



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Agenda

Date: **Tuesday, February 17, 2026**
Time: **4:00 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."	
	1.2 Approval of Agenda	
	1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda	1 - 1
	1.4 Acceptance of Minutes	
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	1.4.2 February 9, 2026	9 - 10
2.	Presentations	
	2.1 Transportation Feasibility Study - WSP	11 - 134
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	3.2 Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy- LeBlanc	140 - 147
	3.3 Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy and Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy - LeBlanc	148 - 162
	3.4 Commercial Development Support Program By-law - Wilson	163 - 196

3.5	Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy - Wilson	197 - 199
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4.4	Photo Opportunity Location - Bristol	228 - 228
4.5	Tourism Strategy Update - Bacon	229 - 230
4.6	By-law / Policy Review - Jones	231 - 239
4.7	CAO Task Report - MacDonald	240 - 240
5.	Monthly Reports	
5.1	Community Living	241 - 245
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5.7	Operations	255 - 257
5.8	Planning & Economic Development	258 - 261
5.9	Police Services	262 - 264
6.	Closed Session	

6.1 Approval of Closed Session Agenda

6.2 Acceptance of Closed Session Minutes

6.3 MGA 22(2)(a) - acquisition, sale, lease and security of municipal property

6.4 MGA 22(2)(c) - personnel matters

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

7. Adjournment



Town of Amherst
Committee of the Whole
Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Consent Agenda

MOTION:

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

- 4.3 Citizens on Patrol**
- 4.4 Photo Opportunity Location**
- 4.5 Tourism Strategy Update**
- 4.6 By-law/Policy Review**
- 4.7 CAO Task Report**
- 5.1 Community Living Monthly Report**
- 5.2 Corporate Monthly Report**
- 5.3 Cumberland Business Connector Monthly Report**
- 5.4 Financial Services Monthly Report**
- 5.5 Fire Services Monthly Report**
- 5.6 Human Resources Monthly Report**
- 5.7 Operations Monthly Report**
- 5.8 Planning and Economic Development Monthly Report**
- 5.9 Police Services Monthly Report**

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

Date: January 19, 2026
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
Denise Smith, Finance Manager
Jeff Bacon, Economic Development Officer
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk
Cindy Brown, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

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

1.1 Territorial Acknowledgement

Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

That the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

1.3 Approval of the Consent Agenda

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

To approve the consent agenda with the removal of items 3.2 Affordable Housing Fee Forgiveness Policy and 4.1 Corporate Services Monthly Report.

MOTION CARRIED

1.4 Acceptance of Minutes - December 15, 2025

Mayor Small called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. There being none, the minutes of the December 15, 2025, meeting of the Committee of the Whole were accepted as included in the agenda package.

2. Council Direction Requests

2.1 Curling Club Community Support Grant

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

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting, approval for the Amherst Curling Club to carry over into 2026 the 2025 Community Support Grant in the amount of \$8,000.

MOTION CARRIED

2.2 Request for Banners

Moved By Councillor Wells

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That Council direct staff to:

- 1. Develop detailed eligibility criteria for permanent banner recognition at Town Facilities;**
- 2. Establish a formal, merit-based application and review process for nominations;**
- 3. Draft a terms of reference for a committee to review applications and make recommendations to Council; and**
- 4. Bring the draft documents to the March 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting for consideration.**

MOTION CARRIED

2.3 Street Light Policy

Staff directed to make further amendments to the Street Light Policy and bring back to Council at the February Committee of the Whole meeting.

2.4 Construction of New Residential Streets

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council direct staff to prepare a new Public Street Contribution Policy for the Town of Amherst that:

- 1. Establishes a municipal contribution of up to \$1,500 per linear metre of new public street constructed and accepted by the Town;**
- 2. Amends the Town's current practice of paying for the top lift of asphalt and concrete curb on new residential streets;**
- 3. Ensures that developers are fully responsible for all construction costs and infrastructure installation;**
- 4. Sets clear eligibility criteria tied to road acceptance and completion of a one-year warranty period;**
- 5. Includes timing requirements for the installation of asphalt and curb works; and**
- 6. Directs staff to bring forward any necessary amendments to the Subdivision Bylaw needed to implement the policy.**

MOTION CARRIED

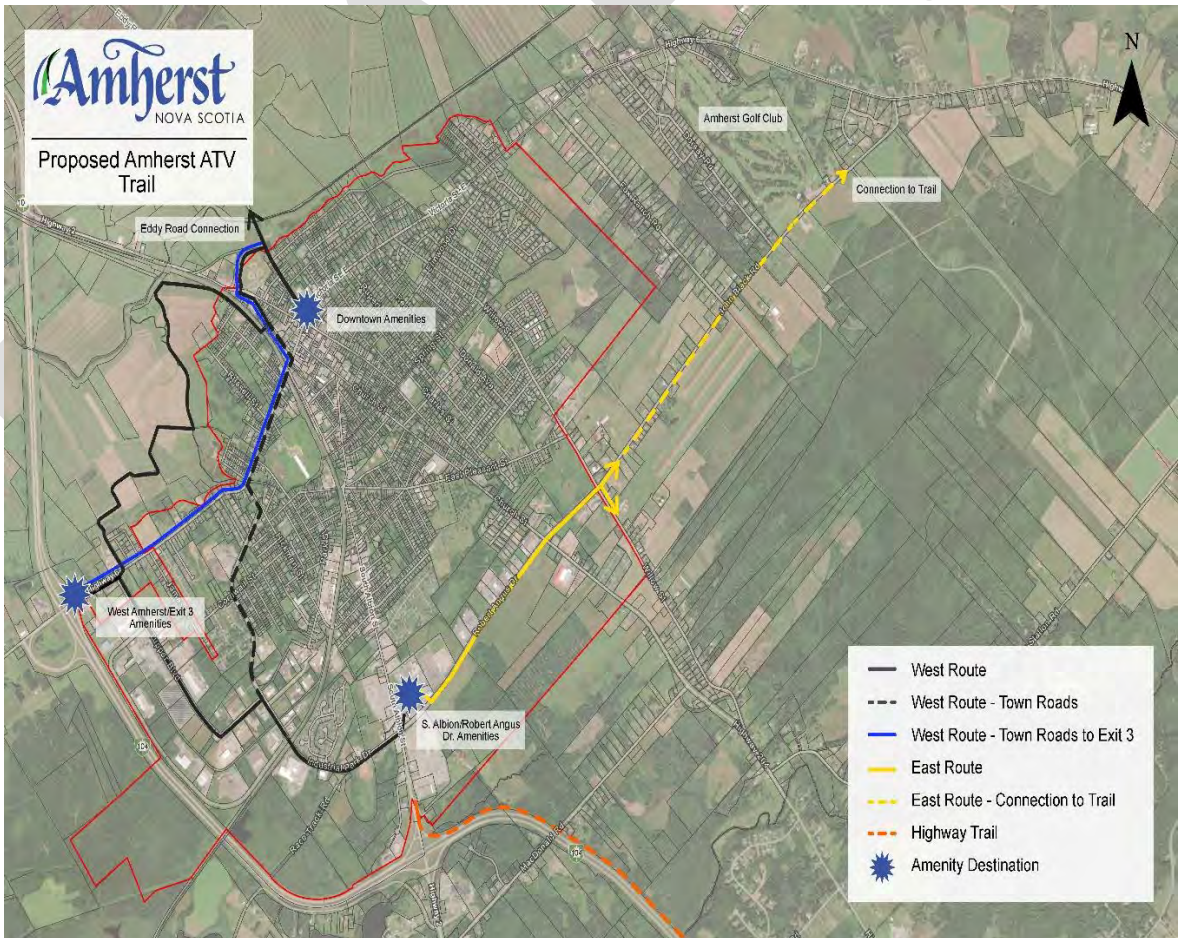
2.5 ATV Trail

**Moved By Councillor Ripley
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers**

That staff be directed to take the following steps listed below for the ATV trail on the Western Route Exit 3 starting at Eddy Street continuing onto Lawrence Street, Erncliffe Street, Sackville Road through the Amherst Sod roads onto Tupper Boulevard, Anson Avenue and then onto Industrial Park Drive (noted in the solid black line of the map below)

- **Confirm scope – Limited off-street or trail-based options are the primary focus, consistent with provincial legislation.**
- **Engage the public – Undertake early, high-level public engagement to understand community concerns and expectations.**
- **Consult key stakeholders – Continue preliminary discussions with the ATV club, landowners, and police.**
- **Include Costs - Explore costs to develop and maintain route(s).**
- **Report back to Council – Summarize public input and high-level options to determine whether a full review is warranted.**

MOTION CARRIED



2.6 Requests for Proclamations and Flag Raising Ceremonies Policy

Moved By Deputy Mayor Chambers

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the Requests for Proclamations and Flag Raising Ceremonies Policy as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

2.7 Christie Foundation Donation

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

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers

That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the request to receive a donation of \$10,000 from the Dr. & Mrs. H.E. Christie Community Foundation to fund a corresponding grant of \$10,000 to the Cumberland County Minor Hockey Association.

MOTION CARRIED

2.8 Write-Off Uncollectable Accounts Receivables

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor McManaman

That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the proposed write off of uncollectible accounts in the amount of \$44,334.07.

MOTION CARRIED

2.9 By-law to Amend the Deed Transfer Tax By-law

Moved By Councillor McManaman

Seconded By Councillor Furlong

That Council defer this item to be discussed during budget deliberations.

MOTION CARRIED

2.10 Cumberland Public Libraries Request for Additional Board Members

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Furlong

To go into closed session pursuant to MGA 22(2)(f) litigation or potential litigation.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That the CAO be directed to inform the Library Director that Council agrees with expanding the composition of the Library Board by three members: one municipal councillor from Cumberland and two members at large to be appointed by the municipal councils pending a legal review of any liability on the municipal councils with making these appointments, with the process of such to be determined.

MOTION CARRIED

- 2.11 YMCA Request for Funding**
Moved By Deputy Mayor Chambers
Seconded By Councillor Wells
That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting approval of the funding request from the YMCA of Cumberland in the amount of \$9,000 to come from the Strategic Priority Reserve.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 2.12 Joint Councils Terms of Reference Policy**
Moved By Councillor Davidson
Seconded By Deputy Mayor Chambers
That Council forward to the January 26, 2026, regular meeting, the repeal of the Joint Councils Terms of Reference Policy 10350-27.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 2.13 Nova Scotia Strong Mayor Powers**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Councillor Wells
That Council direct staff to not send a letter to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities expressing the lack of support for Strong Mayor Powers.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 2.14 Visitor Information Centre**
Council agreed to return to this item following a discussion at the closed session meeting as per the MGA section 22(2)(c) personnel matters.
- 2.15 Request for Policy Review**
Moved By Councillor Davidson
Seconded By Councillor McManaman
That staff be directed to review the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards 10350-28, and the Council Committees Policy 10350-32 and bring amendments back to the February Committee of the Whole meeting for Council's consideration.
- MOTION CARRIED**
- 2.16 Request for Policy Review**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Councillor Ripley
That staff be directed to undertake a comprehensive review of the Snow and Ice Management Policy and report back to Council no later than the March Committee of the Whole meeting.
- MOTION CARRIED**

3. Information Items

- 3.1 Amherst Community Christmas Dinner**
Information item only, memo included as part of the agenda package.

- 3.2 **Affordable Housing Fee Forgiveness Policy**
Information item only, memo included as part of the agenda package.
- 3.3 **Economic Forum Update**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 3.4 **Transit Feasibility Study**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 3.5 **By-Law / Policy Review**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 3.6 **CAO Task Report**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.

4. **Monthly Reports**

- 4.1 **Corporate**
Councillor Furlong asked about the internet restoration at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. The Director of Operations replied that this issue has now been resolved.
- 4.2 **Community Living**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.3 **Cumberland Business Connector**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.4 **Financial Services**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.5 **Fire Services**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.6 **Human Resources**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.7 **Operations**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.8 **Planning & Economic Development**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.
- 4.9 **Police Services**
Information item only, approved as part of the consent agenda.

- 5. **Closed Session**
Moved By Councillor Furlong
Seconded By Councillor McManaman
That the Committee move into a Closed Session.

MOTION CARRIED

Return to Item 2.14 Visitor Information Centre

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Davidson

That staff be directed to continue and possibly build on the current program this summer, and further that the Mayor write a letter to the province outlining our need and desire for a larger presence at the VIC, potentially in conjunction with the Municipality of the County of Cumberland.

MOTION CARRIED

6. Adjournment

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

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Rob Small
Mayor

DRAFT

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

Date: February 9, 2026
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
Kim Jones, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Krista Crossman, Director, Human Resources
Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
Lori O'Connell, Marketing & Communications Officer
Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
Jeff Bacon, Economic 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.

2. Council Direction Requests

2.1 Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing Plan and Communications Plan

Moved By Councillor Furlong

Seconded By Councillor Ripley

That Council forward to the February 9, 2026, special meeting, approval of the Brand Strategy, the Strategic Marketing Plan and the Communications Plan without including the proposed 'Centre of it All' tag line.

Against (5): Mayor Small, Deputy Mayor Chambers, Councillor Davidson, Councillor McManaman, and Councillor Wells

MOTION DEFEATED

Moved By Councillor Davidson

Seconded By Councillor Wells

That Council forward to the February 9, 2026, special meeting approval of the Town of Amherst Brand Strategy, Strategic Marketing Plan, and Communications Plan 2026-2028 as presented.

Against (2): Councillor Furlong, and Councillor Ripley

MOTION CARRIED

3. Adjournment

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

Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk

Rob Small
Mayor

DRAFT

MEMO

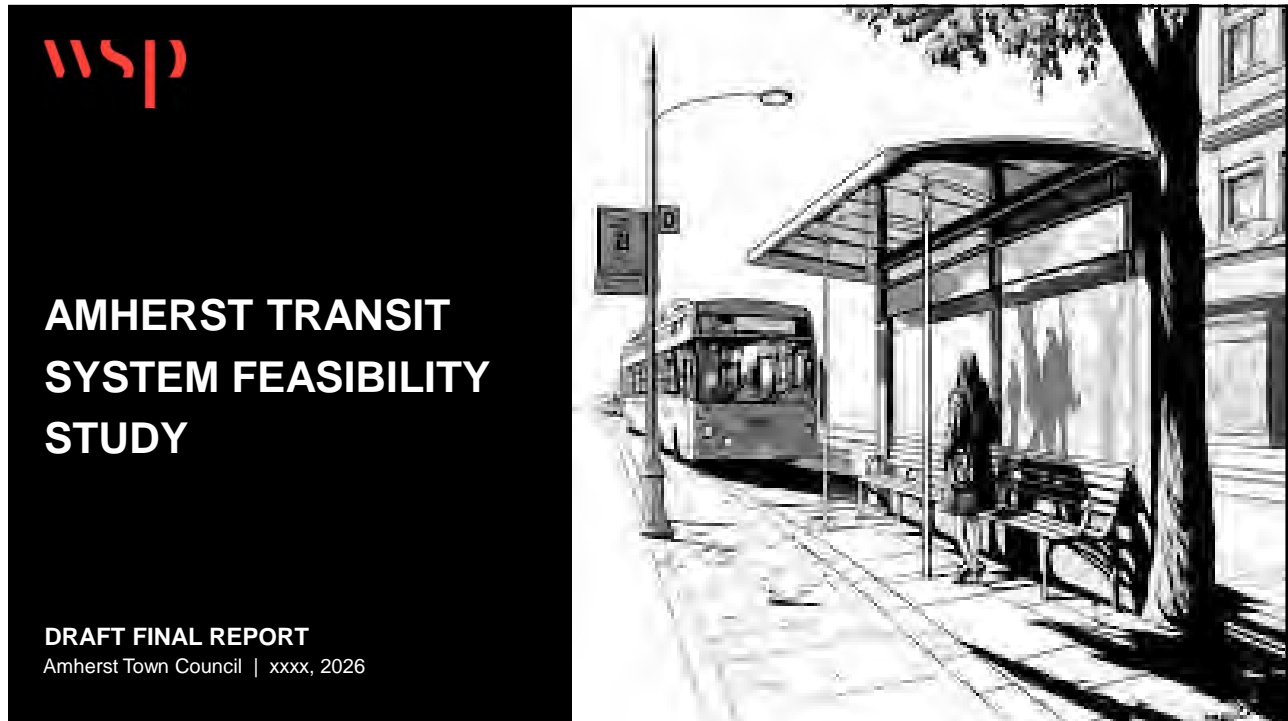
TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Andrew Fisher, Director of Planning & Economic Development

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: **Transit Feasibility Study**

Included in this package is the final Transit Feasibility Study Report developed by WSP consultants who will attend this meeting to give the attached presentation and answer questions. Decisions regarding Transit will take place at a later date within the budget process.



