WEAKNESSES

- Lack of uniform signage
- Lack of inventory in terms of unique accommodation experiences- (campgrounds, “glamping”, B&B’s, home shares, hostels, hotels) that will satisfy our three target markets
- Lack of tourism-specific online presence & quality content
- Run-down infrastructure- roads, trails, bathroom facilities
- Cell phone/Wi-Fi coverage
- Lack of a common brand or vision
- Limited electronic vehicle charging stations
- Limited awareness of public coastal access to lakes, trails, waterfalls, and ocean for hiking, kayaking, swimming, sup boards, etc.
- Lack of evening experiences/events
- Minimal world class tourism experiences and packages
- Population/worker base

# SWOT Analysis

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Development of outdoor adventure tourism experiences- long trail hiking, kayaking, tubing, mountain biking, etc.
- Eco-tourism promotion
- Promotion of our unique geology - “Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark”, Joggins Fossil Cliffs
- Development and support for cultural events and experiences specifically Indigenous and Acadian cultural history.
- Capitalize on the region’s convenient location and high drive-by-traffic volume
- Four seasons- Increase focus on the development of the shoulder season(s) - fall - fall colors, spring - maple season, and winter - outdoor activities; skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, etc.
- Bus tours
- Cross-promotion. Increase awareness of local tourism assets and experiences (FAM tours) and enhancement through business partnerships.
- Partner with neighboring municipalities
- Short-term rental accommodations– Airbnb
- Ideally positioned to attract researchers from diverse earth science backgrounds and fields- geology, tidal power, ecology, paleontology etc.
- Development of campgrounds i.e. “glamping ”
- Regional unique culinary experiences; foraging dinners, seasonal culinary experiences- blueberry, maple, harvest, seafood, fresh in-season produce, chef- in – residence opportunities, farm tours, clam digging, u-picks
- Work with Bicycle NS and Blue Route to develop, enhance and promote safe, scenic cycling routes
- Waterfall and trail/trailhead development
- Boat launch awareness and increased awareness and need for mapping of public access to beaches and right-of-way

# SWOT Analysis

## THREATS

- Destruction and depletion of beautiful natural assets as a result of an increase in visitation
- Climate change
- Out-migration
- Loss of historically significant buildings due to neglect or abandonment
- Aging population
- Poor planning for increased visitors
- Loss of access to trails and special places such as waterfalls, shorelines etc. due to an increase in visitors crossing private property
- Shoreline erosion
- Direct competition from similar markets throughout the Maritimes and within the province
- Destruction of natural assets and areas of high touristic appeal and value due to clear cut logging, fracking, exploration mining and poorly sited industrial wind turbines

# The Strategic Framework

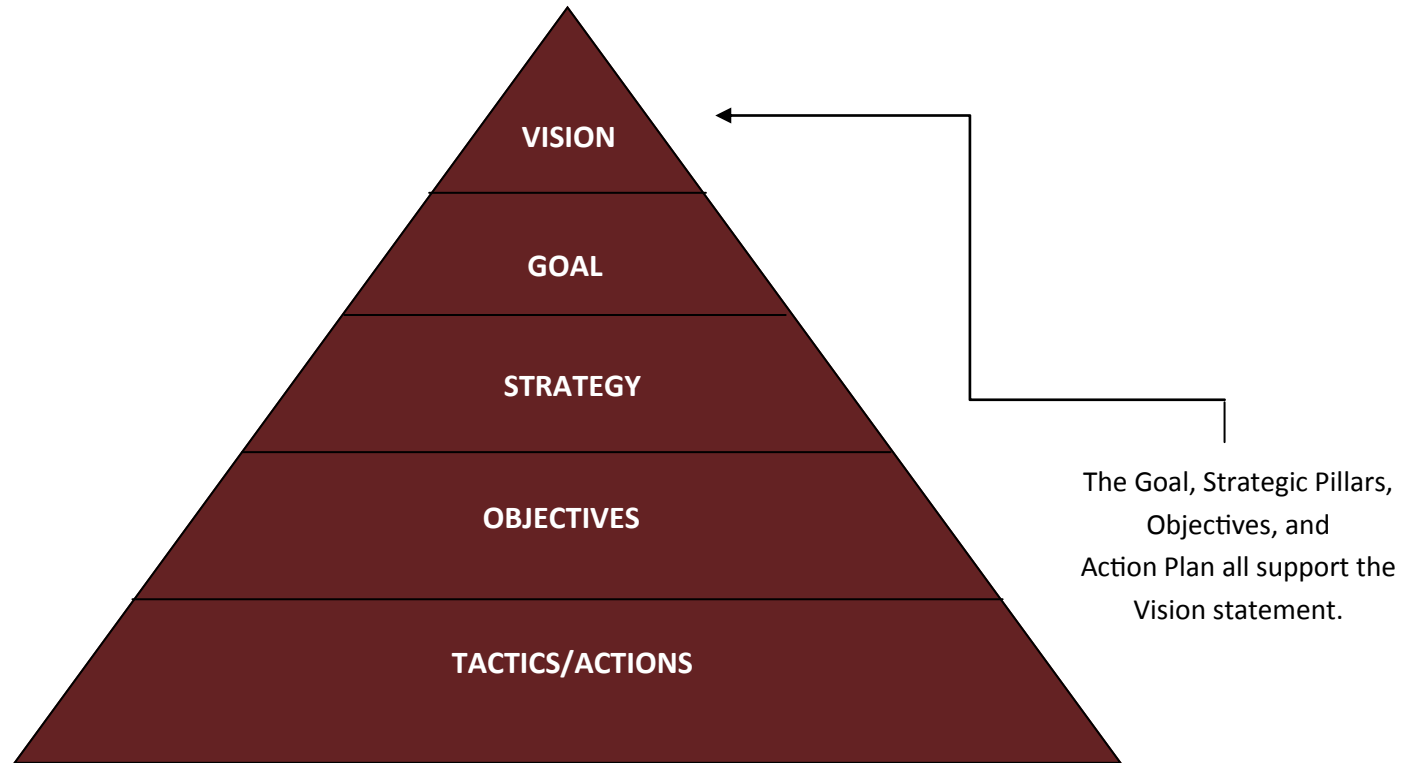
The framework used to complete the strategy is the GSOT model

**GOAL** — A broad primary outcome.

**STRATEGY** — The specific approach that will be taken to achieve a goal.

**OBJECTIVES** — A measurable outcome of this strategy

**TACTICS/ACTIONS** — A tool used to implement the strategy.



We are confident that we have successfully captured everything that we can realistically achieve that will not leave us spinning our wheels and wasting time on areas we ultimately have no control over.

# Vision



The Vision Statement provides direction, guides the strategic goals and includes a perspective of values. A vision is a picture of a future desired situation. It is a description of what we want tourism in the Cumberland Region to look like in the future. The vision draws people together around a common set of ideas about what they would like to achieve for the future. The vision statement gets everything “on track” by building consensus about where you are going.

The crafting of the vision statement was an important piece of work which could only be accomplished following the foundational work involved in the second stage of planning - “the situation analysis”. This stage involved a complete situation analysis including the involvement of stakeholders in completing the SWOT analysis. It is only with a full understanding of where we are, and what we have, can we truly identify where we need to go.

The Visioning exercise was lead by facilitator Alan Walter. Alan guided us through the exercise, provided clarity and a solid summary of the work that had been completed and kept us focused on where we wanted to go, and what we wanted to be perceived as, in regards to tourism in the Region in the future. As a result of this session, and the sessions leading up to it, the committee crafted the vision statement for the Cumberland Region.

**“To be recognized as a four-season tourism destination through facilitating the development, enhancement, preservation and collective marketing of our natural, historic and cultural assets, leading to an improved economy and quality of life.”**



Wentworth Valley Brinton Photography

# The Goal

Goals are clear, concise statements that outline what needs to happen with respect to tourism in the community if you are to achieve your vision. They provide direction for the objectives which are more specific and measurable. The goal reflects the vision, the future desired state of tourism in the Cumberland Region. To make the vision meaningful and achievable, as a committee we converted the vision statement into a set of objectives and actions.

In the Cumberland region we are aligning with Tourism Nova Scotia’s strategic plan to do our part in helping reach the provincial goal set out in the “Now or Never” report by the Ivany Commission guide, which is to reach \$4 billion in tourism revenues annually by 2024. Our goal is to increase the visitors length of stay in the region by two days resulting in the average length of stay by “pleasure visitors” to 8.3 days and increase tourism revenues by 1% by 2024 which will result in an additional \$27 million in revenues entering the local economy.

Develop and promote market ready tourism products and experiences that :

Attract more visitors

- +encourage them to stay longer
- +experience more

---

**= Increased visitation and increased spending**

**\$81 million in tourism revenues by 2024**

This goal will be achieved through a collaborative approach among tourism stakeholders and partners to achieve experience development priorities in the Cumberland Region.

# The Strategy



## 5 Strategic Pillars:

- 1) Collaborative tourism leadership structure
- 2) Destination Branding and marketing
- 3) Sustainable tourism asset development
- 4) Communication, engagement and outreach
- 5) Extend shoulder seasons & develop winter



# Objectives

After defining the strategic pillars, we held several sessions defining the objectives and narrowed the list to focus on what makes the most sense, and whether each objective was; specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic. We looked carefully at each objective and asked, “how will each objective contribute to helping reaching the goal?”

| Strategic Pillars                             | Objectives   |
|---|--|
| 1) Collaborative tourism leadership structure | Implement the strategy   |
| 2) Branding and marketing                     | Develop brand, marketing and signage strategies to be used to market the Cumberland region   |
| 3) Sustainable tourism asset development      | Encourage sustainable development of market ready tourism products, support anchor attractions and protect our cultural and natural assets |
| 4) Communication, engagement, and outreach    | Improve collaboration, communication, awareness and engagement with tourism stakeholders   |
| 5) Extend shoulder season & develop winter    | Increase visitation in shoulder seasons and develop winter.  |

# Action Plan

## ACRYNOMS USED IN ACTION TABLE LISTED BELOW:

**MOC**– Municipality of Cumberland **TOA** – Town of Amherst **TOO** – Town of Oxford **CIB**- Communities in Bloom

**COC**– Chamber of Commerce **TDO** - Tourism Development Officer **TNS** – Tourism Nova Scotia

**TIANS**– Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia **NSITEN**– Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network

**ED** – Economic Development **CCH** - Communities Culture & Heritage **BDO** - Business Development Officer

“Time Frame for Completion” defined below:

**Immediate** - Current to 1 year **Short-Term** - 1 to 3 years **Long - Term** - 3 to 5 years

## 1) Collaborative Tourism Leadership Structure

| Action   | Lead          | Partners                              | Resources Needed                           | Constraints Issues                        | Time Frame For Completion     | Measurement  | Accountability                                    |
|--|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Identify Steering committee members              | MOC           | TOA, TOO, MOC                         | Space, Materials, Human Resources, Funding | Pending councils adoption of the strategy | Immediate— by June 30th, 2019 | The committee is formed and functioning                                | Councils  |
| Create terms of reference for steering committee | TAO, TOO, MOC | TOA, TOO, MOC<br>Tourism Stakeholders | N/A  | Time                                      | Immediate                     | Terms of reference is created and approved by the three municipalities | Councils, the steering committee and stakeholders |

# Action Plan

## 2) Branding and Marketing

| Action  | Lead               | Partners  | Resources Needed  | Constraints Issues                        | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement   | Accountability                          |
|---|--------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| Identify sub-committees   | Steering committee | Consultants, citizens   | N/A   | N/A                                       | Immediate                 | Committees are formed and meeting regularly   | Councils and steering committee         |
| RFP to hire consultant(s)-select consultants                                      | TOA, TOO, MOC      | TOA, TOO, MOC, ACOA, TNS  | Funding   | Contingent on funding                     | Immediate                 | RFP is completed and consultants are selected   | Steering committee and funding partners |
| Implement strategies  | Steering committee | TOA, TOO, MOC, TNS, TIR, Tourism Operators, Dept. of Lands & Forest | -Funding for implementation<br>-Strategies complete to guide implementation | Contingent of funding                     | Immediate & ongoing       | Regional brand is created, marketing strategy is being implemented in phases and signage is created | Councils and private sector             |
| Lobby the province to change boundaries to better represent the Cumberland region | Steering Committee | TNS, COC  | Human   | The province hearing the regions concerns | Long - term               | Boundary is changed to reflect the region   | Councils and steering committee         |

# Action Plan

## 2) Branding and Marketing

| Action   | Lead | Partners                                   | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues                    | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement   | Accountability                |
|--|------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Develop promotional Materials; maps, tradeshow booth, brochures etc. | TDO  | Amherst BDO & Staff or Council from Oxford | Content          | Branding needs to be developed first. | Short Term                | Committee has approved design and materials are developed | Councils & Steering Committee |

