



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Agenda

Date: **Monday, December 15, 2025**
Time: **3:00 pm**
Location: **Council Chambers, Town Hall**

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement	
"I would like to acknowledge that our gathering today is taking place in Mi'kma'ki (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, the people of African descent whose legacy and contributions date back over 400 years predating confederation of this land. We are all treaty people."	
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5.4	MGA 22(2)(a) - acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property	
5.5	MGA 22(2)(a) - acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property	

5.6 MGA 22(2)(e) - contract negotiations

6. Adjournment



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Monday, December 15, 2025

Consent Agenda

MOTION:

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

- 3.1 Holiday Events**
- 3.2 User Fee Comparisons**
- 3.3 Cumberland Business Connector and CBDC Comparison**
- 3.4 Color Themed Flowers**
- 3.5 2026-2028 People Strategy**
- 3.6 ATV Trail**
- 3.7 By-law/Policy Review**
- 3.8 CAO Task Report**
- 4.1 Community Living Monthly Report**
- 4.2 Corporate Monthly Report**
- 4.3 Financial Services Monthly Report**
- 4.4 Fire Services Monthly Report**
- 4.5 Human Resources Monthly Report**
- 4.6 Operations Monthly Report**
- 4.7 Planning and Economic Development Monthly Report**
- 4.8 Police Services Monthly Report**

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

Date: November 17, 2025
Time: 4:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present
Mayor Rob Small
Deputy Mayor Charlie Chambers
Councillor Hal Davidson
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 & Economic Development
Dwayne Pike, Chief, Police Services
Greg Jones, Director, Fire Services
Kim Jones, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sarah Wilson, Director, Finance
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Corey Crocker, Recreation Facilities Manager
Matt Selig, Parks & Recreation Foreman
Denise Smith, Finance Manager
Jeff Bacon, Business Development 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 Deputy Mayor Chambers

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

To approve the consent agenda as included in the agenda package.

MOTION CARRIED

1.4 Acceptance of Minutes

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the October 20, 2025, meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Town of Amherst Parks Presentation

Recreation Facilities Manager Corey Crocker and Parks and Recreation Foreman Matt Selig presented their From Green to Great - Building for a Growing and Diverse Community Plan. Information item only at this time.

3. Council Direction Requests

3.1 User Fee Policy

Information item only at this time. Staff to compile further information with comparisons of user fees from other similar municipalities regarding Planning & Development fees and analyze the costs / benefits of Off-Season Stadium Rentals and bring this information back to Committee of the Whole in December.

3.2 Debt Management Policy

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025, regular meeting, approval of the Debt Management Policy as presented with no recommended changes.

MOTION CARRIED

3.3 Written Submissions to Council Policy

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025, regular meeting, approval of the amended Written Submissions to Council Policy.

MOTION CARRIED

3.4 2026 Meeting Dates

The following item was approved as part of the consent agenda:

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025 regular meeting, approval to change the February 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, February 16, 2026 to Tuesday, February 17, 2026 due to the Heritage Day holiday, change the May 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting date from Monday, May 18, 2025 to Tuesday, May 19, 2026 due to the Victoria Day holiday, change the start time of the December 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting to 3:00 p.m. and further the date of the regular Council meeting date from Monday, December 21, 2026 to Monday, December 14, 2026 due to the Christmas holiday season.

MOTION CARRIED

3.5 Waste Water Treatment Plant UV Disinfection

Moved By Councillor Ripley

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025 regular meeting, an amendment to the 2025/26 general capital budget to increase the budget from \$650,000 to \$750,000 with the funding increase to come from long term debt (sewer department), and further that Council award the supply and installation of the ultraviolet disinfection system for the Amherst Wastewater Treatment Facility to Filtrum Construction in the amount of \$721,000 plus applicable taxes.

MOTION CARRIED

3.6 Beautification Strategy

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025, regular meeting, approval of the 2025 Beautification Strategy.

MOTION CARRIED

3.7 Community Support Grants

Councillor Ripley declared a conflict of interest and took a seat in the galley for the discussion and vote on this item.

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the November 24, 2025, regular meeting, approval of a Community Support Grant in the amount of \$2,000 for the Amherst Community Christmas Dinner.

MOTION CARRIED

3.8 Volunteer Recruitment

Moved By Councillor Wells

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That the Community Living Department continue to work towards trying to find matches between volunteer need in the community and people looking to volunteer.

MOTION CARRIED

4. Information Items

The following information items were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- 4.1 Centre Village Renewables Integration and Grid Security (RIGS) Project
- 4.2 Annual Accessibility Report
- 4.3 Dangerous/Unsightly Premises Semi-Annual Report
- 4.4 Color Themed Flowers
- 4.5 By-Law and Policy Review
- 4.6 CAO Task Report

5. Monthly Reports

The following Monthly Reports were approved as part of the consent agenda:

- 5.1 Community Living
- 5.2 Corporate
- 5.3 Cumberland Business Connector
- 5.4 Financial Services
- 5.5 Fire Services
- 5.6 Human Resources
- 5.7 Operations
- 5.8 Planning & Economic Development
- 5.9 Police Services

6. Closed Session

**Moved By Councillor Ripley
Seconded By Councillor Furlong
That the Committee move to a Closed Session.**

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the meeting.

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Rob Small
Mayor



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025143

Date: December 15, 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living

DATE: December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Community Support Grants 2025

ORIGIN: 2025-26 Operating Budget

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 65 Power to expend money: (au) a grant or contribution to (v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the province; Community Support Grants Policy, 72000-08

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the December 15, 2025, regular meeting, the application from the Nova Scotia Community College to be denied.

BACKGROUND: An annual budget is allocated for community support grants so that the Town can provide assistance in a fiscally responsible manner to organizations that qualify under the criteria set in the policy. In doing so, the Town encourages and promotes the success of these organizations. It should be noted that all groups fill a significant role in the community; however, to ensure the intentions of the policy are adhered to, not all can be funded.

DISCUSSION: The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) is developing a program for Maggie's Place and Public Health to assist families in providing alternative opportunities for fun as opposed to being dependent on electronics. They are requesting \$3,000 to help offset these costs. After reviewing this application staff feel that these costs could and should be covered by the NSCC or the partners (Maggie's Place and Public Health).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Currently there is \$328.00 in the Community Support Grant fund.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: In response to a public invitation to apply, funding requests were submitted by community groups. Future community and sporting event requests will be dealt with on an individual basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications attached to this request.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Community not for profit organizations, sports teams, festivals and events help weave the fabric of our society. When a community has a strong base



of supportive organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for our residents in addition to sports, culture, arts, and events it is enriched in so many key ways. In most all cases these organizations rely heavily on outside sources of funding to stay afloat. Due to the nature of the not-for-profit world, it is our opportunity to assist those who work so tirelessly to make our community better. The Town of Amherst, as a funding contributor, helps create a community that all can be proud to live, work and play.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the funding requests as listed
2. Discontinue the practice of providing community support grants

ATTACHMENTS:

- Community Support Grants Policy, 72000-08

**TOWN OF AMHERST
COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS POLICY**

**NUMBER 72000-08
Page 7 of 7**

Date: November.11/25

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS
TOWN OF AMHERST
REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

1. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

Name of Organization: LogOff Cumberland
Full Mailing Address: 147 S Albion St, Amherst, NS B4H 2X2
Contact Person: Lisa Gower
Email Address: Lisa.Gower@nsc.ca
Telephone: 902-661-3558

2. AMOUNT OF FUNDING ASSISTANCE BEING REQUESTED \$3000

3. What is the purpose for the funding requested? (Community Event; Tournament - Provincial / National / Invitational; Festival, etc.)
Included in attachment.

4. Please attach a budget for the tournament, event or activity; include sources of revenue and ALL costs. Please attach all documents that support the funding request.

5. What are the expected benefits to the community? (event participation numbers; local, regional, provincial or national attraction; time span; community assets being used; support from business community)
Included in attachment.

6. Please list all funding sources and/or other community partners for this event:

NAME	FUNDING IF ANY
Maggies Place	\$500
Nova Scotia Community College	\$2687
School of Business Budget	\$313

7. How many volunteers contribute to this event or festival: 20-25

www.amherst.ca
P.O. Box 516, Amherst, NS B4H 4A1
(902)667-3352



Log  ff

healthy screens, healthy starts

Question 3:

Our project is to act as digital marketers and content creators as part of our Digital Marketing and Project Management class. Our first campaign is for a real organization (Public Health & Maggie's Place) and is called Logoff Cumberland. Our role is to plan, organize and execute a social media campaign which attempts to reduce screentime use among young children. We primarily target low-income families, single parent households, and lower literacy households, to spread awareness to those who need it most. We are requesting funding to help with campaign materials and community engagement strategies targeting families and children in our community, which will run for 3 months. The need for funding to support a community outreach market, ad placement & boosting, branded merchandise, campaign and print materials.

Question 4:

- 400 - Print collaterals: brochures.
- 250 - Promo: Boosting social media ads, radio ads, etc.
- 225 - Canva Pro Account.
- 165 - Crayons for coloring book.
- 2223 - Coloring book (Designed in house).
- 825 - Branded banners, toques, stickers.
- 100 - Christmas market supplies.

Question 5:

Enriching the community by creating educational, informational, and engaging content about the risks associated with high screentime usage. Providing alternative activities for young children, while also educating parents/guardians on the dangers and potential best practices. Promoting these practices by engaging in community activities, for example, Northport Christmas Market, Cumberland Christmas Parades, educational parent sessions, etc.

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

APPROVAL DATE: March 24, 2025

CAO Signature: 

POLICY STATEMENT

- a. The Community Support Grants Policy guides the allocation of financial and in-kind contributions to non-profit or charitable organizations that are based in the Town of Amherst and are providing services that in the opinion of Council, are of a benefit to the residents and businesses of the Town. Applicants and Groups that actively support inclusion, diversity, accessibility and equity will be given priority consideration as will those applications that enhance community well-being and increase the social determinants of health, such as, but not limited to food insecurity, affordable housing, early childhood development, education, social inclusion and non-discrimination of the citizens of Amherst
- b. This program does not govern the following, which are separately administered:
 - i. Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organizations (full and partial tax exemption by-laws);
 - ii. Residential Property Tax Rebates (low-income homeowners)

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- a. to outline the requirements to apply and be considered for a Community Support Grant
- b. to establish equitable guidelines for the distribution of limited amounts of funds to non-profit and charitable organizations in a manner approved by Council.
- c. to ensure that groups applying for Community Support Grants are evaluated on a consistent, equitable basis, utilizing the same evaluation criteria; and
- d. to provide for public disclosure of a list of grant recipients and the amounts of those grants.

1. SCOPE

The Program includes financial grants in the form of cash and in-kind services (for use of municipal facilities, for example). The value of requests is not limited; however, applicants must be aware that:

- a. The application process is competitive;
- b. There are more grant applications received than available funding;
- c. Past funding commitments should not be interpreted as a guarantee that future requests will be approved. The Town is interested in ensuring that organizations are self-sufficient;
- d. The Town would like to support programs and events that promote community well being and health and safety of our citizens. With that in mind, events based on alcohol consumption (beer gardens, wine tasting tours etc.) may only receive support if other community benefits can be shown. Overall, the Town will show preference to events that are family friendly and support the overall well being of the community.

2. EXCLUSIONS

The following are exclusions from the grant program:

- a. While Council reserves the right to, it is not the intent of this policy to fund activities of organizations that are clearly within the mandate of the Government of Nova Scotia (hospitals, medical programs, treatment services or social services programs) or the Government of Canada (e.g., health, social services)
- b. The Town of Amherst will not consider requests received as part of general (mass) mailing or telemarketing campaigns

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

- c. Funding applications will not be considered from the following:
 - i. Businesses;
 - ii. Provincial Government organizations;
 - iii. School Boards or quasi government organizations;
 - iv. Non-profit organizations for the purpose of funding accumulated deficits;
 - v. Any organization for the purpose of fundraising to distribute to other organizations/individuals; and
 - vi. Organizations with political affiliations.
- d. Funding will not normally be provided to religious organizations where services include the promotion or required adherence to a particular belief
- e. Funding will also not normally be provided to fundraising campaigns of national charitable organizations either directly or indirectly.
- f. Funding will not normally be provided to organizations who are planning to give proceeds of the event to another organization.

3. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

Council is not obligated to:

- a. Provide funding in the form of Community Support Grants;
- b. Spend all the funds allocated for grants in any given year;
- c. Award the full amount requested in an application; or
- d. Renew any grant

4. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply to all grant requests except those listed in 4 above:

- a. Funding will generally be limited to no more than 40% of overall costs for an event or program
- b. Funding cannot be used to directly purchase products regulated by the Liquor Control Act R.S., c. 260, s. 1. or the Cannabis Control Act 2018, c. 3, s. 1.
- c. Preference is given to new initiatives; however, grants may be provided in multiple years for the same initiative.

5. PROGRAMS

The following are a list of the grants available:

a. Sport, Arts, and Culture

Maximum funding considered will be \$1000 for a team and \$250 for an individual:

- i. This includes amounts for teams / groups and individuals traveling to Provincial, National and International competitions and events when the Amherst based teams or individual have been successful at a regional qualifying competition recognized by its relevant provincial or national umbrella organization, or have been invited by such an organization;
- ii. The team / group is in the Town of Amherst and is considered by the provincial or national umbrella organization to be the home for the team;

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

- iii. The individual is competing / attending as an individual and has their principal residence in the Town of Amherst;
- iv. The Town of Amherst resident has been selected / qualified to represent the Province of Nova Scotia or Canada at a national or international competition / event.

b. Festivals, Arts and Cultural Events Grants

Under this component will generally not exceed \$5,000

- i. Event must demonstrate broad community support;
- ii. Provides an experience not duplicated by other ongoing events, festivals or activities.
- iii. Draw spectators locally, from the Maritimes, nationally or internationally and increases the profile of our community;
- iv. Must be affiliated with a local community non-profit organization.

c. Organizational Equipment

Operational and capital equipment purchase requests will be considered on an individual basis.

d. Funding for Social Equity Initiatives

For the purposes of this policy, "Social Equity Funding" is defined as the annual funding allotment within the Community Support Area Rate, including any reserves for this purpose, to be used for initiatives that specifically target social equity issues. All applications which Council feels meet this definition and for which Council is considering funding from the annual Social Equity Funding allotment or associated reserves set aside for this purpose may be referred to the respective committees for a recommendation.

Notwithstanding the above, Council reserves the right to fund such poverty initiatives from other sources in addition to or in lieu of the annual Social Equity Funding allotment.

e. Large Scale Projects

Applications for large scale projects (generally greater than \$5,000 or multi-year initiatives) will be evaluated on an individual basis. In these cases, Council may require Municipal representation on a board, the development of an MOU and/or other reporting requirements etc.

6. APPLICATION PROCESS

The following outlines the application process:

A call out for applications will be issued by the Town in the months leading up to budget time. Community organizations will be encouraged to apply during this initial call out however applications can and will be received throughout the year and be considered based on budget availability.

Community groups may submit more than one application per year however Council will prioritize funding over a diverse collection of applications to ensure fairness and equity for all.

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

- a) Applications - must submit the following information
 - i. A complete Community Grant Application
 - ii. a proposed budget for the project
- b) The Town of Amherst may request additional information as deemed necessary.

7. APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. For applications over \$1,000 staff will review applications, ensure requirements have been met and make recommendations to Council. Funding will be determined by council upon reviewing the proposal and recommendations from staff.

8. AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) may approve applications that are less than \$1000 provided such applications qualify in accordance with this policy. Council will be notified by email upon approval of each application and a media release will be issued to communicate the support provided by the Town under the application. A list of applications approved will be provided to Council quarterly. (March, June, September and December).

The CAO may waive the cost for Town owned facility rentals for organizations carrying out an event or service that satisfies the intent of this policy to a maximum of four rental waivers per year per organization.

9. PAYMENT PROCESS

For amounts over \$1,000 payment will be made at time of award.

10. CONDITIONS

- a. Grant recipients shall:
 - i. Make no misrepresentation on their application
 - ii. Use the grant as described in the application
 - iii. Use the funds in the year granted
 - iv. Council and/or the CAO may request an in-depth report for grants over \$5,000 at their discretion
 - v. Recipients from previous years who received over \$2,000 will be asked to complete a report detailing expenses and impact on the community or individual. This report will be sent prior to the call for applications each year. This report must be completed prior to the new application being considered.
- b. Grant recipients shall keep proper books of accounts and receipts of all expenditures related to the project and shall make them available for inspection by the Town of Amherst upon request.
- c. Non-compliance, in any aspect could result in no funding being awarded in the future year(s)

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
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- d. Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the financial support of the Town of Amherst in all advertising, publicity, programs and signage for which funds are granted
- e. If the event/project does not occur for any reason, all grant monies must be returned
- f. Grant recipients who fail to comply with these conditions may be required to return all or partial funds to the Town of Amherst and may be deemed ineligible for Community Support Grant funding in future years.

11. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

- a. The Town of Amherst will provide financial information with respect to the budgeted amounts disbursed and actual amounts disbursed on an annual basis
- b. A summary of grant awards will be posted on the Town of Amherst's website in accordance with s.65C(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

Application for Funding

Date: _____

REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT **REQUEST FOR IN-KIND FACILITY RENTAL**

1. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

Name of Organization: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____

2. AMOUNT OF FUNDING ASSISTANCE BEING REQUESTED \$ _____

Total cost of program event or activity \$ _____

3. What is the purpose for the funding requested? (Sport and Physical Activity, Arts/Culture Events, Festivals, Organizational Equipment, Community Well-Being etc.)

4. Please attach a budget for the tournament, event or activity; include sources of revenue and ALL costs. Please attach all documents that support the funding request.

5. What are the expected benefits to the community? (Event participation numbers; local, regional, provincial or national attraction; time span; community assets being used; support from business community)

6. Please list all funding sources and/or other community partners for this event:

NAME	FUNDING IF ANY

7. How many volunteers contribute to this event or festival: _____



TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director Community Living	To ensure adherence to the policy. Advise staff of Policy changes and create awareness in the community of policy changes.
Mayor and Council	Review and approve applications as required.
CAO	Ensure applications under \$1,000 are reviewed and decision made in accordance with policy.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Amendments to policy to collapse A fresh grants, streamline application process, increase CAO approval limit, inclusion of MAP requirements, rewording to ensure policy is more inclusive and promotes community well-being	Director Community Living, Bristol	Council	February 27, 2023
Amendment to policy to remove Deed Transfer reference from Poverty Funding. Rename Poverty Funding to Social Equity.	Director Community Living, Bristol	Council	April 24, 2023
Eliminate section 4 as it is exclusionary of other organizations; amend Section 9 Payment Process to eliminate the two phased payment approach as this is administratively time consuming and places undue pressure on community organizations; and amend Section 10 Conditions to include the reporting requirement for organizations who intend to reapply for future grants. This will allow for transparency on how funds are used and the impact on the community.	Director, Community Living, Bristol	Council	October 30, 2023

TITLE: Community Support Grants Policy
SECTION: All Town Departments
POLICY NO: 72000-08

Change the requirement to send applications to the social equity committees from will to may	Director, Community Living, Bristol	Council	March 24, 2025
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Minutes reference date: 23 September 2013 27 October 2014 21 May 2015 25 June 2018 24 September 2018
 28 October 2019 27 January 2020 25 October 2021 27 February 2023 24 April 2023
 30 October 2023 24 March 2025

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Lori O’Connell and Sean Payne – Marketing & Communications Officers

DATE: December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing/Communications Plan

ORIGIN: The Town of Amherst Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing Plan, and Communications Plan 2026-2028 have emerged from direction included in Council’s 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 47 (1) 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 December 15, 2025 regular meeting approval of the Town of Amherst Brand Strategy and Strategic Marketing/ Communications Plan 2026-2028.

BACKGROUND: Direction was taken from Amherst Town Council’s 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, specifically requesting development of the following by December 2025: 1- New Marketing & Branding Strategies & Materials; 2- Brand Strategy – Amherst as a Destination Community; and, 3- Develop a Communication Plan/Strategy. From this, necessary steps were taken to produce the Town of Amherst Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing Plan, and Communications Plan 2026-2028.

DISCUSSION: The Marketing & Communications Officers have been working on the development of the Town of Amherst Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing Plan, and Communications Plan 2026-2028 since May, 2025. Beginning with primary research, 904 responses were received across various surveys and two focus groups. Feedback provided insights on positive features and challenges to be addressed.

This research was used to create new branding strategies, including a new tagline. Further, research directly informed creation of strategic pillars and associated actionable initiatives within the Strategic Marketing Plan. Evidence-based decision making was used to form goals, objectives, and actions for the new Communications Plan. Action items are set to commence in January, 2026, through 2028.