1

 This slide is titled 'Project Objective' and features the WSP logo in the top left corner. The main heading is 'Project Objective'. Below it, a red text block states: 'The Town of Amherst recognizes that public transit can be transformative for the community'. This is followed by a bulleted list of six objectives:

- Improves social equity;
- Reduces traffic noise and exhaust;
- Increases employment opportunities;
- Adds to the value and attractiveness of residential and commercial properties;
- Supports reduced car dependency, particularly in youth; and,
- Enhances quality of life.

 To the right of the list is an illustration of a target on a tripod stand with three arrows hitting the bullseye. At the bottom left, there is a small footer: 'WSP | Amherst Transit System Feasibility | January 17, 2026'. At the bottom right, there is a small number '2'.

2



Study Process

Starts with Community Engagement

- Interviews with key stakeholders (Cumberland County Transportation Society, Nova Scotia Public Health – Northern Zone, and Municipality of Cumberland County Planning)
- Interviews with Municipal Staff (Operations, Planning & Economic Development, Community Living, and Finance)
- A two-hour drop-in style public open house session held at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre
- An online survey



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3

3

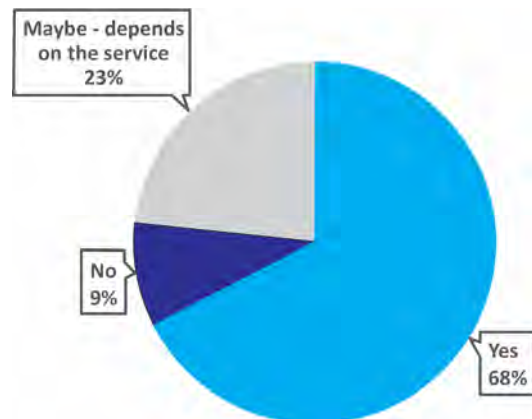


Study Process

What we heard

- Safe and Equitable Transportation
- Shifting from Car Culture to Choice
- Design a Service that Fits Daily Life
- Building a Sustainable and Scalable Service

Would you use a public transit service if one were available?



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4

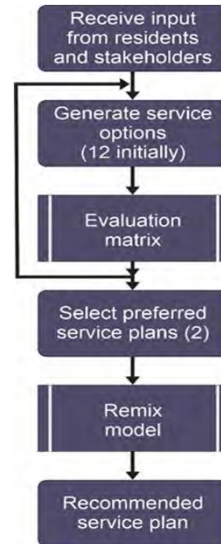
4



Study Process

Modelling of multiple routing concepts

- Considered a wide range of geographic coverage and service frequencies
- Evaluated each concept based on dwelling units and destination points within a five-minute walk of the route
- Selected two preferred routing plans for detailed evaluation
- Agreed on the best plan for service and costing analysis



5



Serving the Community

Connecting route options to population and destinations



6



The Recommended Plan

Service every hour

- 17.8 km loop
- 53 minutes on-route, 7 minutes recovery time
- 80% of town population within a five minute walk of a bus stop
- Service weekdays 8am – 7pm to begin

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7

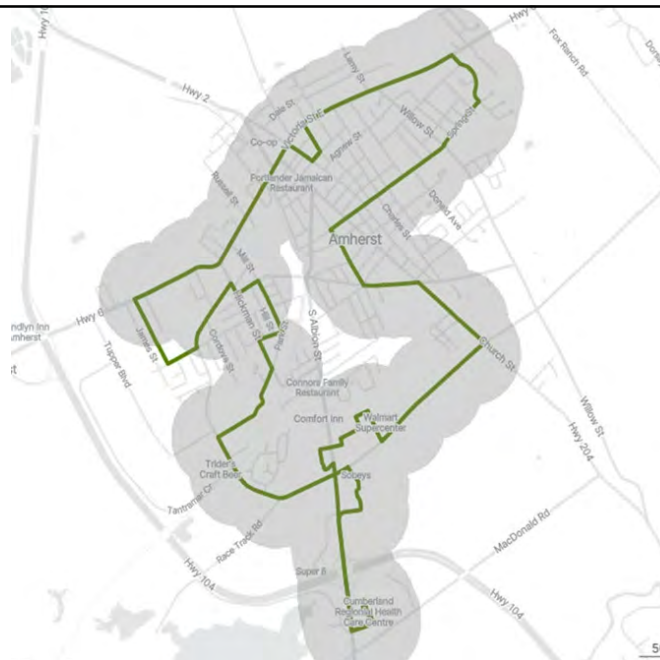
7



Coverage Area

80% of town population within a five minute walk of a bus stop

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8

8



Vehicle Selection

Urban transit bus versus mini-bus

- Urban transit bus is built for a longer service life, is more comfortable, and has greater passenger capacity
- Mini-buses are less expensive to purchase and are more easily serviced locally

*Two 35-foot urban transit buses recommended
Consider mini-buses for a pilot project*



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9

9



Vehicle Selection

Diesel versus battery-electric

- Diesel buses have enough range to do a full day of service without refill
- Battery-electric buses consume half the energy and cost much less to maintain
- Funding programs nearly always require the purchase of battery-electric buses

Diesel buses recommended



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10

10



Operating Models

Operator	Description	Examples
Community Not-for-Profit	CCTS would operate with Municipal funding	Antigonish Transit and CHAD Transit (Pictou County)
Municipality	Town of Amherst would operate	Halifax Transit, Transit Cape Breton, Bridgewater Transit, and Yarmouth Transit
Multi-System Operator	Kings Transit may be positioned to take on such a role	BC Transit
Private Sector Operator	Private sector bus charter companies could be procured to operate	Charlottetown Transit

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11

11



Cost Projection (Capital)

Urban Transit Buses

		Year One	Year Two	TOTAL
Buses	2 new buses	\$1,360,000	0	\$1,360,000
Infrastructure	Signs, pads, shelters, etc.	\$8,000	\$132,000	\$140,000
Start-up	Engineering, procurement, etc.	\$40,000	0	\$40,000
TOTAL		\$1,428,000	\$132,000	\$1,540,000

Mini-buses

		Year One	Year Two	TOTAL
Buses	2 new buses	\$400,000	0	\$400,000
Infrastructure	Signs, pads, shelters, etc.	\$8,000	\$132,000	\$140,000
Start-up	Engineering, procurement, etc.	\$40,000	0	\$40,000
TOTAL		\$448,000	\$132,000	\$580,000

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12

12



Cost Projection (Operating)

	Urban Transit Buses	Mini-Buses
Fuel	\$31,000	\$24,000
Maintenance	\$40,000	\$40,000
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$43,000	\$25,000
Salaries (drivers, admin)	\$178,000	\$178,000
Misc. (insurance, marketing, etc.)	\$23,000	\$23,000
TOTAL	\$315,000	\$290,000

13



Cost Projection (Revenue & Net Operating)

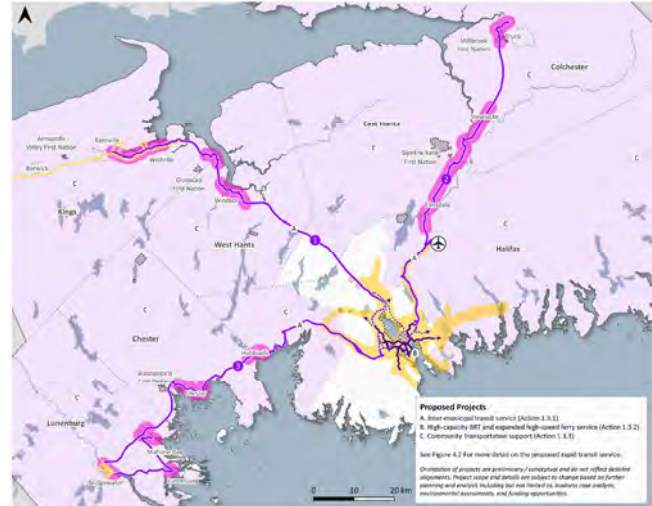
	Low Projection	High Projection
Operating Cost	\$315,000	\$315,000
Revenue	\$38,000	\$60,000
Net Operating Cost	\$277,000	\$255,000
Cost per Resident	\$29.16	\$26.84

14



Future Considerations

- Expanding or contracting service based on measured demand
- Exploring a shared service with Cumberland County (using demand-responsive models)
- Connections to Truro and provincial inter-city transit network



From: Regional Transportation Plan: JRTA, 2026

15



THANK YOU



16

Town of Amherst
**Amherst Transit System Feasibility
Study**

Draft Final Report (Revision 2)

2026-02-05

CA0057519.4020



Document distribution

Town of Amherst

Amherst Transit System Feasibility Study

Draft Final Report (Revision 2)

2026-01-26

Prepared for

Town of Amherst

98 East Victoria Street
Amherst, NS B4H 1X6

Prepared by

WSP Canada Inc.
1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1X7
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Quality control	Name	Date	Signature
Prepared by:	D. McCusker J. Finkleman	2026-02-05	
Reviewed by:	C. Pyne	2026-02-05	

Revisions

Rev	Date	Details
1	2026-01-26	Incorporated comments received from Town Staff (2026-01-13)
2	2026-02-05	Incorporated comments received from Town Staff (2026-01-30)

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Appendix A – Maps

Appendix B – Concept Sketches

Appendix C – What We Heard

Abbreviations and glossary

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
CCTS	Cumberland County Transportation Service (demand-responsive transit)
CPTF	Canada Public Transit Fund
JRTA	Joint Regional Transportation Agency
MAE	Multiple Account Evaluation
PTAP	Public Transportation Assistance Program
RTSF	Rural Transit Solutions Fund

Executive summary

Purpose and Context

The Town of Amherst commissioned this feasibility study to assess the need, viability, and implementation strategy for introducing a fixed-route public transit service, while considering coordination with existing demand-responsive transportation provided by Cumberland County Transportation Service (CCTS). The study responds directly to Council priorities, community feedback, and long-term goals related to equity, sustainability, economic development, and quality of life. The role public transit plays in improving inclusivity, social equity, and the environment are highlighted.

Key Findings

Strong Community Need and Support

- Over 1,000 survey responses and extensive stakeholder engagement demonstrate strong public interest in transit, particularly among seniors, youth, individuals without access to vehicles, and those with mobility challenges.
- 68% of respondents indicated they would consider using public transit if available, and 74% said they would be more likely to use it if routes and schedules align with daily needs (work, shopping, healthcare).
- Affordability, safety, accessibility, and reliability emerged as core expectations.

A Single Fixed Route Can Serve Most of Amherst Effectively

- A 60-minute loop route is recommended as the preferred service plan (see Figure ES-1).
- Approximately 80% of Amherst residents ($\approx 7,600$ people) and nearly all key destinations (downtown, hospital, major retail, community facilities) would be within a 5-minute walk of a bus stop.
- The route design balances coverage, simplicity, and operational feasibility, while excluding expected low-ridership areas such as the industrial park.

Service Design Must Prioritize Simplicity and Reliability

- Comparative evaluation showed that while multi-loop options increase frequency on some corridors, they introduce schedule complexity and reduce coverage.
- A single, predictable route operating every 60 minutes was found to be more legible for users and better aligned with Amherst's scale and ridership expectations.

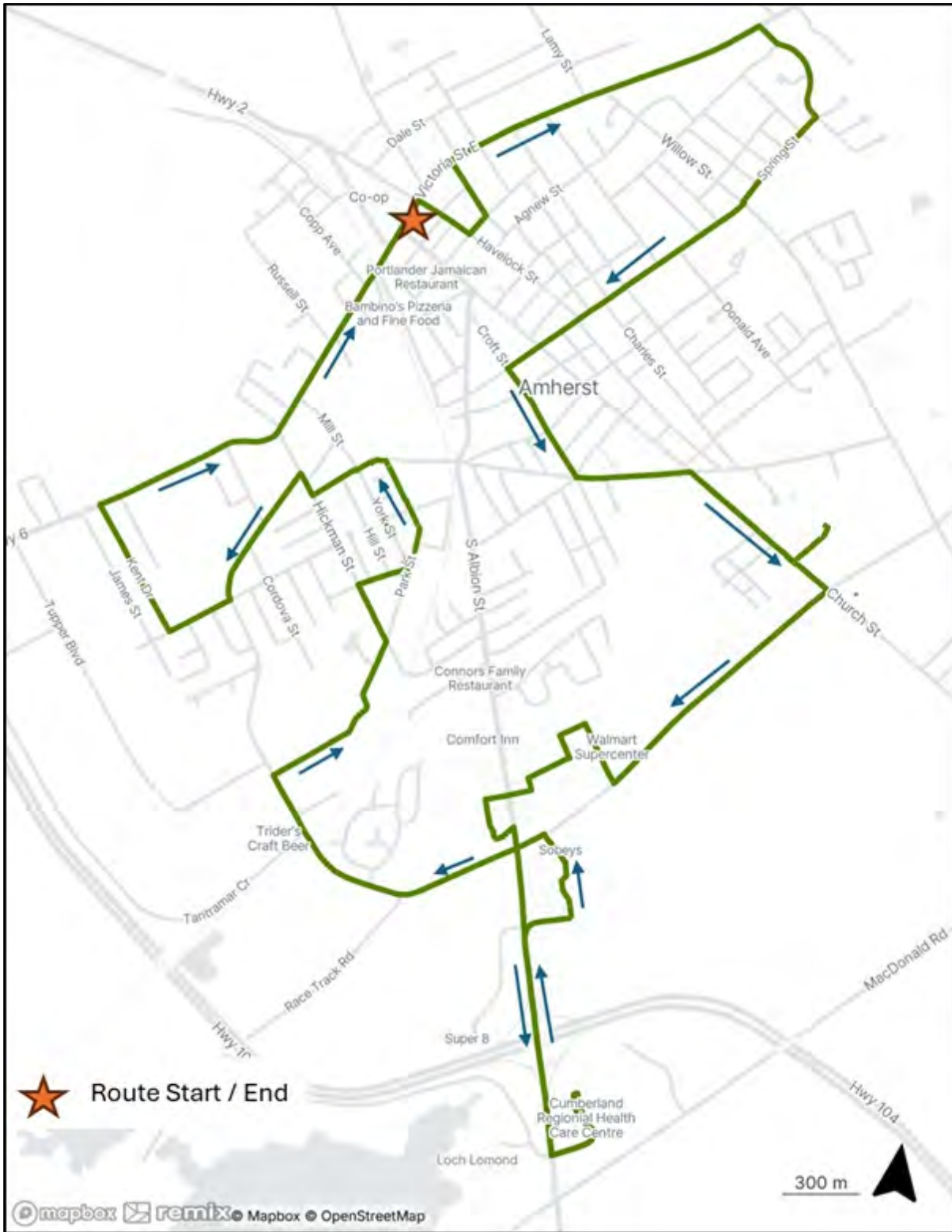


Figure ES-1: Preferred Route

Ridership Will Be Modest but Meaningful

- Projected weekday ridership ranges from 55–88 trips per day, with annual ridership of 13,900–22,200 once the system stabilizes.
- Ridership is expected to build gradually over 1–2 years, underscoring the importance of marketing, education, and patience during startup.