## 3) Sustainable Tourism Asset Development

| Action   | Lead | Partners  | Resources Needed  | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                     | Accountability                                   |
|--|------|---|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Complete a market readiness assessment                                     | TDO  | ACOA<br>TOA, TOO                                | Funding           | N/A                | Short Term                | Assessment is complete          | Councils & steering committee & funding partners |
| Focus on supporting the 6 priority demand categories as outlined on pg. 24 | TDO  | TNS, CCH, private sector, tourism industry reps | Human & financial | N/A                | Short term & ongoing      | Increase in market ready assets | Councils & steering committee                    |

# Action Plan

## 3) Sustainable Tourism Asset Development

| Action   | Lead                            | Partners  | Resources Needed   | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement  | Accountability                         |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Partner to increase awareness of the regions cultural heritage           | TDO, steering committee         | TOA, TOO, MOC, CCH, NSITEN, CANSA, Acadian org, museums   | Human, financial   | N/A                | Short term & ongoing      | Strong partnerships are developed and groups are participating | Councils, steering committee, partners |
| Encourage participation in Tourism NS EXCELLerator program               | Steering committee              | TNS   | N/A  | N/A                | Ongoing/Annually          | New participants in the program                                | Steering committee                     |
| Create themed experiential itineraries for bus tours and solo travellers | TOA, TOO, MOC, private business | Tour bus companies, TNS, private business & organizations | Human, financial– attendance at conferences such as Rendez-Vous Canada and Showcase Atlantic | N/A                | Short term                | Itineraries are developed                                      | Partners, councils, steering committee |

# Action Plan

## 3) Sustainable Tourism Asset Development

| Action   | Lead   | Partners  | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                                      | Accountability                          |
|--|--|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| Coordinate Tourism Asset Development Workshops                                 | TDO, steering committee                        | TNS, TIANS, chambers of commerce, Business Connector, TOA, TOO, MOC | Human, financial | N/A                | Short Term & ongoing      | Workshops are planned & delivered & reviewed     | Councils & steering committee           |
| Support the development of a trails strategy                                   | Municipal recreation staff & committee members | TOA, TOO, MOC, trail groups & associations                          | Human, financial | Capacity/time      | Short term                | Recreation staff have begun the planning process | Councils & staff                        |
| Coordinate group webinars throughout the region for operators and stakeholders | TDO steering committee                         | TNS, TIANS, chambers of commerce, TOA, TOO, MOC                     | Human, financial | N/A                | Short Term & ongoing      | Webinars are being held throughout the region    | Councils, steering committee & partners |

# Action Plan

## 3) Sustainable Tourism Asset Development

| Action   | Lead                                   | Partners  | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues                               | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement  | Accountability                                 |
|--|--|---|------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| Support the enhancement & development of anchor attractions    | TOA, TOO, MOC, steering committee      | TNS, businesses & tourism organizations, TOA, TOO, MOC                          | Financial        | Access to funding                                | Ongoing                   | Annual survey  | Councils, steering committee, funding partners |
| Pursue opportunities for regional culinary tourism development | TDO, TOA, TOO, MOC, Steering committee | Regional producers, Taste of NS, TNS, Select NS                                 | Time             | Time for initial contact with potential partners | Ongoing                   | Food tours, festivals, dining guides, and unique culinary trails developed | Councils, steering committee, partners         |
| Partner to support community beautification initiatives        | Steering committee                     | CCH, Communities in Bloom, chambers of commerce, Boards of Trade, TOO, TOA, COM | Funding          | Time   | N/A                       | Local beautification efforts are being implemented                         | Councils, steering committee, partners         |

# Action Plan

## 3) Sustainable Tourism Asset Development

| Action   | Lead                                | Partners  | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                        | Accountability                       |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Identify funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements   | Steering committee                  | ACOA, Develop NS, Corporate, Foundations, TOA, TOO, MOC | Human, financial | N/A                | Long-term                 | N/A                                | Partners                             |
| Support the development of market ready & near market ready festivals that improve the visitor experience        | TDO & Amherst & Oxford ED employees | Business Community, chambers, CIB, citizens             | Human            | N/A                | Ongoing                   | Festivals are experiencing growth. | partners                             |
| Support the development of demand generator themed festivals & events that extend the season & off season growth | TDO & Amherst & Oxford ED employees | Business Community, chambers, CIB, citizens             | N/A              | N/A                | Ongoing                   | N/A                                | Partners                             |
| Develop natural asset access map for access to waterfalls, water, trails etc.                                    | TDO, GIS analyst                    | public, trails groups, rec NS, dept. of environment     | Human            | Time               | Short-term                | Access maps are developed          | Councils, steering committee, public |

# Action Plan

## 4) Communication, Engagement and Outreach

| Action   | Lead              | Partners                                      | Resources Needed                       | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                                  | Accountability                  |
|--|-------------------|---|--|--------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Coordinate annual familiarization tours                | Tourism committee | Tourism operators, ED employees from TOA, TOO | Human & financial                      | Time               | Short term                | FAM tours have been executed                 | Councils and steering committee |
| Maintain web-site and social media pages               | TDO               | Tourism Operators, TOA, TOO, MOC              | Financial, Human, Social Media Manager | Time/skill         | Short Term/Ongoing        | Sites are active, and information is current | Steering committee & councils   |
| Create quality, visually appealing monthly newsletters | TDO               | Tourism stakeholders, COC                     | Human/quality images                   | Capacity           | Short Term/Ongoing        | Newsletters are created and issued monthly   | Steering committee & councils   |
| Create a festivals & events calendar for the region    | TDO               | Tourism stakeholders, TOA, TOO, COC, CIB      | Human                                  | Time               | Short-term/ongoing        | Calendar has been created and kept current   | Steering committee & councils   |

# Action Plan

## 4) Communication, Engagement and Outreach

| Action   | Lead                      | Partners   | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues       | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement  | Accountability                         |
|--|---------------------------|--|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Host an annual tourism conference  | TDO                       | TOA, TOO, TNS, COC, TIANS, TNS, NSITEN, Fox Harb'r | Financial        | Time for proper planning | Short-term ongoing        | 1st Conference was a success-<br>-High registration<br>- Surveys from participants | Tourism committee councils, partners   |
| Investigate funding opportunities to help rural communities with tourism planning using the Guide and the Tourism Strategy as tools. | Steering committee<br>TDO | TNS  | Financial        | Financial, Capacity      | N/A                       | A community has begun the planning process   | Tourism committee, councils, partners. |

## 5) Extend the Shoulder Seasons and Develop Winter

| Action   | Lead | Partners                                 | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                                   | Accountability                                 |
|--|------|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Communicate vision and strategy with operators, create a survey & organize engagement sessions to gauge interest in extending season | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Chambers, tourism stakeholders | N/A              | Time               | N/A                       | Engagement sessions and surveys are complete. | Tourism steering committee, councils, partners |

# Action Plan

## 5) Extend the Shoulder Seasons and Develop Winter

| Action   | Lead | Partners                                 | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                                   | Accountability                                 |
|--|------|--|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Communicate vision and strategy with operators, create a survey & organize engagement sessions to gauge interest in extending season | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Chambers, tourism stakeholders | N/A              | Time               | N/A                       | Engagement sessions and surveys are complete. | Tourism steering committee, councils, partners |
| Complete asset inventory for shoulder season– Who is currently open & what experiences can we offer visitors?                        | TDO  | TOA, TOO, tourism operators              | N/A              | N/A                | Short - term              | Inventory is complete                         | Tourism steering committee                     |
| Complete asset inventory for winter  | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Tourism operators              | N/A              | N/A                | Short - term              | Inventory is complete                         | Tourism steering committee                     |

# Action Plan

## 5) Extend the Shoulder Seasons and Develop Winter

| Action   | Lead | Partners   | Resources Needed | Constraints Issues                 | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement                 | Accountability                        |
|--|------|--|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organize meeting with maple producers regarding the development of maple based experiences in the region | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Business connector, maple producers, Gregor Wilson | Human            | Finding time to arrange a meeting. | Short - Term              | Meeting was achieved        | Steering committee partners           |
| Develop maple trail and support the development of maple themed festivals and itineraries                | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Taste of NS, TNS, NS Select                        | Financial, human | Time                               | Short - term              | Maple trail is developed    | Steering committee councils, partners |
| Develop fall itineraries   | TDO  | TOA, TOO, Taste of NS, TNS, NS select                        | Financial, human | Time                               | Short - term              | Fall itinerary is developed | Steering committee councils, partners |

# Action Plan

## 5) Extend the Shoulder Seasons and Develop Winter

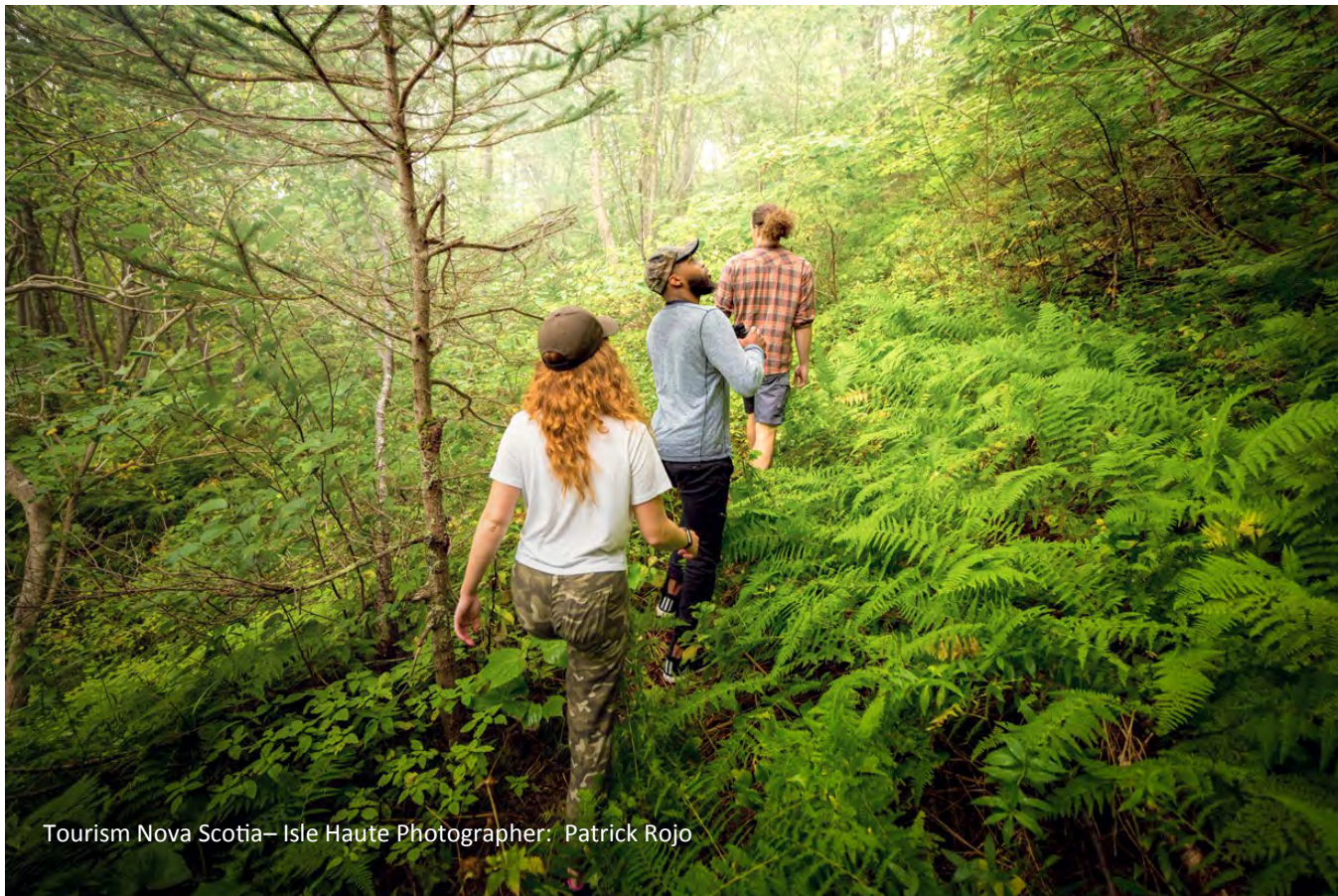
| Action   | Lead                     | Partners   | Resources Needed   | Constraints Issues       | Time Frame For Completion | Measurement   | Accountability                         |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Develop & support culinary festivals that extend the season i.e.– fall harvest, maple fest, blueberry harvest fest | TDO                      | TOA, TOO, Taste NS, Select Nova Scotia, food producers   | Financial<br>Human | Time for proper planning | Short - term              | Festivals are planned, executed and successful          | Steering committee, councils, partners |
| Help identify solutions for seasonal workforce issues  | Cumb. Business Connector | TOA, TOO, MOC, NS Works, CANSA, Federal Government, NSCC | N/A                | N/A                      | N/A                       | N/A   | Tourism steering committee, councils   |
| Promote shoulder season and winter experiences   | TDO                      | TOA, TOO, Tourism operators, business community          | Human & financial  | N/A                      | Short - term ongoing      | Successful development of quality promotional materials | Steering committee, councils, partners |

# Next Steps

This three-year strategy is a living document, developed by people who live and operate businesses in the Cumberland region and everyone has a role to play in its success.