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025146

Date: December 15, 2025

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Actions to be implemented will be based on available departmental budget.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: There will be increased opportunity for continuous community engagement, improved access to information, new and improved channels for public feedback.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: None

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Continued engagement with our community at large to ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1 Send back to Marketing & Communications for further assessment
- 2 Defer to 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 Brand Strategy
- 2 Strategic Marketing Plan and Communications Plan 2026-2028



Town of Amherst

Brand Strategy

Version: December 4, 2025

<p>MISSION</p> <p>To create a welcoming, connected community that values authenticity, enriches the lives of our residents, and fosters opportunities for growth, culture, and collaboration.</p>																	
<p>VISION</p> <p>To be a vibrant destination community where people choose to live, visit, and do business.</p>																	
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- Enhance quality of life
 - o Through making the community accessible and equitable to all

Businesses – Driving growth and opportunity

- Build pride in accomplishment
 - o Highlighting and promoting the successes of new and existing businesses
- Position Amherst as a supportive and attractive environment for businesses

Visitors – Highlighting vibrancy, convenience and variety

- Visitors:
 - o Position Amherst as a multi-stop service centre
 - Convenience for surrounding areas
 - o Leverage our geographic position within NS and the Maritimes
 - Big city convenience in small-town Amherst
- Tourists:
 - o Increase tourists' stay and spending
 - o Strengthen partnerships with regional tourism
 - E.g. Explore Cumberland
 - o Highlight Amherst as home base for exploring our greater region

BRAND PILLARS

1. Purpose

Amherst connects people, community and opportunity – creating a place where residents thrive, businesses grow, and visitors feel at home.

2. Perception

- o **Current Perception:** (Surveys)
 - Sense of community
 - Friendly & welcoming
 - Safe & supportive
 - Tight-knit community
 - Quiet, peace, slow pace, simple pleasures
- o **Desired Perception:**
 - Amherst is a convenient, multi-stop service centre that is vibrant, welcoming, and authentic.

3. Personality

- **Welcoming**
 - o Warm, approachable, friendly and genuine.

- **Confident**
 - o Sure of ourselves without being pretentious.
 - o Intelligent and capable, but down-to-earth.
- **Vibrant**
 - o Energetic and lively
 - o Celebrates culture, diversity, history
- **Dependable**
 - o A community people can count on – safe, stable, and proud.
 - o Businesses, residents, and visitors feel supported.
- **Optimistic**
 - o Embracing growth, innovation, and opportunity.

4. Position

Amherst is a convenient service centre for all.

5. Promotion

Amherst showcases itself as a vibrant, welcoming community at the heart of the Maritimes. Through storytelling, events, partnerships, and campaigns, we highlight the community spirit, convenience, and opportunities that make Amherst the place where residents belong, businesses grow, and visitors explore and restore.

BRAND POSITIONING STATEMENT (Internal Focus)

For residents, businesses, and visitors, Amherst is the second-largest small town in Nova Scotia and the most convenient geographical point in the Maritimes, because we're in the centre of it all.

- **Frame of Reference/Market Category**
 - o Second-largest small town in Nova Scotia
- **Brand Name:**
 - o CONTEXT-BASED: Consideration for Logos
 - When we talk about our community – Local Context:
 - Amherst
 - When we talk about our community – External Context:
 - Amherst, Nova Scotia
 - When we talk about the Municipality – Internal and External Context:
 - Town of Amherst
- **Target Audience:**
 - o Residents, Businesses, and Visitors

- **Point of Differentiation/Benefits:**
 - o Amherst is the most convenient geographical point in the Maritimes.

- **Competitive Advantage:**
 - o Small-town belonging with big city convenience.

- **Reason to Believe/Proof Point:**
 - o We're in the centre of it all.

VALUE PROPOSITION (External Focus)

Amherst offers connection, convenience, and community – right in the heart of the Maritimes.

We offer residents a welcoming and vibrant community, businesses a supportive environment for growth, and visitors a convenient homebase to explore and restore.

- Our location provides easy access to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and beyond.
- Amherst is a service centre for all.
- The events, culture and recreational opportunities here enrich the quality of life for all.

VERBAL IDENTITY

Verbal Identity = Tone of Voice + Brand Messaging

BRAND TONE OF VOICE

- Humorous
 - o Not afraid to have a little fun
 - o Playful, but never mean spirited
- Authentic
 - o Share real stories, real people
 - History, culture, local pride
 - o Owning past and present, all parts of it.
- Welcoming
 - o Friendly
 - o Approachable and genuine
 - o Warm and inclusive
- Accessible
 - o Plain language
 - o Easy to understand

MESSAGING THEMES

Brand Promise: We promise to create a welcoming environment for all, to celebrate our vibrancy through arts, culture, and events, and to lead with positivity as we grow together.

- **Residents:** belonging, pride, quality of life
- **Businesses / Investors:** opportunity, growth, regional advantage
- **Visitors:** vibrancy, experience, welcome

1. Community & Belonging

Amherst is a place where people feel welcome and connected – connected to their neighbours, to opportunity, and to something bigger than themselves. Our residents look out for one another, and newcomers are quickly made part of the story. We celebrate together, support one another, and take pride in our shared hometown spirit. We lead with kindness, inclusion, and small-town warmth that makes people want to stay.

Key messages: Connection, inclusion, pride, volunteerism, neighbourly support, civic engagement.

2. Vibrancy

Amherst’s energy comes to life through creativity, innovation, and celebration. Our festivals, local artists, and community gatherings bring people together and showcase the spirit that defines us.

Key messages: Innovation, arts and culture, local events, recreation, shared experiences, and community pride, local shops and restaurants.

3. Opportunity & Growth

Amherst offers room to grow—whether you’re starting a business, raising a family, or investing in the future. Our location, resources, and community spirit make Amherst a smart place to build and belong.

Key messages: Economic development, business community vitality, entrepreneurship, strategic location, innovation, collaboration.

4. Heart of the Region

At the crossroads of the Maritimes, Amherst is both geographically central and emotionally grounded. We are the gathering place of the region – small enough to know you, big enough to serve you.

Key messages: Central location, accessibility, regional importance, convenience, connection to surrounding communities, belonging.

5. Quality of Life

Our community offers a balance that few can match: a charming small-town pace with full-service amenities, surrounded by nature, moments from the coast.

Key messages: Work-life balance, recreation, affordability, green spaces, family life, wellness, day tripping/home base, simplicity.

6. People

Amherst's greatest asset is its people—the dreamers, doers, and difference-makers who shape our community. We honour our heritage while embracing growth, diversity, and innovation.

Key messages: Leadership, civic pride, inclusivity, innovation, resilience, collaboration, history, and youth engagement.

7. Beautiful Amherst

In Amherst, there is no shortage of beautiful scenery to enjoy. We pride ourselves on showcasing the impressive collection of heritage properties build of wood and local sandstone; our parks and flower beds tell a story of a community that cares; and everywhere you turn there is a lovely vista to enjoy, different each season.

Key messages: Heritage buildings, easy access to beaches, parks and green spaces, natural surroundings, Tantramar Marsh, seasonal variation.

BRAND STORY

Amherst's story begins in 1764. For centuries, our central location has made us a gathering place; where cultures meet, community thrives, and businesses grow to serve local and distant markets alike.

We've always been more than just a stop along the way. We are a place where people put down roots, build businesses, create memories and lasting connections.

Our purpose today is the same as it has always been: to create a welcoming, connected community that enriches the lives of residents, supports business opportunity, and opens our doors to serve the needs of visitors.

We celebrate our history, while embracing innovation and growth that makes us stronger for the future.

Town of Amherst

Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Version: December 10, 2025

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1. Executive Summary

The Town of Amherst Marketing Plan 2026 – 2028 has emerged from direction included in Council’s 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan.

This plan provides a roadmap for marketing Amherst’s strengths - including its central location, small-town charm, active business community, and strong sense of belonging - through cohesive campaigns, partnerships, and measurable actions. It positions Amherst to attract new residents and investment, grow tourism, and strengthen community pride through clear, data-driven marketing.

This plan also includes Amherst’s new Brand Strategy, which will form the foundation of all marketing and communications efforts.

2. Situational Analysis

2.1 Town Overview

Amherst is the largest community in Cumberland County, and the second-largest small town in the province, consisting of 9,700 really cool people. It is located strategically on the Nova Scotia–New Brunswick border and is known for its central location within Cumberland and the Maritimes as a whole. Amherst serves as a regional hub for commerce, healthcare, and recreation.

Great opportunities to capitalize on all of Amherst’s strengths to help make our town a destination community for residents, businesses, and visitors.

2.2 Mission, Vision

Mission: To create a welcoming, connected community that values authenticity, enriches the lives of our residents, and fosters opportunities for growth, culture, and collaboration.

Vision: To be a vibrant destination community where people choose to live, visit, and do business.

2.3 Core Values, Guiding Principles

Core Values	Guiding Principles
1. Community First	We prioritize quality of life.
2. Authenticity	We embrace our history, culture, and local character; every part of it.
3. Connectivity	At the heart of the Maritimes, we are open and welcoming to all.

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4. Inclusivity	Welcoming, accessibility, belonging.
5. Growth & Opportunity	We support businesses, tourism, and innovation while investing in our residents and planning for our future generations.
6. Vibrancy	We celebrate events, arts, recreation, and shared experiences.
7. Collaboration	We work together with residents, businesses, organizations and surrounding neighbours to build shared success.

2.4 Market Research & Insights

The Town conducted comprehensive primary and secondary research to inform this marketing plan, including: surveys (over 900 responses); community focus groups; a review of regional competitors; a review of Amherst’s history; and, a review of related documents and plans.

A full Research Report is included as a separate appendix to this document, which is the source of key themes, feedback, and insights that directly inform Amherst’s marketing and communications strategies.

Full research methodology, survey data, and detailed stakeholder input findings are provided as an appendix. This research report determines our audiences, current and preferred communications channels, our key messaging themes, and how the brand will be developed.

2.5 PESTLE Analysis

A **PESTLE Analysis** helps us examine the wider forces shaping how residents behave and receive information, and how the Town communicates with residents, businesses and visitors.

Political factors:

- Growing public scrutiny of government decisions
- Need for stronger inter-municipal collaboration to compete regionally for tourism and economic development (ex. Explore Cumberland)
- Provincial and federal policy shifts

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Economic factors:

- Sharing goals in common with nearby communities regarding businesses, workers, investment, and events
 - o Economic pressure impacting resident affordability and municipal expectations
 - o Shift toward regional travel rather than long-distance tourism

Social factors:

- o Aging demographic and youth out-migration reducing long-term community vibrancy
- o Strong local word-of-mouth culture influencing public perception – both positively and negatively
- o Growing expectations for transparency and quick communication
- o Negative social media narratives and misinformation eroding trust
- o Visible downtown decline perception affecting community morale and tourism impressions
- o Changing communication preferences across age groups

Technological factors:

- o Heavy reliance on Facebook as the primary communication channel for residents
- o Heavy reliance on word of mouth
- o Need for modernization of digital tools (website, alert systems)
- o Information fragmentation leading to confusion, misinformation, and disengagement
- o Difficult to navigate website creating frustration and reducing trust in official information on channel

Legal factors:

- Copyrighted materials
- Claims that could imply liability
- Mandated accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.1 Standards) for new digital content
- Municipal Government Act

Environmental factors:

- Seasonal tourism and weather fluctuations impact event attendance and local business activity
- Amherst's geographical position as a border community shaping commuter patterns and visitor trends

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- Environmental sustainability expectations are growing among residents and visitors

2.6 SWOT Analysis

Internal Analysis

Strengths:

- Location and accessibility as a regional hub and border town
- Strong sense of community pride
- Active local organizations, clubs, and recreational activities support community life.
- Walkable downtown core
- Strong history and heritage character
- High engagement through Facebook
- Strong resident participation in community events
- Small town appeal
- Variety of amenities and facilities

Weaknesses:

- Perceived lack of transparent and proactive communication
- Website usability
- First impression on entrance corridors
- Limited weekend/evening vibrancy
- Fragmented information sources
- Limited staff capacity for content creation and proactive communication
- Lack of formal communications protocols and content standards

External Analysis

Opportunities:

- Strengthened regional tourism partnerships
- Improved signage (digital + physical)
- Focusing on staycations and positioning as a home base for regional travel
- Improved marketing and communications to regional audiences
- Attract former residents to return

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Threats:

- Negative social media narratives and misinformation
- Aging demographic and youth out-migration
- Shared municipal goals for attention, workers, businesses, and tourism
- Economic pressures for residents
- Perceptions of downtown decline
- Information fragmentation and inconsistent messaging across channels
- Heavy reliance on word of mouth
- Seasonal tourism fluctuations
- Growing expectations for transparency and quick communication
- Changing communication preferences

2.7 Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis was completed to understand how Amherst compares to similar municipalities and where strategic improvements are needed. Three key comparators were identified: **Truro, Bridgewater, and Sackville**

This analysis highlights how these communities position themselves and helps identify best practices and opportunities that Amherst can adapt to strengthen its own marketing, branding, and communications.

There are many other municipalities that were identified, for the full competitive analysis, see the full Research Report.

1. Truro, NS

“Make the Connection”

Truro is the most relevant comparison due to its similar population, role as a service hub, strong community identity, and heavy public comparison.

What Truro Does Well:

- A modern, unified brand centered on connection and livability
- Strong regional partnerships (Truro–Colchester Partnership)
- A funded tourism model (3% accommodation levy)
- Clear, consistent messaging across website, tourism, and business attraction

Key Lessons for Amherst:

- Regional collaboration amplifies visibility
- A clear narrative and updated brand improve trust and engagement
- Dedicated tourism funding increases capacity and reach through sustainable marketing capacity

2. Bridgewater, NS

“Main Street of Nova Scotia’s South Shore”

Bridgewater is a leading comparator due to its **rapid growth, modernized identity**, and reputation as one of Nova Scotia’s most progressive small towns. With a growing population, strong community amenities, and major investments in sustainability and digital modernization, Bridgewater has positioned itself as a forward-looking, resident-focused community.

What Bridgewater Does Well

- Modern, future-focused brand identity
- Smart Cities leadership and Energize Bridgewater initiative
- Strong digital presence and user-friendly online services
- Messaging highlights affordability, walkability, and quality of life
- Revitalized downtown and active recreation/cultural sectors
- Clear economic development tools and business support

Key Lessons for Amherst

- A strong narrative attracts residents, investment, and media attention
- Digital modernization improves public experience
- Proactive economic development messaging helps attract and retain businesses
- Testimonial-driven storytelling strengthens resident attraction

3. Sackville, NB

Brand Language: “Tantramar is where small-town charm meets big-hearted community.”

Sackville was selected due to its geographical proximity, frequent comparison by Amherst residents, and its long-standing reputation as a creative town with a strong cultural identity. Sackville also provides a useful cautionary example: following its recent regional rebrand, much of its distinctive small-town identity became less visible.

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What Sackville Does Well

- Distinctive identity rooted in arts, creativity, and sense of place
- Strong experiential tourism (Waterfowl Park, arts festivals, university-linked events)
- Lifestyle-focused messaging emphasizing belonging, walkability, and culture

Key Lessons for Amherst

- Strong cultural storytelling can differentiate small towns and strengthen its identity
- Identity rooted in character and creativity help attract residents seeking connection and lifestyle
- Experiential tourism can be powerful brand drivers of visitation
- Small businesses thrive in communities with clear sense of place

2.8 What This Means for Amherst

Amherst's comparison shows that while community vibrancy is a strength, the Town needs a more consistent brand, stronger tourism storytelling, improved digital platforms, and clearer business-focused communication. By focusing on these areas and staying true to Amherst's unique character and sense of community — the Town can strengthen visibility, competitiveness, and overall impact in the region.

3. Audiences

The Town of Amherst serves a broad and diverse community, so our marketing and communications must reach multiple audiences with different needs. To maintain clarity and focus, we classify audiences as **primary**, **secondary**, and **emerging/underserved audiences**.

Primary audiences inform the core of the Town's messaging and channel strategy. Secondary audiences are supported through targeted initiatives, seasonal campaigns, and partnership marketing. Emerging/underserved audiences include groups that are growing, changing, or not fully reached by current communication channels and therefore require improved or alternative approaches

3.1 Target Markets

The Town of Amherst's target market includes the **broader population we aim to serve and influence** through marketing and communications efforts now and moving forward. This includes:

- **Residents**
- **Visitors and tourists**
- **Businesses**
- **Community partners and organizations**

3.2 Target Audiences

Within the wider target market, Amherst has historically communicated with **specific audience segments** that share similar needs, behaviours, and communication preferences. These audiences require tailored messages and channels. The following segments were compiled through survey analysis and social media analytics. Our audience mix will shift as the marketing strategy is implemented.

The detailed findings are included in the Research Report.

Primary Audiences

Primary audiences represent the residents who require frequent, essential communications and rely on the Town for day-to-day information, services, and updates.

Adults (35–64)

Our largest and most civically engaged group. This segment represents our core residents who rely heavily on Facebook, but clearly want a stronger website and a regular, structured newsletter. They also support the use of radio and occasional direct mail for important messages. They are your core audience for service updates, events, and municipal decisions.

Seniors 65+

Seniors are active on Facebook but show strong interest in traditional and accessible formats such as newsletters, radio, and clear, easy to navigate website content. They also

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value direct mail. Clarity, accessibility, and trust are essential when communicating with this audience.

Families and caregivers

Parents and guardians depend heavily on Facebook and the Town website for program updates, events, closures, and schedules. They also receive information through schools and community groups. They show strong support for more structured, school-based, and predictable communication around recreation and events.

Secondary Audiences

These audiences engage with the Town less frequently but are important for community vibrancy, economic development, and regional identity.

Local Businesses & Organizations

Small businesses, nonprofits, and service groups require updates on programs, permitting, economic development initiatives, and partnership opportunities. They prefer targeted outreach such as direct emails, information on the website, and Facebook.

Visitors (including tourists and day-trippers)

People traveling from surrounding areas or further for events, dining, shopping, recreation, or regional exploration. They rely on Google search, Instagram, Facebook events, and signage.

Former residents

People who previously lived in Amherst and stay connected primarily through Facebook to stay updated on recreation, events, and community life. They remain an important audience for community pride and potential return migration.

Commuters

People who work, shop, or access services in Amherst. They prefer quick, clear updates through Facebook and have a strong engagement in word of mouth.

Emerging & Underserved Audiences

These audiences are growing, changing, or not fully reached by current communication efforts. They represent opportunities for future engagement.

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Youth (13-17)

Youth use TikTok, Instagram, and school networks. They are highly engaged in recreation, sports, and peer-driven content, but are not currently targeted directly by Town communications. This group represents a long-term opportunity to build community connection and future civic engagement.

Young adults (18–34)

Young adults in Amherst are still very Facebook-centric when that is the only reliable source of information. They also use Instagram, TikTok, and rely heavily on word of mouth. They show a strong interest in newsletters and occasional direct mail. Motivated by affordability, job opportunities, lifestyle, and events, they are underserved but important for long-term community vibrancy. They are reachable with existing tools, but there is room to grow engagement with more modern, lifestyle-oriented content and better use of Instagram and TikTok.

Newcomers & ESL households

Need plain-language and visual communication across digital and print. Often receive information from employers and community organizations. Partnerships and accessible resources are key in engaging this audience effectively.

Hard-to-Reach Residents

Individuals with limited digital access, low digital literacy, or minimal online engagement. Best reached through posters in key physical locations, community service providers, partner organizations, and boosted social content.