Operating a Municipal Transit System Independently Is Challenging

- Operating a single-route transit system in-house presents staffing, maintenance, and redundancy risks.
- Leveraging an experienced third-party operator significantly reduces startup risk and improves reliability

Capital and Operating Costs Are Significant but Comparable to Peer Communities

- Capital costs: ~\$1.39M in Year 1 (two buses + initial stop infrastructure).
- Annual operating costs: ~\$315K in Year 1, ~\$326K in Year 2.
- Fare revenue will offset only a portion of costs, consistent with public transit norms in small communities.

Key Recommendations

1. Proceed with Implementation of a Fixed-Route Transit Service

- o Adopt the recommended single, 60-minute loop route operating weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- o Defer evening and weekend service until ridership and funding can be reassessed.

2. Engage a Third-Party Operator

- o Pursue negotiations with Cumberland County Transportation Service (CCTS) or another experienced operator rather than operating the service directly.
- o This approach minimizes operational risk, leverages existing expertise, and supports future integration with demand-responsive services.

3. Select a 35-Foot Urban Transit Bus

- o Use fully accessible, low-floor urban buses to accommodate projected demand and future growth (see Figure ES-2).



Figure ES-2: Urban Transit Bus



- o Begin with diesel vehicles to reduce startup costs, while remaining open to battery-electric buses depending on funding requirements and lifecycle analysis.
- o Consider acquiring new or used 27-foot mini-buses as an option for a quick start-up or pilot service.

4. Adopt an Affordable, Accessible Fare Strategy

- o Target fares in the \$3 range, reflecting community willingness to pay while maintaining inclusivity.
- o Offer multiple payment options (cash, passes, electronic) to reduce barriers to use.

5. Invest in Visible, High-Quality Stop Infrastructure and Rider Information

- o Prioritize shelters, lighting, benches, and clear wayfinding at key stops.
- o Implement real-time tracking or schedule apps to improve user confidence and perception of reliability.

6. Phase, Monitor, and Adapt

- o Treat the service as a scalable foundation, not a final product.
- o Monitor ridership, costs, and customer feedback closely, with annual reporting to Council.
- o Explore future enhancements such as extended hours, weekend service, or regional and demand-responsive expansions in co-operation with the Municipality of Cumberland County as conditions allow.

Cost Summary

The recommended approach of purchasing urban transit buses to provide needed capacity and longer service life will result in a significant up-front cost (\$1,540,000 over the first two years). A more cautious approach, particularly if external capital funding support cannot be secured, would be to purchase mini-buses to begin with. The total capital cost (\$540,000 over the first two years) would be significantly reduced. Start-up costs could be reduced even further with the acquisition of used buses instead of new.

The net annual operating cost (total cost minus fare revenue) is projected to be \$277,000 in the first year. This estimate is for the low end of projected ridership – ridership closer to the higher end of the projection will reduce that cost. Operating costs are also slightly reduced if the option of using mini-buses is exercised.

A summary of capital and operating costs is provided in Table ES-1.



Table ES-0-1: Cost Summary

	Urban Transit Buses		Mini-Buses	
	Year One	Year Two	Year One	Year Two
CAPITAL COSTS				
Vehicles	\$1,360,000		\$400,000	
Stop Infrastructure	\$8,000	\$132,000	\$8,000	\$132,000
Start-up (procurement, promotion, engineering, etc.)	\$40,000		\$40,000	
TOTAL	\$1,408,000	\$132,000	\$448,000	\$132,000
OPERATING COSTS				
Fuel	\$31,000	\$32,200	\$24,000	\$25,000
Maintenance	\$40,000	\$41,600	\$40,000	\$41,600
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$43,000	\$43,000	\$25,000	\$38,000
Salaries (drivers and administration)	\$178,000	\$185,100	\$178,000	\$185,100
Miscellaneous (insurance, marketing, etc)	\$23,000	\$23,900	\$23,000	\$23,900
TOTAL	\$315,000	\$325,800	\$290,000	\$300,600
NET OPERATING COSTS				
Revenue*	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
TOTAL	\$277,000	\$287,800	\$252,000	\$262,600

* Revenue shown is the low end of a projected revenue range
 Figures do not include tax

Overall Conclusion

While the introduction of a fixed-route transit service represents a significant financial commitment, the study concludes that it would deliver substantial social, economic, and quality-of-life benefits to Amherst residents. Community support is strong, the proposed service is appropriately scaled, and implementation risks can be managed through phased delivery and third-party operations. The recommended transit system provides Amherst with a realistic and flexible starting point for building a more inclusive and connected transportation network locally and, over time, regionally.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Town of Amherst is located in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia, near the Nova Scotia/New Brunswick border. The Town has a defined downtown core and an uptown commercial area with Albion/South Albion Street acting as the spine of the Town. The industrial park is home to several large employers. Virtually all of the urbanized area is contained within the Town boundaries. Several planned low- to medium-density residential projects are in the approval phases, suggesting continued growth can be expected.

Fixed-route public transportation for Towns within Nova Scotia has been gaining momentum in recent years. Ten years ago, only Halifax Regional Municipality, Cape Breton Regional Municipality, and Kings Transit offered fixed-route service. Since that time, new fixed-route services have been implemented in six additional communities and planning is underway in several others. Community-run demand responsive services have also seen expanded growth in that time.

1.2 Project Objective

The Town of Amherst recognizes that public transit can be transformative for the community and can achieve many important goals such as:

Improving inclusivity and social equity

Not every resident has access to a vehicle whether due to age, economics, or physical limitations. Public transit provides affordable opportunities for travel without reliance on a private vehicle. This increased mobility can help reduce isolation and increase opportunities for social interaction.

Improving the environment

Traffic noise and exhaust can be noticeably reduced when trip-making is attracted to transit and away from vehicles. Road congestion and parking space requirements can also be reduced. People who take public transportation feel a sense of satisfaction knowing that they are doing their part to reduce air pollution and help the environment.

Contributing to the economic well-being of the community

Public transit helps reduce the cost of travel for individuals, as well as businesses. Businesses can attract employees from a broader pool when greater travel flexibility is provided. Public transportation can also reduce the amount of money spent on parking fees and gasoline. The amount of lost time and productivity associated with traffic congestion can also be decreased.

Adding to the quality of life

Public transportation can also improve the overall quality of life. It can reduce stress levels and lead to a healthier and more enjoyable lifestyle. It can provide access to areas that would otherwise be



inaccessible, providing greater opportunities for education, employment, and leisure activities. The convenience of having reliable transportation options can also provide greater freedom and flexibility, allowing individuals to plan their days more effectively. All these factors can contribute to an improved sense of well-being and a better quality of life.

Adding to the value and attractiveness of residential and commercial properties

Residents and businesses looking to locate in a community often consider the value of public transit and make it an important component of their decision-making. Younger residents, in particular, value the environmental and economic value of public transit and seek to make that a lifestyle choice. Studies have found that youth are more attracted to public transit than previous generations.

Car dependency is reducing among young people in high-income countries. Young people use multimodal transport more than other age groups, and policy makers can leverage this. Delaying car-based lifestyles by providing alternatives is essential to behavioural change. Ensuring affordability, accessibility and safety in transport systems should be the priority for policy makers, as these still do not exist in many places.¹

The stated objective of the feasibility study is to assess the need, viability, and implementation strategies for introducing a fixed-route transportation system into the Town of Amherst. The Town has indicated an interest in exploring a variety of transit service models and coordination with Cumberland County Transportation Service (CCTS), the existing demand-responsive service.

¹ ITF (2024) Youth on the Move: Young People and Transport in the 21st Century”, International Transport Forum Policy Papers, No. 128, OECD Publishing, Paris.

2. Existing Conditions

2.1 Study Area

The focus of this study is the jurisdictional extent of the Town of Amherst. The study area will be extended to include the Cumberland Regional Health Centre, which is a regional health facility integral to providing for the health care needs of the community, but located just to the south of the municipal boundary. Consideration will also be given to extension of service to nearby communities such as Springhill, Oxford, Wallace, Pugwash, Parrsboro, and Sackville, NB in the longer term.

2.2 Street Network

Streets are normally classified by the function they provide. In an urban area like Amherst, it is typical to have arterial, collector, and local streets. Arterials are intended to facilitate traffic flow over land access and local streets are designed more for land access than they are for traffic flow. Collectors are the “middle ground” between the two.

For the development of transit routing, it is important to focus on arterial and collector streets where the movement of larger vehicles like buses is better accommodated. A proposed classification for streets in Amherst is provided in Map A-1 in Appendix A.

2.3 Population

Population is what generates transit trips. Areas with higher population density can generate more transit trips within shorter travel distances. The distribution of population for the study area, as provided in 2021 census data, is shown in Figure 2-1. This data will be used to determine where transit service can most effectively reach residents.

To conduct a more fine-tuned assessment of how well populations are being reached by various servicing plans, several transit nodes and collection areas within the study area were established. These nodes approximate potential bus stop locations. Surrounding each node, an area within a 400m walking distance was established. These nodes and areas are shown in Figure 2-2. 400m represents a five-minute walk at a normal pace, which is typically viewed as an acceptable walking time to get to a bus stop.

For this analysis, both single-family homes and apartment units are considered dwelling units. More importantly, every resident room within a multi-unit seniors’ facility is considered a dwelling unit in recognition of the significance of seniors to transit trip generation. A summary of the total dwelling units by zone is provided in Table 2-1.

In addition to existing population, consideration will be given to where future growth is expected to occur. Potential growth nodes are shown at a conceptual level in Figure 2-3. These growth areas will not be considered as potential markets for transit trips for the evaluation of initial service. A final review of preferred routing will, however, consider the opportunity for minor route deviations to provide future service to these growth nodes.

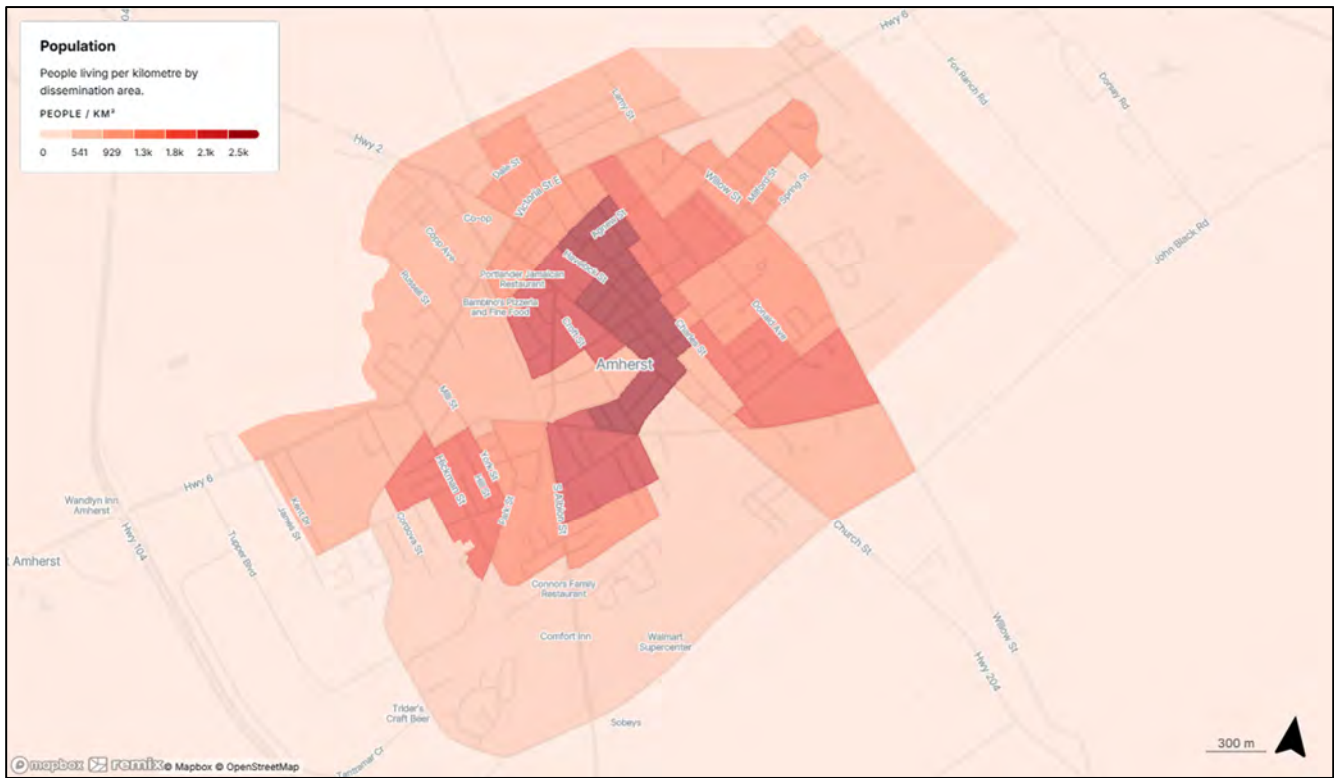


Figure 2-1: Population Density in the Study Area

Table 2-1: Dwelling Units by Zone

Zone	Dwelling Units	Zone	Dwelling Units	Zone	Dwelling Units
1	20	13	152	25	122
2	82	14	174	26	107
3	129	15	152	27	83
4	77	16	174	28	170
5	40	17	101	29	0
6	117	18	24	30	0
7	101	19	21	31	0
8	125	20	42	32	0
9	46	21	0	33	0
10	163	22	0	34	117
11	0	23	75	35	0
12	153	24	148		