This document will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains relevant and takes into account the trends and changes of the industry. Implementation and review of the strategy will require ongoing engagement with stakeholders to measure success moving forward.

Over the period of the next three years, this strategy, and all action plans implemented are to support the vision, goals, and values laid out in this document.



Tourism Nova Scotia— Isle Haute Photographer: Patrick Rojo

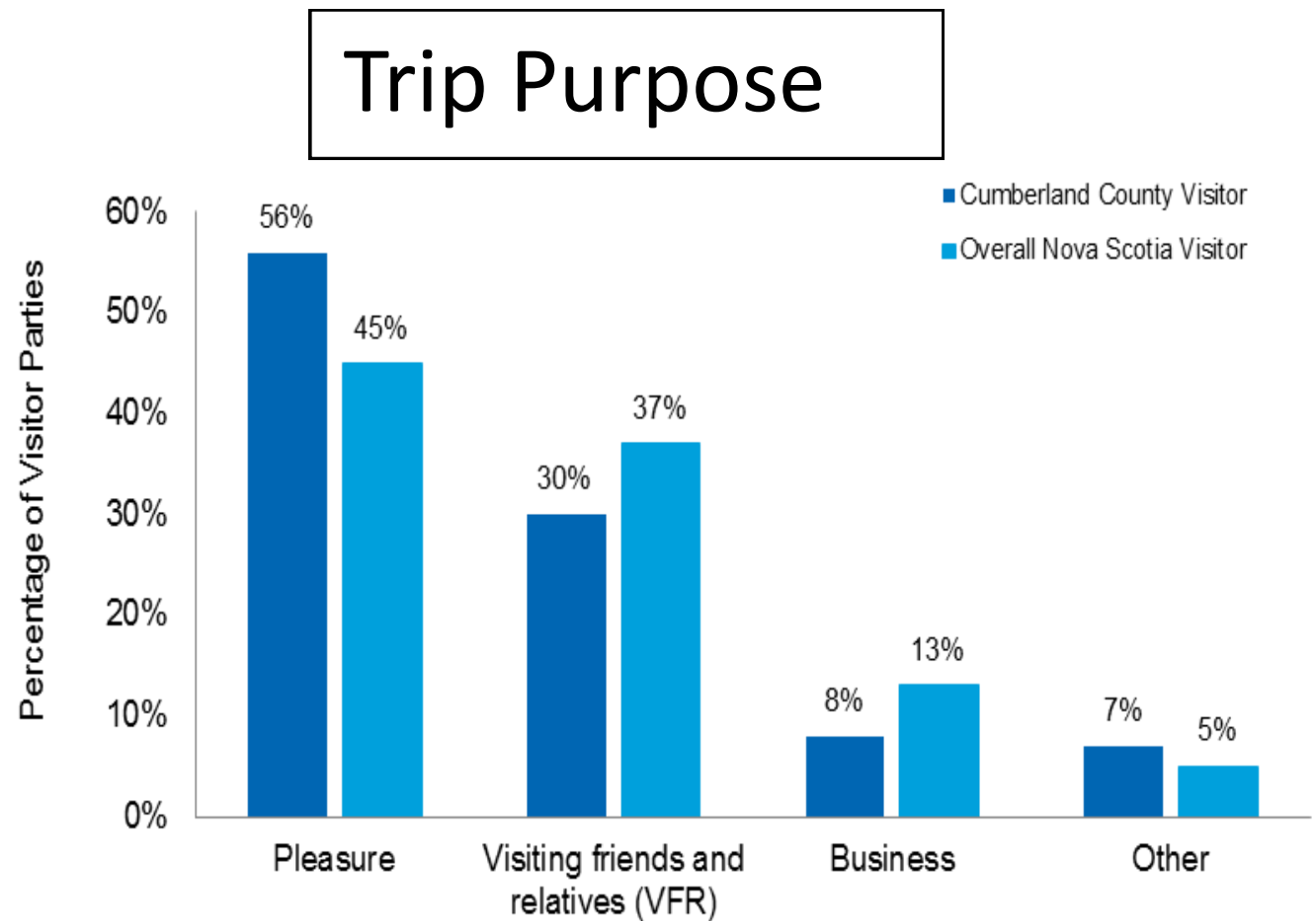


# Appendix

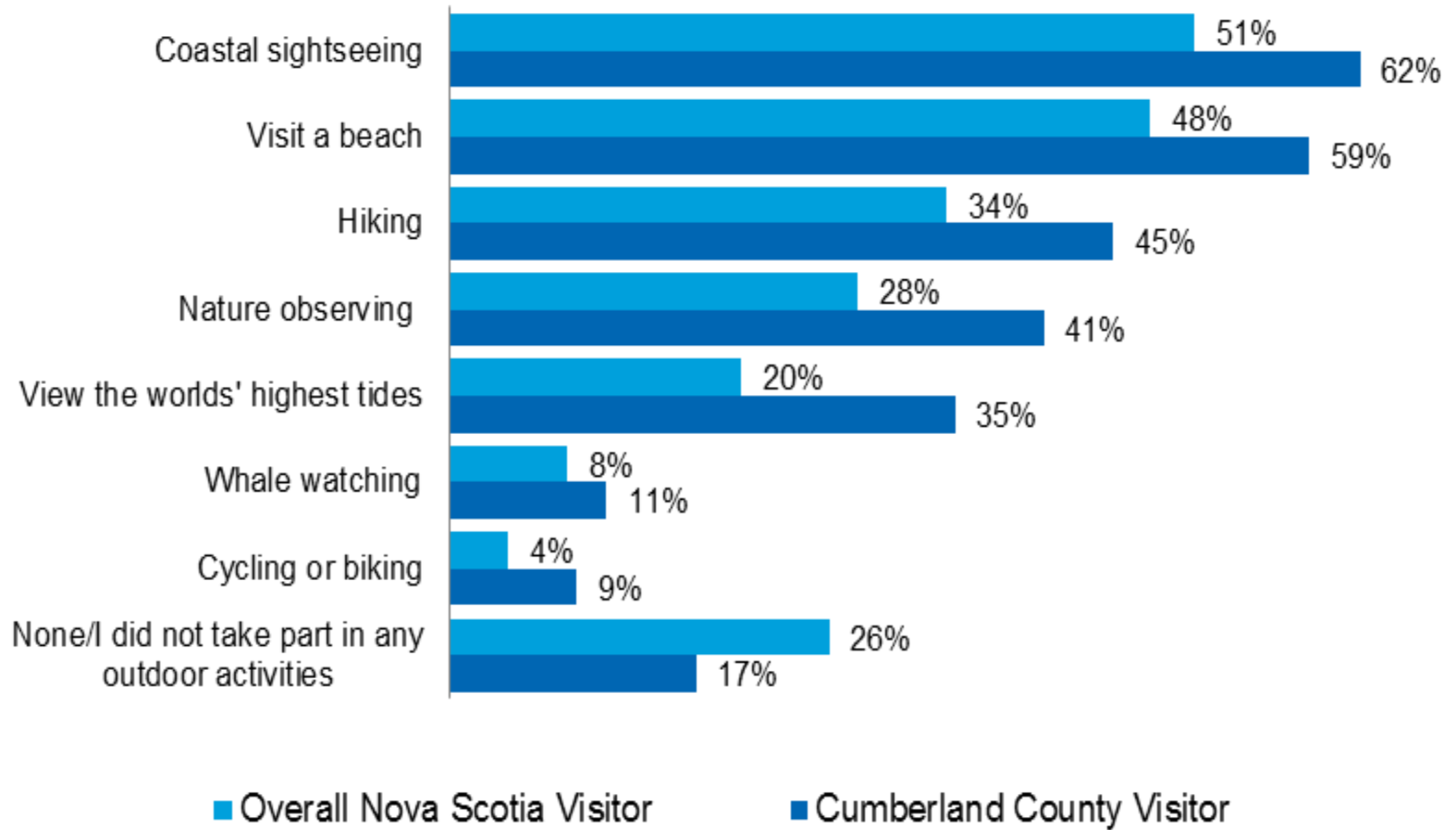
Town of Amherst— Summer Night Market

## Visitor Exit Surveys

- Profiles non-resident overnight visitors to Nova Scotia and focused on visitors to the Cumberland Region
- Trip purpose
- Visitor spend
- Areas visited
- Activities
- Satisfaction