3.3 Audience Personas

Persona 1: Carla

The Established Amherst Resident (Primary Audience)

Age: 50

Lives in Amherst as a long-term **resident**

Owns a home, raising teens and caring for aging parents

Works in town, involved in community events and recreation

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What Carla Cares About

- Municipal services that affect her daily life: **roads, sidewalks, snow removal, taxes/fees, safety**
- **Events & recreation** that keep her and her family engaged
- Clear information about **growth, development, and how decisions are made**

Where Carla Gets Information

- Checks **Facebook** daily (Town of Amherst + community groups)
- Uses the **Town website** to confirm details (event dates, bylaws)
- Notices **radio, newsletters, and direct mail** as supporting channels

Persona 2: Jake

Youth & Young Adult (18–34):

Age: 23

Location: Lives in Amherst, recently moved back after school

Household: Renting with partner

Employment: Works locally; budget-conscious

Lifestyle: Social, digital-first, values local food spots, gyms, and events

What Jake Cares About

- Fun, low-cost things to do in Amherst
- Opportunities to connect with friends, sports leagues, and events
- Clear updates on weather, closures, and last-minute changes
- Feeling that Amherst is active, modern, and worth staying in long-term

Where Jake Gets Information

- **TikTok & Instagram:** For local events, trends, and what's happening right now
- **Facebook:** Still checks for community updates, events, and Town announcements
- **Google Maps/Search:** To find businesses, hours, and locations
- **Word of Mouth:** Friends, coworkers, and local groups

Persona 3: Emily

Visitor (Daytrip)

Age: 34

Location: Lives in Pugwash

Visit Pattern: Comes to Amherst a few times a month for shopping, appointments, dining, or events

Lifestyle: Busy, practical, chooses destinations based on convenience, variety, and what's happening locally

What Emily Cares About:

- Knowing what events, markets, or activities are happening before she decides to drive in
- Up-to-date info on shopping, dining, and local services
- Deals, promotions, and seasonal experiences worth making the trip
- Easy navigation: where to park, what's open, and where to go
- Feeling welcomed and seeing Amherst as a vibrant, convenient hub

Where Emily Gets Information

- **Facebook:** Event posts, shared content, and boosted ads from the region
- **Town website:** For confirmations, event calendars, hours, and directions
- **Regional tourism pages:** Explore Cumberland, Nova Scotia tourism posts
- **Google Maps/Search:** To check store hours, restaurants, and reviews
- **Word of Mouth:** Friends, coworkers, and family mentioning events

4. Brand Strategy

Our brand strategy is a unique, long-term plan for creating a consistent identity for Amherst. Below, we have included foundational elements that serve as a roadmap for our marketing efforts that follow.

The complete Brand Strategy document can be found as a separate appendix.

4.1 Positioning Statement

An **internal statement** that will guide our approach to marketing Amherst:

For residents, businesses, and visitors, Amherst is the second largest small-town in Nova Scotia and the most convenient geographical point in the Maritimes, because we are in the centre of it all.

4.2 Brand Promise

We promise to create a welcoming environment for all, to celebrate our vibrancy through arts, culture, and events, and to lead with positivity as we grow together.

4.3 Brand Strategy Goal

Making Amherst a destination community for residents, businesses, and visitors.

4.4 Brand Strategy Objectives

Residents – Strengthening Community Belonging

- Foster community spirit
 - o Foster collaboration and unity
- Increase resident engagement
 - o Civic, cultural, recreational activities
- Enhance quality of life
 - o Through making the community accessible and equitable to all

Businesses – Driving growth and opportunity

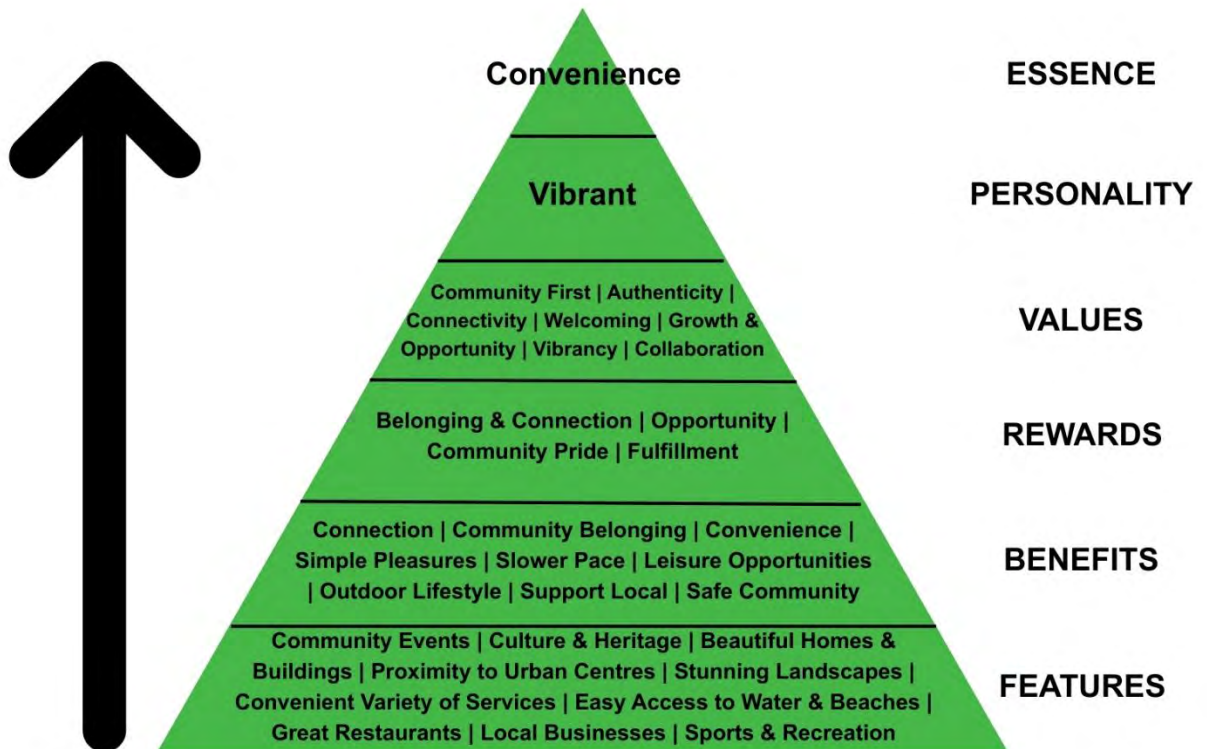
- Build pride in accomplishment
 - o Highlighting and promoting the successes of new and existing businesses
- Position Amherst as a supportive and attractive environment for businesses

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Visitors – Highlighting vibrancy, convenience and variety

- Visitors:
 - o Position Amherst as a multi-stop service centre
 - Convenience for surrounding areas
 - o Leverage our geographic position within NS and the Maritimes
 - Big city convenience in small-town Amherst
- Tourists:
 - o Increase tourists’ stay and spending
 - o Strengthen partnerships with regional tourism
 - E.g. Explore Cumberland
 - o Highlight Amherst as home base for exploring our greater region

4.5 Brand Pyramid



Tagline:

“The Centre of It All”

This will function as Amherst’s new primary tagline. It will endure throughout marketing efforts over the next several years.

For so long, Amherst has been known as a service centre. And for good reason. This is the place where people come to complete everyday tasks. But Amherst is also at the geographical centre of the Maritimes, making us a very convenient location for tourists to make their home base while exploring the wider Cumberland region. Looking at this in another way, The Centre of It All represents Amherst’s community spirit – the way this place anchors its residents through shared history, pride, and enthusiasm for the future.

The tagline can be adapted to feature additional components of our brand language. By replacing “It All” with an element such as “Community” or “Belonging” the tagline can adapt to wherever it is being used and appropriately emphasize Amherst’s various benefits.

There may be instances where campaign-specific slogans will be developed to help convey messages. Slogans will be short-lived where our tagline will remain a fixture of marketing efforts.

Adaptation possibilities:

- Tourism: Make Amherst the centre of your getaway.
- Business: Grow your business at the centre of it all.
- Community: Amherst – the centre of community spirit.
- Campaign specific (events): Your weekend starts at the centre of it all.

4.6 Messaging Themes

Brand messaging themes are the **core storylines or pillars** that express Amherst’s identity, priorities, and personality. They connect our **brand promise** to our **audience**.

1. *Community & Belonging*

Amherst is a place where people feel welcome and connected – connected to their neighbours, to opportunity, and to something bigger than themselves. Our residents look out for one another, and newcomers are quickly made part of the story. We celebrate together, support one another, and take pride in our shared hometown spirit. We lead with

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kindness, inclusion, and small-town warmth that makes people want to stay.

Key messages: Connection, inclusion, pride, volunteerism, neighbourly support, civic engagement.

2. *Vibrancy*

Amherst's energy comes to life through creativity, innovation, and celebration. Our festivals, local artists, and community gatherings bring people together and showcase the spirit that defines us.

Key messages: Innovation, arts and culture, local events, recreation, shared experiences, and community pride, local shops and restaurants.

3. *Opportunity & Growth*

Amherst offers room to grow—whether you're starting a business, raising a family, or investing in the future. Our location, resources, and community spirit make Amherst a smart place to build and belong.

Key messages: Economic development, business community vitality, entrepreneurship, strategic location, innovation, collaboration.

4. *The Centre of it All*

At the crossroads of the Maritimes, Amherst is both geographically central and emotionally grounded. We are the gathering place of the region – small enough to know you, big enough to serve you.

Key messages: Central location, accessibility, regional importance, convenience, connection to surrounding communities, belonging.

5. *Quality of Life*

Our community offers a balance that few can match: a charming small-town pace with full-service amenities, surrounded by nature, moments from the coast.

Key messages: Work-life balance, recreation, affordability, green spaces, family life, wellness, day tripping/home base, simplicity.

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6. *People*

Amherst's greatest asset is its people—the dreamers, doers, and difference-makers who shape our community. We honour our heritage while embracing growth, diversity, and innovation.

Key messages: Leadership, civic pride, inclusivity, innovation, resilience, collaboration, history, and youth engagement.

7. *Beautiful Amherst*

In Amherst, there is no shortage of beautiful scenery to enjoy. We pride ourselves on showcasing the impressive collection of heritage properties built of wood and local sandstone; our parks and flower beds tell a story of a community that cares; and everywhere you turn there is a lovely vista to enjoy, different each season.

Key messages: Heritage buildings, easy access to beaches, parks and green spaces, natural surroundings, Tantramar Marsh, seasonal variation.

4.7 Next Steps

To fully activate Amherst's brand and ensure its long-term success, the Town requires consistent standards, tools, and processes that guide how the brand is used internally and externally. This section outlines the actions and activities that support our brand's effectiveness.

By strengthening the foundation of our brand, we will be fully prepared to execute the actions contained in our strategic marketing pillars.

- Update the brand guidelines manual
- Create a brand launch toolkit
- Provide brand training sessions
- Revise and improve organization of Amherst's logos
- Implement an internal brand asset library
- Complete an Amherst logo use audit
- Create branded templates for all communication channels
- Introduce a brand review process for all materials

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Note:

2026 is a benchmarking year. Because consistent data has not been available in the past, all evaluations of 2027 activities will be informed by the baseline data gathered in 2026, along with any relevant data available from previous years.

5.0 Strategic Marketing Pillars

Internal Departments & Staff Roles

MarComm – Marketing & Communications Officers

CL – Community Living Department

EDO – Economic Development Officer

CWB Mgr – Community Well-Being Manager

Events – Event Coordinator / Events Team

PW / Facilities – Public Works & Facilities

IT – Information Technology

Mayor & Council

APD – Amherst Police Department

AFD / AFFA – Amherst Fire Department / Amherst Firefighters Association

Community Partners - Local organizations, regional tourism operators, nonprofits, schools, employers, accommodations, and other stakeholders collaborating on specific initiatives.

Strategic Pillar 1 – Residents				
Goal: Strengthen Community Belonging				
Objective 1.1	Increase community spirit by growing resident participation with community-focused content by 20%	Timing by 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Work with a videographer to create four reusable videos (minimum one per season) to generate excitement around a variety of	Annual events 2026	Marcomm IT CL	Up to \$6,000 per video

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	events, ensuring final videos have appropriate storage solutions		EDO	
	Produce a minimum of one good news story per month to highlight community heroes or volunteer stories, distributed to our media list	Monthly starting Jan 2026	Marcomm Other depts & community partners	Boosting option \$25-\$50 per post
	Create two posts per month highlighting Amherst's strengths (geography, people, convenience, attractions, history)	Twice monthly (24 per year) starting Jan 2026	MarComm Other depts & community partners	Within existing content budget Boosting option \$25-\$50 per post
	Build recognition by creating and re-using event content (i.e. hashtags, Facebook events)	Per event (12 a year) starting Jan 2026	CL	\$100 Boosting
	Increase earned media coverage by sending media releases for major events, and pitch at least one story per quarter	Quarterly pitches + event-based releases beginning Jan 2026	MarComm	Staff time
Objective 1.2	Increase resident engagement with Town communications and programs by 25%	Timing Jan 2026 - Dec 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Launch a monthly community newsletter. Further investigate appropriate, cost-effective newsletter platforms to highlight upcoming events and share information on initiatives.	Monthly beginning April 2026	Marcomm CL	Platform cost TBD
	Use targeted event-related social media boosts within 50 km for key demographics	3 per month starting Jan 2026	Marcomm	\$1,800 (\$50 ea.)
	Develop a list of high-traffic locations for event-related flyer distribution	Jan 2026	Events	N/A
	Investigate and implement a comprehensive event calendar on the website to position this information front-and-centre	March 2026	Marcomm	Plug-in costs for website \$500-\$1,000 annual
	Install a community message board in Town Hall lobby to promote information and events	Jan 2026	Sarah Marcomm Events	\$500 for Town Hall board
	Utilize the outdoor digital screen at Amherst Stadium to promote Town communications. Investigate options to update the screen	2026-2028	Public works Facilities Marcomm	TBD
	Investigate options for a digital community board (on the highway or other location)	2027 project	Marcomm	TBD
	Conduct a Voyent Alert promotional campaign. Determine feasibility for ongoing use.	Feb 2026-April 2026	Marcomm	\$500-\$1,000

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	Invite community input on new cultural or inclusive initiatives by hosting community alignment workshops, starting a resident ambassador program, and other initiatives outlined in the demographic strategic plan.	Ongoing starting in 2026	CWB Mgr Marcomm CL	TBD Staff time
	Decrease information fragmentation by maintaining consistent visibility across all platforms	Starting Jan 2026 and ongoing	Marcomm	N/A
	Ensure accessibility and inclusion in marketing efforts (i.e. plain language, considerations in design)	Starting Jan 2026 and ongoing	Marcom CWB Mgr	N/A
	Boost promotion the Mayor’s radio segment across all platforms. Evaluate effectiveness of the mayor’s weekly segment to determine future investment	Starting Feb 2026	Marcomm	\$500 for promotion \$15,000 for radio package
	Offer incentives for completing calls to action, such as gift cards for survey completion	Monthly		\$600 (\$50 ea.)
Objective 1.3	Enhance quality of life by increasing resident awareness and participation in Town programs, events and services by 25%	Timing 2026	Role	Budget
Actions	Connect residents with health and wellness resources and supports that can be found in Amherst		partners, community groups, other levels of government	
	Foster understanding on the purpose of the Community Living and Recreation Facebook page, to increase understanding and followers	April 2026	Marcomm REC CL	\$500- \$1,000
	Partner with APD, AFD and community partners to create a plan that promotes initiatives enhancing safety	Dec 2026	APD AFFA Marcomm Community volunteers	TBD Boost Ads Campaign-based \$500 per campaign
Objective 1.4	Increase public feedback by 10%, by increasing awareness and access to mechanisms	Timing 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Promote awareness of existing and new public feedback mechanisms			

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	Improve the function of comments/questions/feedback on the website	March 2026	Marcomm	TBD
	Create a feedback box at Town Hall to accept all types of resident input	March 2026	Marcomm	\$100 for box
	Conduct annual public surveys and determine if focus groups are required based on feedback	Feb 2027	Marcomm	Up to \$500 for boosting and ads
Strategic Pillar 2 - Businesses				
Goal: Drive Growth and Opportunity for new and existing business development				
Objective 2.1	Build Pride in Accomplishments by partnering with at least two new economic development organizations	Timing By 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Highlight and promote the successes of new and existing businesses	Ongoing	Marcomm EDO	TBD minimal
	Create a campaign to promote the expansion of the industrial park by developing collateral materials to support the work of the economic development department of the Town of Amherst.	Jan 2026 onward	Marcomm EDO	Budget to come from EDO
	Promote collaboration with regional employers and post-secondary institutions to attract and retain workers. Create promotional material to assist with this.	2026-2028	Marcomm CL CWB Mgr EDO	\$500-\$1,000 from EDO budget
Objective 2.2	Assist the Economic Development department with the promotion of at least two partnerships for current and new businesses	Timing By 2028	Role	Budget
Actions	Design collateral materials on the promotional needs of economic development department	Ongoing to 2028	EDO Marcomm	TBD based on need
	Identify opportunities for cross-promotion with influencers	As opportunities present	Marcomm EDO CL	Influencer fees \$1,000-\$2,500 each
	Promote the hosting of business roundtables, economic development forums, employment expos as requested	As opportunities present	Marcomm EDO	Cost TBD
	Assist the EDO with creating initiatives for shop and eat local campaigns	Jan-June 2026, Oct-Dec 2026 – Updates as required	Marcomm EDO CL	\$2,000 annually
Objective 2.3	Attract ten new business inquiries to Amherst by promoting our community as safe, accessible, inclusive and engaged	Timing By 2028	Role	Budget
Actions	Assist Economic Development Officer to create an opportunities /incentives campaign to increase business development	September 2026 onward	Marcomm EDO	\$1,500-\$2,500

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			Economic development partners	
	Update and expand Invest Amherst (existing business page) website content	April 1 2026 ongoing	Marcomm EDO Ec Dev partners	\$500-\$1,000
	Promote relocation incentives for small business development	2027	Marcomm EDO Ec Dev partners	TBD
Objective 2.4	Increase awareness of opportunities for newcomer business owners to collaborate and access resources, to be tracked by measuring attendance numbers and requests to access services	Timing 2026-2028	Role	Budget
Actions	Promote regular newcomer business events	2026-2028	CWB Mgr. EDO CL Marcomm	Social boosting, other ads \$500
Strategic Pillar 3 – Visitors				
Goal: Highlight Vibrancy, Convenience and Variety				
Objective 3.1	Increase awareness of Amherst as a multi-stop service centre among nearby communities, measured by gathering input from businesses	Timing 2027-2028	Role	Budget
Actions	Create a campaign to feature all of the services available in Amherst	Oct 2027-2028	Marcomm EDO CL	\$1,000-\$2,500
	Target locations that lack services Amherst can provide, such as – with a 100 km radius – promoting Amherst’s service offerings	Oct 2026-March 2027	Marcomm EDO CL	\$1,000-\$2,500
	Ensure accuracy and availability of Amherst shopping and restaurant guides. Create new content as required.	Jan 2026 ongoing	Marcomm EDO CL	\$500
Objective 3.2	Market Amherst as a Tourism Destination to increase engagement with online tourism content by %10	Timing 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Implement sections of the Town beautification strategy and highlight areas that relate to tourism	Jan 2026 ongoing	Marcomm CWM PW Parks	
	Create seasonal tourism campaigns for Maritime and Ontario markets	As required starting in 2026	Marcomm EDO Ec Dev	TV AD COSTS \$5,000-\$10,000 per campaign
	Improve quality and availability of visitor information	April 2026 ongoing	Marcomm CL EDO	\$500

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			Community Partners	
	Determine if Town Hall will be a permanent location for Amherst visitor information services and promote as such	Feb 2026	Mayor and Council Jason	N/A
	Create promotional campaign around new signature event	March-April 2026	Events CL	Up to \$2,000
Objective 3.3	Strengthen awareness of Amherst’s central geographic position within the Maritimes by creating three regional travel resources (i.e. maps, distance guides)	Timing April 2026	Role	Budget
Actions	Develop the new resources that demonstrates Amherst’s position as a home base for exploring the greater region	April 2026	Marcomm CL EDO Community Partners	\$1,000- \$2,000
Objective 3.4	Strengthen Partnerships with five Regional Tourism Operators and Organizations to promote Amherst as a larger tourism opportunity	Timing Jan 2026 ongoing	Role	Budget
Actions	Identify and create opportunities to work together on regional initiatives	Jan 2026 ongoing	Marcomm Regional Tourism Partners EDO	N/A
	Partner with accommodations to help promote Amherst’s brand and variety of events and activities	April 2026 ongoing	Marcomm EDO Accomms Partners	\$2,000
Objective 3.5	Increase Amherst’s visibility and appeal to new and former residents by growing traffic to relocation-focused web pages and engagement relocation content by 20%	Timing by Dec 2027	Role	Budget
Actions	Implement relocations pages and resources on the Town website *Considerations for existing documents (Explore Cumberland)	After website audit 2027	Marcomm	TBD
	Create a campaign for new and/or former residents to increase awareness advantages, including strategic locations	Sept 2026	CWB mgr Marcomm Community partners EDO	TBD

6.0 Communications Plan

Goal 1	Improve access to Town of Amherst information
Objective 1.1	Make it easier to access, understand and use information about living, visiting, and doing business in Amherst.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm how audiences prefer to access and receive information and use these channels consistently – update channels as driven by audience feedback - Anticipate questions and provide information proactively - Provide plain language summaries for complex documents when applicable - Maintain information relevance on message boards (digital and physical) - Evaluate the effectiveness of physical information kiosks and create a plan for their use moving forward - Evaluate the effectiveness of the mayor’s radio segment and identify opportunities for improvement - Explore additional opportunities for sharing information
Objective 1.2	Ensure accessibility practices are used consistently in everyday communications
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write content using plain language whenever possible - Ensure digital content functions well with assistive technologies - Review the Town’s website and implement updates to improve accessibility - Use high contrast colours in design - Plan for potential accessibility needs when organizing public communications and events
Objective 1.3	Strengthen internal communications practices to improve the flow of information
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide Town staff with regular information updates - Establish a process where staff can easily submit feedback they receive from the public - Work with Human Resources to fully develop an internal communications plan