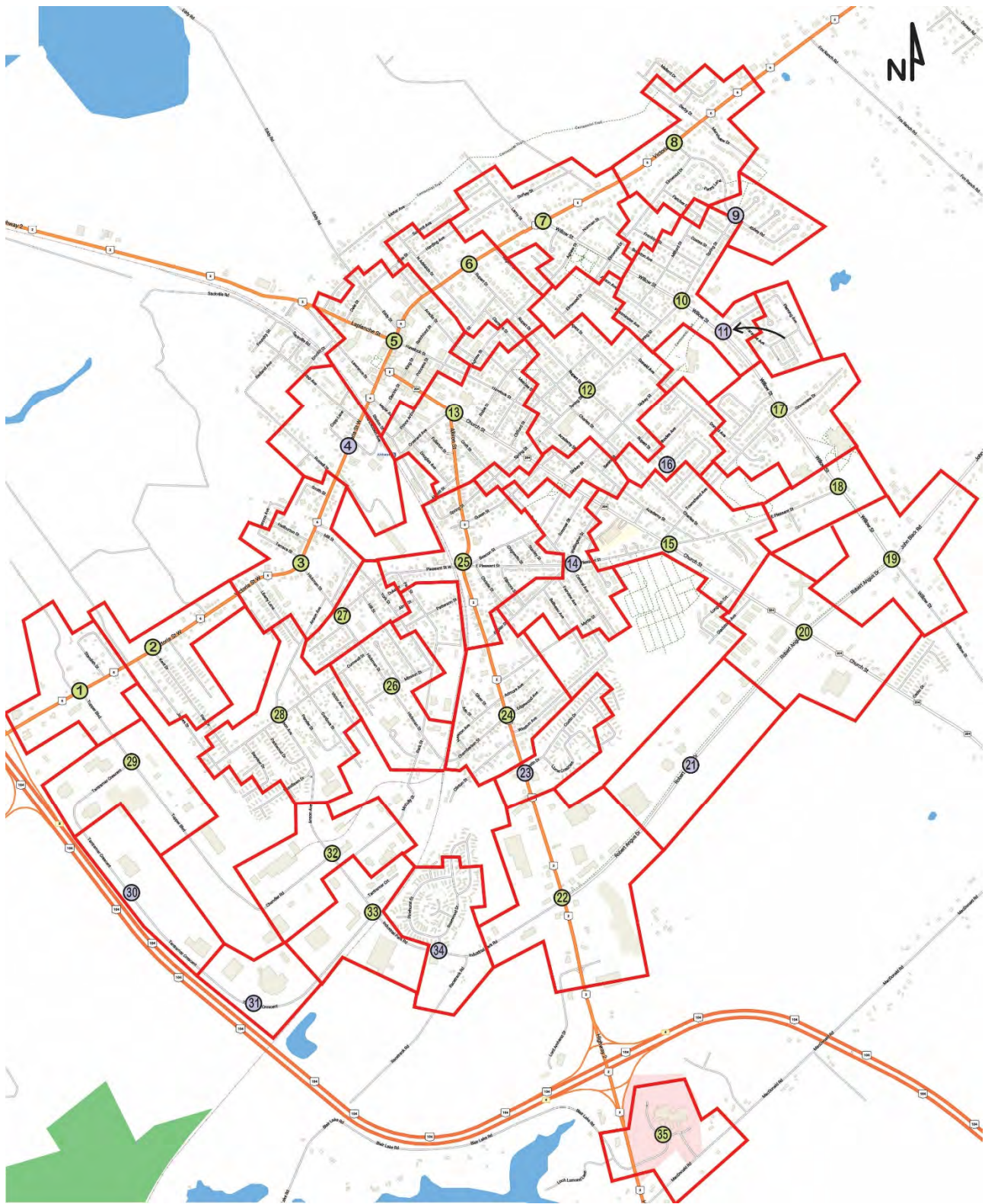


Figure 2-2: Potential Transit Nodes and Collection Areas (Zones)

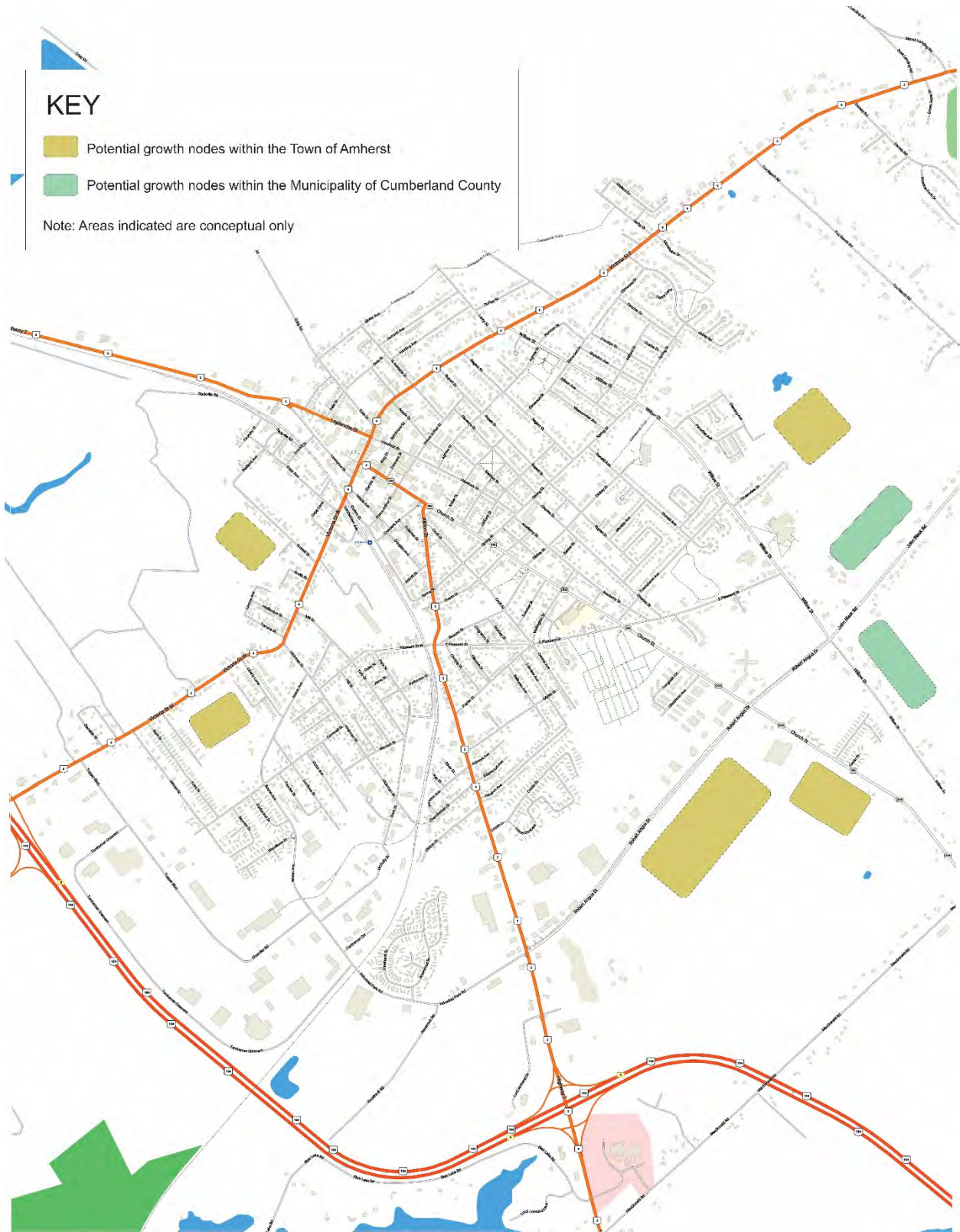


Figure 2-3: Potential Growth Nodes in the Study Area

2.4 Destinations

While population generates transit trips, it is destinations that attract them. To determine how key destinations within the study area are distributed, a visual inventory was conducted. The locations of individual destinations within the study area collection zones were identified and a score was assigned to that zone to reflect the relative attractiveness of that zone for transit trips. This destination score was based on the following inputs:

- Four months of drop-off and pick-up data provided by CCTS
- Key destination points identified by Northern Zone, NS Public Health from their transportation data
- Our study team’s knowledge of small transit services within Nova Scotia

There is no “value” to the destination points or formula used to calculate them. They are simply a relative ranking of their importance in attracting potential transit trips. A summary of destination points by zone is provided in Table 2-2. This data will be used in the evaluation of route concepts to identify which options best connect to the key destinations within the study area.

Based on experience with similar services elsewhere in Nova Scotia, we have not assigned a significant number of destination points to the Amherst Industrial Park. We have found that hourly transit service has little attraction for workplace commuting as the transit schedule is unlikely to provide good coordination with the workday schedule and workers will either arrive by bus well before their workday begins or wait for the bus well after their workday ends. Consideration may be given to servicing areas like this with route diversions timed to align with shift changes or other service delivery models like vanpooling (see Section 7.3).



Table 2-2: Destination Points by Zone

Zone	Destination	NS Health	CCTS Trips	Points
1	Maritime Bus (Esso Station)			1
4	Autumn House (Russell Street)	✓		1
5	Downtown Amherst			20
	<i>Bridge Adult Service Centre (Station Street)</i>		1118	
	<i>Lawton's (Lawrence Street)</i>	✓		
	<i>Mental Health and Addictions Services (Prince Arthur Street)</i>	✓	10	
	<i>Cumberland Mental Health Services (Havelock Street)</i>	✓		
	<i>Amherst Collaborative Family Practice (Prince Arthur Street)</i>	✓		
	<i>VON (Havelock Street)</i>	✓	130	
	<i>Amherst Family Dental</i>		10	
	<i>VIA Rail</i>			
7	Maggie's Place (Elmwood Drive)	✓		1
12	Spring Street Academy			1
13	YMCA of Cumberland (Church Street)	✓		1
15	Amherst Stadium			1
17	Amherst Regional High School			1
20	Medical Clinics & Pharmasave (Robert Angus Drive and Church St.)			2
21	Amherst Eye Clinic (Robert Angus Drive)	✓		1
22	Commercial Area			12
	<i>Amherst Centre</i>			
	<i>Walmart</i>	✓		
	<i>SuperStore</i>			
	<i>Sobey's</i>			
	<i>Canadian Tire</i>			
	<i>Kent</i>			
	<i>NSLC</i>			
	<i>NSCC</i>			
	<i>Cumberland Eye Care</i>		18	
	<i>FYI Eye Doctors</i>		20	
24	South Albion Storefront Businesses			1
25	South Albion Storefront Businesses			1
30	Industrial Park - Tantramar Crescent			2
	<i>IMP Aerospace</i>			
	<i>Wonderbrands</i>			
	<i>LED Roadway Lighting</i>			
	<i>Waldale Manufacturing</i>			
32	Industrial Park - Tupper Blvd			1
	<i>Dowe Concrete</i>			
	<i>Novapet</i>			
	<i>NS Transportation</i>			
35	Regional Health Centre		398	6



2.5 Relevant Municipal Plans

Three recent policy documents produced by the Town make reference to developing public transportation within the town which are, Council Strategic Priorities (2024), Municipal Planning Strategy (Draft) and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (2019).

2.5.1 Council Strategic Priorities (2024)

The newest addition to Amherst’s list of Strategic Priorities is the development of a Mobility Strategy. This strategy will examine how people move around the community and identifies the need for a transit study. The description of the priority states “The aim of the transit study is to identify our community’s transportation challenges and present a potential solution in the form of a bus service.” It goes on to say that “It will be determined if the provision of a similar service in Amherst will help to serve a segment of our population currently experiencing transportation difficulties – and others who desire an alternate mode of transportation – and whether such a service will help our town to continue to grow into the future.”

2.5.2 Municipal Planning Strategy (Draft)

The Municipal Planning Strategy is currently under review. As part of the public engagement conducted to support the plan review, a lack of transportation options and the desire for public transit service was identified. The Plan recognizes that a move towards higher density development along potential transit corridors can contribute to the success of public transit.

2.5.3 Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (2019)

This plan summarizes the interconnected environmental, social, cultural, and economic development objectives and policies contained within the Town of Amherst Municipal Planning Strategy and other relevant policy documents. One of the goals resulting from public consultation is “To provide a safe, efficient and diversified transportation system.”

2.6 Jurisdictional Scan

A scan of one- or two-bus systems within Nova Scotia was conducted for comparative purposes. The data is provided in Table 2-3. The purpose of this exercise is not to mimic other systems but to understand what characteristics have made other systems successful. From this data we see how common one-hour loop systems have become in towns like Amherst. We can also get a sense of the types of fares offered and their cost.



	ANTIGONISH	PICTOU COUNTY EXPANSION N.G./STELARTON		BRIDGEWATER	YARMOUTH
Municipality coverage	Town of Antigonish Antigonish County	Pictou County	Town of New Glasgow Town of Stellarton	Town of Bridgewater	Town of Yarmouth
Service operator	Community NFP (ACTS)	Community NFP (PCT)	Community NFP (PCT)	Municipality	Municipality
Primary bus	Mini-Bus	Mini-Bus	Mini-Bus	Gas cutaway	Mini-Bus
Passenger seats (w/o wheelchairs)	19	18	18	19	16
Accessibility	Lift		Low-floor	Low-floor	Low-Floor
Bike racks	No		No	Yes	Yes
Backup bus	Mini-Bus	Van	Van	Gas cutaway	Mini-Bus
Routing scheme	Loop	Bi-directional Linear	Loop	Loop	Loop
Service frequency	60 min	4 hr (some 2 hr)	60 min (some 30 min)	60 min	60 min
Weekday operating hours	7:00 - 19:00	6:30 - 20:30	7:00 - 21:00	06:00 - 21:00	7:00 - 19:00
Saturday operating hours	8:00 - 16:00	6:30 - 20:30	7:00 - 21:00	08:00 - 19:00	8:00 - 18:00
Sunday operating hours	none	no service	9:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	no service
Total weekly hours	92 hr	84 hr	94 hr	94 hr	70 hr
Route length	20.0 km	94.2 km	22.6 km	16.9 km	13.2 km
Percentage of route flag stopping	100%	60%	70%	70%	90%
Annual operating cost	\$137,000		\$270,000	\$200,000	\$195,000
Annual fare revenue	\$13,000		\$90,000	\$45,000	\$33,000
Annual ridership	7,200		50,000	36,000	14,300
Administration staff				1 (part-time)	
Single adult cash fare	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$0.00
Single student cash fare	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$1.50	\$0.00
Single senior cash fare	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$2.00	\$0.00
Monthly adult pass			\$70	\$45	
Monthly senior pass			\$60	\$45	
Monthly student pass			\$60	\$30	
Monthly youth pass			\$40	\$30	
Other fares	Day pass \$5.00 20-day pass \$55.00	Day pass \$5.00	Day pass \$7.50	10-ride adult \$18.00 10-ride student \$13.50 Family rate \$4.00	
On-board fare collection	cash ,debit, credit	cash, debit, credit	cash, debit, credit	cash, hotspot app	no fares

NOTES: Community NFP are not-for-profit groups that operate local on-demand transit service

Table 2-3: Jurisdictional Scan of Smaller Fixed-Route Transit Systems in Nova Scotia

2.7 Public Engagement

To understand the needs and expectations of the community relative to public transit, the project team carried out a comprehensive public engagement program designed to gather meaningful input from residents and stakeholders. To promote the engagement opportunities, the Town used both digital and direct outreach methods. Event and online survey information was shared across municipal social media channels.

A detailed description of the engagement strategy and summary of our findings is documented in a What We Heard report included in Appendix C.

Engagement mechanisms included:

- Interviews with key stakeholders (Cumberland County Transportation Society, Nova Scotia Public Health – Northern Zone, and Municipality of Cumberland County Planning)
- Interviews with Municipal Staff (Operations, Planning & Economic Development, Community Living, and Finance)
- A two-hour drop-in style public open house session held at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre (see Photo 2-1)
- An online survey



Photo 2-1: Public Open House Session



The findings from the stakeholder and community engagement activities conducted have been summarized into a series of “Key Themes”. The input collected through internal and external stakeholder interviews, the community survey, and an open house provide valuable insight into the barriers, opportunities, and aspirations to help inform the development of the Transit Feasibility Study.

While the feedback received varies, several key themes were identified, which will support the development of the Study’s recommendations. This section provides an overview of key themes heard throughout these engagement efforts, which have been categorized into four (4) “Key Themes” which are outlined below:

- 1) Safe and Equitable Transportation
- 2) Shifting from Car Culture to Choice
- 3) Design a Service that Fits Daily Life
- 4) Building a Sustainable and Scalable Service

SAFE AND EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION

The engagement feedback emphasized that equity, safety, and affordability are central to developing a successful transit system in Amherst. Respondents consistently noted that a successful transit system must be inclusive and accessible for all, particularly seniors, youth, newcomers, and individuals with mobility challenges. Participants highlighted that public transit could play a vital role in promoting independence, reducing social isolation and enhancing overall quality of life, especially for those who rely on it as their primary mode of travel.