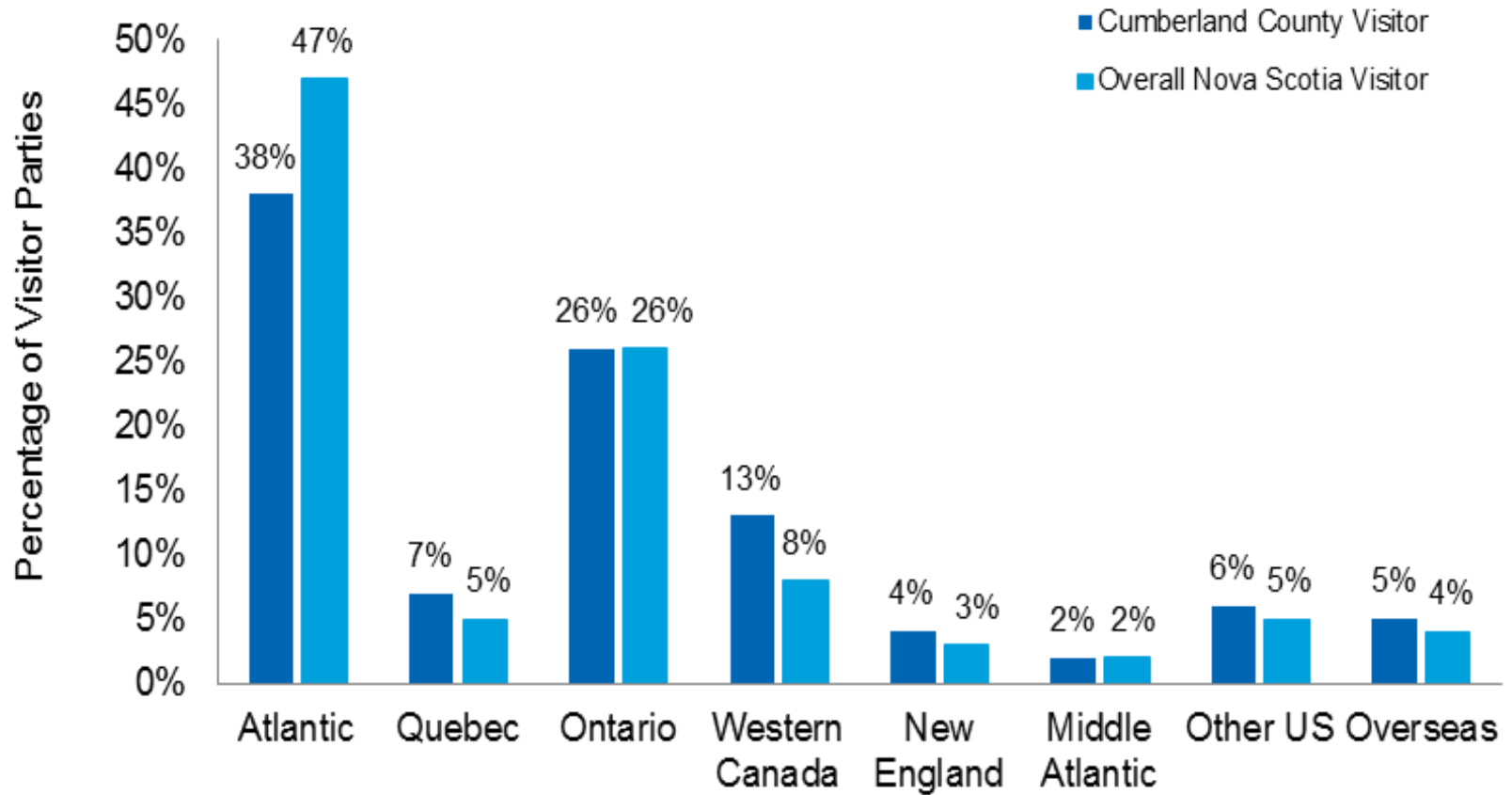


## Outdoor Activities – Pleasure Visitors



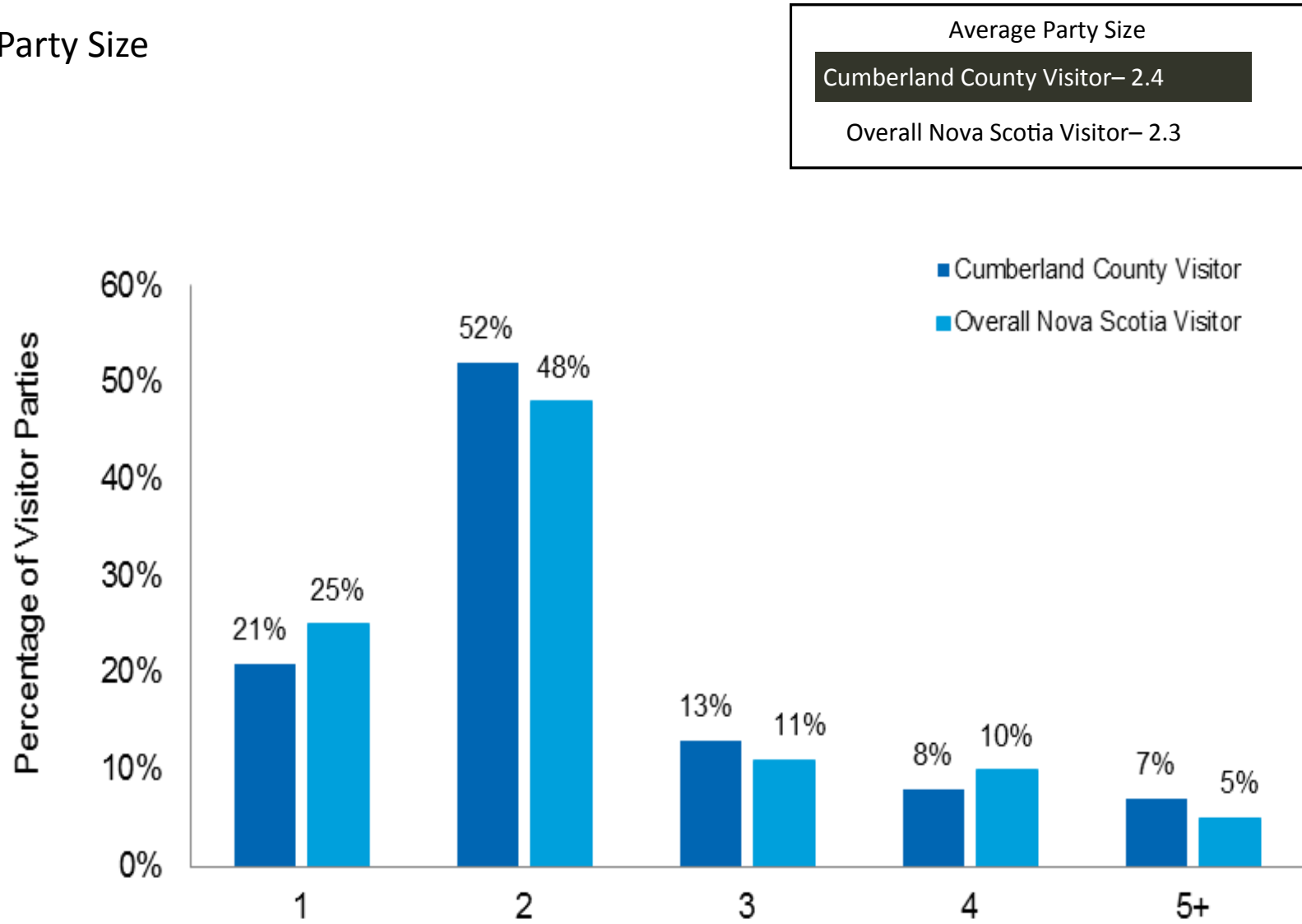
## Appendix III

### VISITOR ORIGIN

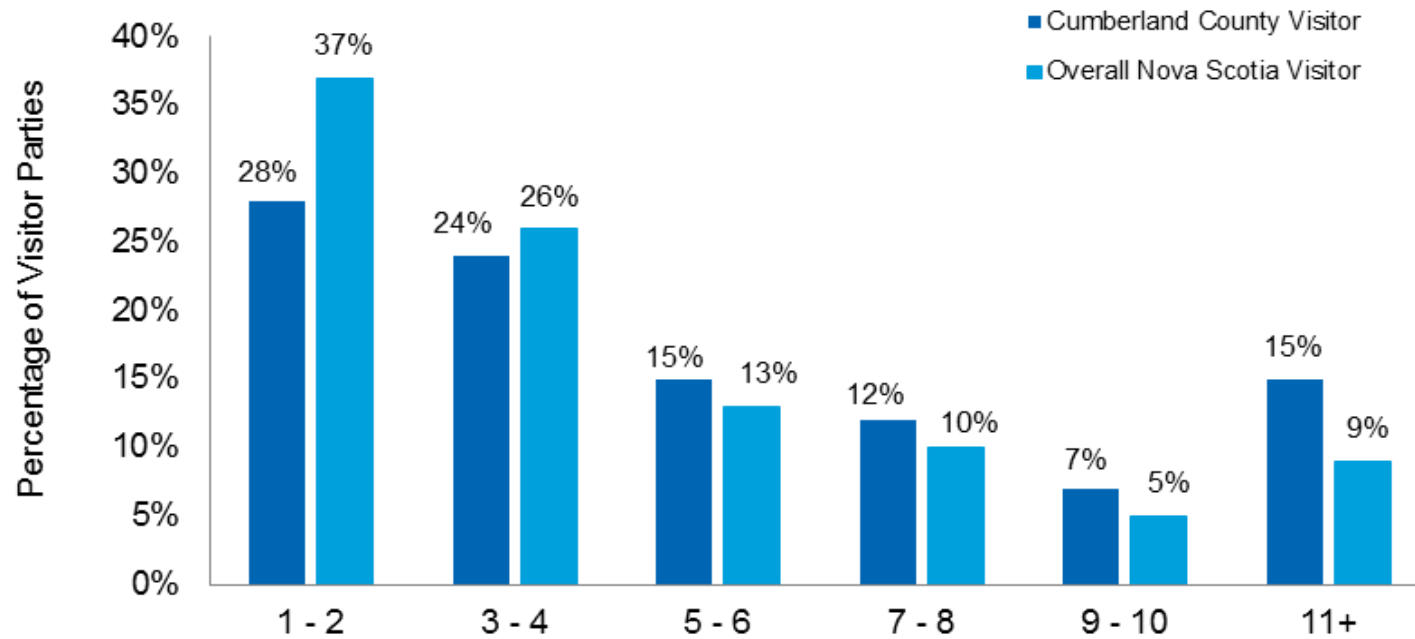


# Appendix IV

## Party Size



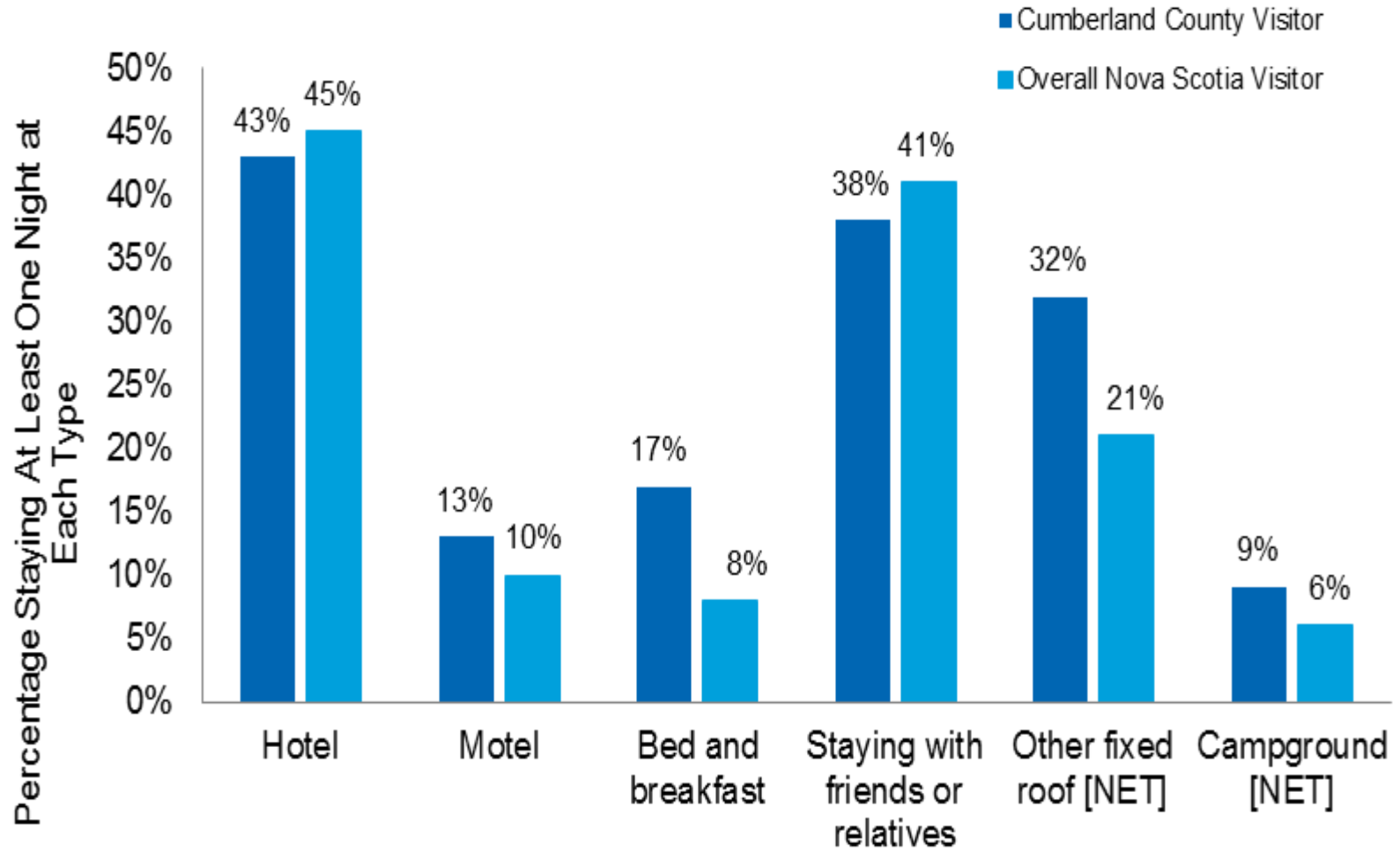
## Number of Nights Stayed in Nova Scotia



## Average Length of Stay

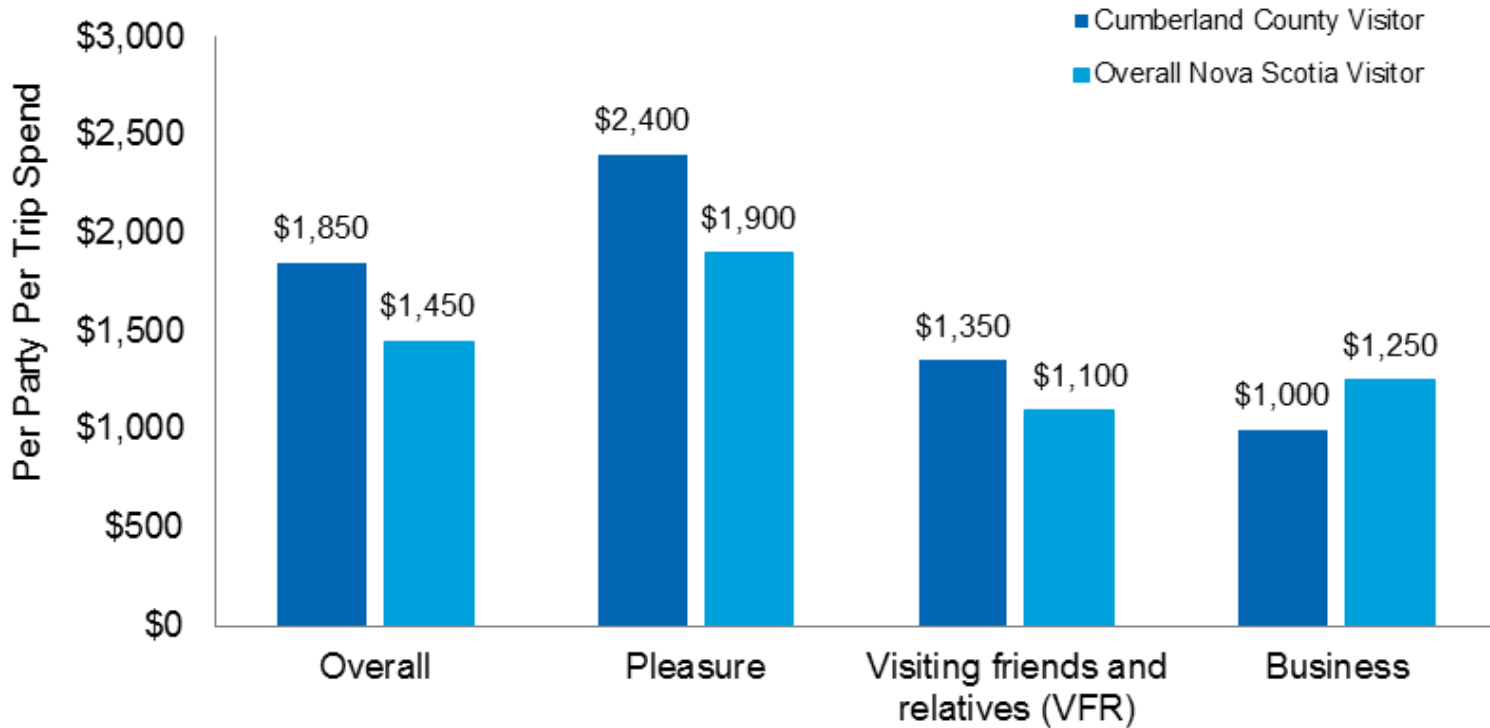
|                             | Overall | Pleasure | Visiting Friends or Relatives | Business |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Cumberland County Visitor   | 6.1     | 6.3      | 6.2                           | 3.2      |
| Overall Nova Scotia Visitor | 5.1     | 5.3      | 5.7                           | 3.6      |