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Objectives and actions for Goal 1 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 2	Be consistent with and ensure effectiveness of our communications channels
Objective 2.1	Ensure all channels are used in the most effective way
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete an audit of all communications channels - Identify the purpose and the content strategy for each communications channel - Evaluate and optimize platform performance
Objective 2.2	Create guidelines required to manage content delivery
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop posting standards (how we post) - Develop content guidelines (what we post) - Develop social media terms of use
Objective 2.3	Improve the Town of Amherst website
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a complete audit of the website - Create a plan to implement all recommended updates - Improve Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to deliver better website search results - Establish guidelines for regular website content updates
Objectives and actions for Goal 2 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 3	Improve engagement
Objective 3.1	Diversify communications channels
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and identifying new platforms for use as needs evolve - Identify and adopt new trends as appropriate to reach new audiences - Annual review of our communication channels to determine preference and performance
Objective 3.2	Create more opportunities for people to share feedback
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine the best ways for people to provide comments and feedback, which may include selected social media comments, alternate platforms for feedback, or directing comments to official channels - Implement feedback mechanisms

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Objective 3.3	Improve proactivity of Town communications
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with all departments to better streamline public communications - Ensure timely posting of major updates - Develop an Outlook calendar to be populated and used internally to proactively address communications requirements
Objective 3.4	Increase participation in Town programs, events, and public processes
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use targeted and audience specific tactics to boost engagement with social media content - Consider the use of incentives to boost participation - Track event attendance and registration data to create a baseline for ongoing measurement - Look for opportunities to expand partnerships with schools and community organizations
Objectives and actions for Goal 3 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 4	Increase audience reach
Objective 4.1	Ensure more people receive the information that we share
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a mix of channels to share information, based on audience preferences - Optimize web content to improve SEO - Pay to boost certain content on social - Create cross-promotional opportunities with businesses and organization
Objective 4.2	Reach underserved or hard-to-reach audiences
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify hard-to-reach audiences - Determine how best to communicate with them moving forward, such as direct mail or new communications channels
Objective 4.3	Use data, analytics and resident feedback to guide our strategies to strengthen our reach
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review communications channels analytics - Identify high-reach content - Optimize communication strategies
Objectives and actions for Goal 4 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	

7.0 Marketing Channels & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. Website (amherst.ca)

Primary KPIs

- Total site sessions
- Unique visitors
- Most visited pages
- Bounce rate
- Average time on page
- Top search terms
- Accessibility compliance indicators (alt text completion, heading structure, page contrast)

2. Social Media – Facebook (Town + Community Living & Recreation)

Primary KPIs

- Reach
- Engagement rate
- Follower growth
- Click-throughs to website
- Video views and average watch time
- Performance of boosted posts

3. Social Media – Instagram

Primary KPIs

- Reach
- Engagement rate
- Reel views
- Follower growth
- Profile visits

4. Social Media – TikTok

Primary KPIs

- Video views
- Completion rate
- Engagement rate
- Follower growth

5. Email Newsletter

Primary KPIs

- Open rate
- Click-through rate (CTR)
- Subscriber growth
- Top-clicked content

6. Print Communications

Primary KPIs

- Distribution reach
- Cost per household
- Call to actions
- Resident feedback (survey)

7. Voyent Alert!

(or replacement system)

Primary KPIs:

- Subscription count
- Alert open rate
- Click-through rate

8. Radio

Primary KPIs

- Estimated audience reach
- Number of mentions / ads aired
- Traffic spikes to website or social media after radio segments
- Resident recall (survey question)

9. Community Engagement Activities

Primary KPIs

- Event attendance
- Public meeting participation
- Survey response rates
- Public feedback

7.0 Appendices

- Marketing & Brand Strategy and Communications Plan Research Report
- Town of Amherst Brand Strategy

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living

DATE: Monday, December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Demographic Strategic Plan

ORIGIN: As set out in the Town of Amherst’s Strategic Plan, staff were to develop a Town demographics strategy that targets specific demographics to move to Amherst.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 47(1) 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 December 15, 2025, regular meeting, approval of the 2025 Demographic Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND: Over the past several months staff have consulted with new and long-term residents through online surveys and an in-person engagement event to understand what draws people to Amherst and what helps them stay.

DISCUSSION: Staff have been working on the development of the Demographic Strategic Plan since June 2025. To engage the community, surveys were administered over the town’s communication platforms and printed on the back of the July Water Bill. Feedback was also gathered through an in-person engagement event with our YReach Partners in November. In total data was collected over 37 surveys.

Integrating pieces of this plan into the Marketing and Communications Strategic Plans and targeting specific demographics, the Demographic Strategic Plan positions Amherst as a vibrant, connected and family-friendly regional hub to attract and retain young professionals and families.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: The expenses associated with the Demographic Strategic Plan should be planned and delivered with consideration for both capital and operating budget impacts as well as staffing capacity. Projects should be assessed to ensure that appropriate staff resources are available for planning, and implementation.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: The community through the delivery of this plan could see improvement to the Towns long-term vitality, sustainability and promote a more balanced life-style.





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025142

Date: December 15, 2025

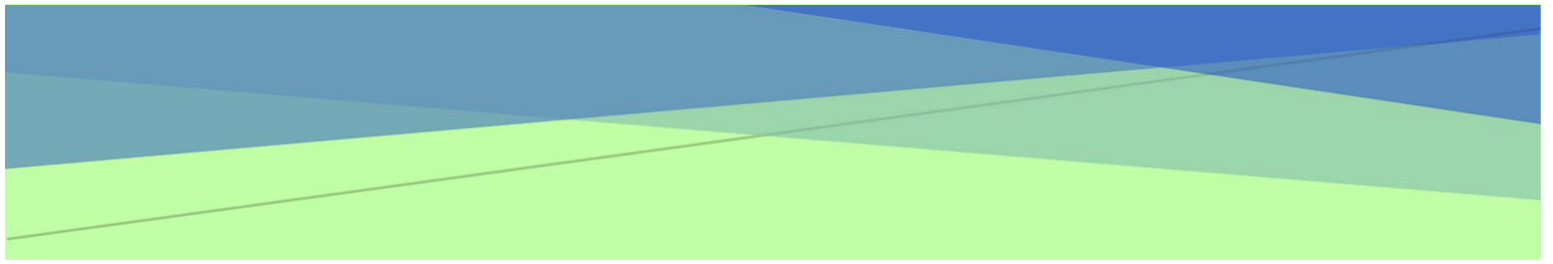
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: The Demographic Strategic Plan should consider environmental sustainability, such as promoting green spaces and sustainable transportation, and also anticipate the environmental impact of growth, like managing waste and energy consumption. Key considerations include adapting to climate change, improving energy efficiency, protecting natural heritage, and ensuring new development doesn't negatively affect air and water quality or resource availability

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Ongoing

ALTERNATIVES: 1. Send back to staff for further considerations
2. Do not accept the Demographic Strategic Plan

ATTACHMENTS: Town of Amherst Demographic Strategic Plan





OUR TOWN, YOUR FUTURE

Amherst Demographic Strategic Plan 2026-2028

A **roadmap to achieve sustainable population and economic growth** by aligning community resources and marketing efforts with the specific needs and preferences of target demographics

Manager of Community Well-Being
Community Living Department

1. Executive Summary

Like many Nova Scotia communities, Amherst's population is aging. Between 1996 and 2021, the number of seniors (65–84) and elderly residents (85+) grew by 35% and 39%, while the youth (0–19) and working-age (20–64) populations declined by 22% and 7%.

As of the 2021 Census, Amherst's population was 9,548, with a median age of 48.8—higher than the national average. This trend has continued over several decades, contributing to slower population growth and an older community profile.

Attracting and retaining young professionals and families is essential to Amherst's long-term vitality. A younger, working population supports local businesses, fills labour gaps, and contributes to a balanced, sustainable community.

This plan outlines Amherst's two-year strategy to strengthen its position as a welcoming, affordable, and connected town where families and professionals can live, work, and thrive.

2. Regional Overview

Amherst is the largest town in Cumberland County, located on the Nova Scotia–New Brunswick border. Its location along major highways and rail lines provides access to regional trade, transport, and employment opportunities.

Amherst serves as a regional service centre for health care, education, retail, and government services, supporting surrounding rural communities and contributing to the area's economic stability.

3. Community Highlights

To understand what draws people to Amherst and what helps them stay, the Town conducted an online survey and an in-person engagement event with 37 residents, including newcomers and long-term community members.

What We Heard – New Residents

New residents shared that Amherst's affordability, community character, and welcoming environment were key reasons for choosing the town.

Top reasons for moving to Amherst:

- Affordable housing and cost of living
- Small-town atmosphere and slower pace of life
- Proximity to family or community ties
- Employment or business opportunities
- Strong community values and sense of belonging
- Access to recreation and nature

Respondents said Amherst feels safe, peaceful, and connected, offering a good balance between affordability and quality of life.

Why People Stay in Amherst

Long-term residents described Amherst as a place where community, safety, and affordability define everyday life.

They stay because Amherst is:

- Friendly and welcoming—a place where people support one another
- Safe and family-oriented
- Affordable, making homeownership achievable
- Conveniently located, with easy access to larger centres while maintaining small-town charm
- Connected to recreation and nature through walkable neighbourhoods, parks, and local facilities

Residents also expressed pride in their town’s sense of belonging and hope to see continued investment in recreation, youth programming, and downtown vibrancy.

4. Target Demographics

Young Professionals (25–40 years)

- Remote workers, entrepreneurs, skilled trades and service professionals.
- Motivated by digital connectivity, affordable living, balanced lifestyle, proximity to nature, community feel.

Young Families (30–45 years)

- Seeking safe, supportive communities with access to quality schools, childcare, recreation and parks.
- Value connection, affordability, sense of belonging, and good housing options for kids.

Resident Attraction Campaign & Strategic Timeline (2026–2028)

Goal: Position Amherst as a vibrant, connected, and family-friendly regional hub that attracts and retains young professionals and families.

Phase 1: Foundation and Brand Launch (2026–2027)

Focus: Build awareness, strengthen Amherst’s identity, and prepare for growth.

Initiative	Description	Lead	Timeline
1. “Centre of It All” Campaign	Develop and launch a campaign promoting Amherst’s affordability, quality of life, and location to position Amherst as the Centre of it all. Create digital and print materials and share resident success stories.	MarComm, Community Living & Economic Development	2026–2027

Initiative	Description	Lead	Timeline
2. Resident Attraction Marketing	Target young professionals and families through digital advertising, social media, relocation focused web pages and partnerships with regional media.	MarComm & Economic Development	2026–2027
3. Community Alignment Workshops	Host sessions with local employers, realtors, and organizations to coordinate housing, employment, and relocation efforts.	Economic Development, MarComm & Community Living	2026
4. Resident Ambassador Program	Recruit community volunteers and new residents to share their experiences and support newcomers.	Community Well Being Manager & CommLiving	2026
5. Establish Baseline Data	Collect housing, demographic, and relocation data to track progress.	Community Well Being Manager & CommLiving with departmental support as needed	2026

Phase 2: Growth and Engagement (2026–2028)

Focus: Strengthen housing, infrastructure, and community engagement.

Initiative	Description	Lead	Timeline
6. Residential Development & Infrastructure	Support diverse, family- and professional-oriented housing projects. Improve broadband and transportation links.	Planning & Infrastructure	2026–2028
7. Co-Working and Innovation Hub	Establish a shared workspace to support entrepreneurs, remote workers, and small business start-ups.	Economic Development and Community Well Being Manager	Mid 2026–2027
8. Strengthen Partnership with YMCA YReach Program	Collaborate with the Cumberland YREACH team to enhance newcomer settlement, inclusion and integration supports. Collaborate to expand Welcoming Week Event.	Community Living CWB Manager	Mid 2026
9. Family Lifestyle Campaign	Promote Amherst’s parks, schools, and recreation through local storytelling and media.	MarComm	2027–2028

Initiative	Description	Lead	Timeline
10. Regional Employer Partnerships	Collaborate with regional employers and post-secondary institutions to attract and retain workers.	Economic Development	2027–2028

Phase 3: Expansion and Retention (2027–2028)

Focus: Sustain momentum and reinforce belonging.

Initiative	Description	Lead	Timeline
11. Lifestyle and Public Space Enhancements	Invest in parks, childcare, recreation, and cultural spaces to improve livability.	CommLiving Operations Land & Planning	2027–2028
12. Regional Collaboration	Work with neighbouring communities, tourism, and education partners to market Amherst regionally.	Economic Development & MarComm & Community Well Being Manager	2027–2028
13. Incentives for New Residents and Businesses	Explore small business start-up and relocation incentives.	Economic Development & MarComm	2027–2028

Summary

This two-year campaign positions Amherst as a **“Centre of it All”**—a welcoming, affordable, and connected community for young families and professionals. Through deliberate branding, infrastructure investment, and community engagement, Amherst can achieve sustainable population growth, economic vitality, and a strengthened sense of belonging.

Recommendations

That **Council endorse the Our Town, Your Future: Amherst Demographic Strategic Plan (2026–2028)** as a guiding framework to support population growth and community vitality, and direct staff to:

1. **Launch the “Centre of It All” Brand Campaign**
Implement a coordinated marketing campaign promoting Amherst’s lifestyle, affordability, and location advantages.
2. **Support Alignment Across Sectors**
Strengthen collaboration between housing, workforce, and community development initiatives.

3. Implement Resident and Business Attraction Programs

Deliver newcomer welcome initiatives and partnerships that promote Amherst as a great place to live and work.

Next Steps

1. Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Establish baseline data for 2026 and track annual progress

2. Pursue External Funding and Partnerships

Authorize staff to seek provincial and federal grants and to partner with private developers, local employers, and educational institutions to:

- Support housing and infrastructure investment.
- Fund marketing and community engagement initiatives.
- Leverage shared priorities to extend municipal resources.

3. Strengthen Partnerships for Newcomer Settlement

Continue collaboration with the Cumberland YMCA YREACH Program to improve newcomer support and inclusion. Through coordinated settlement services, cultural awareness activities, and community connections, YREACH and the Town can ensure Amherst remains a welcoming destination for new residents.

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living

DATE: December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIDE) Committee Recommendations

ORIGIN: The Town of Amherst Accessibility and IDE Strategic Plan, and November 12, 2025 AIDE meeting

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA 47 (1) 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 December 15, 2025 regular meeting, the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee motions for approval.

BACKGROUND: Municipalities and other prescribed public sector bodies through the Accessibility Act of NS 2017 and the NS Dismantling Racism and Hate Act 2022 are required to develop and update their strategic plans. The Town of Amherst approved an Accessibility Strategic plan in 2022 and the Inclusion Diversity and Equity plan in 2023. A new three year plan combining the Accessibility and IDE objectives was developed and forwarded to the Province April 1, 2025. To facilitate this Council combined the two committees into one forming the AIDE (Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity) committee.

DISCUSSION: At the November 12, 2025 Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee meeting, the Committee passed two motions to be forwarded to council for consideration. They are as follows:

- 1. That the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee recommend that Council request staff to investigate the feasibility of having inclusive, all gender restrooms at all Town of Amherst facilities.**
- 2. That the Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee recommend Council request staff to complete an audit of all Town of Amherst facilities and infrastructures, including accessible parking spaces, to ensure they are fully accessible as it is laid out in the Council approved Strategic Plan and to bring a report back to this Committee for review.**

These motions were in reference to the AIDE strategic plan and the yearly update report. In anticipation of Council's review of these motions staff met to review how best to carry out these requests should council approve the motion.





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2025149

Date: December 15, 2025

We reviewed the Accessibility Act and clarified that it applies to new builds or redevelopments and though existing buildings are not grandfathered, it is considered best practice to conduct area assessments on these spaces.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Unknown at this time but there could be a financial impact to make these changes.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: The community through the AIDE Committee will have continued input into the development of policy and procedures related to accessibility and inclusion, diversity and equity.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: none

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Continued engagement with our community at large to ensure everyone has input into AIDE practices conducted in the town.

ALTERNATIVES: 1 Deny the motions
 2 Defer to next month

ATTACHMENTS: None



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Councillor Terry McManaman

DATE: December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Banner Request

In honor of the late Vaughn Martin, I would like to make the following motion:

That staff be directed to investigate the appropriateness of hanging a banner at the Amherst Stadium in memory of Vaughn Martin.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council
FROM: Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE: December 15, 2025
SUBJECT: Social Media and Communication Presentation

At the December 16, 2024 Committee of the Whole, the following motion was passed:

Moved By Councillor Ripley

Seconded By Councillor Chambers

That we formally invite David Mitchell to our town to give a presentation on social media and communication.

Against (2): Deputy Mayor Davidson, and Councillor McManaman

It was decided that we would invite Mayor Mitchell at the final stages of the marketing and communications plan development. While the plan may be approved this evening, it is not too late to make this invitation. The plan includes various methods for obtaining community feedback, including social media. We could invite Mayor Mitchell to share his experiences on community engagement in Bridgewater and to provide his advice on how we could incorporate what Bridgewater learned as we move forward.

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Jason MacDonald, CAO

DATE: December 15, 2025

SUBJECT: Community Centre Strategic Priority

ORIGIN: 1. Town of Amherst Strategic Plan; 2. Motion of November 17, 2025:

That a steering committee be created, inclusive of private citizens, to:

- a) develop partnerships with residents, community groups, government and non-government organizations for funding purposes, and
- b) identify and engage with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and manageable plan for the construction, operation and maintenance of a new civic centre;

And further that Council agrees to a 10% reduction in their remuneration for the remainder of their term to assist with the funding of the steering committee activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council not pass the motion made at the November 17, 2025 Committee of the Whole Closed Session and direct staff to:

Hold a strategic priority session in January 2026 with Council to:

- a. determine the uses to be included in a new community centre /stadium and provide direction to staff to hire a consultant to develop a high-level concept for a facility;
- b. review a draft terms of reference and budget for a fundraising committee for a new facility;
- c. determine if a 10% reduction in Council remuneration is required to fund the activities of the steering committee.

BACKGROUND:

- 1) A community centre feasibility study was undertaken which identified a new facility that included a YMCA could be built in the downtown at an estimated cost of approximately \$90,000,000. Alternatively, a new rink / gymnasium could be constructed for approximately \$45,000,000. Council made the decision to try to move forward with a facility that would include an ice surface, gymnasium and community rooms. Upon further financial analysis which indicated an estimated 10% tax increase was necessary to fund 1/3 of the capital costs of the project (minus \$5,000,000 in fundraising) as well as estimated operational costs, Council passed a motion in June of this year to pause the project and continue to explore funding opportunities.



- 2) Further to this direction, in September staff were given direction to hire consultants to conduct three studies:
 - a) Replace the ice making equipment at the Amherst Stadium
 - b) Plan a complete renovation to the Amherst Stadium
 - c) Plan for construction of a new community centre.

- 3) At the November 17, 2025 Committee of the Whole the following motion was passed:

That a steering committee be created, inclusive of private citizens, to:

 - a) develop partnerships with residents, community groups, government and non-government organizations for funding purposes, and
 - b) identify and engage with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and manageable plan for the construction, operation and maintenance of a new civic centre;

And further that Council agrees to a 10% reduction in their remuneration for the remainder of their term to assist with the funding of the steering committee activities.

DISCUSSION: Staff have a number of concerns with the motion that was passed on November 17, 2025 Committee of the Whole:

1. At this point, Council has not formally determined the uses that would be provided within a new community centre. It is not prudent to form a committee to fundraise and create partnerships for a facility without clear direction on what that facility includes. Staff assume it will contain an NHL sized rink with 1,500+- seating capacity. Other issues to be determined include: size and scale of any community rooms, walking track, food service, etc. Finally, what is not included in the facility must be articulated as well (assuming no curling rink, pickleball courts etc.). The committee needs firm direction on what they are fundraising for, and that they are not being asked to add / subtract uses.
2. What is the ultimate funding goal of the committee? What is considered success and when will the committee be disbanded? Do they have authority to apply for government grants on behalf of the Town? These questions need to be addressed before the committee is formed.
3. Once the committee's goal is achieved, what is the expectation of the Town in regards to financing the unfunded costs (if any) of the facility? The Committee should know that if they achieve their goal, the Town will provide the remainder of the funding and get the project started.
4. To be fair to all involved, the Town should identify where their portion of the funding is coming from before the committee is formed. This would include a commitment to raise property taxes to cover our portion of the capital and operating costs, if not actually starting to do so. It would be disingenuous to let the committee and the public believe that we can fund our costs solely through operational savings and increased assessment due to new construction.