Feedback also highlighted that safety and comfort at both bus stops and on board are key to encouraging usage. Investments in shelters, lighting, benches, and accessible design were viewed as essential to ensuring all users feel confident and secure when using transit services.

The Study should consider:

Accessible Vehicles and Barrier-Free Stops

- o Design all vehicles and stops with universal accessibility in mind, ensuring safe, comfortable, and convenient use by people of all ages and abilities.
- o Consider vehicles with lifts, rather than low floor/ramp buses to promote ridership for all users.

Investment in Supportive Infrastructure

- o Prioritize infrastructure improvements that promote safety, comfort, and convenience, including lighting, shelters, benches and clear wayfinding signage at transit stops.
- o Ensure that new infrastructure aligns with accessibility standards and supports equitable access to public spaces and transportation services.



Affordable Fare Structures and Flexible Payment Options

- o Explore opportunities to provide affordable fare options that maintain long-term financial sustainability while ensuring accessibility for all users.
- o Consider multi-faceted payment methods, including electronic payment (e.g., app or tap cards), prepaid tickets or passes, and cash options to accommodate diverse user preferences and needs.
- o Engagement results indicated that 42% of survey respondents indicated they would be willing to pay a maximum of \$2.01-\$3.00 for a one-way trip, while 19% would be willing to pay \$3.01-\$4.00 and 5% would be willing to pay more than \$4.00.

How do riders want to pay?
Survey results show that 73% of respondents prefer to pay for bus tickets electronically (such as through an app or tap card), 54% would like to buy tickets online, and 43% still want the option to purchase tickets in person.

Social and Community Benefits of Transit

- o Recognize the broader social value of transit in promoting independence and inclusion, particularly for individuals who do not drive.
- o Strengthen connections between transit planning and community well-being by reducing social isolation and enhancing access to daily needs, services, and employment opportunities.

SHIFTING FROM CAR CULTURE TO CHOICE

Engagement feedback revealed that most Amherst residents rely heavily on private vehicles for transportation, indicating that a meaningful shift toward public transit will require both cultural and infrastructural change. Participants emphasized the need for improved pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, to enable residents to safely and conveniently choose alternatives to driving.

Respondents also acknowledged that transitioning to a transit-supportive community will take time and should focus on increasing awareness, improving connectivity, and demonstrating the convenience and reliability of transit as a viable travel option.

The Study should consider:

Encourage Mode Shift From Private Vehicle Use

- o Introduce awareness campaigns and pilot initiatives to showcase the benefits of transit use, such as cost savings, environmental impacts, and improved accessibility.
- o Partner with schools, major employers, and community groups to build ridership and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips. Of survey respondents, 68% indicated they would consider using a public transit system if it were available to them.

67% of survey respondents use a personal vehicle as their primary means of transportation



Supporting Behavioural Change

- o Provide early demonstration projects or temporary routes to build familiarity and trust in new services.
- o Use consistent branding and clear communication to reinforce the reliability and value of the system.

Addressing Infrastructure Barriers

- Integrate pedestrian and cycling connections within transit planning to create a truly multi-modal network.

DESIGNING A SERVICE THAT FITS DAILY LIFE

Participants expressed a strong desire for a transit system that reflects how and where residents travel in their daily routines. Convenience, reliability, and accessibility of routes and schedules were identified as critical factors that would influence ridership. Survey results indicated that 74% of respondents would be more likely to use public transportation if routes and schedules aligned with their work, school, and shopping patterns.

The Study should consider:

Convenient Routes and Schedules

- o Design transit routes and service frequencies that align with residents' daily travel needs and common destinations. Key destinations identified by survey respondents included the Hospital, Amherst Centre Mall/Town Square, and the Downtown Core.
- o Ensure schedules are predictable, reliable, and easy to understand, allowing users to plan trips with confidence.

68% of survey respondents indicated they would consider using a public transit system if it were available

Strategic Stop Placement

- o Prioritize transit stops near high-demand areas such as employment centres, healthcare facilities, retail hubs, and schools.
- o Explore opportunities to enhance comfort and accessibility at stops, such as lighting, benches, and shelters.

Optimizing Access to Transit

- o Recognize that 57% of survey respondents are willing to walk up to five minutes to reach a bus stop and plan routes to reflect that comfort range.
- o Implement pedestrian-friendly design and wayfinding to make access routes to stops clear and safe.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND SCALABLE SERVICE

Participants emphasized that a future transit system should be both adaptable and scalable to respond to the community’s changing needs. The system should not only meet current travel demands but be capable of evolving alongside population growth, employment shifts, and regional development.

There was a strong interest in partnerships, with employers, educational institutions, and surrounding municipalities, to increase transit efficiency, ridership, and reach. Several respondents expressed a desire for potential regional routes connecting Amherst with neighbouring communities such as Oxford, Springhill, and Parrsboro.

The Study should consider:

Flexible and Responsive Service Design

- o Build flexibility into service design to accommodate changes in population, ridership, and travel patterns.
- o Explore phased implementation to test, refine, and expand service over time.
- o Incorporate pilot programs or phased implementation to test and refine service options.

74% of survey respondents indicated they would be more likely to use a transit service if schedules and routes worked with their schedule

Partnerships for Success

- o Collaborate with local employers, schools, and institutions to explore transit partnerships that support employee and student transportation.
- o Pursue funding and resource-sharing partnerships that support long-term operational sustainability.

Regional Connectivity

- o Evaluate options for expanding transit beyond Amherst’s boundaries to strengthen regional access to jobs, education and services.
- o Assess opportunities to expand service to nearby communities such as Oxford, Springhill, and Parrsboro to support regional mobility and economic ties.

3. Evaluating Fixed-Route Service Concepts

The first step in developing a fixed-route service plan is to develop a suite of routing concepts for evaluation and review. It is expected that the ideas contained in these concepts will lead to the development of new concepts, modified concepts, or combined concepts. The objective of this exercise is to use a comparative evaluation to focus on two concepts that best meet the needs of the community. From that point, a more extensive analysis and modeling process can be applied. Ultimately, a single preferred service plan will be identified. The full process is summarized in Figure 3-1.

3.1 Service Concepts

We initially produced a set of twelve concepts which are provided in Appendix B. The concepts were illustrated on a coarse map of the Town’s arterial and collector street network. The concepts provide only minimal operating detail, allow those details to be developed in subsequent stages of the process. Along with each concept sketch, we provide some basic evaluation criteria described below.

Route cycle time

This is the time that the bus takes to complete the full route, inclusive of stops and dwelling time. A one-hour cycle is typical and results in an easily memorized schedule. Reducing the cycle length will improve the frequency of bus arrivals, however results in a more complex arrival schedule. Our concepts provide a range of cycle lengths.

Route in-service time

This is the time that the bus will be operating on the route, including normal stops for loading. The difference between the cycle time and the in-service time is called “dwell time”. Dwell time is built into one, or possibly two, locations along the route (i.e. the route “starting point”) to allow the driver a periodic break. The dwell time also helps to keep alignment with the route schedule if delays occur. Dwell time is also valuable for battery topping-up, if a battery-electric bus is selected. A dwell period of two to ten minutes is desirable.

Number of dwelling units in service area

For each of the routing concepts, we have determined which nodes (see Map A-2) will be serviced and therefore how many dwelling units will be within 400 metres walking distance from the candidate route.

Destination points in service area

Similar to the dwelling unit assessment, we have determined how many “destination points” are within 400m of each route. It should be noted that some of the options extend service well beyond the Town boundary. As the original objective of the study was to develop solutions that essentially stay within the

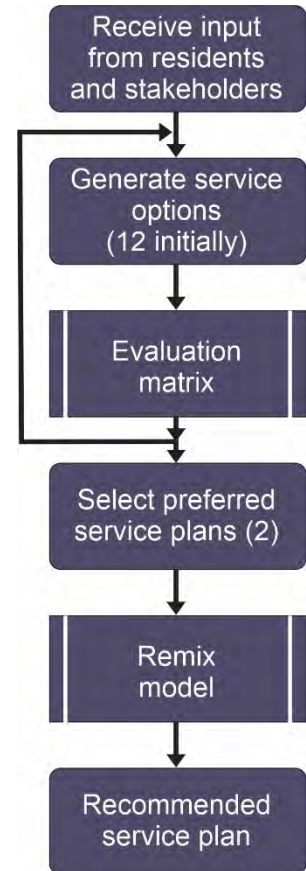


Figure 3-1: Process Chart



Town boundary, these concepts will not be selected for detailed evaluation. We will, however, discuss the potential to develop such services in the longer term later in the report.

3.2 Routing Approaches

There are two general approaches to developing a route: loop and out-and-back. Nearly every Nova Scotia Town with a single-route transit service (Pictou County, Antigonish County, Yarmouth, Bridgewater, and planned for Lunenburg County) uses a one-hour loop model. The transit route planned for East Hants, however, is a one-hour out-and-back. Recently introduced routes to supplement the core Pictou County route are also out-and-back in their layout.

The benefit of a loop model is that it provides coverage of a broad geographic area. The downside of a one-hour loop is that the sum of an A-to-B and a return B-to-A trip is always going to be one hour, even if A and B are close in proximity. Also, if there is a large amount of dwelling time built into the route plan, there will be some passengers who are enroute to their destination who will have to sit through that dwell time. With an out-and-back route, the A-to-B and B-to-A trip times will be essentially identical and correspond to the distance between the two points. Dwelling time will be built into the terminus points where the bus should be empty of passengers.

Our concepts primarily reflect the loop model, but some are out-and-back routing combined with smaller loops.

3.3 Evaluation Results

The ability of each of the routing concepts to reach dwelling units and destination points within its service area (a 400-metre walking distance of the route) is a critical measure of potential ridership. Figure 3-3 shows, for each of the concepts evaluated, how many dwelling units and destination points are within walking distance of the route.

Along with the concept sketches, we produced a comparative evaluation matrix. The matrix and the criteria used in it are shown in Figure 3-2.

An evaluation matrix is a tool that allows important success criteria for a transit service to be measured and compared for a range of service concept options. Our intent with this matrix is not to use its scoring as the sole indicator of success. The matrix is intended to be supportive of using subjective judgement supported by objective measurement in determining what will work best for the Town.

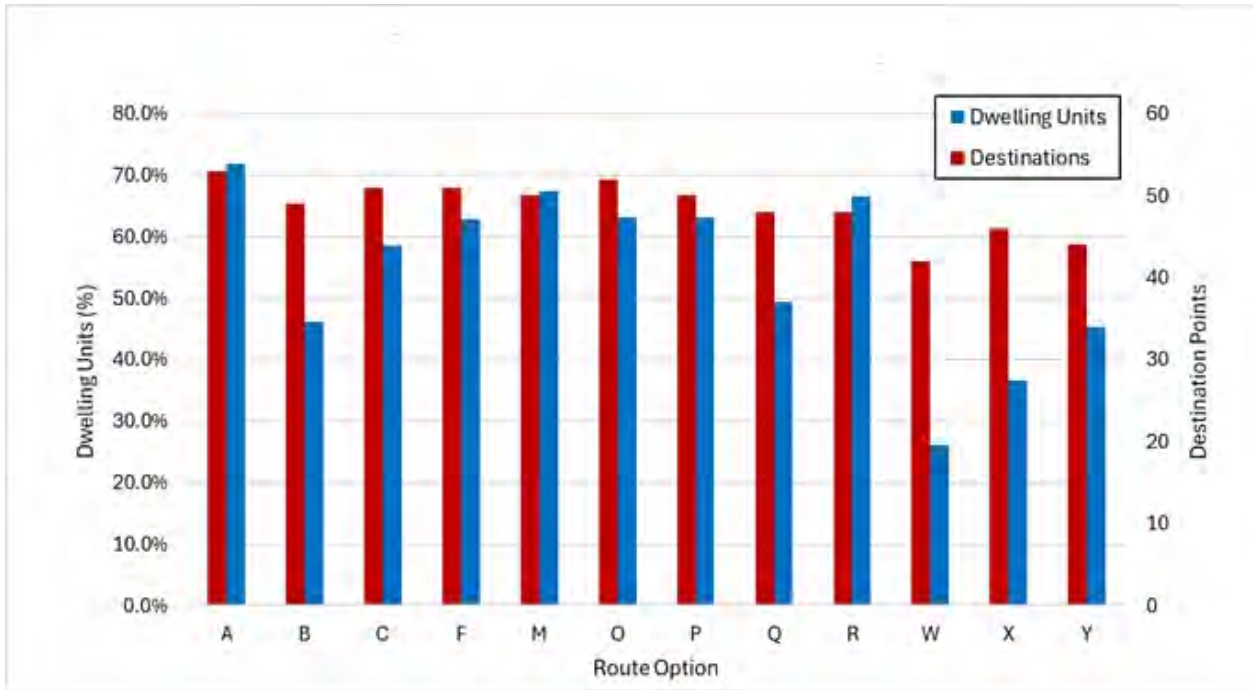


Figure 3-3: Dwelling Units and Destination Points by Route Option

Criteria	Rationale	Route Concept											
		A	B	C	F	M	O	P	Q	R	W	X	Y
Dwelling Units in Service Area	The more dwelling units that are captured, the greater the number of potential transit users.	Meets	Partially	Partially	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Partially	Meets	Mostly misses	Mostly misses	Partially
Destination Targets in Service Area	Servicing more destinations provides more destination choices for transit users.	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Mostly misses	Partially	Partially
Proximity to Works Garage	Having a route in close proximity to the Town of Amherst's garage reduces deadheading at the beginning and end of the service day.	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Partially
Dwelling Time	Dwell time is important to maintain schedule adherence and to give the driver a rest break. It is also valuable for battery top-ups if a battery-electric bus is selected.	Partially	Mostly misses	Meets	Partially	Meets	Partially	Meets	Meets	Partially	Partially	Partially	Meets
Service Frequency	A more frequent service provides more opportunity for transit users to use the bus.	Meets	Meets	Meets	Partially	Partially	Partially	Meets	Meets	Partially	Meets	Meets	Meets
Clarity for Customers	A clear schedule makes it easier for users to understand. A complicated route that passes by the same spot multiple times or a route where the time the bus arrives is inconsistent can lead to customer confusion which may be a deterrent to using transit.	Partially	Partially	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Mostly misses	Meets	Partially	Partially	Mostly misses
Total Points		26	21	24	24	26	24	27	23	22	16	16	17

 Meets the criteria well	 Mostly meets the criteria	 Partially meets the criteria	 Mostly misses meeting the criteria	 Fails to meet the criteria
--	--	--	--	---

Figure 3-2: Evaluation Matrix



3.4 Selection of Preferred Concepts

Following a review with Municipal staff it was determined that the preferred routing concepts to move forward to detailed analysis were Concept A and Concept C with some modifications. The modifications to the routing layouts are described below:

Concept A

- Use Croft between Spring and E. Pleasant instead of Albion to avoid turning onto Albion from Spring and dealing with tight turning and limited sight distance issues
- Use E. Pleasant instead of Townsend between Charles and Willow to avoid turning at Charles (a tight turn) and for better access to Dickey Park
- Use Park instead of Hickman to maintain proximity to Anchor Centre
- Provide service to the Exit 3 Esso Station only when it aligns with Maritime Bus arrivals and departures

Concept C

- Reverse the second half of the route so that there is service in both directions on Albion and South Albion
- Show the service as two routes for better clarity
- Provide service to the Exit 3 Esso Station only when it aligns with Maritime Bus arrivals and departures

Additional modifications may be made when developing the detailed service plans in the next step.

For simplicity Concept A will now be referred to as Plan 1 and Concept C will be referred to as Plan 2 (consisting of Routes 2A and 2B).