## Where Visitors Stayed



# Appendix VII

## Visitor Expenditures\*



\*Includes allocated travel/Excludes major purchases

# References

- 1) <https://www.novascotia.com/>
- 2) <http://www2.unwto.org/>
- 3) <https://skift.com/2018/11/06/five-trends-that-will-shape-experiential-travel-in-2019/>
- 4) <https://tourismns.ca/sites/default/files/Tourism%20Driving%20Export%20Revenue%20Strategy%202018.pdf>
- 5) <https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/tools>
- 6) [https://tourismns.ca/sites/default/files/page\\_documents/final\\_a\\_guide\\_to\\_community\\_tourism\\_planning\\_in\\_nova\\_scotia\\_nov\\_2013.pdf](https://tourismns.ca/sites/default/files/page_documents/final_a_guide_to_community_tourism_planning_in_nova_scotia_nov_2013.pdf)
- 7) <https://www.cumberlandcounty.ns.ca/413-community-economic-development-strategy-september-2014-1/file.html>
- 8) [https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/804-Unlocking%20the%20Potential%20of%20Canadas%20Visitor%20Economy/Unlocking%20the%20Potential%20of%20Canadas%20Visitor%20Economy\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/804-Unlocking%20the%20Potential%20of%20Canadas%20Visitor%20Economy/Unlocking%20the%20Potential%20of%20Canadas%20Visitor%20Economy_WEB.pdf)



Tourism Nova Scotia – Isle Haute Photographer: Patrick Rojo

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council  
**From:** Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Date:** February 18, 2025  
**Subject:** 'A' Special Day - Strategic Priorities "Points to Capture"

---

One of the Points to Capture was '**A**' **Special Day**. Staff are not sure exactly what this means.

Staff are seeking clarification and direction.

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
FROM: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk  
DATE: February 18, 2025  
SUBJECT: Egress From Council Chambers Procedure

---

In December 2023, the CAO approved the attached Egress from Council Chambers Procedure in case of an emergency.

Staff will be reviewing this Procedure with you during the meeting.

**TITLE:** EGRESS FROM COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
**DEPARTMENT:** PHYSICAL SECURITY  
**PROCEDURE NO:** 2650-01P

**APPROVAL DATE:** Dec 7/23

**CAO Signature:** 

**PURPOSE:**

Safety planning and direction for council, staff and any committees using Council Chambers in response to an immediate threat or active attacker

**PROCEDURE:**

1. In the event of an immediate threat or active attacker in council chambers:
  - a. Hit the silent panic Alarm. This alarm goes directly to the Amherst Police Department. There are 4 alarm buttons around the council table including at the CAO's position and the Clerks position;
  - b. Council or committee members should exit the room via the corner doorway which should always be open unless council/committee is in a closed session;
  - c. Any staff present leave via side door, which can be left open unless council is in a closed session;
  - d. Once in the adjoining corridor:
    - i. Take shelter in staff offices;
    - ii. Close and secure office door with secure lock or similar security door barrier;
    - iii. Turn off lights and be very quiet;
    - iv. Shelter in place until police arrive and advise it is safe.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

| Title Role                                 | Responsibilities   |
|--|--|
| CAO/Clerk/Person sitting at alarm location | Depress alarm button to activate alarm   |
| All  | Exit room via applicable exits and into staff offices                                      |
| All  | Secure office doors, turn off lights and be quiet until police arrive and clear scene      |
| Police                                     | If a Police Officer is in Council Chambers during an incident, they will engage the threat |

For Administrative Use Only:

**VERSION LOG**

| Development Description | Procedure Owner       | Approved By | Approval Date    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|
| New Procedure           | Chief of Police, Pike | CAO         | December 5, 2023 |

# MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council

From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

Date: February 18, 2025

Re: Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) – Wind Turbine

---

## **Background**

In 2010 Council awarded a contract to Seaforth Energy to supply and erect a 50kw wind turbine on the same site as the new wastewater treatment facility. The cost of the wind turbine was \$232,566 including applicable taxes. The construction was completed and the turbine was put into service in June 2014.

The turbine is equipped with NS Power revenue class metering equipment, meaning all of the power generated by the turbine is sold back to NS Power. The turbine does not supply power to any of the equipment at the treatment facility.

In recent years the turbine has been out of service for extended periods of time as parts to repair the turbine are becoming increasingly difficult to source.

To put it in perspective; the first 3 years the turbine was in service it generated \$118,500 in revenue and repair costs were \$3,600 for a net profit of \$114,900. In the past 3 years the turbine has generated \$64,000 in revenue and repair costs have been \$17,900 for a net profit of \$46,100.

Total revenue since 2014 is \$327,800 against \$80,000 in repair and maintenance costs for a total net profit of \$247,800.

The turbine has been offline most of the current fiscal year (2024/25) with revenue of only \$1,118 against repair and maintenance costs of \$5,070.

## **Discussion**

A decision may need to be made in the near future on the continued viability of the wind turbine as it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep it operational. Parts are difficult to source as Seaforth Energy, the Dartmouth based turbine manufacturer, ceased operations in late 2014. We were also informed late last week that the company we were using for repair and maintenance, CMS Steel Pro, are no longer offering wind turbine maintenance services.

Staff are seeking an alternate service provider that can complete an assessment on the turbine and are working on an RFP for Wind Turbine Maintenance & Repair Services.

# MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council  
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police  
Date: February 18, 2025  
Subject: Land Use By-Law Issue

---

Over the past number of years, the Town has received complaints concerning the intersection of Chamberland and South Albion Streets in relation to parked vehicles causing a visual obstruction for vehicles coming out of Chamberlain Street that are often unable to see south-bound traffic approaching them on South Albion Street because of parked cars at that location.

The Town of Amherst Land Use By-Law addresses this issue in Section 4.6 – Corner Lot Triangle or Day Lighting Triangle:

*On a corner lot, no fence, sign, hedge, shrub, bush or tree or any other structure, vehicle or vegetation shall be erected, placed; or in the case of plants, permitted to grow to a height greater than 0.6 m above grade within a corner lot sight triangle.*

Corner lot sight (day lighting) Triangle is defined in the LUB as “that area of a corner lot which is enclosed by a triangle, the apex of which is the intersection of the flanking lot line and the front lot line, two sides of which triangle are 6 m in length measured from said point of intersection along the said lines and the base of which triangle is formed by a straight line joining the said exterior lot lines at the said points 6 m from the intersection”. (see figure 1).

The lot at this area is operated by a car rental company. Several years ago, the police responded to complaints concerning cars parked within the ‘day lighting triangle’ area. Police spoke with the company representatives who agreed to ensure that they did not park vehicles within this area because of the traffic safety issue that it creates. This provided a partial solution, as the company ensured that they no longer parked vehicles within this area, but customers returning cars often still parked the cars within the triangle and they remained there until a staff member moved them.

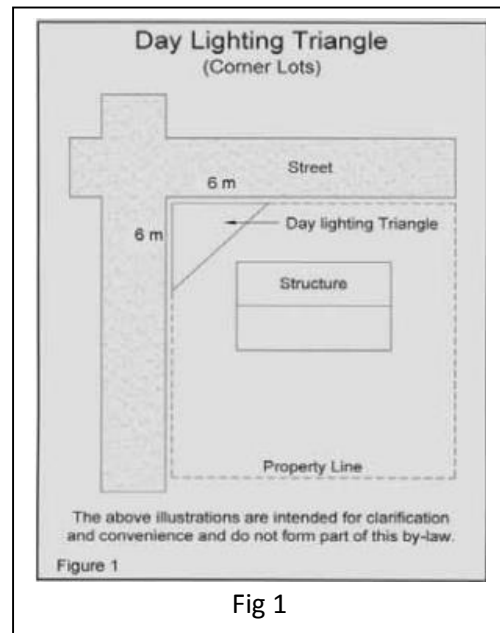


Fig 1

In 2023, we opened a file on this matter as a result of a complaint received. The issue had been reported to a council member, who contacted the Police Department. The matter was assigned to Inspector Gairns to review and address. As part of his review, he spoke with the complainant and visited the area. While the issue did not appear to be a consistent one, the complainant advised it was a re-occurring problem and he had observed several near-misses and other safety concerns because of the parking issues. Inspector Gairns met with the owners of the business

and discussed the Land Use By-Law and the safety concerns and explored options on how this matter could be addressed permanently. The property owners were very cooperative and open to suggestions. Again, they advised their clients not to park vehicles in this area and contracted a local company to measure the area and paint applicable parking lanes and a 'no parking' symbol in the corner area of their lot to indicate no parking. There was also a discussion about putting a jersey barrier on the spot, but it was decided against as it could impact snow removal and actually make the problem worse with piled snow in the winter. Another issue that the complainant voiced was that vehicles parking in this lot were within 5m of the fire hydrant. Parking legislation regarding fire hydrants is in regards to street parking (i.e. South Albion Street), not parking on private property. Inspector Gairns corresponded with the complainant and advised of the proposed action and the issues faced by the property owners. The councilor in question also received the same correspondence. The complainant expressed his appreciation for the action taken in addressing the issue.



In January of 2024 we received another complaint on this matter when a vehicle was parked in the area and had its bumper extending over the sidewalk. It was moved by the property rep. A month later, a complaint came in via E11 concerning vehicles that were parking in this area, often blocking the sidewalk and near the fire hydrant. Again, these were vehicles that were being parked by customers. Inspector Gairns contacted the company and learned that the manager he had dealt with in the past had been away, which may have contributed to the issue.

In August of 2024, this issue once again resurfaced. We received a complaint about parking in this area. Police attended and the vehicle was promptly moved by the property rep. A couple of days later, I was contacted again by the same councilor who had been involved in the 2023 complaint that had been assigned to Inspector Gairns. It had come to the councilors attention as a result of an ongoing thread on social media. The thread was concerning the same incident that had already been reported to police and had been addressed and the vehicle had moved. I responded to the councilor and advised again of the issues faced by the business and the actions that had been taken. We suggested that the most efficient way to deal with the issue is to call the Police, or even the company, as they have been cooperative. I also advised that despite the online concerns and commentary that seems to indicate that this is a consistent problem, Police rarely get complaints on the issue. Our suggestion to the councilor was that contacting the police department about the issue is a much more efficient way to deal with an issue. It also provides a means for us to gauge how often this occurs. We have not received a Police complaint on this issue since August of 2024.

It is my understanding that a current councilor has received a complaint about the matter from the same complainant in the 2023 that Insp. Gairns had been assigned.



At this time, the 'no parking' symbol is currently covered by snow, and the area within the 'Corner lot sight Triangle' is covered by snow, so that parking in that area is not possible for the time-being.

# MEMO

**TO:** Mayor Small and Members of Council  
**FROM:** Jason MacDonald, CAO  
**DATE:** February 18, 2025  
**RE:** **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**

---

At the November 2023 meeting of Council a motion was passed that authorized the Town of Amherst to “opt-in” to the EPR program for packaging, paper products, and packaging like products and direct staff to register for the program with Divert NS.

The RFD from that meeting is attached for your reference.

The program is designed to shift responsibility for curbside recycling programs from municipalities to the producers of packaging and paper products. Under the new program, producers will have to meet recycling targets that, over time, will encourage more eco-friendly packaging and reduce single-use plastics.

This program will standardize recycling programs across Nova Scotia, reduce the amount of waste disposed in landfills, and incentivize producers to reduce consumer packaging. EPR moves the physical and financial obligation of collecting, sorting, and processing curbside recyclables to producers and away from municipal governments and taxpayers.