5. The motion includes a 10% reduction in Council remuneration to fund the operation of the committee. This would mean that the Committee operating budget would be approximately \$20,000 / per year. It is not clear to staff what this budget would entail. All 'hospitality' and travel functions of this committee must follow Town policy and procedure. \$20,000 / year would seem an excessive amount for these activities.
6. Council has set aside a strategic reserve fund of \$500,000 / year with approximately one half being 'committed' so far. Any typical Committee costs could be accommodated within this budget.
7. Does Council really want a community committee to "develop a sustainable and manageable plan for the **construction, operation and maintenance** of a new civic centre? These items are the role of staff under Council direction. It could be interpreted that the committee would actually be the owner and operator of the facility, especially without a commitment of Town funds to build and operate the building.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are two aspects to the financial implications. The first is the costs of the committee. Staff are not sure what functions of the committee would cost \$20,000 / year. Typical committee costs can be accommodated within the current operating budget / reserve.

The second financial implication is the capital and operating costs of the new facility. Depending on the fundraising goal of the committee, the capital costs to the town could be in the tens of millions of dollars. The operating costs will be about \$300,000+ more per year than the Amherst Stadium. Without some commitment to fund these amounts Council may be setting the committee up for failure and unduly raising citizen expectations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: The eventual construction of a new community centre will greatly increase our efforts for social justice.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications to the recommendation or the original motion.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Establishing a committee to work towards and fundraise for a new community centre shows strong community engagement. However, without a clear mandate of goals and expectations this engagement has a high probability of failure.

ALTERNATIVES: 1) Pass the original motion:

That a steering committee be created, inclusive of private citizens, to:

- a) develop partnerships with residents, community groups, government and non-government organizations for funding purposes, and
- b) identify and engage with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and manageable plan for the construction, operation and maintenance of a new civic centre;

And further that Council agrees to a 10% reduction in their remuneration for the remainder of their term to assist with the funding of the steering committee activities.

2) Pass the recommended motion.

ATTACHMENTS: None

List of previous motions:

November 17, 2025

Moved By Councillor Wells

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

That Council direct staff to develop a plan to replace / rehabilitate the ice making equipment at the Amherst Stadium at an estimated cost of \$1,000,000 - \$3,000,000 to be funded by long term debt with consulting services to be paid for from the operating reserve (strategic priorities).

November 17, 2025

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That a steering committee be created, inclusive of private citizens, to:

- a) develop partnerships with residents, community groups, government and non-government organizations for funding purposes, and
- b) identify and engage with stakeholders to develop a sustainable and manageable plan for the construction, operation and maintenance of a new civic centre;

And further that Council agrees to a 10% reduction in their remuneration for the remainder of their term to assist with the funding of the steering committee activities.

Against (2): Mayor Small, and Councillor Furlong

MOTION CARRIED

September 22, 2025

Moved By Deputy Mayor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That staff be directed to hire a consultant to complete a master plan for a new soccer / athletic field facility at Dickey Park at a cost of about \$25,500 plus HST, and further that staff procure the services of a consultant, preferably Black and MacDonald, to analyze the systems within the stadium to determine what needs to be replaced to extend the life of the facility for another 5-10 years and to engage Sierra Planning and Management, to determine what would be required for a complete more long-term renovation, including but not limited to proper seating and dressing rooms, and to determine the costs of constructing a new stadium facility.

MOTION CARRIED

June 16, 2025

MGA 22(2)(e) - Community Centre - MacDonald

The CAO reviewed his memo included in the agenda package. Council directed staff to continue to look for more funding and site opportunities, to re-evaluate capital budget items, including the industrial park expansion to help find ways to find the funding necessary and to consider a more phased-in approach for the new Community Centre.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council
FROM: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
DATE: December 15, 2025
SUBJECT: Holiday Events Debrief

Staff met to debrief from the holiday events and have developed a list of actionable items for next year.

- 1) Christmas Parade - Overall very positive comments on the parade, the quality and quantity of floats and entries. Some concerns were raised that Santa wasn't clearly visible, and the community didn't understand that he was driving the Coke Caravan. While this was a different approach to Santa for this year, we will be bringing back a traditional Santa and sleigh/float for next year. The change was communicated on our social media channels, but it didn't reach everyone and therefore some children and families were disappointed. On the flip side there were also positive comments about this change.
- 2) Safety Concerns During the Parade - There was feedback that some parade entries were driving unsafely during periods of the parade. This will be communicated with them if they reapply next year and all efforts will be placed on ensuring safety of the participants and spectators. Staff will have Chief Jones review our documents that are given to float entries to ensure we are covering all aspects of safety.
- 3) Concerns about the Quiet Zone – There were concerns raised about the quiet zone not being respected. Staff will bump up communications around this area and ensure that all vehicles and drivers are aware of this moving forward. We will also look into increased signage that may identify the area ahead as the quiet zone.
- 4) Tree for Boston - No issues. Lots of positive feedback on having the lobby of Town Hall used for the hot chocolate and entertainment.
- 5) Christmas Light Up - Staff received very positive feedback from the First Baptist Church as we increased staff presence at the entry way to ensure no food or drink was brought into the church. Staff heard both positive and negative feedback on the lights (in trees vs on buildings) This will be reviewed going forward.

MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council

From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

Date: December 15, 2025

Re: Cost Analysis of Off-Season Stadium Rentals

At the November 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting Council directed staff to prepare a cost benefit analysis of off-season stadium rentals prior to approving proposed off-season rental fee increases at the Amherst Stadium as per the Town's User Fee Policy.

The current and proposed off season rental rates at the stadium are:

Amherst Stadium	Rink Floor Only (Day Rate)	Rink Floor Only (Hourly)	Entire Facility (Day Rate)	Entire Facility (Hourly)
Current	\$630.00 +HST	\$50.00 +HST	\$790.00 +HST	\$70.00 +HST
Proposed	\$945.00 +HST	\$82.50 +HST	\$1185.00 +HST	\$90.00 +HST

** Entire facility includes meeting rooms and team rooms

Off season rental rates at other municipal arenas:

Municipality	Rate (Day)	Rate (Half Day)	Rate (Hourly)	Rate Status
Yarmouth	\$1,250.00	\$750.00	\$150.00	Updated Dec 2024
Bridgewater	\$750.00	\$450.00	\$90.00	Updated Fall 2024
Pictou	\$600.00	\$300.00	\$60.00	Updated Fall 2025
Springhill	\$500.00	\$300.00	\$55.00	Current

A summary of expenses (wages & consumables), revenue, and staff time (includes setup and cleanup) for the 6 events hosted at the stadium is outlined below:

Event	# of Staff	Staff Time (Hours)	# of Days	Revenue	Expenses
Home Show	8	96	4	\$0.00	\$3200.00
Job Fair	6	48	3	\$790.00	\$1550.00
Circus	4	40	1	\$790.00	\$1375.00
Wrestling	4	32	1	\$790.00	\$1200.00
Rotary Club	6	68	3	\$790.00	\$2,400.00
Relay For Life	6	88	3	\$0.00	\$2,900.00

Based on the cost analysis, the proposed increases to off-season rental rates at the Amherst Stadium are reasonable and justified. The analysis clearly demonstrates that current rates do not recover the Town's direct costs for staffing, setup, cleanup, and consumables, resulting in an overall deficit of approximately \$8,300 across last summers six off-season events. Even when rental revenue was collected, it was insufficient to offset wages and operating expenses, particularly as setup and tear-down time is currently not charged.

Staff believe the proposed rates will still be affordable for users while helping with cost recovery and are recommending Council approve the rates as presented in the amended User Fee Policy.

MEMO

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council
FROM: Andrew Fisher, Director of Planning & Economic Development
DATE: December 15, 2025
RE: Review – Development and Building Permit Fees

As part of Council’s November review of the User Fee Policy, staff were directed to report on the Town’s development and permit fees compared to those of similar municipalities in Nova Scotia. The attached comparison shows that Amherst’s building permit fees are generally in line with other units. Because fee structures vary, the report uses four common scenarios for comparison:

1. New residential construction
2. Residential renovation
3. New commercial construction
4. Commercial renovation

Overall, Amherst’s fees align with other municipalities, except for Truro, which maintains notably lower fees.

In contrast, Amherst’s fees for development agreements and planning document amendments are significantly lower than the comparison group. These fees primarily cover the cost of newspaper advertisements. In fact, Truro charges only the actual advertisement cost. This issue of cost recovery has become less significant since the province amended the MGA to remove the requirement for newspaper ads, which represented the bulk of the cost.

In terms of revenue, as shown in the chart below showing annual permit revenue, the total revenue is not significant.

Year	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26 YTD
Fees	\$ 23,622	\$ 14,799	\$ 20,679	\$ 38,470	\$ 25,733	\$ 23,626

Based on the above considerations that are detailed in the attached report, staff maintain their recommendation to maintain status quo.



Detailed Comparison of Planning and Development Fees.

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Prepared by: Torben Laux, Land Use Planner & Development Officer

Purpose

This detailed comparison of Planning and Development Fees examines how the Town of Amherst aligns with Truro, Wolfville, Bridgewater, and New Glasgow. The goal is to provide Council with a clear understanding of how Amherst's fees compare to other municipalities using typical development scenarios.

Background

Development and building fees are charges collected by municipalities when property owners construct, renovate, or modify buildings. These fees cover the cost of reviewing applications, ensuring compliance with building codes, and managing planning processes.

Municipalities structure their fees in different ways, including:

- Flat fees: A fixed amount regardless of project size
- Per square foot fees: Calculated based on the size of the project
- Value-based fees: Calculated as a percentage of project cost

A scenario-based comparison approach was used. To simplify the comparisons, four common development scenarios were analyzed:

- Scenario 1: New Residential Construction: 1,000 sq ft home, \$300,000 value
- Scenario 2: Residential Renovation: \$75,000 project value
- Scenario 3: New Commercial Construction: 1,000 sq ft, \$300,000 value
- Scenario 4: Commercial Renovation: 1,000 sq ft.

Development Agreements, Amendments, Site Plan Approvals, and Variances were also compared across the same municipalities. Amherst generally falls at the low end of the fee range for all of these categories. Other municipalities charge between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for Development Agreements and planning document amendments, compared to Amherst's much lower fees of \$200–\$300.

Conclusion

Amherst's fees tend to fall on the lower end compared to other municipalities. The Town maintains a base fee of \$50 plus a per-square-foot charge for new construction, with a clear distinction between residential and commercial/industrial uses. The overall fee structure is simpler and less complex than those used by other municipalities. While Amherst's per-square-foot fees are generally comparable, demolition fees are relatively low, and the Town does not differentiate demolition, addition, or renovation fees based on whether the project is residential or commercial. Truro has the lowest fees in all scenarios. After speaking with the town, it explained to encourage development.

Building Fee Structure

Fee Type	Amherst	Truro	Wolfville	Bridgewater	New Glasgow
Development Permit	\$50.00	—	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$100.00
Administration Fee	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
New Residential Construction	\$50 + \$0.12 per sq ft	\$0.06 per sq. ft.	\$50.00 + \$0.15 per sq. ft.	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00 base + \$0.20 per sq. ft. (per floor) + \$0.10 per sq. ft. (basement)
New Non-Residential Construction	\$50 + \$0.17 per sq ft	\$0.10 per sq. ft.	\$75.00 + \$0.20 per sq. ft.	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00 base + \$0.25 per sq. ft.
Mini/Mobile Homes	—	—	—	\$2.10 per \$1,000	\$200.00
Additions (Residential)	—	—	\$75.00 + \$0.20 per sq. ft.	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00 base + \$0.10 per sq. ft.
Additions (Commercial)	—	—	\$75.00 + \$0.20 per sq. ft.	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00 base + \$0.20 per sq. ft.
Renovations (Residential)	\$50 + 0.25% of value	<1000 sq. ft. = \$25; 1000–5000 sq. ft. = \$50; >5000 sq. ft. = \$250	\$50.00 + \$4.00 per \$1,000 of value	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00 base + \$4.00 per \$1,000 of value
Renovations (Non-Residential)	\$50 + 0.25% of value	<1000 sq. ft. = \$50; 1000–5000 sq. ft. = \$100; >5000 sq. ft. = \$250	\$50.00 + \$4.00 per \$1,000 of value	\$3.00 per \$1,000	—
Accessory Buildings / Sheds / Decks	\$50 + \$0.04 per sq ft	—	\$25.00 + \$0.10 per sq. ft.	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$100.00 (≤200 sq. ft.) or \$100.00 + \$2.50 per \$1,000 (>200 sq. ft.)
Demolition (Residential)	\$20	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00
Demolition (Non-Residential)	\$20	\$100.00	\$50.00	\$3.00 per \$1,000	\$50.00
Temporary Structure	—	\$50.00	—	—	—
Sign Permit	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	—	—
Occupancy Deposit / Permit	—	\$100.00 (Refundable deposit)	—	\$50.00	—
Permit Renewal	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$50.00

Fee Structure Explained

Fees typically fall into two main categories: Residential and Non-Residential (Commercial, Industrial, etc.). Within each category, fees are further divided into New Construction and Renovation. Some municipalities add additional subsections to further refine how fees are applied. Municipalities use different methods to calculate fees: some charge a flat fee, others charge per square foot, and some use a percentage of project value. Value-based fees generally increase more quickly as project costs rise.

Scenario 1

New Residential Build

Size: 1,000 sq ft

Value: \$300,000

Municipality	Formula	Total Fee
Amherst	$\$50 + (1,000 \times \$0.12)$	\$170
Truro	$1,000 \times \$0.06$	\$60
Wolfville	$\$50 + (1,000 \times \$0.15)$	\$200
Bridgewater	$\$300,000 \times (\$3 / \$1,000)$	\$900
New Glasgow	$\$50 + (1,000 \times \$0.20)$	\$250

Truro has the lowest total fee at \$60, with Amherst following in second place at \$170. Overall, Amherst remains on the lower end of fees for new residential development.

Scenario 2

Residential Renovation

Size: 1,000 sq ft

Renovation Value: \$75,000

Municipality	Formula	Total Fee
Amherst	$\$50 + (0.25\% \times \$75,000) = \$50 + \187.50	\$237.50
Truro	Based on size, not value → 1000 sq ft = \$50	\$50
Wolfville	$\$50 + (\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \$4) = \$50 + \300	\$350
Bridgewater	$\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \3	\$225
New Glasgow	$\$50 + (\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \$4) = \$350$	\$350

Amherst falls in the mid-range at \$237.50. Truro has the lowest fees due to its flat-rate structure based on project size. Bridgewater charges a fee per \$1,000 of project value and does not apply a base fee. Wolfville and New Glasgow have the highest fees, using a combination of a \$50 base fee plus an additional charge per \$1,000 of project value.

	Cheapest Fee
	Amherst
	Most Expensive Fee

Scenario 3

New Commercial
Size: 1,000 sq ft
Value: \$300,000

Municipality	Formula	Total Fee
Amherst	$\$50 + (1,000 \times \$0.17)$	\$220
Truro	$1,000 \times \$0.10$	\$100
Wolfville	$\$75 + (1,000 \times \$0.20)$	\$275
Bridgewater	$\$300,000 \times (\$3 / \$1,000)$	\$900
New Glasgow	$\$50 + (1,000 \times \$0.25)$	\$300

Scenario 4

Commercial Renovation
Size: 1,000 sq ft

Municipality	Formula	Total Fee
Amherst	$\$50 + (0.25\% \times \$75,000) = \$50 + \187.50	\$237.50
Truro	1000–5000 sq. ft. = \$100; >5000 sq. ft. = \$250	\$100 - \$250
Wolfville	$\$50 + (\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \$4) = \$50 + \300	\$350
Bridgewater	$\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \3	\$225
New Glasgow	$\$50 + (\$75,000 \div 1,000 \times \$4) = \$350$	\$350

Truro has the lowest fees for new commercial construction, followed by Amherst. Bridgewater applies the same rate for both residential and non-residential projects, charging \$3 per \$1,000 of project value.

Commercial renovations follow the same fee structure as residential renovations in all the listed municipalities, so the fees are identical. For the scenario used, Truro charges \$100 to \$250 based on site

	Cheapest Fee
	Amherst
	Most Expensive Fee

Development Agreement, Amendments, Variance, and Site Plan Applications Fees

Fee Type	Amherst	Truro	Wolfville	Bridgewater	New Glasgow
Development Agreement	\$200	Charging PH and Signage	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$2,000
Amendments	\$300	Ad costs only	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$1,500
Variance	\$75	Ad costs only	—	\$50	\$200
Site Plan Approval	\$75	Ad costs only	\$150	\$100	\$500 (including variance)

The Development Agreement and Amendment fees in Amherst are significantly lower compared to other municipalities. Typically, these fees also cover the cost of newspaper advertisements. With the addition of the Site Plan Approval process in the new planning documents, allowing 7–12 units where permitted, the application fee should be increased, as notices must be distributed and the application requires a detailed review by planning staff. Truro does not have publicly listed fees for these applications, due to the Municipal Government Act having changed the requirement of posting notices in newspapers. Truro used to charge \$600 plus any additional fees. This was changed to charging the applicant only the fees of the Public Participation and signs posted on the property.

Overview of the Similarities and Differences between CBDC-Cumberland and the Cumberland Business Connector

This summary covers the distinct mandates, governance structures and funding models of the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and the Cumberland Business Connector / Regional Enterprise Networks (RENS) across Nova Scotia.

CBDCs and RENS are both active across Nova Scotia, serving complementary but distinct roles within the province’s economic development ecosystem. Both networks maintain long-standing relationships with local businesses but operate under different accountability and governance frameworks.

Category	CBDC-Cumberland	Cumberland Business Connector
Mandate	Support small business start-ups, growth and modernization through loans, training, and advisory services.	Strengthen regional economies through collaboration, business retention, investment readiness and workforce development.
Funding Source	Funded by the Government of Canada through ACOA under the <i>Community Futures Program</i> . Revenue generated through loan interest.	Core funding is from the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland as well as the Department of Growth and Development (DGD). <i>Sometimes there are other projects funded from provincial or federal partners.</i>
Geographic Scope	Community-based catchment areas (e.g., Pictou CBDC, Shelburne CBDC, Yarmouth CBDC).	Each REN and REN-like organization focuses on one Functional Economic Region (e.g., Western REN, Valley REN, Cape Breton REN, Cumberland Business Connector).
Core Activities	Business loans, entrepreneurship training, advisory services, and self-employment.	Regional economic planning, business retention and expansion (BRE), workforce alignment and investment attraction. One-on-one support for business startup or growth, business succession, and resource navigation
Accountability	Report to ACOA and the Nova Scotia Association of CBDCs. Each corporation has a community-based board of directors.	Report through the Liaison and Oversight Committee to participating municipalities and DGD. Each REN reports to a business-led board of directors composed of local businesspeople.
Client Focus	Entrepreneurs and small business owners.	Small and medium-sized businesses, new entrepreneurs, industry associations, and regional / municipal economic growth priority areas.

KEY POINTS

- CBDCs provide direct lending and business support (primarily to their loan clients), while the Connector focuses on regional planning and economic strategy as well as providing support to any business in the region.
- The Nova Scotia Association of CBDCs serves as a coordinating body for the 13 organizations and reports to a board composed of the CBDC Executive Directors.
- RENS focus on regional priorities, including investment attraction, workforce alignment, and long-term planning across multiple municipalities.
- Both systems are essential to advancing inclusive, sustainable economic growth across rural and regional Nova Scotia. CBDC-Cumberland and the Cumberland Business Connector refer clients to each other when the other organization can provide additional support.

MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council

From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

Date: December 15, 2025

Re: Five-Year Rotating Theme for Downtown Flower Beds

Staff have developed a plan for a five-year rotating color theme for the Town's Downtown Core floral displays. The intent of this plan is to implement a rotating theme that is operationally feasible while delivering a strong visual impact each season.

The rotating themes will apply specifically to high visibility display beds within the Downtown Core, including:

- Victoria Square – step side beds, bandshell bed, and back corner bed
- Havelock/Victoria Corner – primary display bed
- Ratchford Corner – featured display bed

In addition, the theme for each year will be applied to the bed or planting area closest to the community partner associated with that theme, such as:

- Town Hall (Celebrating Amherst)
- CANSA (African Nova Scotians)
- Other nearby partner locations, when applicable to the theme

The locations identified above will be themed, the hanging baskets and other flower beds throughout Town will maintain the standard color palettes.