Plan 1, with added routing details, is shown in Figure 3-4. This plan covers a large portion of the town and is planned to operate on a 60-minute cycle. Within these 60 minutes there will be, on average, 4-5 minutes of time that the bus will dwell downtown, allowing time for a driver to break and helping to ensure the bus can absorb enroute delays staying on schedule.

Plan 2, with added routing details, is shown in Figure 3-5. The two routes in Plan 2 each are planned to have a cycle length of 30 minutes and will run alternatively. This will mean that the Albion/South Albion corridor (which is common to both routes) will have service every thirty minutes while areas on only one of the two routes will see a sixty-minute frequency. There will be, on average, 4-5 minutes of time following the completion of Route 2A for dwelling downtown. While this Plan does not cover as wide an area as Plan 1, the “spine” of the town sees a high service frequency and overall user trip times will be reduced.

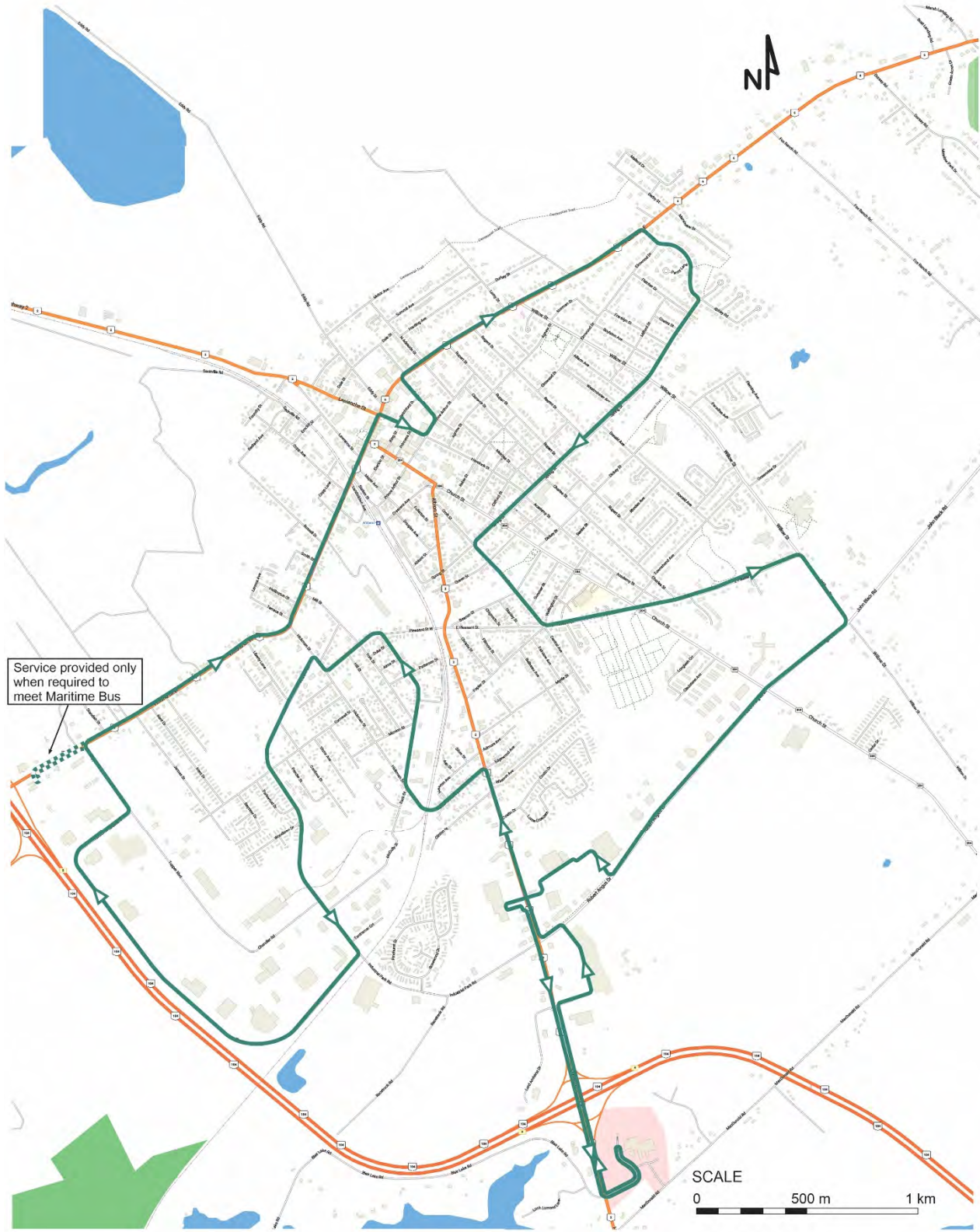


Figure 3-4: Route Plan 1

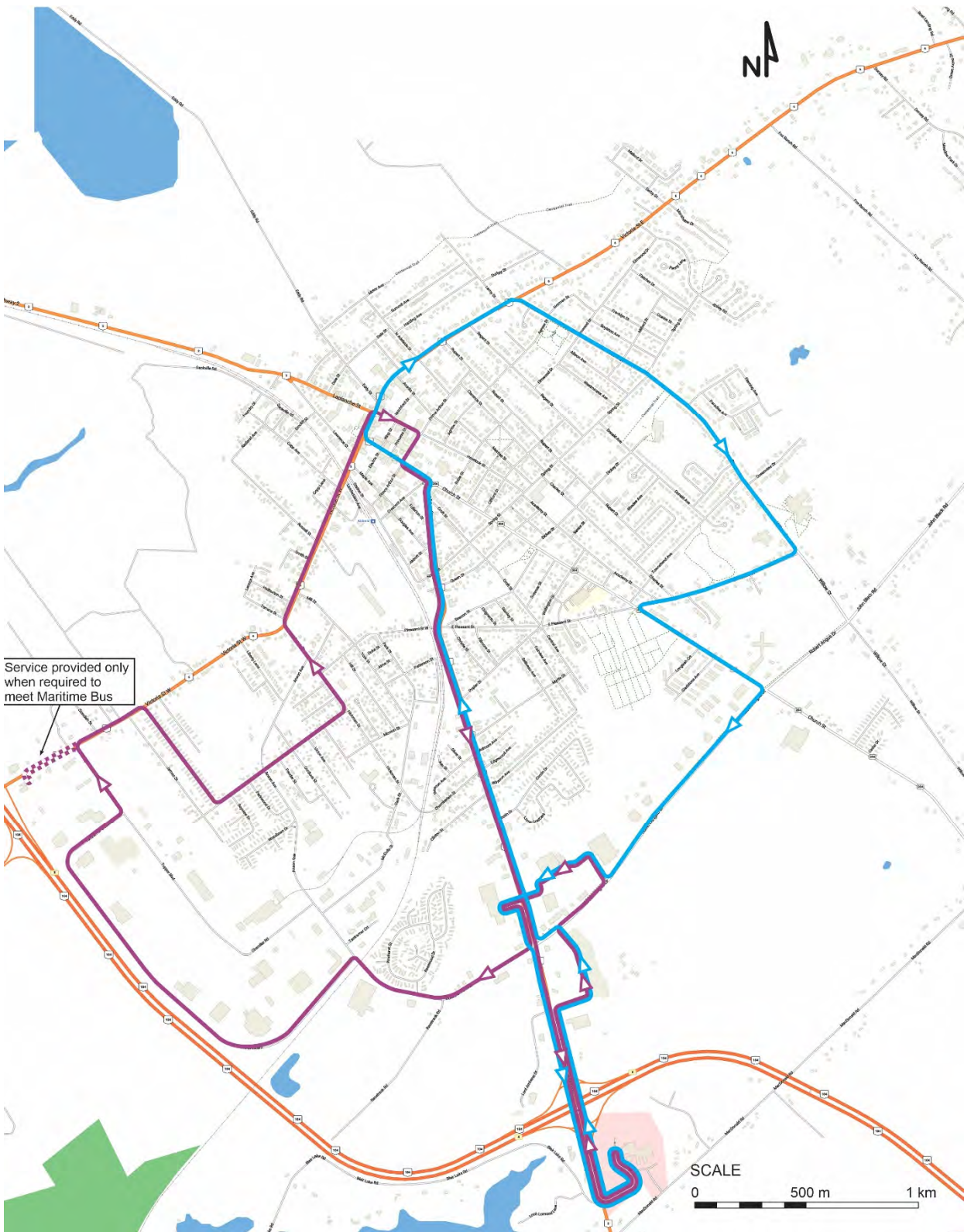


Figure 3-5: Route Plan 2 (Routes 2A and 2B)

4. Fixed-Route Service Plan

4.1 Evaluation Process

The two preferred concepts selected in the previous step of the process were modelled using Remix, one of the world’s most comprehensive transportation planning and scheduling software packages.

Route modelling was based on typical average speeds for small Canadian systems of 20.7 km/h (which excludes recovery time).

Revised Vehicle and Servicing Requirements:

Revised route in-service time and cycle times for the shortlisted routing plans are displayed in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Route Plan In-Service and Comprehensive Cycle Times

Route Plan	Distance (km)	In-Service Travel Time (minutes)	Recovery Time (minutes)	Cycle Time (minutes)
Route Plan 1	21.2 km	61.4	10	71.4
Route Plan 2	27.2 km	78.7	10	88.7
Loop A	12.7 km	36.8	5	41.8
Loop B	14.5 km	41.9	5	46.9

Route Plan 1 requires 61.4 minutes of in-service time to complete the route displayed, while Route Plan 2 requires 36.8 minutes of in-service time to complete Loop 2A and a further 41.9 minutes to complete Loop 2B, resulting in a combined 78.7 minutes of in-service time. Assuming a further 10 minutes are required for recovery, Route Plan 1 has a resultant comprehensive cycle time of 71.4 minutes while Route Plan 2 has a comprehensive cycle time of 88.7 minutes.

As such, it will not be feasible to complete either Route Plan 1 or Route Plan 2 with a single vehicle with 60-minute frequencies. Either two vehicles will be required to operate at the same time to maintain 60-minute frequencies or frequencies will need to be adjusted to every 90 minutes.

Multiple Account Evaluation

A multiple account evaluation (MAE) framework was applied to assess both shortlisted options based on the following criteria:

- Route Frequency – how often trips operate (assumes 1 vehicle in operation)
- Coverage – how much area and population the service reaches
- Trip Directness – ability to travel between primary destinations without significant route deviations
- Frequency between Primary Destinations – how often travel between primary destinations is offered



- Schedule Predictability – customer ease of understanding the bus schedule and grasping the route design.

The MAE which accounts for all categories and criteria is outlined in Table 4-2. Coverage for Route Plan 1 and 2 is summarized graphically in Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2.

Table 4-2: Comparative Evaluation of Route Plans 1 and 2

	Route Plan 1	Route Plan 2	Notes
Route Frequency	90 minutes	90 minutes	Assumes 1 vehicle. Minimum based on cycle-time requirements.
Coverage (400m radius)	~8,400 people	~7,400 people	Large coverage gaps noted for Route Plan 2 in north-central Amherst
Trip Directness		Preferred	Route Plan 2 provides a less circuitous option to/from neighbourhoods and primary retail destinations though notable reduced directness between industrial park and residential zones in northeast.
Frequency between Primary Destinations	90 minutes	45 minutes	Route Plan 2 provides connectivity between Downtown and South Albion St commercial zone and hospital as these connections are provided in both Loops A and B.
Schedule Predictability	Preferred		Route Plan 1 provides consistent predictable service every 90 minutes, while Route Plan 2 alternates each 45 minutes, resulting in a complex schedule for customers.



Figure 4-1: Route Plan 1 - 400m (5-minute walk) Radius

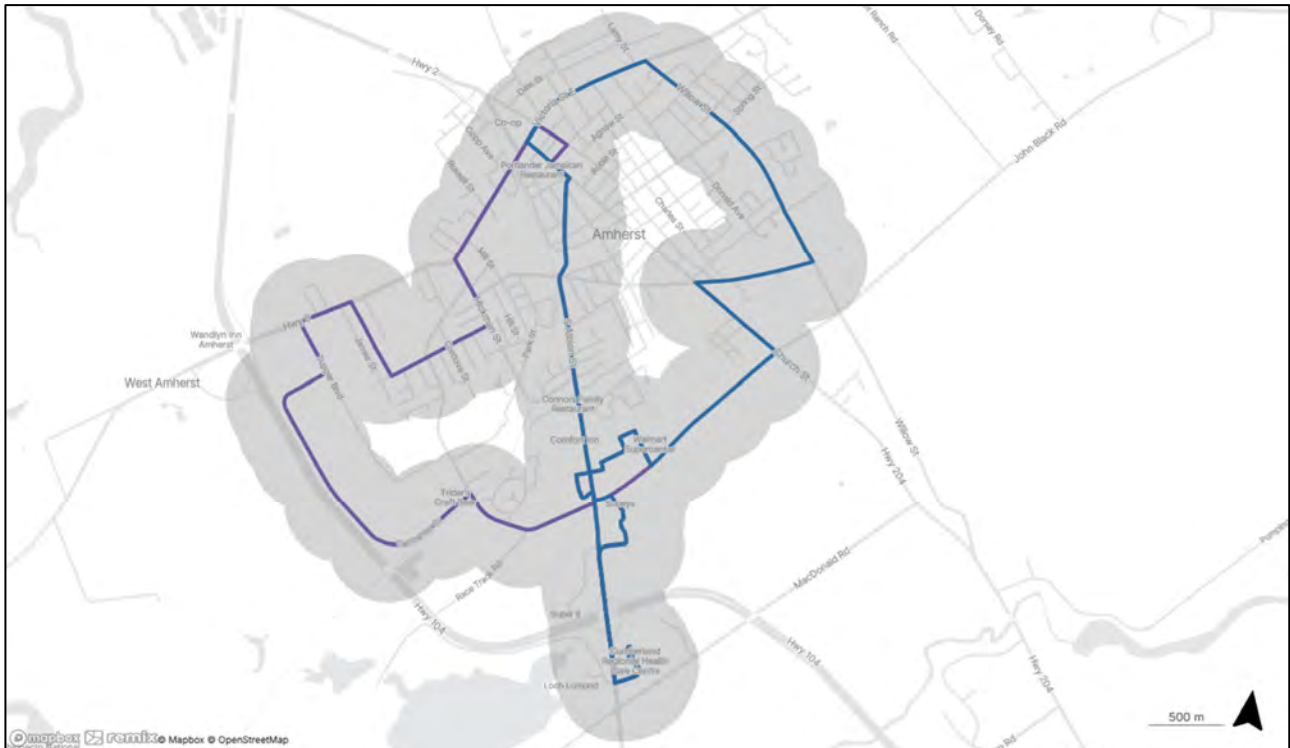


Figure 4-2: Route Plan 2 - 400m (5-minute walk) Radius

4.2 Selection of Preferred Service Plan

Following review and discussion with Municipal staff it was decided that a modified Plan 1 would be the route recommended for implementation. While there was agreement that frequency of service along the Albion/South Albion corridor was an attractive feature offered by Plan 2, the ultimate decision was based on the more extensive coverage offered by Plan 1.

During the service plan review, the interactive nature of the model allows for minor modifications to the routing to be suggested and tested. The result was that the following changes were made to the recommended routing to allow for a **60 minute service frequency**:

- Rerouting along Church Street between E Pleasant St and Robert Angus Dr in lieu of Willow St;
- Alterations to routing in western Amherst including the elimination of service through portions of the industrial park along Tantramar Crescent and Tupper Boulevard. Industrial parks typically produce very limited transit ridership in small communities.