We are due to receive the written offer on February 14 and provide written intent to opt in or out by the 28<sup>th</sup> – this can be done at the CAO level. By May 16 a formal decision of Council will be required. We may have a special meeting to discuss (or discuss at / prior to Council next week).

If you have any questions, please contact me.

---

**TO:** Mayor Kogon and Members of Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

**DATE:** November 27, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

---

**ORIGIN:** Provincial regulations respecting extended producer responsibility for packaging, paper products, and packaging like products.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** Nova Scotia Environment Act, Chapter 1 Section 102.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council approve of “Opting-In” to the EPR program for packaging, paper products, and packaging like products and direct staff to register for the program with Divert NS.

**BACKGROUND:** Municipalities have been requesting the provincial government to regulate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, paper products, and packaging like products (PPP) for a number of years. A proposal for EPR was submitted to the provincial government in 2019 and on August 2, 2023, regulations for EPR for PPP were announced.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, paper products, and packaging like products (PPP), regulates industry responsibility for both the operational and financial management of select recyclable products. In Nova Scotia, EPR for PPP will include materials that are commonly found in the blue bag system.

With an EPR program the savings from new operational arrangements are estimated to be between 20-25 million annually for NS municipalities.

**DISCUSSION:**

All Nova Scotia municipalities must now decide to:

1. Opt-out of EPR for PPP and continue to service the blue bag program at full cost to the municipality.
2. Opt-In to EPR and cease to provide any services related to the blue bag program.





## AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL

RFD# 2023138

Date: November 27, 2023

If a municipality opts-in to an EPR Program for PPP, discussions will begin with industry representatives on the details of what the program would look like. The Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) may wish to engage the municipality as a service provider and the municipality would enter into contract negotiations with the PRO regarding the nature of the service provided and the remuneration paid by the PRO to provide the service.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** It is unknown at this point what the financial implications are however the Town of Amherst will potentially realize significant savings.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** There are no social justice implications.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** Potential expansion of the blue bag recycling program.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** There is no community engagement required at this time.

**ALTERNATIVES:** Opt-out of EPR for PPP and continue to service the blue bag program at full cost to the Town.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None

---

Report prepared by: Brenda Rioux, Solid Waste Education and Contract Coordinator  
Report and Financial approved by:



# CAO Task Report

February 2025

---

Task Updates:

**Task: Inter Municipal Services Agreement**

Received message from MCC CAO indicating that he is working on his end of the project.

Status: Ongoing

**Task: Committee Review**

Combining of IDE and AAC Committees is in progress.

Status: Ongoing

**Task: Anson Aircraft Monument**

Allocation made in the draft capital budget. Staff have yet to meet with Mr. Gould.

Status: In Progress

**Task: Request to Present – Social Media and Communication**

This will be undertaken when drafting our new marketing / communications plan.

Status: In Progress

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Community Living

### February 2025

---

This month the Community Living Department has been working on the following things:

- Planning/engaging in African Heritage Month activities
- Planning Winter Carnival, Athletic Achievers and Flag Day
- Assisting the Nova Scotia Healthcare recruitment with events, sourcing potential housing, arranging welcome baskets
- Liaising with Schools to partner in Winter Carnival Activities
- Meeting with the Integrated Youth Services and Amherst Youth Town Council
- Finalizing the Amherst Police Department Strategic Plan
- Developing proposal for the Office Healthcare Professional recruitment
- Meeting with the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee
- Hosting public sessions on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity and Accessibility Strategic plan
- Various ongoing projects such as NS Walks, Parks and Facilities Marketing plan and update of marketing materials

#### Task Updates:

|   |
|---|
| <p>Task: Volunteer Recruitment Procedure</p> <p>Update: Develop procedures around recruitment and selection for Volunteer of the Year.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>         |
| <p>Task: Accessible Playground</p> <p>Update: An internal committee of staff has been struck to determine plan, design and cost moving forward</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Task: APD Strategic Plan</p> <p>Update: Working on Survey and process for community engagement</p> <p>Status: working on final report</p>                              |

# Monthly Report

## Corporate

### February 2025

---

**IT Services:**

- The Wi-Fi upgrade for the Stadium has been completed. All the old equipment has been removed and upgraded to new wireless equipment. Configuration on the new system has been completed and tested.
- Arena display board computer has been replaced. Database has been moved to the new system.
- Dispatch remodel is still on going. We are still waiting for the VOIP phone and new radios to be installed. The radio people have advised that they have some basic setup and testing completed on the new equipment and should be able to start the installation in a couple of weeks.
- The cameras and computers have been updated in the two interview rooms on the main floor at APD. The software has been tested and is working as it should.
- The computer for the Admin Assistant at APD crashed and I had to replace the hard drive in the computer and reload Windows on the new hard drive.
- Reception at Town Hall has been moved to its new location across the lobby and all services have been reconfigured and operational.
- The building controls server and software was upgraded last month, operator training was provided this month.

**Procurement:**

| ID    | Type | Project                   | Process Type | Budget Type | Released | Closed | App'd | App'd By |
|-------|------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|--------|-------|----------|
| 24-52 | RFP  | Floor Scrubber            | Regular      | C           |          |        | X     | CAO      |
| 24-69 | RFP  | MSA Air Cylinders         | Regular      | C           |          |        | X     | CAO      |
|       | ALT  | Extrication Tools         | Alternative  | C           |          |        | X     | CAO      |
| 24-03 | RFP  | Household Hazardous Waste | Regular      | O           |          |        | X     | CAO      |
| 25-01 | RFP  | Bedding Plants            | Regular      | O           |          |        | X     | CAO      |
| 25-02 | RFP  | Hanging Flower Baskets    | Regular      | O           |          |        | X     | CAO      |

**Other:**

**E-11 Customer Service**

There were 75 open cases in January. Top categories were: Weather conditions/ice (20 cases), By Law issues (which includes permits and applications as well as Unightly) (15 cases), Solid Waste (11 cases)

Of the 75 cases, 41 of them were resolved/cleared within 24 hours.

**Task Updates:**

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Task:</b></p> <p>Update:</p> <p>Status:</p> |
|---|

# Monthly Report

## Cumberland Business Connector

### February 2025

---

Priority: Support Businesses (primarily 0-50 employees)

- The Cumberland Business Accelerator Program continues to support businesses with high growth potential.

Accelerator businesses have been supported in the following ways:

- Created Plans of Action for clients to visualize their priorities and to systematically work through them
  - Prepared a SWOT analysis for one business
  - Provided feedback on a business' in-house valuation of their assets
  - Provided advice on new product launch
- The Business Spotlight program continues to highlight small businesses on social media.
- Business Retention and Expansion visits are going well. Some highlights include:
    - The Dine Around Cumberland program for February has commenced. This initiative is in collaboration with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia.
    - Some concern around potential American tariffs, but no specific impact yet
    - Provided referrals to businesses to the appropriate municipal and provincial offices that can assist them
    - Continued to work with a few family businesses that are in the early stages of succession (within the family)
- Workshops
    - Workshops that have been held in collaboration with our local partners include:
      - January 22<sup>nd</sup> – Bookkeeping and Taxes
      - January 29<sup>th</sup> – A workshop was held to help businesses deal with remittance of HST due to the complications of the December to February GST/HST tax holiday. This was in collaboration with the Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia and the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia.
      - February 11<sup>th</sup> - Webinar with Tourism Nova Scotia
    - Upcoming workshops include:
      - February 19<sup>th</sup> – Harnessing AI for Marketing
      - March 25<sup>th</sup> - Meet and greet with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, one session in Amherst, and one in Pugwash.
      - March 26<sup>th</sup> - The Art of Merchandising.

New Businesses

- We have met with a few entrepreneurs who are interested in starting businesses. We have also met with a few entrepreneurs looking at taking over family businesses and running them more efficiently.

#### Priority: Labour Availability and Workforce Development

- We continue to connect clients to provincial staff that can help them through the process becoming Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) certified which will make it easier to hire skilled immigrants, including those that have studied in Maritime Universities and Colleges.

#### Other Work

- We continue to attend monthly Team Cumberland meetings
- We continue to prepare for the Partners 4 Progress conference that we are hosting in late April. This is the major Economic Development conference held annually in Nova Scotia. We have refocused the agenda of this conference to include a major emphasis on export diversification and growth.
- The Cumberland Business Connector is working collaboratively with our counterparts across Nova Scotia, as well as the Chambers of Commerce and Invest Nova Scotia to help businesses with trade challenges. We are committed to keeping abreast of trade and tariff issues as they arise and will continue to relay information to the business community as it becomes available. We are here to continue to support businesses as they adapt and thrive in this time of turmoil.

## Overview of what the Connector is doing for businesses due to Tariffs

**January 28<sup>th</sup>** – The Cumberland Business Connector participated in a virtual meeting with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, Invest Nova Scotia, the Regional Enterprise Networks, and the Chambers of Commerce.

The province updated us on the government's view of the trade situation.

- The US Trade Representative is due to report back to the President by April 1<sup>st</sup> which could have a major impact on the trade situation. This date may be the real start to planned 2026 review of the Canada-US- Mexico Trade Agreement.
- The premiers are meeting weekly to discuss tariff-related issues including supports to business
- The province has been meeting directly with major NS exporters.

On **Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>** we distributed the following letter through all our Social Media channels:

As most are aware, the United States has imposed 25% tariffs on most Canadian products being exported to the United States. This will have a significant impact on some of our local businesses. Other businesses who import products from the United States may also be impacted as Canada has moved to retaliate with tariffs on certain imports coming from the United States of America.

During this time of uncertainty, it is necessary that businesses have a plan of action in place to mitigate the impacts of these tariffs. While we expect that there will soon be programs put in place by the federal and provincial governments to help businesses navigate through these uncertain times, it is necessary that businesses take charge of their own future. As soon as we are aware of relevant programs for business transition or support, we will share them with our local business community.

The Cumberland Business Connector is here to support businesses in Amherst and throughout the Municipality of the County of Cumberland. We are available for one-on-one confidential conversations with your business. We can discuss the challenges and opportunities that this Trade War will bring to you, and help identify plans of actions to guide you through this challenging time.

At a time like this, it is valuable to re-examine your entire business for savings or growth opportunities. Some opportunities include:

- Increasing productivity to reduce per unit costs.
- Pivoting to new domestic or international markets.
- Look for opportunities to produce goods or services for the Canadian market that is currently being supplied by American firms.
- Explore job share plans to handle temporary reductions in workforce (if necessary) and retain your existing workforce.

For companies who have only exported to the United States, this is an important wake up call to not rely solely on one customer. It is time to take advantage of the large number of free trade agreements that Canada has with other regions. The two largest free trade agreements that we have outside of North America are:

- the Canada - European Union trade agreement. This Agreement includes the countries of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

- When the United Kingdom left the European Union, our trade with the UK has continued under the Canada UK Trade Continuity Agreement.
- The Trans Pacific Partnership. This agreement includes Australia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei, Chile, and Malaysia.

Other trade agreements that Canada have include:

- Chile
- Columbia
- Costa Rica
- The European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).
- Honduras
- Israel
- Jordan
- Korea
- Panama
- Ukraine

If you would like to meet and discuss your business' situation, please reach out to us at [contact@cumberlandbusinessconnector.ca](mailto:contact@cumberlandbusinessconnector.ca)

**Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>** – We posted on our Social Media Channels information that the Province had shared with us. This included a link to a survey for businesses to make the Province aware of inter-provincial tariffs that are impeding trade. Additionally, there was a 1-800 number set up to advise businesses on trade and tariff-related issues.

**Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>** – Along with the Regional Enterprise Networks, Chambers of Commerce, etc. We participated in a virtual meeting with Minister Colton LeBlanc. Some updates included:

- Businesses have asked for support developing new markets outside of the US.
- The province is also pushing the NS Loyal brand. This will make it easier for consumers to identify Nova Scotian products. This initiative started out with food products and it has just been expanded to forest products.
- The province wants more businesses and retailers to register on NSLoyal.ca (there has been a 25% increase in registrations last week).
- The government is also focusing on changes they made last year to use government procurement to drive local economic activity. Businesses can register to automatically receive tender notifications through the Tender Opportunities Notification System (TONS) when tenders are issued by the province and related organizations. Businesses can register at [Procurement-Portal.NovaScotia.ca/tons](http://Procurement-Portal.NovaScotia.ca/tons)

**February** – we have revamped the agenda of the Partners 4 Progress conference on April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Export Diversification and Growth is now one of the 3 key themes of the Conference.

# Monthly Report

## Finance

February 2025

---

### FINANCE

The third quarter financial review is complete and the Third Quarter Financial Report will be presented to the Audit Committee in the near future. The financial results continue to be favourable.

Staff are finalizing the 2025/26 capital budget projects and funding. As well, staff continue to work on the 2025/26 operating budget, reviewing the budget in its entirety for required updates and completeness.

As we are quickly approaching year end, staff have also directed their focus towards year end tasks.