Flower color theme for 2026–2030 will be:

1. **Celebrating Amherst** – Blue & Green
2. **African Nova Scotians** – Red, Yellow & Green
3. **Indigenous Persons** – Orange, White & Black
4. **LGBTQIA2S+ Pride** – Pride Colours
5. **Celebrating Canada** – Red & White

The proposed five-year rotation provides a clear, achievable way to deliver strong seasonal themes in the Downtown Core, aligning with Council's strategic direction while respecting operational capacity and existing procurement timelines. This approach enhances visual identity, supports community representation, and maintains flexibility for annual creative adjustments.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council
FROM: Krista Crossman, Director of Human Resources
DATE: December 15, 2025
SUBJECT: **People Strategy 2026-2028**

We are pleased to enclose our two-year People Strategy, submitted for Council's information. This strategy was designed to reflect one of the Administrative Initiatives from our Strategic Plan: developing a comprehensive Human Resources Plan to support our goal of making Amherst the best place to work.

This strategy builds on the strong progress we've made over the past year in strengthening our people practices. It outlines clear focus areas that will create the conditions for our employees to thrive and foster an engaged and capable workforce. This strategy will serve as a practical roadmap for ongoing development with measurable actions that will be implemented and monitored throughout its term.

Attachments/Resources:

1. **2026 – 2028 People Strategy**
-

Amherst

NOVA SCOTIA



People Strategy 2026 - 2028



Introduction

I am pleased to share the Town of Amherst's People Strategy: a roadmap to strengthen our workforce and build a high-performing, resilient organization. This strategy builds on the foundation established in 2024, a year in which the CAO and Council demonstrated a strong commitment to Human Resources by prioritizing investment in our people practices.

Over the past year, we've made meaningful progress, including:

Establishing a dedicated Human Resources department, enabling more strategic, centralized support for workforce planning and recruitment.

Conducting the first comprehensive employee engagement and wellness survey in many years, creating a baseline for ongoing improvements aligned with our employee's feedback.

Expanding our employee wellness initiatives, including flexible work procedures and regular wellness programming.

Transitioning to a fully integrated payroll and HR management system, streamlining core processes and improving access to evidence-based workforce data.

With this momentum, we now look ahead. This two-year strategy focuses on seven key priority areas:

- Workforce Planning and Talent Attraction
- Leadership and Succession Development
- Employee Engagement and Retention
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Labour Relations and Union Partnerships
- Policy Development and Compliance
- Operational Excellence in HR Services

Each priority includes measurable action items and achievable timeframes. In a time when the world of work is rapidly shifting toward greater flexibility, digital integration and evolving employee expectations, this strategy positions us to proactively adapt and continue delivering strong public service through engaged, supported, and empowered employees.

Special thanks to Sandi Embree, HR Generalist, for her integral role in developing this strategy. Her dedication and insight have shaped a plan that is both practical and progressive.

Krista Crossman

Director, Human Resources

Our Organization

MAYOR & COUNCIL



CAO's OFFICE



COMMUNITY LIVING

HUMAN RESOURCES

OPERATIONS

PLANNING

FINANCE

FIRE

POLICE



Our HR Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

To deliver strategic and people-focused human resource services that attract, support, and retain a talented and diverse workforce.

MISSION

We aim to create a workplace culture grounded in fairness, equity, opportunity, and transparency, empowering employees to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of our community.

VISION

To foster a high-performing, inclusive, and resilient workforce that reflects and supports our community's vision of health, prosperity, environmental sustainability, and pride in public service.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RESPECT: Valuing the dignity, contributions, and diversity of every employee.

INTEGRITY: Acting with honesty, consistency, and fairness in all HR practices.

COLLABORATION: Partnering across departments, unions, and employees to achieve shared goals.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Taking ownership of outcomes and delivering on commitments.

INCLUSIVITY: Promoting equitable access, representation, and belonging for all.

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING: Using data and best practices to guide HR decisions and policies.

SUSTAINABILITY: Building a future-ready workforce and resilient workplace systems that support long-term organizational health.



What We Heard:

Insights from the December 2024 Employee Survey



In December 2024, we conducted a comprehensive employee survey to better understand the experiences, needs, and priorities of our workforce. The results offered valuable insight into both the strengths we can build upon and the opportunities for improvement in our workplace culture and support systems.

Overall Well-Being & Workload

- While two-thirds (66.7%) of employees reported their overall well-being at work as good or excellent, 46.9% of employees sometimes feel stressed and 29.7% often feel stressed.
- High workloads and competing personal or family responsibilities were cited by 69.7% as key challenges in maintaining work-life balance.

Mental Health & Emotional Support

- Encouragingly, 85.7% of employees are aware of how to access mental health resources, and 90.5% rate the current support as good or fair.
- However, 60.6% expressed that additional stress management training and counselling services would be beneficial.
- While 65.1% feel at least neutral in discussing mental health concerns with HR or their manager, ongoing trust-building in this area remains important.

Physical Health & Safety

- 75.4% of employees feel their physical health is supported in the workplace.
- 70.8% agree or strongly agree that they feel physically safe while performing their jobs.

Career Development & Recognition

- Career development emerged as a key area of opportunity. While 70.3% are satisfied or neutral with current opportunities, 61.5% identified leadership training and online certifications as beneficial.
- 59.4% of employees feel recognized for their contributions, with 68.7% expressing a preference for private or performance-based recognition methods.



Access & Inclusion

- More than half (51.5%) of employees felt neutral or positive about their ability to access available mental health services, indicating potential barriers still exist.

These findings provide a critical foundation for shaping our People Strategy moving forward. They reinforce the importance of addressing stress, enhancing work-life balance, strengthening career growth opportunities, and creating a culture of meaningful recognition and psychological safety.

Situation Analysis 2025



Building on the employee feedback from our survey, this situational analysis reflects a broader look at our internal strengths and challenges, as well as the external factors that influence our ability to support, attract and retain talent.

Our Strengths

- Strong commitment to public service and community impact, echoed by staff pride in their work and connection to the community.
- Stable employment, competitive benefits, and positive job security perceptions among staff.
- Collaborative relationships with union partners.
- Strategic location that supports economic flexibility, with a growing appeal for families and remote workers.
- Growing focus on flexible work arrangements.
- Active participation in regional collaboration.

Our Weaknesses

- Aging workforce and rising number of anticipated retirements creating concern around knowledge loss and succession gaps.
- Informal succession planning and leadership development.
- Inconsistent performance management practices and outdated HR policies.
- Survey results highlighted communication gaps across departments and a desire for more transparency from leadership.
- Lack of clear growth opportunities within roles.



Opportunities

- Digital transformation to modernize HR systems and streamline processes.
- Leveraging Amherst's lifestyle, affordability, and work-life balance as unique recruitment and retention selling points.
- Expansion of wellness initiatives and consistent application of flexible work practices in response to employee feedback.
- Investments in housing and infrastructure that boost overall attractiveness to prospective employees.
- Staff interest in professional development and internal training creates momentum for structured growth pathways.

Threats

- Difficulty attracting skilled workers in our rural setting.
- Outmigration of our youth, contributing to a shrinking labour force.
- On-going regulatory changes (e.g. Nova Scotia labour laws in 2025) requiring HR compliance and updates.
- Potential for burnout and turnover in a small team with growing demands and budget constraints.
- Potential for morale issues if survey feedback is not transparently addressed or followed by visible action.
- Increasing sick time utilization presents a potential threat to operational efficiency and sustainability.



Strategic Goal # 1: Workforce Planning & Talent Attraction

What’s Driving This Goal: Employees shared that workload pressures and stress levels are ongoing challenges. Our situation analysis also highlighted rural recruitment difficulties and the need for proactive workforce planning. This goal focuses on understanding future staffing needs and enhancing our ability to attract and onboard top talent.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Conduct workforce demographic analysis & retirement projections	Completed report identifying workforce gaps & retirements	Data-driven insights for proactive staffing decisions	HR staff March 2026
Modernize & streamline recruitment processes & enhance onboarding processes	Update job postings, process documentation & templates, standardize onboarding checklists & welcome resources	Faster hiring timelines & better candidate experiences. Increased early engagement & smoother transitions for new hires	HR staff, hiring managers Ongoing 2026-2027
Create a “hard-to-recruit” roles strategy	One-page internal guide for key roles	Quicker response to vacancies, better candidate match	HR staff, department input December 2026



Strategic Goal # 2: Leadership & Succession Development

What's Driving This Goal: Many employees expressed interest in leadership development and internal growth, with 61.5% identifying training and certifications as valuable. Coupled with an aging workforce and informal succession planning, this goal helps ensure long-term continuity through leadership readiness and internal advancement.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Identify critical roles, assess future leadership gaps & develop a leadership competency framework	Inventory of key roles, risk areas for succession planning, defined competencies aligned to our strategic needs	Clarity on leadership vulnerabilities, workforce continuity needs & clear guidance for leadership expectations, development & assessment	HR staff, Directors March 2026
Create a formal succession plan	Comprehensive living document outlining key positions & successors	Long-term talent pipeline, increased organizational readiness	HR staff, Directors, HR software Ongoing 2026-2027
Launch leadership development program	Research & schedule appropriate training opportunities for new & aspiring leaders	Improved leadership skills & readiness with internal candidate pool	HR staff, training facilitators December 2026



Strategic Goal # 3: Employee Engagement & Retention

What's Driving This Goal: Despite overall good well-being ratings, employees reported feeling stressed at least sometimes (46.9%), or often (29.7%). Feedback also pointed to a desire for more meaningful recognition and development. This goal supports employee satisfaction by investing in wellness, appreciation, growth opportunities and stronger engagement practices.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Conduct annual employee engagement survey	Summary report	Insight into employee sentiment & drivers of satisfaction	HR staff January 2026
Strengthen employee recognition practices	Enhanced recognition program & calendar of activities	Increased morale & sense of value among staff	HR staff, Directors Ongoing 2026-2028
Provide regular opportunities for employee development	Internal/external learning calendar & tracking system	Improved skill development & employee engagement	HR staff, training budget Ongoing 2026-2028

Strategic Goal # 3: Employee Engagement & Retention Cont'd

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Launch & promote employee wellness initiatives	Calendar of wellness events & participation tracking	Enhanced work-life balance, reduced stress & increased engagement	HR staff, wellness budget, local providers as needed Ongoing 2026-2028
Introduce semi-annual, organization-wide meetings with all staff	All-staff meetings that include presentations on strategic priority progress, departmental news/initiatives & opportunity for direct dialogue with senior leaders	Improved internal communication, greater employee understanding of organizational direction, increased sense of inclusion, transparency & trust in leadership	CAO, Directors, all staff Ongoing 2026-2028



Strategic Goal # 4: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

What's Driving This Goal: Over half of employees felt neutral or somewhat positive about their access to mental health supports and flexible work emerged as a key priority. Our analysis also identified EDI as a growth area. This goal strengthens inclusion, accessibility and belonging for all employees.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Review & update job ads/postings to remove biased language & highlight flexible work	Standardized inclusive job posting templates	Increased accessibility & attractiveness of roles to a diverse talent pool	HR staff February 2026
Integrate EDI training into orientation & manager development programs	EDI training modules for onboarding & leadership	Greater awareness of inclusion practices & improved leadership accountability	HR staff, training resources Ongoing 2026-2028
Document & communicate guidelines for workplace flexibility & accessibility accommodations	Workplace accommodation guide & flexible work procedure updates	Improved support for employees with varying needs & increased workforce participation	HR staff, leadership input October 2026



Strategic Goal # 5: Labour Relations & Union Partnerships

What's Driving This Goal: Employees want more open communication and clarity across departments. While collaborative union relationships are a strength, our analysis emphasized the need for consistency and proactive labour practices. This goal enhances transparency, issue resolution and respectful partnership with our unions.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Host semi-annual meetings with front-line union managers to discuss collective agreement trends & operational challenges	Meeting agendas and minutes	Proactive issue identification & improved bargaining readiness	HR staff, managers Ongoing 2026-2028
Develop process documentation for key labour-related procedures	High-level procedural outlines for common leave or unionized workplace issues	Consistent handling of labour-related matters & reduced administrative uncertainty	HR staff, leadership input December 2026
Schedule & facilitate regular labour-management meetings	Meeting calendar & documented action items	Improved communications & strengthened trust with union representatives	HR staff, union reps, managers, directors Ongoing 2026-2028

COMPLIANCE

POLICIES REGULATIONS

GOVERNANCE SECURITY

CONTROL STRATEGY

Strategic Goal # 6: Policy Development & Compliance

What’s Driving This Goal: While the survey highlighted a desire for clearer communication and more transparency, our internal analysis also identified outdated HR policies. This goal ensures our policy framework is modern, fair and aligned with both legal standards and our values.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Conduct a comprehensive review & gap analysis of existing HR policies	Policy audit report with identified gaps	Clear understanding of policy priorities & areas for modernizations	HR staff, Director input Spring 2026
Create an HR-specific review schedule for Council	Rolling calendar for policy updates & Council approvals	Consistent, proactive approach to keeping policies up-to-date	HR staff, CAO consultation Summer 2026
Create a comprehensive employee handbook using updated/current HR policies & procedures	Completed employee handbook, digital & printable	Centralized resource for employees, managers, excellent onboarding tool, enhanced transparency	HR staff, Manager/ Director/CAO input Spring 2027



Strategic Goal # 7: Operational Excellence in HR Services

What's Driving This Goal: Employees shared a need for better communication and easier access to information. The situation analysis revealed gaps in performance management practices but also identified digital modernization as a major opportunity. This goal improves HR service delivery through streamlined systems, technology and communications.

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Build out & optimize core modules in HR module of Workforce Now	Automated workflows for leave, onboarding, records management etc.	Reduced manual tasks, faster service delivery, improved accuracy & consistency	HR staff Ongoing 2026-2028
Improve performance management processes by establishing clear expectations, consistent evaluation criteria & regular manager training	Defined performance standards, consistent review tools & trained supervisors & managers	Increased accountability, improved feedback quality & an equitable process	HR staff, WFN tools, Directors & Managers February 2026
Launch a quarterly newsletter for staff	Short, engaging newsletters with updates, events, reminders, holidays etc.	Improved internal communications, transparency & employee awareness	HR & communications staff, Director input Spring 2026

Strategic Goal # 7: Operational Excellence in HR Services Cont'd

ACTION ITEM	OUTPUT	OUTCOME	WHO/WHEN
Strengthen operational excellence by implementing clear incident reporting policies with anti-retaliation protections	Updated incident reporting policy, including confidential reporting systems & trained HR staff & managers	Enhanced trust in HR processes, increased reporting, timely issue resolution, a culture of accountability & safety	HR staff, Directors & Managers October 2026

Conclusion

This People Strategy marks a pivotal moment in our efforts to strengthen the Town of Amherst as an employer of choice, one that values its people as the foundation of service excellence. It is both a reflection of how far we've come and a commitment to the work that lies ahead.

As we implement this strategy over the next two years, our focus will remain on turning intent to impact, aligning our actions with our goals, responding to the evolving needs of our workforce, and continuously improving our employee experience. This plan is designed to be both actionable and adaptable, allowing us to stay grounded in our strategic direction while remaining responsive to change.

Ultimately, the success of this strategy will depend on collaboration across all levels of our organization. With leadership and Council support, employee input, and continued investment in our people, we are confident in our ability to build a resilient, engaged, and future-ready workforce.

We look forward to bringing this strategy to life, together.



Great Teams Build Great Communities!



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council
FROM: Jason MacDonald, CAO
DATE: December 15, 2025
SUBJECT: ATV Trail

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

That staff be directed to provide a letter of support for the designation of the Eddy Road as a potential ATV access to the Town, and communicate this with the Municipality of the County of the Cumberland; and further that staff also be directed to develop a preliminary discussion paper on this issue to aid Council in deciding if they want to undertake a full review, including public participation, of providing ATV access to specific streets within Town so that the ATV drivers can access services such as gas, food and lodging, indicating that the Town is in the process of commencing a study to decide if Council eventually wants to permit ATV access to Town streets, and as such ATV access is not guaranteed at this time.

A letter of support was sent for the designation of the Eddy Road as a potential ATV access into town. Since that time, the Eddy Road has now been designated as an access into the town.

Staff from Police, Planning and Operations have been doing some work on this initiative, and a meeting is scheduled for the new year to pull it all together, including how to obtain public input. The discussion paper should be ready for January COW.



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
Jan-23				
	03400-01	SIGNING AUTHORITY POLICY (210-12)	FINANCE	updated january council
	03400-02	BANKING (211-2)	FINANCE	updated january council
	C 02	DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS BYLAW	POLICE	Reviewed at January COW - No changes
Feb-23				
	03800-05	COVID-19 PROPERTY TAX FINANCING PROGRAM POLICY	FINANCE	repealed Feb 2023
	10350-23	DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE	PLANNING	repealed feb 2023
	10350-22	COMMUNITY ARTS COUNCIL COMMITTEE	COMMUNITY LIVING	repealed Feb 2023
	72000-08	COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS	COMMUNITY LIVING	updated Feb 2023
Mar-23				
	P 09	COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT BYLAW	PLANNING	reviewed, no change recommended March COW 2023
	C 10	MOBILE VENDORS ON STREETS AND SIDEWALKS	POLICE	First reading March 2023
	04000-05	OVERTIME - NON-UNION EMPLOYEES (211-21)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	updated March 2023
	10350-14	REQUESTS FOR FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS (210-24)	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	updated March 2023
	10350-24	PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	referred to April 2023
	317400-05	NORTH TYNDAL WELLFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY	PLANNING	updated March 2023
	03700-01	PROCUREMENT POLICY	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	updated March 2023
	66000-01	PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (210-23)	PLANNING	updated March 2023
	04530-01	SALARY ADMINISTRATION (211-27)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	updated March 2023
	3000-10	Inventory of Non Capital Equipment Policy - (New)	Finance	approved March 2023
Apr-23				
	01130-01	TOWN CREST (210)02)	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	amended April 2023
	01130-02	PURCHASE AND USE OF BOTTLED WATER	CLERK	amended April 2023
	03800-02	TAX REDUCTION POLICY (110-02)	FINANCE	updated to Customer Service/HR from Finance. Policy was included in the Operating Budget presentation, no changes recommended.
	03800-04	TAX EXEMPTION POLICY	FINANCE	updated to Customer Service/HR from Finance
	03470-03	USER FEES	FINANCE	updated to Finance from Customer Service/HR
May-23				
	C 09	C TAXI BYLAW	POLICE	given 1st reading at May 2023
	C07	FIRES AND BURNING OF MATERIALS BYLAW	FIRE	given 1st reading at May 2023
	C08	REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BYLAW	FIRE	postponed to a later date pending consultation
	03000-07	EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	FINANCE	amended at May 2023 Council
		Territorial Acknowledgement Policy (NEW)	CLERK	approved May 2023 Council
Jun-23				
	P 04	MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCIES	PLANNING	memo presented to COW, bring back in Fall for revisions



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
		Street Banner Policy	COMMUNITY LIVING	amended June 2023
Sep-23				
	10350-21	AMHERST YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL	COMMUNITY LIVING	Amended Sept 2023
	C 10	MOBILE VENDORS ON STREETS AND SIDEWALKS	POLICE	memo presented to COW from Andrew Fisher
	04530-01	SALARY ADMINISTRATION (211-27)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	Amended Sept 2023
Oct-23				
	72000-08	COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS	COMMUNITY LIVING	Amended Oct 2023
	C 04	COMPANION ANIMAL BYLAW	POLICE	received first reading in October 2023
Nov-23				
	10350-31	INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE POLICY	COMMUNITY LIVING	amended Nov 2023
	10350-21	AMHERST YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL	COMMUNITY LIVING	amendments approved Nov 2023
	C 04	COMPANION ANIMAL BYLAW	POLICE	received 2nd reading in Nov 2023
Dec-23				
	66000-04	PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (PACE) PROGRAM POLICY	PLANNING	recommended no change
	10350-29	POVERTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE POLICY	COMMUNITY LIVING	Amended
	04500-06	SUBSTANCE USE POLICY	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	forwarded to January
	P 06	TRANSIENT AUTOMOBILE VENDORS	PLANNING	recommended no change
Jan-24				
		Noise bylaw	POLICE	recommend to not proceed
		USER FEE POLICY	CLERK	amended
Feb-24				
	10350-08	APPOINTMENTS OF CITIZENS TO BOARDS (210-11)	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	repealed Feb 2024
	NEW	EMPLOYMENT EQUITY POLICY	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	Approved Feb 2024
Mar-24				
Apr-24				
	10359 24	Proceedings of Council Policy	Clerk	
	10350 32	Council committees Policy	Clerk	
	4000 10	Vacation Holiday Policy Non Union employees	HR	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	4000 11	Maternity Parental and Adoption Leave policy	HR	
May-24				
	04000-10	VACATION/HOLIDAY - NON-UNION EMPLOYEES (211-31)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	
Jun-24	04000-10	VACATION/HOLIDAY - NON-UNION EMPLOYEES (211-31)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	amended June 2024
	10350-28	APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS	Clerk	amended June 2024
		AUXILLIARY POLICY BYLAW	POLICE	given 2nd reading
Sep-24				
	03800-01	TAX COLLECTION POLICY (110-01)	FINANCE	approved Sept Council
Oct 2024 -NONE				
Nov-24		new council orientation		
Dec-24				
Jan-25				
	03000-08	HOSPITALITY EXPENSE POLICY	FINANCE	Amended January Council
	03000-07	EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY	FINANCE	Amended January Council
	03000-05	AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERNCE POLICY	FINANCE	Approved January Council Status quo
	10350-26	COUNCIL CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	CLERK	Approved January Council Status quo
Feb-25				
	10350-28	APPOINTMENTS OF MEMBERS OF COUNCIL TO EXTERNAL BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS	Clerk	Amended February Council
		Sidewalk/Curb Construction Policy	Operations	Amended February Council