Route modifications result in a revised total route length of 17.8 km, with a resulting in-service travel time of 51.5 minutes and a 60-minute cycle time (with 8.5 minutes of recovery time). The recommended route is displayed in Figure 4-3.

The route is suggested to function as clockwise loop beginning and terminating Downtown Amherst on Victoria Street West, immediately west of Havelock Street. An on-street terminal and supporting amenities including a bus shelter and bench is recommended along either Victoria Street between Church Street and Havelock Street or along Havelock Street between Victoria Street and King Street. The route will then proceed along Havelock St -> Prince Arthur Street -> Acadia Street to provide proximate service to the YMCA, Curling Club, and Public Library, before returning to Victoria Street.

Routing then continues along Victoria Street -> Abbey Road -> Spring Street, providing access to E.B. Chandler Junior High School, before proceeding along Croft Street -> E Pleasant Street -> Church Street to connect with McDonald's Rotary Park, Amherst Stadium and Skate Park. The route enters the driveway of the Gables Lodge and returns to Church Street. Routing continues along Robert Angus Drive then travels through the Walmart and Atlantic Superstore shopping plaza, crosses Albion Street and access Amherst Town Square then continues south along Albion Street across Highway 104 to Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre. Returning north along Albion Street, the route deviates via Canadian Tire, Amherst Shopping Centre, and Sobeys turning left onto Robert Angus Drive and crossing Albion Street to then proceed onto Industrial Park Drive. The route then turns onto McCully Street -> Park Street -> Mission Street -> Park Street -> West Pleasant -> Hickman -> Anson Avenue -> Cornwall Street -> Kent Drive and Victoria Street W to return to the terminus.

As displayed in Figure 4-4 the preferred service plan provides coverage to 7,600 people within a five-minute walking distance (400m radius) of the bus route, or approximately 80% of Amherst's population. This includes the vast majority of Amherst residential and commercial zones, though notably excludes much of the industrial park along Tantramar Crescent and Tupper Boulevard as well as Amherst Regional High School.



Figure 4-4: System Coverage



Periods of Operation

The community survey indicates demand for service across a range of potential service periods. To address this range in demand for travel, it is recommended that service be operated on weekdays between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm. Weekday evening and weekend service can be evaluated in future phases and would not require any additional vehicles. The recommended periods of operation correspond to the primary stated intentions of survey respondents including access to groceries/shopping, recreational amenities, medical appointments, work and school, visiting family or friends, and accessing social services. Periods of operation align with service provided in peer municipalities.

A draft schedule based on the above characteristics has been prepared and is included in Table 4-3. For eleven loop trips of 60 minutes, the recommended schedule requires approximately 11 revenue service hours per weekday or approximately 2,860 hours annually.

Table 4-3: Draft Service Schedule

Downtown Terminal	Walmart	Hospital	Amherst Shopping Centre	Hickman / Anson	Downtown Terminal
8:00a	8:19a	8:27a	8:31a	8:41a	8:51a
9:00a	9:19a	9:27a	9:31a	9:41a	9:51a
10:00a	10:19a	10:27a	10:31a	10:41a	10:51a
11:00a	11:19a	11:27a	11:31a	11:41a	11:51a
12:00p	12:19p	12:27p	12:31p	12:41p	12:51p
1:00p	1:19p	1:27p	1:31p	1:41p	1:51p
2:00p	2:19p	2:27p	2:31p	2:41p	2:51p
3:00p	3:19p	3:27p	3:31p	3:41p	3:51p
4:00p	4:19p	4:27p	4:31p	4:41p	4:51p
5:00p	5:19p	5:27p	5:31p	5:41p	5:51p
6:00p	6:19p	6:27p	6:31p	6:41p	6:51p



4.3 Ridership Projections

Annual ridership projections are estimated based on hourly utilization averages from peer community systems. This data comes from the Canadian Urban Transit Fact Book, last published in 2023. Projections for Amherst are provided in Table 4-4 and represent stable state conditions.

Between 55 and 88 rides are anticipated each weekday, resulting in an annual ridership projection of between 13,900 and 22,200. Stable ridership will take time to build as potential clientele become familiar with the new transit offering and adjust their travel behaviours accordingly, which may take a period of up to 1 to 2 years.

Table 4-4: Transit Ridership Projections

	Low	High
Rides per Service Hour (average)	5.0	8.0
Rides per Weekday	55	88
Annual Ridership Projection	13,900	22,200

5. Operating Options

There are a number of ways for a Municipality to approach the operation of its fixed-route public transit system. The most obvious way is for the Municipality to take on the operation itself. This can be a daunting undertaking, however, as even the smallest transit systems must deal with issues such as maintaining back-up vehicles and back-up drivers. This is much more efficiently handled in a multi-route system than it is in a single-route system.

Options to a municipally-operated transit service are present and working effectively in the Atlantic Provinces. Table 4.3 provides a summary of operational options and examples of each that we are aware of.

Table 4.3: Transit Operating Models in Atlantic Canada

Operator	Description	Examples
Community Not-for-Profit	CCTS would operate the service with funding from the Municipality as well as other sources.	Antigonish Transit CHAD Transit (Pictou County)
Municipality	The Town of Amherst would operate the service itself, hiring staff and creating a Transit division within the organization.	Halifax Transit, Transit Cape Breton, Bridgewater Transit, and Yarmouth Transit
Multi-System Operator	Although we are aware of few examples, we believe Nova Scotia would benefit from having a single operator for its multiple smaller non-contiguous transit systems. Kings Transit Authority might be positioned to take on a role like this.	BC Transit ²
Private Sector Operator	There are some private sector bus charter companies within Nova Scotia who could be procured through a tendering process to operate a fix route.	Charlottetown Transit

Any of these models could be a good fit for Amherst, although as we discuss further in Section 10.2 it will be challenging for the Municipality to operate a single-route service. CCTS (community not-for-profit), Kings Transit (multi-system operator) and Coach Atlantic (private sector operator) could all be engaged in discussion related to service provision.

² BC Transit, which began as the Urban Transit Authority in 1979 is a provincial crown agency charged with providing transit service throughout BC outside of the Greater Vancouver Area. Victoria Transit is the only service operated directly by BC Transit, while regional services in over fifty other communities are operated either by the Municipality or by a private contractor. In addition to funding, the individual regional services receive high-level planning and operational support from BC Transit.

6. Selecting a Vehicle

6.1 Vehicle Types

There are three basic types of design that can be selected for an urban public transit bus. Each is listed and described below. Although a life-cycle costing analysis specific to the Amherst service was not part of this project, we provide some general observations to compare cost and performance of each bus type.

Highway Coach

A highway coach is designed mostly for charters and inter-city travel. Seating is typically high quality, individual seats and loading is normally done only through a front door. These buses have compartments for luggage and may be equipped with a washroom. They are often not designed to be accessible. Highway coaches are not well suited to the constant boarding and deboarding characteristics of urban transit routes.



Urban Transit Bus

An urban transit bus is purpose-built for operating in urban areas. The structure of the vehicle is extremely sound and buses can often achieve one million kilometers during their service life. Most urban transit buses today are built with a low-floor design. The bus is able to “kneel” as it stops at the curb and deploy a boarding ramp if needed for accessible access. These vehicles are available in standard lengths of 35 feet, 40 feet, and 60 feet (accordion-style). A 35-foot bus, which is most suited to ridership expectations for Amherst, will seat about 32 and can handle standing loads in addition to that.



Mini-Bus

A mini-bus starts with a standard truck chassis and is typically referred to as a “cutaway”. The seating and shell of the bus is then built onto the truck chassis. There are a number of configurations and lengths to how these buses are designed. Some mini-buses have low-floor accessible access, while some have a wheelchair lift at the rear of the vehicle. The seating capacity is typically 16-20, fewer when wheelchairs are being accommodated. A mini-bus is not designed for standing loads and provides a lower quality ride (noise, space, passenger maneuverability) than an urban transit bus or a highway coach.



Either a 35-foot urban transit bus or a mini-bus could be appropriate for service in Amherst. In general terms, the trade-off between the two is that an urban transit bus will cost more to purchase than a mini-bus, but provide more than double the service life.



Assuming a quarter of all daily rides take place on a single trip at the high total ridership projection of 88 rides per day, a vehicle would need to be able to accommodate 22 passengers at any given time. While it is recognized that these assumptions are conservative, they would not be able to be reliably supported in a mini-bus. As such a **35-foot urban transit bus** is most appropriate for use in Amherst. Vehicles of this type typically accommodate up to 32 people in seats (plus an additional 35 standees) and can be rendered 100% wheelchair accessible. A 35-foot urban transit bus additionally allows for opportunities to grow ridership without fear of capacity constraints. Having adequate passenger capacity at all times is critical for the success of a transit system. Although a full load may be a rarity, when a bus has to pass by a stop where passengers are waiting because there is no room on the bus for them, perception of the service is severely harmed. Vehicles of this type retail for approximately \$680,000 for a diesel vehicle.

While the increased seating capacity and the extended service life of the urban transit bus justify the significant investment, we recognize that the high up-front cost can be an impediment to a quick-start or pilot implementation of the service. An alternative would be to purchase new or used mini-buses (see Section 6.3). A 27-foot mini-bus would provide capacity for only 18 passengers (fewer if wheelchairs are included). While this capacity may be adequate initially, it will be more likely to be exceeded as the service matures. Ensuring that the capacity of the vehicles is not exceeded is critical to the success of the service, as riders left waiting at the stop as a full bus passes by is a major deterrent to continued use of the service.

One active vehicle plus one spare vehicle is required to provide the service as described. A spare vehicle is essential to the reliable functioning of any transit system. All vehicles require periodic maintenance and servicing and can occasionally break down (or need to be transported to a larger community to address a major repair). When both vehicles are available, the vehicle in service should be alternated daily or weekly based on a predetermined schedule to spread regular wear-and-tear.

6.2 Propulsion

There is also a choice to be made in propulsion type. Although a range of propulsion options is available for urban transit buses including overhead-electric (trolleys) and hydrogen cell, the popular propulsion options for both urban transit and mini-buses are gas/diesel, hybrid, and battery-electric. As a general rule, a battery-electric bus will cost double that of a diesel/gas bus to purchase but result in half of the operating costs (including both powering and maintenance). Normally, a life-cycle analysis will demonstrate a reduced overall cost for battery-electric over diesel/gas. Hybrid buses normally fall between those two options. One issue that arises from the selection of battery-electric vehicles is that they currently do not have sufficient battery capacity to do a full day of service without recharge. A strategic approach to managing this may include midday recharging or swapping buses in and out of service to be recharged.

6.3 Used Buses

In addition to acquiring a new vehicle, purchasing a used bus is an option. In the past, Halifax Transit has made decommissioned urban transit buses and mini-buses (Access-A-Bus and MetroX buses)



available to transit systems in Nova Scotia at no cost. Halifax Stanfield Airport retires vehicles in their Park-and-Fly service well before the end of their typical service life and those vehicles become available for purchase from time to time. A variety of used buses are always available through brokers. Most notably, Scotiashare Bus Sales in Moncton carries an extensive inventory of used mini-buses suitable for service in Amherst.

7. Other Transit Service Models

7.1 Enhancement of Dial-a-Ride (Cumberland County Transportation Service)

CCTS was established in 2009 and operates a door-to-door, pre-booked transportation service to all residents of Cumberland County. The fleet currently consists of six vehicles, five of which are accessible. Rides must be booked at least 24 hours in advance, but requests may not always be accommodated if the vehicles are fully booked.

Although the existing service is available to any resident of Cumberland County (including the Town of Amherst) it is typically only used by seniors and those with accessibility barriers. Data showing a breakdown of all clients provided by CCTS (Figure 7-1) shows that nearly all identify with some type of disability. The availability of this service may not be broadly known to all, and there has been no effort to market it to the general public. The reason for this is that CCTS has only enough capacity to handle the current demand for trips. Broadening the customer base would harm the availability of the service for those who currently use and require it.

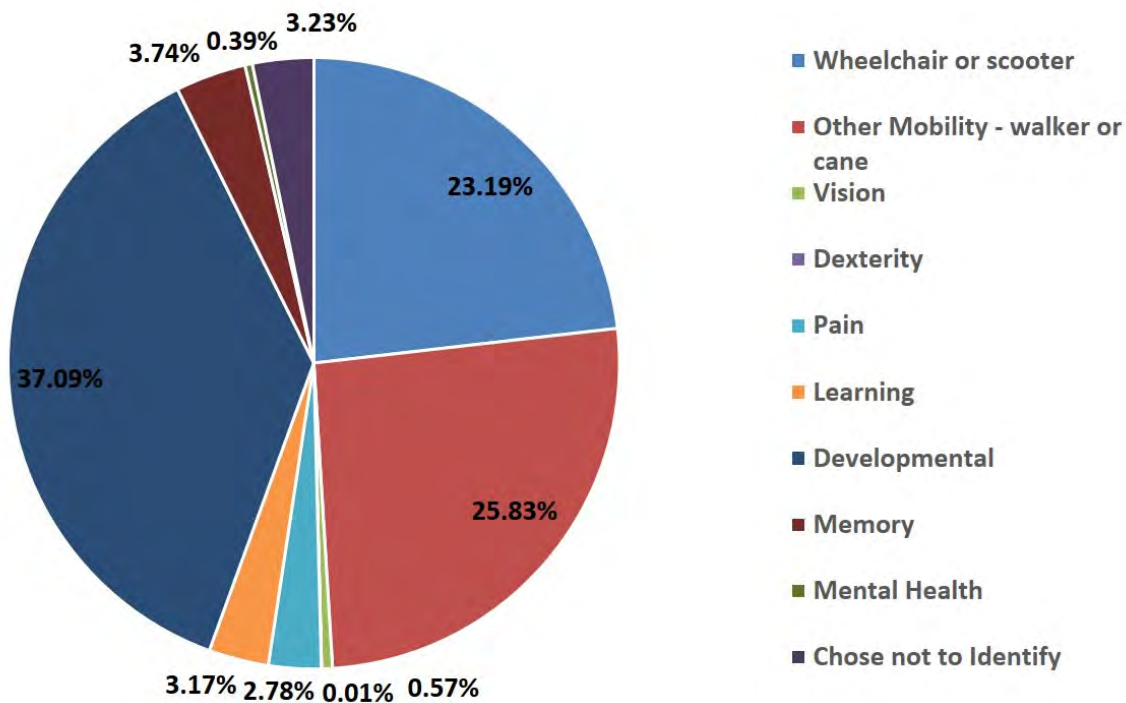


Figure 7-1: CCTS Client By Disability (2024)



A better-funded service could see capacity increased, allowing for the customer base to be expanded, the reliability of the service to accept trips improved, and possibly the price charged to clients reduced. The Municipality of Cumberland County provides annual funding which increased to \$25,000 in 2024-25, while the Town of Amherst provides funding only on a piecemeal basis through its grants program.

A viable alternative to funding a fixed-route service is to budget annually to fund the operation of CCTS. If both Cumberland County and the Town of Amherst were to each budget \$40,000 per year, the service could be marketed to all residents of Cumberland County and provide more effective and reliable service.

For the Town of Amherst, this would be a significant cost saving compared to operating a fixed-route transit service. Projecting comparative ridership and perceived value, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

7.2 Flex-Route Services

Flex route transit combines aspects of fixed-route and demands responsive service. In this model, a bus operates along a defined route with scheduled timing points and fixed stops, but it has the flexibility to deviate to pick up or drop off passengers closer to their origins or destinations typically upon advance request. Riders can board or get off the bus at a flag or fixed stops along the main route and the bus will only leave the route if a deviation is requested. This service delivery model can improve accessibility and coverage for users beyond walking distance from main corridors while maintaining a basic level of scheduled service. However, operational complexity can increase as drivers must balance scheduled stops with deviations and careful management is required to avoid delays or missed connections. Public awareness and understanding of how to request deviations are also important for successful implementation.