### TAX / ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE / COLLECTIONS

**Water Collections** – 121 collection notices were sent to customers with two plus quarters outstanding.

**Tax Sale** – A tax sale was held February 11, 2025, with four properties up for bid as follows:

59 Church Street – sold for \$15,000 + HST

2 Pearl Place – no bids

6 Parkwood Drive – no bids

34 Clarence Street – sold for \$75,000

**2024 Assessment Appeals** – The Town received the appeal inventory from PVSC. There was a total of 95 appeals of which fifty-nine (59) appeals are complete, fifteen (15) are outstanding and four (4) withdrawn. NS Assessment Appeal Tribunal status for 2024: 3 total, 1 complete, 1 withdrawn and 1 outstanding.

|                       | # Of Accounts Appealing |              | Appeal Completed as of Jan 1/25 | Pending as of Jan 1/25 | Withdrawn as of Jan 1/25 | Outstanding Appeals as of Jan 1/25 | Appeals Successful as of Jan 1/25 | Loss of Assessment Value | Amount of Revenue Reduction | Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal Status |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Residential /Resource | 74                      | \$26,779,800 | 44                              | 0                      | 3                        | 14                                 | 10                                | \$537,800                | \$8,981.26                  | 1   |
| Commercial            | 21                      | \$21,610,100 | 15                              | 0                      | 1                        | 1                                  | 6                                 | \$973,000                | \$43,493.10                 | 0   |
| TOTAL                 | 95                      | \$48,389,900 | 59                              | 0                      | 4                        | 15                                 | 16                                | \$1,510,800              | \$52,474.36                 | 1   |

**Property Sales/Tax Certificates**– There were 6 residential property sales in January, and no commercial property sales. 22 tax certificate requests were completed during the month.

## **WATER/SEWER**

Third quarter water / sewer billing is complete, and bills were mailed out on January 31. We will continue with maintaining customer accounts and contacting residents that may require meter repair or replacement as indicated from the reports generated from the meter reads.

## **TASK UPDATES**

Task: Tax Sale Minimum Bid

Motion: That Council approve setting the minimum bid for 59 Church Street at \$15,000 for the tax sale scheduled on February 11, 2025.

Update: Website tax sale notice has been updated with minimum bid for 59 Church Street.

Status: Task complete.

---

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Fire Department

### February 2025

---

#### RESPONSES (January)

|                                    | <u>Town of Amherst</u> | <u>District 2</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Confirmed Extinguished fire        |                        |                   |
| Carbon Monoxide detector activated |                        | 1                 |
| Structure fire                     | 1                      |                   |
| Hazardous materials                |                        | 1                 |
| Monitored alarm                    | 8                      | 1                 |
| Motor vehicle accidents            | 4                      | 2                 |
| Mutual aid requests                |                        | 1                 |
| Oil burning appliance Malfunction  |                        |                   |
| Open burn / Wildland fire / Mulch  |                        | 1                 |
| Smell of smoke / Air quality check | 1                      | 1                 |
| Smoke alarm activations            | 4                      |                   |
| <b>Total events</b>                | <b>18</b>              | <b>8</b>          |

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### Weekly fire fighter training

During the month of January, the fire department focused it's training on pre-event planning, a communications exercise, Automated External Defibrillator & a Narcan refresher.

##### Junior firefighter program

The focus of the junior firefighters' program is to provide youth with theory and hands on training related to fire fighter duties. This is completed though weekly training and weekend training sessions once a month. During the month of January, the juniors spent a fair amount of time focusing on hands on training related to hose operations, personal protective equipment and equipment checks.

#### RECRUITMENT

The fire department continues to look for new members to join our team. For more information on becoming a member of the Amherst fire department, please go to [www.amherst.ca/volunteer-firefighter.html](http://www.amherst.ca/volunteer-firefighter.html)

#### TASK UPDATES

|   |
|---|
| Task: <span style="color: red;">No open tasks at this time</span> |
|---|

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Human Resources

### February 2025

---

#### **Staffing Updates**

Part-time Dispatcher: The Amherst Police Department welcomed Scott MacKay as our new part-time Dispatcher in January. Scott will be filling in for vacations and other shift shortages. Welcome Scott!

#### **Current Recruitment**

Police Constable: Our recruitment campaign for an additional full-time Officer remains open. Staff had previously developed a video to promote the benefits of living and working in Amherst and becoming a member of the Amherst Police Department family to support the recruitment efforts. The video and posting will continue to be circulated online until the position is filled.

Police Science Cadet Program: The Amherst Police Department applied for and was awarded a student position in the January 2026 police class and is also on the wait list for a position in the spring 2025 class. An information session was held on January 18, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Amherst Police Department. Further applicant screening is currently underway.

Marketing Manager: A competition process is anticipated to begin in the coming weeks for this new position.

Summer Student Recruitment: The recruitment process for our annual summer student hiring is currently in progress. The competitions will remain open until late March/early April.

Student Placements: We are pleased to host various work placements, typically in the spring each year, to support students in gaining on-the-ground experience to enhance their studies. Two such placements are currently being explored; one in our Public Works Department and one in our Community Living Department.

#### **Other HR News**

##### Labour-Management Meeting

Our semi-annual labour-management meeting with the Amherst Police Association (APA) Local 104 members was held in early February at the Police Department. The discussions were highly productive with great dialogue and valuable takeaways for future improvements.

##### Annual Performance Evaluations

HR staff are working on rolling out our annual employee performance evaluations for all staff. The target deadline for completion is the end of March.

##### Group Insurance Plan Information Sessions

HR staff will be hosting a series of information sessions throughout February for non-union and CUPE employees to review the coverages available including group insurance, health & dental coverages, Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) program and Virtual Health. Information sessions for Amherst Police Department members is expected to be held in March.

### Duty to Cooperate Legislation

HR staff are preparing for the upcoming changes under the Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act, specifically the duty to cooperate legislation, set to take effect on July 15, 2025. Preparation includes reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure we are in compliance with the new legislation and working with WCB Nova Scotia in understanding and fulfilling our responsibilities under the new legislation.

### Leadership & Other Training Opportunities

HR staff are actively researching leadership training opportunities in collaboration with departmental Directors and hope to offer appropriate training opportunities in the coming months. A full training schedule is also being developed for all mandatory training requirements for safety-sensitive positions.

### HR Policy Review

Staff also continue to review all HR policies and procedures with the “Staff Training and Professional Development” policy currently under review for recommended revisions.

### **Payroll**

Payroll and WCB remittances are up to date.

Payroll remittances are remitted to CRA bi-weekly by the payroll company.

WCB is remitted automatically via our payroll provider.

Staff are actively preparing payroll year-end processes and T4's are expected to be completed and distributed by February 20, 2025.

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Operations

### February 2025

---

In addition to their routine maintenance work Operational Services staff worked on and will be working on:

#### **RECREATION & HORTICULTURE**

- Dickey Park washroom is open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm.
- The walking track at the stadium is generally available for use daily from 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- Outdoor rink is open for the season. Depending on the weather the ice surface is open daily from 9:00am to 9:00pm.
- Stadium Events in February include;
  - U9 “My Biggest Fan” Jamboree
  - Amherst Junior A Ramblers have 4 home games
  - NS Figure Skating Provincials
- Dickey Park is hosting the Coldest Night of the Year event on February 22.
- The RFPs for 2025 hanging baskets and bedding flowers were closed and are being evaluated by staff.
- Staff have been preparing for spring. We've redesigned some of our flower beds and will be introducing some new colors and plants.
- Matt Selig took three staff members to the Recreation Facilities Nova Scotia mid-season ice maker's course. The course covered essential topics such as refrigeration plant maintenance, an introduction to Zamboni maintenance, and ice painting. Staff found the training to be very valuable and it was also an excellent opportunity to connect with industry professionals from across the province.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS**

- There were no major storms but many small snow events in the past month, staff plowed the streets and sidewalks on 10 occasions.
- Sidewalk salting took place on 14 occasions and the salt truck was dispatched 20 times due to icy conditions.
- There were 3 broken water mains and 3 plugged sewers repaired in the past month.
- Staff have been patching potholes with recycled asphalt, typically 3 days per week.
- Quarterly meter reading was completed and staff investigated high and zero consumption meter reads.
- Operations staff continue working on the Town Hall office renovations, reception has been relocated and the remaining work should be completed by the end of February.
- New Lions Club plaques for the CCUBIC flagpoles have been received, and will be installed when the weather is more favorable.
- Staff are working on the annual reports for the wastewater treatment facility and the Amherst water utility.

## **SOLID WASTE**

- Staff met with participants at the Bridge Adult Service Center to discuss proper source separation. The participants were eager to learn about what happens to their waste materials!
- Staff visited the center to have a tour of the work that is being done at the center by the participants. Staff will be meeting with the participants in March to discuss source separation.
- The 2025/2026 collection schedule is in the process of being finalized and will be mailed to residents early in March.
- The RFP for the Collection and Transportation of Household Hazardous Waste has been awarded to Green for Life (GFL). The events will be held in the Town of Amherst on June 21<sup>st</sup> & September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Amherst Fire Hall from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. The Blitz events will be held on June 7<sup>th</sup> & September 13<sup>th</sup> in Parrsboro, Pugwash, Oxford, and Springhill.
- Christmas tree collection took place during the week of January 21<sup>st</sup>; all trees have now been collected.
- During the month of January, the hotline received 269 phone calls.
- Staff continue to post weekly sorting information on social media.

### Town of Amherst Curbside Rejections (January 2025)

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Not dual stream                           | 10        |
| Late                                      | 21        |
| Recycle contains garbage (wrapping paper) | 45        |
| Recycle contains organics                 | 1         |
| Garbage stored in cart                    | 2         |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>79</b> |

## **UPCOMING**

- Snow and de-icing operations of streets, sidewalks and VIA rail platform as needed.
- Patching of potholes with recycled asphalt is ongoing.
- Amherst Junior A Ramblers playoff hockey will begin in Mid-March.
- Looking ahead, staff are starting to plan and prepare for the Spring.

Task Updates:

Task: Havelock / Victoria Street Intersection Traffic Signals

Update: An option for intersection improvements has been included in the proposed 2025/26 capital budget

Status: Complete

Task: WWTP Grey Water Energy Extraction Report

Update: Staff did not have time to prepare the memo for February COW, will be completed for March 2025 COW.

Status: In Progress

Task: Sidewalk Curb and Construction Policy

Update: A recommendation for Council from the Accessibility Advisory Committee is on the COW agenda for February 2025

Status: Complete

Task: Water Utility Dump Truck

Update: Delivery expected by the end of February 2025

Status: In Progress

Task: Capital Budget Amendment – New Loader

Update: The new loader has been ordered; delivery is expected February 2025.

Status: In Progress

Task: Anson Avenue – CN Crossing

Update: A memo has been included in the February 2025 COW package.

Status: In Progress

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Planning & Economic Development

### February 2025

---

The attached development activity report shows permits issued in January and a 2023/2024 comparison. As indicated in the report, several permits were issued for detached dwellings within the Hillsdale development.

An application for a development agreement for 96 Church Street to permit a total of seven units took place on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Consideration for Second Reading is scheduled for the February 24<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. A Public Participation Opportunity took place on February 6<sup>th</sup> for development agreement applications to permit an 18-unit apartment building at 91 Rupert Street and an 8-unit apartment building at 3 Robie Street. The Planning Advisory Committee will consider recommendations on these applications at their March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. At that meeting, the PAC will also consider a recommendation to Council on the draft MPS and LUB.

Staff are also developing an RFP for new e-permitting software and a report to Council regarding development fees for affordable housing.

New Industrial Park ads have been placed on the allNovaScotia and ViewPoint websites. Amherst Tourism ads will run in the SaltScape annual and bi-monthly issues this year. A full-page ad will run in the next issue of Canada Travel Magazine. The February issue of Business View Magazine will run an article on Amherst promoting our readiness for economic growth.

As part of the efforts to make aesthetic improvements between the Visitor Information Centre and town limits, the county has tendered three business promotional signs for designated locations between Laplanche Street and Fort Lawrence Road. Town and County staff will be contacting existing sign owners to notify them of the changes and the removal of illegal signs. A program has been developed to allow businesses to be included on the new signs. This work is scheduled to be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

To better promote the Industrial Park to travelers on the trans-Canada highway, a new Industrial Park welcome sign located along the Hwy 104 is expected to be in place by early April. New lighting and landscaping around the sign will be completed this spring-summer by town staff.

Expanding on the February Dine Around Cumberland initiative, the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia will be in Amherst Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> to host an information session to discuss topics including staffing, CRA, education and training, and marketing.