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
Mar-25	03800-03	INSTALLMENT BILLING POLICY (110-03) Themed Crosswalk Policy (new)	FINANCE Community Living	
	10350-25	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW - CAO	HR	
	10350-30	ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE POLICY	COMMUNITY LIVING	
Apr-25	03800-02	TAX REDUCTION POLICY (110-02)	FINANCE	
	03800-04	TAX EXEMPTION POLICY	FINANCE	
	03470-03	USER FEES	FINANCE	
	04530-02	EMPLOYEE COMPUTER PURCHASED POLICY (211-29)	HR	
May-25		Ice Allocation Policy	OPERATIONS	
		Sign Rental Policy - Stadium	OPERATIONS	
	03400-01	SIGNING AUTHORITY POLICY (210-12)	FINANCE	
Jun-25				
	04500-04	SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE POLICY	HR	
	P 05	VACANT BUILDING BY LAW	PLANNING	
	03700-01	PROCUREMENT POLICY	Communications	
Sep-25	66150-01	DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES POLICY (210-21)	PLANNING	amended Sept 2025
	04500-02	VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY	HR	Approved Sept 2025
		Fire and Burning of Materials Bylaw (C-07)	Fire	First reading Sept 2025
		Surplus Fill Policy	Operations	Approved Sept 2025
		Asset Management Policy	Operations	Approved Sept 2025
	New			deferred to Oct
Oct-25				
	72000-04	ARTS & CULTURE POLICY (211-38)	COMMUNITY LIVING	Approved Oct 2025
		Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy	Exec	deferred



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	10350-26	COUNCIL CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	CLERK	Approved Oct 2025
		Corrective Action Policy (new)	HR	Approved Oct 2025
		Land Sales and Development Policy	Planning	Approved Oct 2025
		Fire and Burning of Materials Bylaw (C-07)	Fire	2nd reading October 2025
Nov-25				
	10350-15	WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO COUNCIL (210-25)	CLERK	
		DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY (211-37)	FINANCE	
Dec-25				
	P 08	LEASED LAND COMMUNITY BYLAW	PLANNING	
	04000-06	RENUMERATION FOR ACTING POSITIONS (211-22)	HR	
Jan-26				
	31600-02	Street Light Policy	Operations	
	10350-17	MEMBERSHIP ON NATIONAL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES (211-32)	CLERK	
	B 02-1	DEED TRANSFER TAX BYLAW	FINANCE	
	10350-18	MEMBERSHIP IN CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS (211-33)	CLERK	
	P 07	SUBDIVISION BYLAW	PLANNING	
	04000-09	EMPLOYEE/FAMILY ASSISTANCE (211-30)	HR	
	66580-01	NEW SUBDIVISION STREETS - FINAL SUBDIVISION APPROVAL PRIOR TO STREET PAVING	PLANNING	
Feb-26				
	04000-11	MATERNITY, PATERNAL AND ADOPTION LEAVE POLICY (20071126)	HR	
	P 03	CIVIC ADDRESS BY LAW	PLANNING	
	72000-01	RECOGNITION OF ATHLETIC ACHIEVERS (210-22)	COMMUNITY LIVING	
	10350-01	RECOGNITION OF SERVICE OF BOARDS (210-01)	CLERK	
	03000-05	AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE POLICY	FINANCE	
	03450-03	Debt Management Policy	Finance	
Mar-26				
		Sale of Beer/Liquor - Robbs Park	Operations	
		Beer Garden Policy - Stadium	Operations	
		PACE BYLAW	FINANCE	
	02300-03	SALE/DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT (211-19)	FINANCE	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	10350-05	INQUIRIES FROM COUNCIL (210-07)	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	
	03000-04	ROUNDING OF CASH TRANSACTIONS	FINANCE	
	04500-03	SCENT REDUCTION POLICY	HR	
	D 06	BUILDING BY LAW	PLANNING	
	04000-08	ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION (211-24)	HR	
	A 05	HERITAGE PROPERTIES	PLANNING	
	D 19	Sanitary Sewer Rates	Finance	
	10350-20	CODE OF CONDUCT OF ELECTED MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS	CLERK	
	04000-12	PERSONNEL POLICY & CODE OF ETHICS	HR	
May-26	C 01	BY LAW RESPECTING THE AMHERST BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS	POLICE	
		Vehicular Idling Control Policy	Operations	
	03000-04	Rounding of Cash Transactions	Finance	
	05000-01	RECORDS MANAGEMENT (211-26)	CLERK	
	10350-19	SCHOLARSHIP AND BUSARY POLICY (NEW)	CLERK	
	02300-01	SALE OF USABLE TOWN OWNED LAND (211-07)	PLANNING	
	02300-02	SALE OF NON-USABLE TOWN OWNED LAND (211-08)	PLANNING	
	68500-01	FEMALE POLICE CONSTABLE AND EXPENSE (220-01)	POLICE	
Jun-26				
	68300-01	PERMANENT FIREFIGHTERS (221-01)	FIRE	
	68300-05	RESPECTING THE MANAGEMENT OF THE VOLUNTEER COMPONENT OF THE AMHERST FIRE DEPARTMENT	FIRE	
	03600-01	Investment Policy	Finance	
	10350-11	GIFTS, CARDS, FLOWERS	CLERK/COMM	
	A 07	ALTERNATIVE VOTING BYLAW 2018	CLERK	
	10350-10	RECOGNITION OF RETIRING MEMBERS OF COUNCIL (210-14)	CLERK	
Sep-26	C 11	ALARM BYLAW INTRUSION ROBBERY AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS	POLCE	
		Snow and Ice Management Policy	Operations	
	05000-04	ROUTINE ACCESS POLICY	CLERK	
	68300-02	NEW FIRE STATION, ALBION STREET (221-02)	FIRE	
	72200-01	R. H. SMITH BEQUEST LIBRARY (274-01)	COMMUNITY LIVING	
Oct-26				
	03450-01	CAPITAL BUDGETING (211-14)	FINANCE	
	01000-01	MEDIA POLICY (210-19)	COMMUNICATIONS	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	04000-04	INQUIRIES REGARDING EMPLOYEES (211-16)	HR	
	04000-07	HIRING POLICY (211-23)	HR	
Nov-26		Solid Waste Bylaw	Operations	
	03450-02	CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN (CIP) FRAMEWORK/BUDGET POLICY (211-36)	FINANCE	
	03450-04	Budget Management Policy	Finance	
	05000-02	INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION/TECHNOLOGY USAGE POLICY	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	
Dec-26				
	68300-04	FIRE INSPECTION POLICY	FIRE	
	31600-23	STREET NAMING POLICY	PLANNING	
	31000-01	Standard Specifications for Municipal Services	OPERATIONS	
	68000-03	TRAFFIC AUTHORITY	POLICE	
	31600-26	STREET RENAMING COPP LANE TO ERNIE LANE POLICY	PLANNING	
Jan-27				
		Catch Basins and Laterals	Operations	
	03000-10	Inventory of Non Capital Equipment Policy	Finance	
	31700-04	NORTH TYNDAL LAND ACQUISTION (241-06)	PLANNING	
	02000-01	USE OF FACILITIES - DOMINION PUBLIC BUILDING	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	
	66000-02	POLICY FOR MPS, LUB, SUBDIVISION BYLAW AND DA AGREEMENT ADOPTION AND ADMENDMENT	PLANNING	
	66150-02	ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND SUMMARY OFFENCE TICKETS (211-28)	POLICE	
Feb-27				
		PACE Bylaw	Finance	
	C 02	Discharge of Firearms Bylaw	Police	
	P 04	MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCIES	PLANNING	
	04000-03	STAFF TRAINING (211-06)	HR	
	66400-01	HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE	PLANNING	
Mar-27				
	72000-08	Community Support Grants Policy	Community Living	
		Adopt A Garden	Operations	
	66000-03	POLICY FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND NOTIFICATION	PLANNING	
	C 03	LOITERING BYLAW	POLICE	
	66000-01	PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (210-23)	PLANNING	updated March 2023
Apr-27				
	C 10	MOBILE VENDORS ON STREETS AND SIDEWALKS	POLICE	
	04000-05	OVERTIME - NON-UNION EMPLOYEES (211-21)	CUSTOMER SERVICE/HR	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	04500-01	Safety Policy (211-25)	FIRE	
	01700-01	REPORTING ACCIDENTS (211-03)	FIRE	
	31600-09	Paving New Residential Subdivision Streets (230-11)	Operations	
	02000-03	NAMING PUBLIC LANDS AND TOWN OWNED FACILITIES	CLERK	
	10350-24	PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL	Clerk	
	317400-05	NORTH TYNDAL WELLFIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY	PLANNING	
Jun-27				
	02300-03	Sale/Disposal of Surplus Equipment	Finance	
	C 09	C TAXI BYLAW	POLICE	
	C07	FIRES AND BURNING OF MATERIALS BYLAW	FIRE	
Sep-27				
		Street Rating System	Operations	
	04000-01	RECOGNITION OF EMPLOYEES (210-15)	HR	
	04000-02	SUGGESTION AWARDS (211-16)	HR	
	04000-14	PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY	HR	
Oct-27				
	01130-01	TOWN CREST (210)02)	CLERK	
Nov-27				
		Ice Helmet Policy	Operations	
		Smoke Free Recreational Places Bylaw	Operations	
	03450-02	Capital Investment Plan (CIP) Framework/Budget Policy	Finance	
Dec-27				
	03000-03`	Fund Raising	Finance	
Jan-28				
		Sidewalk Inspection and Maintenance	Operations	
		Street Inspection and Maintenance	Operations	
	03400-02	Banking Policy	Finance	
Feb-28				
	C 04	COMPANION ANIMAL BYLAW	POLICE	

CAO Task Report

December 2025

Task Updates:

<p>Task: Municipal Boundary Change Board has issued an order to approve pending Board notification. Board notification will not be sent until we confirm that the Town and County has adopted all required policies and bylaws. We can give second reading to our Sewer Bylaw in January. Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Task: Committee Review The only item left is to repeal the Joint Councils Policy, need to coordinate with Cumberland County. Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Task: Request to Present – Social Media and Communication Memo included in the December COW agenda package. Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Task: Extended Producer Responsibility Final agreement has now been signed. Status: Completed</p>
<p>Task: Nova Scotia Strong Mayor Powers Oxford and Truro will sign. Cumberland will sign after providing input. Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Task: ATV Trail Letter of support has been sent. The Eddy Road has been designated an access to the town. Police, Planning, Operations and Community Living will develop a discussion paper for January COW. Status: In Progress</p>
<p>Task: Marshview Drive Sale of Lots - Tom Mattinson Agreement with Mr. Mattinson has been signed and is with the lawyers. Status: In Progress</p>

Monthly Report

Community Living

December 2025

Over the months of November and December the Community Living Department has been working on the following things:

Events:

- Christmas Markets page
- Tree for Boston
- Christmas Light Up and Parade
- New Years Eve Planning
- Video Christmas Messaging

Community Well Being:

- Accessible playground meeting with designer
- Working with partners on food insecurity issues
- Grant writing for Accessible playground (Provincial) and African Heritage Month
- Working with AYTC, Anchor
- Demographic Strategic Plan report writing and finalizing

Community Health Navigator:

- Separate report attached

Active Living:

- Learn to Lead
- Multisport
- 55+ Games planning
- Wellness Committee
- Wayfinding Trail signage

Marketing/Communication

- Brand strategy, marketing plan, and communications plan
- Radio station Mayoral address
- Website updates including public notices, street closures
- Media relations activities
- U17 Video

Task Updates:

Task: Accessible Playground

Update: Met with Design company and they are working on design

Status: Waiting on design plans, working on submission for provincial funding

Task: "A" Special Day

Update: Working on concept of a multi-day music festival.

Status: Will be scheduling meeting for January with interested partners

Task: Green Space Veterans Park

Update: Scheduling a meeting in January with Indigenous elders and Indigenous Affairs to discuss multiple initiatives including this one.

Status: Waiting on confirmation of available dates to meet.

Community Navigator
Town of Amherst Council Report
December 2025

November was a busy month of meetings and organizing events. There is a lot of planning and organizing in the works for the remainder of the year.

Completed:

- Met with the physician adviser with Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (CRHCC) to discuss the physicians holiday party.
 - I will be providing small tokens to on-call staff who will not be in attendance on behalf of the Cumberland Physician Retention Committee.
- North Nova Residents had a 2-day training session in Amherst on November 6-7. I provided support with meals and a team building event for the 1st year residents on the Thursday evening.
 - It was a great opportunity to network with the residents who will soon be completing the program and be looking for full-time employment.
- Met with the site lead for CRHCC via phone to discuss what funding options are available to them.
 - The staff holiday party was cancelled due to low ticket sales.
 - Discussed how to pivot and use the items purchased as prizes for staff. Looking at doing draws so that all hospital staff will be able to participate.
 - Received a request to assist with a hot chocolate bar event where staff can come together at the hospital for a small break.
- Provided a lunch of wraps for approximately 20 staff members who attended a Simulation (SIMS) training on November 14th. The organizers were very happy with the turnout for the training.
- Attended the CRHCC holiday market/fair where I supplied gifts and prizes.
- Met with my Nova Scotia Navigators group for our monthly meeting.
 - Discussed OHPR funding, deadlines, reporting.
 - We have confirmed that we will have someone from OHPR attend the next meeting to answer questions directly as there are some new navigators to the group.
- On behalf of the Cumberland Physician Retention Committee, there were 11 welcome and supports baskets to be purchased and delivered.
 - NS Health did a site visit for another possible recruitment opportunity with a physician from Moncton. There are no plans on him moving to Amherst and he did not want a community tour at this time.
- Met with NS Health and leads from the physician recruitment committee to discuss an information dinner with the four residents currently assigned to Cumberland.
 - Dinner held on December 14th and will include a presentation from NS Health, the Recruitment committee and myself.

- Similar events will be held in Pictou and Truro so that all of the North Nova residents get the information they need to make a decision on their intended employment.
- In a Physician Recruitment report presented from NS Health it is noted that Cumberland currently has the following vacancies:
 - Family: 3-Amherst, 1.5 Pugwash, 0.8 Springhill, 0.6 Pugwash
 - Obstetrics/gynecology (OB/GYN): 0.1
 - General Practitioner Oncology (GPO) 0.2

Coming up:

- Monthly meeting with Nova Scotia navigators.
- Research and plan upcoming recruitment conferences.
- Plan recognition events for physicians and all staff.
- Prepare for upcoming site visits for possible physician recruitment.
- Plan and order recognition items for staff.

Amy Menzies

amenzies@amherst.ca

902 694 0831

Monthly Report

Corporate

December 2025

IT Services:

Completed Server updates.

Installed a new version of VMWare on one of the servers with different licensing. Testing the server and configuring it to work in our environment. Connected the Server to the Network hard drives.

Looked at what's needed for Capital Budget 2026-27

Working on the Hardware and Software Operating budget for 2026/27

Removed the Firewall from the Maccan Water Shed

Worked with service provider on allowing ports for the new SCADA System.

Continuing to work on reviewing the IT asset list to purge any old or unusable items.

Working on Billing issues with Bell Land line accounts

Had the sound system in the Conference Room at CCUBIC repaired.

Day to Day IT issues.

Procurement:

ID	Type	Project	Process Type	Budget Type	Released	Closed	App'd	App'd By
	RFP	Demo 77 Station Street	Regular	O			X	CAO
	RFQ	Replacement Robb's Dugouts	Regular	C			X	CAO
	RFP	Crime Prevention Vehicle	Regular	C			X	CAO
	RFP	Police Vehicle	Regular	C			X	CAO
	ALT	Siren/Lights package – Fire Chief Vehicle	Regular	C			X	CAO

Other:

E-11 Customer service

There were 52 cases opened in November

Top categories this month were: Solid Waste / Bin replacements or repairs (14 cases), Application for Development or Building Permit (11 cases), Dangerous/Unsanitary Premises (5 cases).

Task: Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy.

Staff are in the process of reviewing other similar type language and practices of other municipalities. There are not many with a similar policy to this one. We have asked our legal representatives to review the draft for reasonableness. This will hopefully result in a draft returning to Council in the new year.

Monthly Report

Finance

December 2025

FINANCE

The second quarter financial review has been completed and was presented to the Audit Committee on December 10. Second quarter results were favourable for both the General and Water Operating budgets.

Work has commenced on the capital and operating budgets for the 2026/27 fiscal year. Capital budget submissions from departments have been compiled and will be reviewed by the CAO and Director of Finance. Work on the operating budget commenced in November and will continue over the next few months. The initial operating budget updates are due from departments in mid December.

TAX / ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE / COLLECTIONS

2025/26 Final Tax Sale Notice – There were 22 notices sent on November 14, 2025, with a response date of December 5, 2025.

2025/26 – Final Water Notices – There were 48 final water notices sent on November 21, 2025, with a response date of December 5, 2025.

2025 Assessment Appeals – The 2025 assessment appeal inventory from PVSC has 79 accounts with appeals as of December 1, 2025.

	# of Accounts Appealing		Appeal Completed as of Dec 1/25	Pending as of Dec 1/25	Withdrawn as of Dec 1/25	Outstanding Appeals as of Dec 1/25	Appeals Successful as of Dec 1/25	Loss of Assessment Value	Amount of Revenue Reduction	Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal Status
Residential /Resource	67	\$32,370,100	51	0	4	12	7	\$150,200	\$2,508.34	1
Commercial	12	\$17,240,100	10	0	0	2	5	(\$1,130,400)	(\$50,528.88)	3
TOTAL	79	\$49,610,200	61	0	4	14	12	(\$980,200)	(\$48,020.54)	4

Property Sales/Tax Certificates– There were 10 residential and 1 commercial property sales in November as well as 24 tax certificate requests completed during the month of November.

WATER/SEWER

Preparations for 3rd quarter billing are underway. There were several meters reported from the last reading period that require repair or replacement and most residents have been cooperative in calling to make service appointments to have this work done after receiving request letters to do so. Meter reading for 3rd quarter will begin the first week of January.

TASK UPDATES

Task: No outstanding tasks.

Monthly Report

Fire Services

December 2025

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Weekly Fire Fighter Training

During November, the Amherst Fire Department focused its training initiatives on strengthening operational readiness and team coordination. Key areas of emphasis included motor vehicle extrication refresher and company operations.

Rules of Air Management (ROAM) Training

Members of the Amherst Fire Department recently completed comprehensive ROAM training designed to enhance firefighter safety and operational effectiveness. The program consisted of 75 minutes of classroom instruction followed by 90 minutes of practical, hands-on exercises. Key components of the training included: Air Consumption Drills, Relay Breathing Techniques and Last Breath Drills. This focused training reinforces critical skills, strengthens operational readiness, and ensures our firefighters are prepared to perform safely and effectively in challenging environments.

NFPA Fire Chief's Forum

From November 3–6, Chief Jones had the privilege of attending the Fire Chiefs Forum at the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) International Headquarters in Quincy, Massachusetts. This event, fully funded by NFPA, was designed for leaders of Fire Chiefs Associations across Canada and the United States. It provided an executive-level platform for collaboration on emerging issues, challenges, innovative technologies, standards, and networking opportunities. Key topics discussed included:

- NFPA standards development process
- Fire protection research and its impact
- Perspectives on construction fires (Boston and Charlotte)
- Los Angeles Wildfire Storm 2025
- Global safety challenges
- The single stair conundrum
- NFPA regional operations and standards consolidation
- Community risk reduction strategies
- NFPA certification and training
- Advancements in non-PFAS PPE for firefighter safety

This forum allowed Chief Jones the ability to expand his professional network by connecting with fire service leaders across North America. The insights gained will strengthen the Chief's leadership approach and inform operational improvements within the Amherst Fire Department.