The Mind Your Business workshop series is underway with six events between January and May. There is also an abundance of other business learning opportunities - the following list provides a sampling of what is being offered between now and end of March. Those interested are encouraged to follow the Cumberland Business Connector Facebook page for announcements of upcoming learning opportunities.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Organizer/Presenter</b> | <b>Topic</b>   |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|
| Feb. 11     | Tourism NS                 | Experiential Tourism / Getting on Novascotia.com   |
| Feb. 19     | Mind Your Business         | Harnessing AI for Marketing  |
| Feb. 19     | CBDC                       | Understanding & Perfecting the Customer Experience   |
| Feb. 20     | Gros Morne Institute       | Street Festivals & Urban Events: Working with local Businesses to Form Community Partnerships  |
| March 6     | Gros Morne Institute       | Unlocking Event Success: Leveraging Mobile Location Data for Audience Insights and Sponsor ROI |
| March 25    | Restaurant Assoc.          | Meet & Greet in Amherst & Pugwash  |
| March 26    | Mind Your Business         | Art of Merchandising facilitated by Masstown Market  |

### Task Updates:

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Task: 15 &amp; 31 East Victoria Street Development Agreement</b></p> <p>Update: The agreement is ready to be signed but the developer is sorting through land encumbrances before they can execute the agreement. Staff continue to engage them.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>  |
| <p><b>Task: Industrial Park Land Acquisition</b></p> <p>Update: Legal/survey work continues with a completion date scheduled for March.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>   |
| <p><b>Task: 105 South Albion (Blaine Street) and Ottawa Avenue Acquisitions</b></p> <p>Update: Staff are working with the developer to execute the development agreement with a tentative closing date in March for the land transaction.</p> <p>Status: Blaine Street is ongoing. Development of the Ottawa Avenue property is paused.</p>  |
| <p><b>Task: Hotel Levy</b></p> <p>Update: The final report was completed in December.</p> <p>Status: Staff are working on a summary of the report recommendations that will be presented to Council, now pushed to March.</p>  |
| <p><b>Task: LED Roadway Lighting Proposal</b></p> <p>Update: With previous funding applications having been denied, LED Roadway continue to identify potential funding opportunities for a pilot project that would include replacement of almost all of the town's streetlights to more efficient lights, while testing LEDs radar and camera technologies.</p> <p>Status: Paused, pending outcome of funding application</p> |
| <p><b>Task: 8 Lower Laplanche Purchase</b></p> <p>Update: Staff and the town's solicitor continue to get updates on the finalization of the property vendor's estate. Indications are that the estate has been settled but has yet to be registered.</p> <p>Status: Pause, pending settlement and registration of the vendor's estate.</p>   |

# Permits Issued in January 2025

| PERMIT APPLICATIONS |           |                     |           |              |                          |                          |                 | For the Month of January |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Number              | PID       | Civc Address        | New Units | Work Type    | Bldg Type                | Proposed Use             | Permit Fee      | Value                    |
| C2025-002           | 25015496  | 12 Copp Ave         | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Semi-Detached Dwelling   | 168.00          | 115,000.00               |
| B2025-001           | 25009713  | 42 Albion St        | 0         | Renovate     | Single Detached Dwelling | Accessory Uses - Other   | 115.00          | 26,000.00                |
| B2025-005           | 25462110  | 20 Anson Ave        | 0         | Construction | Garage/Carport/Shed      | Deck                     | 58.00           | 25,000.00                |
| C2025-003           | 25519976  | 2 Oakwood Path      | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-004           | 25519984  | 4 Oakwood Path      | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-006           | 25519992  | 6 Oakwood Path      | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-007           | 25520008  | 8 Oakwood Path      | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-008           | 25520016  | 10 Oakwood Path     | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-009           | 25520024  | 12 Oakwood Path     | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-010           | 25520032  | 14 Oakwood Path     | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| C2025-011           | 25520040  | 16 Oakwood Path     | 1         | Construction | Single Detached Dwelling | Single Detached Dwelling | 117.00          | 215,000.00               |
| D2025-012           | 25010570  | 207 South Albion St | 0         | Renovate     | Commercial               | Com - Permanent Sign     | 50.00           | 5,000.00                 |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>12</b> |                     | <b>9</b>  |              |                          |                          | <b>1,327.00</b> | <b>1,891,000.00</b>      |

# 2023-2024 January Comparison

| ACTIVITY REPORT     |          |          |                       |           |          |                       | For Month of January 2025-01-31 |
|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Type                | Jan 2024 |          |                       | Jan 2025  |          |                       |                                 |
|                     | Permits  | Units    | Value of Construction | Permits   | Units    | Value of Construction |                                 |
| Single Family       | 5        | 4        | 999,960               | 10        | 9        | 1,861,000             |                                 |
| Duplex/Semi         | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| Apartments          | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| Other Residential   | 1        | 0        | 70,000                | 1         | 0        | 25,000                |                                 |
| Commercial          | 1        | 0        | 9,500                 | 1         | 0        | 5,000                 |                                 |
| Industrial          | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| Inst & Gov          | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| Agriculture         | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| Other               | 0        | 0        | 0                     | 0         | 0        | 0                     |                                 |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>7</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1,079,460</b>      | <b>12</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>1,891,000</b>      |                                 |
| <b>Year To Date</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1,079,460</b>      | <b>12</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>1,891,000</b>      |                                 |

# Monthly Departmental Report

## Police Services

### February 2025

---

#### TRAINING

**DRE Training** – Our four Drug Recognition Experts all attended DRE training in Halifax on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January. This is part of their regular training to keep their qualifications up to date. DRE education often covers recent case law on drug impaired driving and serves as a refresher for our departmental experts who conduct testing for our drug-impaired files. Such training is required annually, as well as a minimum number of evaluations each year to ensure that they are always well-versed in this area.

**PROS Training:** Our newest part-time dispatcher Scott MacKay attended PROS training from January 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> in Dartmouth. PROS is the file management system used by many police agencies in Canada, including the RCMP and is required so that members/staff can access and use PROS. Dispatchers spend the majority of their time on PROS, creating and inputting details into the occurrences.

**Strategic Resilience:** Constable Michelle Harrison attended the first portion of a 3-part training course on Extensive Resilience training for Active First Responders hosted by the Nova Scotia Community College. On January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> she attended the course which was held in Debert. This training is about developing strategic, effective, resilience-based protocols to deal with cumulative stress and trauma and the continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of self-care and coping strategies in response to stress.

#### GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

**Police Pursuits/Failing to Stop:** During the month of January, APD generated four occurrences in relation to vehicles failing to stop for police. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, at approx. 9:20pm, 2 ATVs were spotted by Police driving on Prince Arthur Street. They were observed pulling into a yard on East Victoria Street and when Police activated their emergency lights, both subjects took off. One of the subjects was later located in the Laplanche Street area and is facing charges of dangerous driving and flight from police. The ATV was also towed by Police. Shortly after this incident, an ATV was observed on Palmer Street, but fled out onto Eddy Street and across the marsh. This incident was likely related to the first matter. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, at approximately 5:00am, a vehicle (a KIA Forte) ran a red light and fled from police when the emergency lights were activated. The matter remains under investigation. A few hours later, at 10:00am, police attempted to stop a Ford Fusion with an obscured rear plate that had been travelling at a high rate of speed. The vehicle fled at a high rate of speed and was last seen on the 104 Highway. All pursuits were discontinued as per policy and risk assessments. There were no incidents of police pursuits in December, however there were five in November and three so far in February. All pursuit files are subject to a review to ensure that members are following policy.

**Shoplifting Complaints:** Shoplifting complaints during January dropped to 7 occurrences, down from 13 in December and 17 in November. Outside of shoplifting complaints, APD also received 20 complaints of theft in January, as compared to 22 in December and 27 in November. Of the 20 complaints in January, 6 were reports of 'gas drive offs'. Two additional complaints were received in January concerning thefts from a motor vehicle.

**Homelessness:** We have been tracking complaints that have a nexus to homelessness. Often these may also have an element of mental health, and usually involve trespassing, noise complaints, and disturbances. Such files usually involve 2-3 of the same people over and over again, with the majority of people who are homeless rarely having such an interaction with Police. During the month of January, our occurrences dropped to 22 complaints, which is down from 34 in December, and lower than the numbers observed during the last few months. The majority of homelessness issues are likely being dealt with and handled by other agencies and the homeless shelter instead of the Police Department.



**OPERATIONAL**

**Drug Alert:** On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Nova Scotia Health sent out a Community Alert concerning a new drug showing up in the drug supply. It is very common for illicit drugs to be mixed with other drugs unbeknownst to the users. Often when people purchase and use illicit drugs, they think they are purchasing one kind, when in fact, they often are being exposed to something completely different. In this case, one of our members, as a result of an arrest in November of 2024, seized an amount of what appeared to be crystal meth. The subject also believed that the substance was crystal meth. Lab testing however indicated that the substance was *Desalkylgidazepam*, a form of benzodiazepine mixed with fentanyl. This is significant because this is the first instance of *Desalkylgidazepam* being detected in the drug supply. Benzodiazepines are central nervous system depressants or sedative-hypnotics. They slow down the nervous system, giving them calming, sleep-inducing properties, which significantly increases risk and danger of drug poisoning.

**Drug Charges:** A 54-year-old Springhill man is facing charges following an early morning traffic stop on Church Street. John Warner, of Springhill was stopped on Church Street on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:40 in the morning. The vehicle he was driving was damaged and had part of the front bumper missing and there were issues with the registration. During the stop, the officer noted what appeared to be a baggie of crystal meth. The subject was arrested and a further search resulted in the seizure of more crystal meth as well as baggies with fentanyl. Police have laid charges in relation to possession of methamphetamine for the purpose of trafficking as well as possession of fentanyl for the purpose of trafficking. Warner was remanded into custody as a result of the charges but was later released by the courts and is scheduled to appear on the charges at a later date.

**Fraud Charges:** After a 13-month investigation, the Amherst Police Major Crime Unit has laid charges of fraud over \$5,000 against three individuals. In November of 2023, a female victim who suffers from Lou Gehrig’s disease, reported that a large amount of money was missing from her bank account. The victim, who cannot move, requires several hours of care each day from a variety of care workers. The victim was provided with government funding to allow her to stay in her home. Investigation into the matter revealed that three staff members assigned to provide care for the victim had removed large sums of money from the victim’s bank account, allegedly to cover hours they had worked. The investigation indicated there were discrepancies between the hours of work reported and the actual hours that had been worked. Clara Harvey, age 29 years, Stacy Leblanc, age 41 years and Gracie Meisner, age 20 years have all been charged with fraud over \$5,000. Harvey, Leblanc and Meisner were arrested in December 2024 and appeared in court on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. All three adjourned their pleas and will next appear in Amherst Provincial Court on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Multiple Charges:** A 21-year-old Amherst Man is facing numerous charges in relation to several incidents in January that include break and enter, theft, possession of property obtained by crime, resisting/obstructing police, breach of probation, shoplifting, and mischief. For January, there have been 14 new charges laid with several pending charges from the fall of 2024. These recent incidents started with a complaint of a theft from the First Baptist Church, followed by a break and enter into the Town Hall where various items were stolen.

The subject, Justice Pettigrew, was arrested on January 17<sup>th</sup>, but was released on conditions. On January 25<sup>th</sup>, he was arrested again in relation to a break and enter at a local hotel where several items were stolen. He allegedly then attended a local business and shoplifted items there before Police arrested him. He is currently in custody.

**OPERATIONAL STATS – DECEMBER 2024**

|                           |     |                        |               |
|---------------------------|-----|------------------------|---------------|
| Occurrences:              | 405 | Criminal Code Charges: | 69            |
| Impaired by Alcohol:      | 1   | CDSA:                  | 3             |
| Impaired by Drug:         | 0   | CBCA:                  | 0             |
| Traffic Tickets:          | 33  | PPA:                   | 3             |
| Traffic Written Warnings: | 0   | Vehicle Checks:        | 121           |
| LCA:                      | 1   | Foot Patrol Hours:     | 31 hrs 39 min |
| Parking Tickets:          | 0   | Parking Warnings:      | 1             |

**TASK REPORT**

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>Task: SARV – Safe Approach and Rescue Vehicle:</b> GARDAWORLD has supplied APD with an armoured vehicle and we are slowly equipping it. It is operational, but requires additional emergency equipment</p> <p><b>Update Status:</b> In Progress: 2025-02-10: In Progress. looking at options for Decals and pricing.</p>   |
| <p><b>Task:</b> Marsh Trail ATV Issues: That staff be directed to install signs, barriers and cameras along the centennial walking trail, and further that Council approves funding for such.</p> <p><b>Update Status:</b> In Progress: 2025-02-10: Public works remains the lead on this at this time as they are looking at new gates etc.</p>   |
| <p><b>Task:</b> Body Worn Cameras: Switch capital budget for BWC to annual operational budget lease.</p> <p><b>Update Status:</b> In Progress: 2025-01-23: D/Hunter and Insp Gairns met with the Motorola people. We expect that we will be up and running within 6 weeks. There are other options we may look at in the future but this meeting was productive and gives us a good timeline. Policy also needs to be developed and we are exploring that.</p> |