EVENTS

During the month of November, the department participated in the Remembrance Day ceremony and the Town of Amherst Christmas parade. In addition, the Amherst Fire Firefighter's Association held their annual toy drive at the Amherst Walmart. Thank-you to Walmart and the community for your support.

RECRUITMENT

We are actively seeking 8–12 new members to join our team. Interested individuals can learn more at: www.amherst.ca/volunteer-firefighter.html

INCIDENT RESPONSES – November 2025

	<u>Town of Amherst</u>	<u>District 2</u>
Carbon monoxide detector activated	1	
Check Air Quality	1	
Pull station activated		
Electrical Fire	1	
Flue Fire	1	
Medical assist		
Monitored alarm	4	
Motor vehicle accident	3	6
Mutual Aid		1
Smell of smoke	1	
Smoke alarm activated		
Wildland fire / open land	1	1
Vehicle fire		1
Total events	13	9
Total responses (Year to date)	276	

TASK UPDATES

Task: No open tasks at this time

Monthly Report

Human Resources

December 2025

Current Recruitment

Police Cadet Program: We are pleased to have sponsored Cameron MacLeod as the successful applicant for the police cadet program for 2025. Cam is currently attending the cadet program at the Atlantic Police Academy, and we look forward to hosting him in the coming weeks for the on-the-job training component of the program.

APD has also been awarded two student positions in the January 2026 police cadet class. Applicant screening is currently being finalized.

APD Corporal: the recent promotion of Tom Wood to the Inspector position facilitates the need for a competition for the Corporal vacancy created from the promotion. Interviews for the Corporal position were held December 9 and a recommendation is forthcoming.

Other HR News

HR Policy Review

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

Market Review

HR staff have concluded the triannual salary market review. Findings and recommendations will be presented to Council in the New Year.

Wellness Committee

The wellness committee was busy with preparation and execution of our staff Christmas party, which was held on December 6. It was a great event! Thanks to the members of the committee for their assistance and to all staff that attended.

Long Service Awards

Long Service Awards were presented at our annual staff Christmas party. This year’s recipients are:

Wendy Herrett:	10 Year Award
Tasha Estabrooks:	20 Year Award
Kevin Girouard:	20 Year Award
Paul Hawkes:	30 Year Award

We are very grateful for their many years of dedication and service to the Town of Amherst!

People's Choice Awards

A survey was conducted for a new employee recognition initiative in which nominees were voted for by their peers for specific award categories. The initiative was a great success, and we were pleased to present the category winners with their award at the Christmas party. The winners were:

The Glue Award:	Jason MacDonald, Sarah Wilson & Krista Crossman
The Ray of Sunshine Award:	Tegan Tran
The Human Shield Award:	Kim Jones
The MacGyver Award:	Jay Crossman
The Silent Hero Award:	Megan Legere
The One-Liner Award:	Ann Estabrooks

Many other staff members were recognized as honorable mentions in each category highlighting the valuable contributions our staff make every day. Thanks to all for their participation.

People Strategy

HR staff are pleased to be presenting our two-year People Strategy to Council in December. Following Council's review, we will introduce the strategy to all staff and begin implementation of the action items.

APA Labour-Management Meeting

Our semi-annual labour-management meeting was held on December 5, 2025. The meeting was productive and resulted in the clarification of a particular contract item to support consistent interpretation and smoother administration of the provision.

Annual Employee Survey

Staff are also preparing for our next annual staff survey, which will be released in January 2026.

Foundations of Belonging Training

Staff continue to complete the training modules for the Foundations of Belonging training that was rolled out in October. This training directly supports the goals of our strategic plan and the AIDE plan to *"provide educational opportunities for elected officials and employees on respect, cultural awareness and the promotion of and protection of human rights."*

We look forward to feedback from all participants as we consider a second phase of training.

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.

HR staff have begun preparations for payroll year-end.

Monthly Report

Operations

December 2025

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

RECREATION & HORTICULTURE

- Dickey Park washroom open 9:00am to 5:00pm daily.
- Ongoing cleaning, ice maintenance and facility maintenance.
- Amherst Stadium Closed December 25, December 26 and January 1.
- Amherst Figuring Skating Club hosted the Nutcracker on Ice December 11 and 12.
- Amherst Jr. A Ramblers playing New Years Eve at 2:00pm at Amherst Stadium followed by Fireworks from the stadium at 6:00pm.
- U18 AAA Major Stadium Series went very well and was well received by all teams involved.
- CCUBIC will be closed from December 24 to January 5.

PUBLIC WORKS

- Public Works staff have completed winterizing hydrants.
- Staff repaired one broken watermain, near the hospital, and repaired one plugged sewer main on East Pleasant Street.
- We've had an early start to winter this year, staff have already had to plow the streets and sidewalks on 3 occasions, hauled snow from the downtown core, and the salt truck has been dispatched several times due to icy road conditions.
- Staff patched potholes on 7 days in November, going into the winter season staff will be regularly out with the asphalt recycler, typically 3 days per week.
- The frame and lighting for the outdoor rink are being assembled, staff will start making ice when the weather conditions are favorable.
- Operations staff are completing their Capital and Operating budgets for 2026/25.
- The library security alarm was updated and now includes 2 "panic" buttons for staff.
- Staff are updating the Paser ratings for streets, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- A failed heat pump was replaced at the library.

SOLID WASTE

- The Solid Waste Hotline (902-667-5141) received 211 calls in November.
- Staff continue to share sorting information, collection updates, and safety reminders on the Cumberland Region Solid Waste Facebook page.
- With the winter weather now upon us, staff will also be promoting the Solid Waste App, where residents can sign up for collection reminders and weather-related cancellation notifications.
- Over the past few months, staff have been busy preparing for the launch of the EPR for PPP Program.
- The Cumberland County Solid Waste App has been updated to reflect the new sorting requirements that took effect on December 1st.
- Meetings were held with Circular Materials to discuss Promotion and Education.
- An updated sorting guide has been developed and will be mailed to residents upon request.
- Staff met with Miller Waste's collection crew to review program changes and expectations regarding the sticker of bags. Crews were provided with a quick reference guide highlighting the changes.
- The program officially launched on December 1st through social media, where posts have received strong engagement and numerous shares.



- Staff met with the Environmental Club at ARHS to support their interest in promoting proper waste separation and improving the school’s current waste management setup.
- Staff have also been working with a new residential development in Amherst to ensure new tenants begin on the right track with proper sorting practices.

Upcoming:

- Quarterly meter reading will start the first week of January.
- Ongoing snow and ice management operations of streets, sidewalks, and the VIA rail platform
- Staff will be starting the accessibility renovations of the library seminar room in January.

TASK UPDATES

Task: GRID Funding Applications

Update: Funding applications have been submitted for the wastewater treatment plant UV disinfection system and for the extension of services to expand the Industrial Park

Status: Complete

Task: Capital Budget Amendment West Victoria Street Engineering Design

Update: Capital Budget was amended, and the work is ongoing. Engineering design is at 50% complete.

Status: Complete

Task: User Fee Policy

Update: Memo with respect to off season stadium rentals included in December COW package.

Status: In Progress

Monthly Report

Planning & Economic Development

December 2025

Planning & Development

The attached report outlines permits issued in November and provides a 2024/2025 year-to-date comparison. Permits issued for new dwelling units to-date total 154 units, far exceeding those issued to-date in 2024.

The NS Regulatory and Appeals Board denied an appeal of Council's approval of Six Point Star Homes' development agreement for an apartment complex at 112 Victoria Street West. The proposal includes two 16-unit and three 8-unit buildings. The developer has indicated a spring 2026 construction start.

Council approved new planning documents (MPS & LUB) in November. Provincial review of the documents can take up to 90 days. Assuming no changes are required by the province, the new documents will become effective following that review. In addition to communicating the new regulations to developers, staff are preparing guides and other materials to assist the public in their understanding of what will be permitted.

Delivery of a draft Transit Feasibility Study has been delayed by 2-3 weeks and will now be provided before the Christmas holiday.

Staff are preparing a 12-month report for the Housing Accelerator Fund, after meeting with the fund administrators. The Town is in an excellent position to meet the proposed housing targets, which will ensure full payment of the funding.

New business recognition certificates were presented to SignPost Commercial Consulting, WayCool Refrigeration, Jake Spence's Auto Spa, and CheeseCurds & Habaneros from members of Council, and their businesses were promoted on the Town's social media page.

The Tourism Industry Association of NS held its annual NS Tourism Summit from December 1st to 3rd in Halifax. Town staff attended, along with representatives from the Municipality of Cumberland, to learn about the industry's perspective on the Province's implementation of the new NS Tourism Sector, 5-Year Strategic Plan, and how our region, through ExploreCumberland and other tourism projects, can adopt these strategies.

Based on the results from the North Tyndal Wellfield property owner engagement project, staff met with the land agent hired under the Town's Nova Scotia Nature Agreement to discuss options to engage the highest probability opportunities. The trade for JD Irving land is in process, and a portion of the Nature Agreement funding is needed to complete this trade. With consideration for this amount, the land agent has been hired to negotiate a high-priority property within the North Tyndal Wellfield using the remaining available funding. Both are expected to close the first of February 2026.

Work continues on the sale of the remaining properties in the Industrial Park and the Business Park Expansion project. Staff are working with the CBDC to register both the current park and the expansion under the Atlantic Canada Certified Sites Program. Being a certified site under the program boosts our visibility and connectivity with investors looking for development-ready industrial and commercial land in Atlantic Canada. Unique from other investment support agencies, development inquiries go directly to the Town and not through an outside organization.

Staff are also negotiating with landowners in the RaceTrack Road area to secure the area for a future industrial park expansion. The Town will enter into Purchase and Sale Agreements for 7 of the 8 properties by the end of December, with the remaining agreement is expected early 2026.

Town staff attended the Atlantic Economic Council Business Outlook Conference in Halifax. This annual event presents an overview of the state of the economy in Atlantic Canada and a forecast of pressures and impactors to be aware of in the coming year.

The Town of Amherst 2025 Fall Business Engagement Forum has been postponed to an early spring date. It was agreed that the information learned at the Dalhousie University engagement session should be considered to help the development of topics and the discussion format of the Forum. The University has provided the minutes of the engagement session, and they will soon release a larger report on outcomes from all communities across the province they visited.

A successful series of Workshops and Events was held across the County during Small Business Week, including the NS Works Fall Job Fair and the Cumberland Chamber of Commerce Business Awards Gala. At the Gala, this year's recipient of the Town of Amherst Community Support and Service Award was Nova Social Media. Participants at all events expressed appreciation for the support of these workshops and engagement opportunities.

The Amherst Farmers' Market is moving into the Christmas season with a collection of new vendors and seasonal offerings. Town staff are working with market organizers to support the development of a marketing campaign to promote the market as a Christmas shopping destination.

Task Updates

<p>Task: Nature Challenge Fund Land Acquisition Status: Survey and legal work to complete an approved land trade with JDI is ongoing. Additional acquisitions have been identified and may be on Council agendas for consideration in January 2026. Status: In-progress</p>
<p>Task: 112 West Victoria Street DA Second Reading The appeal of Council's approval was denied. Construction is anticipated to commence in spring 2026. Status: Completed</p>
<p>Task: Development/Building Permit Fee Review Report included in the December COW package. Status: Completed</p>
<p>Task: Economic Forum Staff are reviewing the Dalhousie University "What We Heard Report" and will bring a memo detailing a go forward plan in January 2026. Status: In-progress</p>
<p>Task: 8 Lower LaPlanche Street Purchase & Sale Agreement The estate has been settled, and the terms of the transaction have been agreed upon. Town solicitor has been given instructions to finalize the purchase and sale agreement. Status: Ongoing</p>

Permits Issued: November 2025

PERMIT APPLICATIONS								For the Month of November
Number	PID	Civc Address	New Units	Work Type	Bldg Type	Proposed Use	Permit Fee	Value
C2025-114	25469669	21 Townshend Ave	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	165.00	200,000.00
D2025-115	25342213	138 South Albion St	0	Construction	Commercial	Com - Permanent Sign	50.00	10,200.00
C2025-116	25026667	86 East Pleasant St	0	Construction	Garage/Carport/Shed	Deck	58.00	25,000.00
B2025-118	25342213	138 South Albion St	0	Renovate	Commercial	Restaurants	75.00	10,000.00
D2025-117	25342213	138 South Albion St	0	Construction	Commercial	Com - Permanent Sign	50.00	10,000.00
B2025-119	25009689	37 Albion St	0	Renovate	Commercial	Office	350.00	120,000.00
C2025-120	25521741	3 Vista Dr	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	144.00	270,000.00
C2025-121	25521758	5 Vista Dr	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	144.00	270,000.00
C2025-122	25521766	7 Vista Dr	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	144.00	270,000.00
B2025-123	25002221	203 Willow St	0	Construction	Garage/Carport/Shed	Deck	63.00	12,000.00
B2025-125	25368796	130 South Albion St	0	Renovate	Commercial	Retail Lumber and BLDG St	300.00	100,000.00
D2025-124	25022930	26 Laplanche St	0	Construction	Commercial	Com - Permanent Sign	50.00	6,500.00
Total	12		4				1,593.00	1,303,700.00

YTD Comparison

ACTIVITY REPORT							For Month of November 2025-11-30
Type	Nov 2024			Nov 2025			
	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	
Single Family	2	1	154,500	4	4	1,010,000	
Duplex/Semi	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Apartments	1	0	800	0	0	0	
Other Residential	0	0	0	2	0	37,000	
Commercial	0	0	0	6	0	256,700	
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	
Total	3	1	155,300	12	4	1,303,700	
Year To Date	100	76	18,314,150	123	154	38,838,966	

Monthly Report

Police Services

December 2025

TRAINING:

Critical Incident Command: Corporal Mark McNair attended the Critical Incident Command Course from November 24th to the 28th. This course was hosted by Halifax Regional Police and covered topics concerning the frontline police response to a major or critical incident in which normal police resources may be overwhelmed and required a tactical or prolonged response. Corporal McNair is one of several officers that has received this type of training in preparing for a critical incident.

Auxiliary Training – Canadian Law and Police Authorities: On November 22nd and 23rd, our four Auxiliary Police Officers received Canadian Criminal Code training thanks to Curtis Fudge, who is the Law Instructor at the Atlantic Police Academy. This two-day training course covered many of the basics of Canadian Criminal Law, Police Authority and other related topics. Many of those in attendance advised that this session helped pull together a lot of what they have learned over the last few months.

Surveillance Techniques – Cst Jeff Goodwin, one of our Street Crime members attended the Surveillance Techniques Course from November 17th to the 21st. This course is hosted by the RMCP and provides instruction for conducting covert surveillance and covers any different scenarios including in-depth hands-on training. Surveillance of criminal targets is one of our most useful means of gathering intelligence and is a necessary tool for our investigative teams.

Financial Crimes Seminar: On November 15th, Insp Wood and Cst Jade Pratt attended a Financial Crimes Seminar in Halifax. The seminar focused on financial crime and frauds and navigating such complex investigations.

Sexual Violence Investigators Workshop: On November 3rd Insp Wood, Cst Pratt and Cst Follows attended a 1-day seminar hosted by Halifax Regional Police in conjunction with the Department of Justice regarding sexual assault investigations.

CCIS System Training: Constable Chapman attended training on December 1st at RCMP Headquarters on the new CCIS system which stores criminal intelligence for police agencies across the country. This system is replacing the ACIS system which is being discontinued.

OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS:

Town of Amherst 2025 Christmas Parade: On November 29th, the Town of Amherst Christmas Parade was held, with APD members providing traffic support and escort duties. The parade was very well attended with hundreds of people lining the streets. Police patrolled the main intersections on foot with assistance from our Auxiliary Police Officers as well as our 2025/26 APA sponsored Cadet.



Coca-Cola Holiday Caravan: On November 29th, the Coca-Cola Holiday Caravan event was held on Church Street and was very well attended with APD members, Auxiliary Police Officers and our 2025/2026 Sponsored APA Cadet. Constable Harrison and Crime Prevention Coordinator were also on scene to ‘cram a cruiser’ for the food bank and the APD Safe Approach and Rescue Vehicle was put on display.



APD Auxiliary Police – Appointment and Swearing in: On Wednesday, November 26th, 2025, our four Auxiliary Police Officers were sworn in and appointed as per the NS Police Act and Regulations. ABPC Vice-Chair Hal Davidson and Justice of the Peace Kathy Farrell were present along with Chief Pike, Sgt Graham and Sgt Galloway. Our Auxiliary Police Officers are Justin McKay, Karley Shultz, Prab Brar and Robert Anderson. After the appointment/swearing in, they continued training with Chief Pike covering officers’ notebooks and Sgt Graham went over searching.

Uttering Threats – Youth Charged: On November 14th, 2025, a 16-year-old youth was arrested and charged with ‘uttering threats’ following an investigation by the Amherst Police Department. As a result of the complaint, the Amherst Police also executed a search warrant outside of town in relation to the matter. Those who were identified as victims in the threats were advised by Police. Police do not believe there is any ongoing danger to staff or students at the Amherst Regional High School at this time.

Remembrance Day Ceremonies: Members of the Amherst Police Department, including our APD Chaplain and our APA sponsored Cadet, attended and participated in Remembrance Day Ceremonies on November 11th. The event was very well attended and sections of the downtown were closed for the procession and the ceremony.



Frauds: Police received numerous complaints of fraud in the month of November. Culprits will use a variety of techniques and story-lines in their attempts to defraud people. These include:

- *November 28th, 2025:* An 81-year-old female fell victim to an online investment scam, losing \$350.00. The culprit continued to contact the victim to try to get more money, but the victims bank shut down the transactions as they recognized it as fraud.
- *November 18th, 2025:* A local person contacted police and advised that they have been receiving texts from a strange number from someone purporting to be their son. The recognized that it was a scam and did not fall for it.
- *November 11th, 2025:* A victim contacted APD and advised that they had received a bill from “Credit Bureau of Canada’ and thought it was a legitimate bill and paid \$550, only to learn later that it was fraudulent.
- *November 4th, 2025:* Police were advised by a local business that they had received a call from a person attempted to make large purchases via credit card. They learned that the same persons had also attempted to use the credit card in New Brunswick and recognized it as an attempt to use a credit card fraudulently. **Sexual Exploitation/Assault etc:** An Amherst man has been arrested and charged with several charges that include Sexual Exploitation of a young person, luring a child and multiple counts of assault/strangulation. The names and details of both the accused and the victim are being withheld as the victim is a youth.

GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Police Pursuits/Failing to Stop: During the month of November police had 2 incidents in which motorists failed to stop for Police and there were 9 incidents in October. This compares to 4 incidents in September, 4 incidents in August and 7 incidents in July.

- *November 1st @02:54am:* Police attempted to pull over a vehicle after it turned onto the Eddie Road and appeared to accelerate at a high rate of speed. Police shut the pursuit down, but then located the vehicle further down the road in the ditch and the driver appeared to have fled through the woods. Shortly afterwards the 35-year-old driver exited the woods and was arrested. He is facing criminal charges that include dangerous driving and fleeing police.
- *November 1st, @10:05pm:* Police observed an ATV operating on Russell Street illegally and attempted to box it in with 2 vehicles but the driver drove across a lawn on private property and then onto Victoria Street at a high rate of speed. Police did not pursue. In all these cases, the pursuits were terminated as per policy and as a public safety issue. All pursuit files are subject to a review to ensure that members are following policy.

Shoplifting/Theft Complaints: During the month of November, police received 17 complaints regarding shoplifting. In October, police received 14 complaints of shoplifting. This compares to 19 complaints in September, 15 in August and 12 in July.

Homelessness Files: For the month of November APD responded to 29 complaints that were associated to homelessness. Of these, the majority are related to trespassing, suspicious persons and well-being checks. In October police logged 43 complaints as compared to 36 in September, 43 in August and 38 complaints in July. As in previous homelessness stats, the vast majority of complaints are around 2-3 of the same people.

OPERATIONAL STATS – PROS Occurrences – November 2025

Occurrences:	385	Criminal Code Charges:	56
Impaired by Alcohol:	31	CDSA:	0
Impaired by Drug:	0	CBCA:	0
Traffic Tickets:	20	PPA:	1
Traffic Written Warnings:	1	Vehicle Checks:	39
Liquor Control Act:	5	Foot Patrol Hours:	39 hrs 22 min
Parking Tickets:	0	Parking Warnings:	0

TASK REPORT

No outstanding tasks.