Table 7-1: Fixed-Route vs Flex-Route Transit Models Comparison

Service Delivery Model	Key Features	Advantages	Challenges
Fixed-Route	Schedule, set route and stops	Predictable, reliable and easy to use	Inflexible, costly in low density areas with low ridership
Flex-Route	Follows a set route and schedule but can deviate within a defined area upon request	Increase coverage for dispersed populations, maintains some schedule predictability	Operational complexity

7.3 Other Demand-Responsive Services

Other alternatives to delivering transit service have been explored elsewhere with mixed success. A summary of some of these service options is provided below.

Vanpooling can be used with a large employer or a “campus” of workplace locations in close proximity. A multi-passenger van will pick up employees in a single location or at their door within a specific neighbourhood and drop them off at a single workplace location. One workplace may have multiple vans that service several communities, but all make only one destination stop. The reverse is done at the end of the day and only one trip in and one trip out is made per day. Typically, the driver of the van is also an employee at the workplace. If vanpooling makes sense for an employer, or a campus of employers, they will implement it. A Municipality, however, may choose to subsidize the operation to get it started with the justification of better managing transportation.

Third-party demand-responsive services provide the same type of service as the existing not-for-profit community operators in Cumberland County and elsewhere in Nova Scotia, but typically employ more technology in the management of trip reservations. VIA is one such provider, demonstrating how technology-enabled demand-responsive systems can support mobility needs in both rural and urban settings. The company operates on-demand transit services in several Canadian communities by supplying the platform used for real-time trip requests, vehicle routing, and shared-ride coordination. In York Region, VIA powers York Region Transit’s on-demand service across suburban and rural areas, expanding transit coverage where fixed-routes are less effective. VIA also supports smaller municipalities, including Kenora, Ontario, where it provides the operational platform for Kenora Transit, and Alma, Québec, where it enables Transport adapté d’Alma’s on-demand operations. Across Canada, VIA reports partnerships with 35 agencies, reflecting a broad operational presence and demonstrating how third-party demand-responsive systems are being used to enhance local mobility options.

Several Ontario municipalities have introduced or expanded on-demand transit services to address gaps in conventional public transportation. In Pembroke, a three-year pilot project was launched to restore local transit after a 12-year absence, offering six-day-a-week service using two eight-seat vehicles that riders can book through an app, web portal, or phone line at a fixed fare of five dollars per trip. In Ottawa’s Blackburn Hamlet, OC Transpo tested an on-demand service using spare Para Transpo minibuses on Sundays and select holidays, allowing same-day and next-day bookings between designated stops and Blair Station. As the pilot concluded, the City of Ottawa reported increased ridership and positive user feedback. In North Grenville, the Municipality introduced NGtransit, an on-demand bus service that can be booked between 30 minutes and one month in advance and operates daily within municipal limits, providing a new transportation option where taxis and ride-hailing are not available. In North Durham, Durham Region Transit continues to operate on-demand service in Uxbridge, Brock, and Scugog, with ridership increasing notably in Uxbridge and Brock and declining slightly in Scugog.

Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft (if available locally), or taxi services, can be positioned in rural areas to provide demand-responsive service. The Municipality would have to subsidize each trip to make the service attractive to the service providers and to keep it affordable for the users. A taxi subsidy model



removes the need for the municipality to purchase vehicles, eliminating associated capital costs. Although taxi trips may have higher operating costs, the municipality does not assume responsibility for service operations. Based on the projected ridership (see Section 4.3), subsidizing the same number of trips through a taxi program would cost the municipality between \$97,300 to \$155,400 annually, assuming an average taxi fare of \$10 per trip and a user 'fare' price of \$3 (i.e. \$7 municipal subsidy). It is recommended that subsidies ONLY be extended to trips that begin and end within municipal boundaries and be extended to residents only. This approach offers cost avoidance related to vehicle ownership; however, it also presents challenges, including limited scalability and reduced ability to manage or coordinate service delivery. As service provision relies entirely on a private third party, servicing cannot be guaranteed for users, resulting in an option that would provide very good coverage – as taxis can travel anywhere – but very low guaranteed reliability.

8. Elements of Operation

In this section, we discuss various elements of operating the fixed-route transit service described in Plan 1 including high level cost estimates. We will describe these elements as though the Municipality were operating the service within its organizational structure. Should the Municipality choose to work towards one of the other operating models described in Chapter 5, these figures can be used as a basis for negotiation of a funding agreement.

8.1 Route

The recommended routing was chosen from a range of options and assessed and fine-tuned through the process described in Chapter 4. The final route, along with recommended bus stop locations, is shown in Map A-3 in Appendix A.

8.2 Fare Structure

Adult base fare is recommended at \$3.00 per ride, which is in line with peer Atlantic Canadian communities. Most peer transit systems offer discounts for seniors and/or youth, representing 60-80% of base fare cost. Additionally, discounted multi-trip tickets or monthly pass offerings are offered to encourage frequent usage. The Municipality is encouraged to explore these fare discount options when determining its pricing structure. Antigonish Transit provides free transfers for passengers on their demand-responsive service who transfer to the fixed-route service and this should be considered for the Amherst service with transfers from CCTS.

8.3 Operating Cost

Based on the recommended service level, annual operating costs are estimated at \$315,000 (Table 8-1). As costs are directly tied to servicing, operating costs can be lowered by pursuing a more limited-service pattern. Using a typical all-inclusive hourly rate, indexed to peer systems, fuel, maintenance and labour are estimated at \$257,000 which confirms our estimate of \$264,000 for those direct cost items.

In addition to a Direct Operating Cost, we have included additional operating costs that are not typically attributed to the transit service operation. These additional costs are stop maintenance, vehicle tracking, and a reserve fund for vehicle replacement. All of the cost elements together make up a Total Operating Cost. Of course, the Town will be responsible for budgeting for the Total Operating Cost. We use the Direct Operating Cost in our calculations for revenue recovery and cost per trip to provide a better “apples-to-apples” comparison with other peer services.



Table 8-1: Annual Operating Costs

Item	Annual Cost (Urban Transit Bus)	Annual Cost (Minibus)	Assumptions/Notes
Fuel#	\$31,000	\$24,000	200km/day; 255 service days per year; \$1.70/L 36L/100km urban transit; 28L/100km minibus
Maintenance#	\$40,000	\$40,000	
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$43,000	\$25,000	50% of replacement value recovered from government grants; 16 year service life urban transit; 8 year service life minibus
Drivers#	\$107,000	\$107,000	\$35/hr (incl. benefits); 0.75 FTE per driver, 2 shifts per day
Administration Salaries#	\$71,000	\$71,000	\$65/hr (incl. benefits) for 0.5 and 0.1 FTE (see Section 8.7)
Administration Costs#	\$8,000	\$8,000	Marketing, printing, monthly pass and ticket sales
Insurance#	\$7,000	\$7,000	
Bus Stop Maintenance	\$6,000	\$6,000	Primary cost is snow clearing
Vehicle Tracking	\$2,000	\$2,000	See section 8.9
TOTAL OPERATING COST	\$315,000	\$290,000	
TOTAL DIRECT OPERATING COST	\$264,000	\$257,000	
# indicates elements included in direct operating cost			

8.4 Revenue and Financial Performance

Table 8-2 compares key financial metrics under low and high ridership projection scenarios, detailing expected revenue and operating costs for each case. The annual net operating cost of transit, as described, is anticipated at between \$245,400 and \$270,300, with a resulting cost per capita of between \$26.21 and \$29.16.



Table 8-2: Financial Performance (Direct Costs)

	Urban Transit Bus		Mini-bus	
	Low	High	Low	High
Ridership Projection	13,900	22,200	13,900	22,200
Total Annual Revenue*	\$38,000	\$60,000	\$38,000	\$60,000
Direct Operating Cost	\$264,000	\$264,000	\$257,000	\$257,000
Net Operating Cost (Direct)	\$226,000	\$204,000	\$219,000	\$197,000
Cost Recovery	14%	23%	17%	23%
Cost per Trip	\$18.99	\$11.89	\$18.49	\$11.58

* Although a cash fare of \$3.00 is recommended, an average fare of \$2.70 is assumed to account for potential discounts for seniors, youth, and monthly passes

Table 8-3: Financial Performance (Total Costs)

	Urban Transit Bus		Mini-bus	
	Low	High	Low	High
Total Annual Revenue	\$38,000	\$60,000	\$38,000	\$66,000
Total Operating Cost	\$315,000	\$315,000	\$290,000	\$290,000
Net Operating Cost (Total)	\$277,000	\$255,000	\$252,000	\$224,000
Cost Per Capita	\$29.16	\$26.84	\$26.53	\$23.58

8.5 Capital Cost

Estimated capital costs are included in Table 8-4. Capital costs include vehicle acquisition (\$1,360,000) and supporting infrastructure (\$140,000), which assumes 24 new bus stop pads (required for wheelchair deployment in situations where sidewalks are absent or too narrow), and 4 bus shelters and benches at the following locations: the Downtown on-street terminal, Walmart, Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre, and Amherst Centre. Together this results in a combined capital cost estimate of \$1,540,000. Unless external capital funding support is available, we recommend that the infrastructure work (bus stops and shelters) be delayed to year two of implementation.

The capital cost for the alternative of purchasing mini-buses has also been provided.

Note that all capital costs are exclusive of taxes.

Table 8-4: Estimated Capital Costs

Item	Units	# Of Units	Unit Cost	Total Per Item (\$)
VEHICLES				
Recommended: New 35-Foot Urban Transit Bus (Gas or Diesel)	Vehicles	2	\$680,000	\$1,360,000
Alternative: New 27-Foot Mini-bus (Gas)	Vehicles	2	\$200,000	\$400,000
SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE				
Bus Stop Signs		40	\$200	\$8,000
Bus Stop Pad		18	\$2,000	\$36,000
Bus Shelter and Bench		4	\$10,000	\$40,000
Localized Sidewalk Extension	m	140	\$400	\$56,000
Start-up (Engineering, procurement, etc.)				\$40,000
TOTAL (Urban Transit Buses)				\$1,540,000
TOTAL (Mini-buses)				\$580,000

8.6 Fare Collection

For many years, dropping coins in a fare box has been the basis for transit fare collection. The sale of tickets and monthly passes is one way to avoid the nuisance of the single fare cash payment. More and more, people are expecting the ability to make transactions through digital means (such as a smart card or a smart phone).

Equipping buses with a secure fare box and arranging for the sale of tickets and passes will be the starting point for the Amherst service. Opportunities should be explored, however, to supplement this with newer technologies for fare collection including:

- Using the HotSpot app which is currently in use by Bridgewater Transit as a fare collection option
- Negotiating with Halifax Transit to use their HFXGo app
- Pushing the Province of Nova Scotia to adopt Action Strategy 1.3.6 from its Regional Transportation Plan (2026) which proposes “a common user interface to manage fares”

8.7 Staffing and Administration

The system, as described, would require two operators at approximately 0.75 FTE and 1 administrator responsible for marketing, issue/complaint resolution, and coordination at 0.5 FTE. Each operator would

work five days a week with a short shift of about six hours (including vehicle preparation time). An additional position (1.0 FTE) within the Municipality (regardless of whether the service is operated by the Municipality or not) would be required for coordination and oversight. Provision would need to be made to have a back-up driver ready to cover for illness or time off.

8.8 Bus Stops

Bus stops are normally located every 350-450 metres along the route in urban areas. Spacing the stops too far apart adds to walking distance, but stops too closely spaced add stopping time to the route. Map A-3 in Appendix A shows recommended locations for bus stop on the preferred route plan.

When considering a new fixed-route service as a trial implementation, investment in vehicles can be partially recovered if the service is discontinued. Investment in transit stop infrastructure can not. For this reason, we recommend minimizing the design of bus stop until confidence is gained in the longer-term viability of the service.

At a minimum, every bus stop must have a sign. For consistency with other services in Nova Scotia, the sign should be predominantly white with a bus logo on it. Some service-specific branding can also be added. The bus stop signs used by Yarmouth Transit provides a good example to follow.



Figure 8-1: Bus Stop Sign (Yarmouth Transit)

It is beneficial to have a sidewalk on the side of the street that the bus travels. When the sidewalk is separated from the street, a concrete pad (with tactile walking surface indicators) should be constructed between the sidewalk and the back of the curb (see Figure 8-2).

Some portions of the route in Amherst have no sidewalk or the sidewalk is on the opposite side of the street that the bus travels (as is the case on Church Street). Over time, consideration should be given to building new sidewalk connecting to the bus stop.

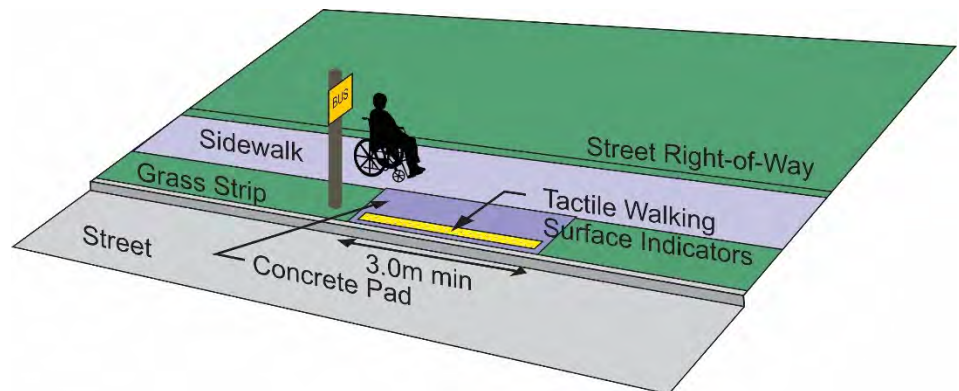


Figure 8-2: Concrete Bus Stop Pad

Transit shelters provide protection from weather for clients waiting for the bus. At a cost of approximately \$10,000 per installation, transit shelters should be used sparingly at first. It would be prudent to approach commercial properties and institutions to encourage them to fund the installation and maintenance of transit shelters on their property. Bus shelters and benches should be prioritized at the Downtown on-street terminal, near Walmart, at the hospital, and at Amherst Shopping Centre.

The majority of streets on which the bus will travel will require the bus to block a traffic lane when pulled to the curb or the edge of pavement. This is normal practice in urban areas and results in only momentary delay. When the bus stops at its terminal point, however, it may dwell there for several minutes waiting for its next scheduled start time to arrive. The bus must wait outside of active traffic flow in this case. The recommended terminal point is on Victoria Street East in northbound direction just before Havelock Street. This location benefits from being a high traffic area and has nearby public facilities for the bus driver. To provide a 15 metre-long dwelling spot for the bus, a shortening of an existing right turn lane, a repurposing of an existing parking space(s), or a combination of the two will need to be undertaken. Shortening the right turn lane will have minimal operational impact as it will be occupied by the bus for only for a small portion of the day.

8.9 Bus Tracking Apps

Apps that track and display the real-time location of transit vehicles on their routes have been a welcome addition to customer support. Transit users gain confidence in using the service when they know where the bus is at all times, even when its running behind schedule. There are several third-party apps on the market that do a good job of providing tracking data, but they typically only provide service for larger systems.

A more simple approach is the ‘home-grown’ one used by Bridgewater Transit. Using a local company (Digital Fusion) they are able to display the location of their bus in real time on their municipal website. The cost of doing this would be approximately \$8,000 for initial setup and \$2,000 per year in licensing fees.

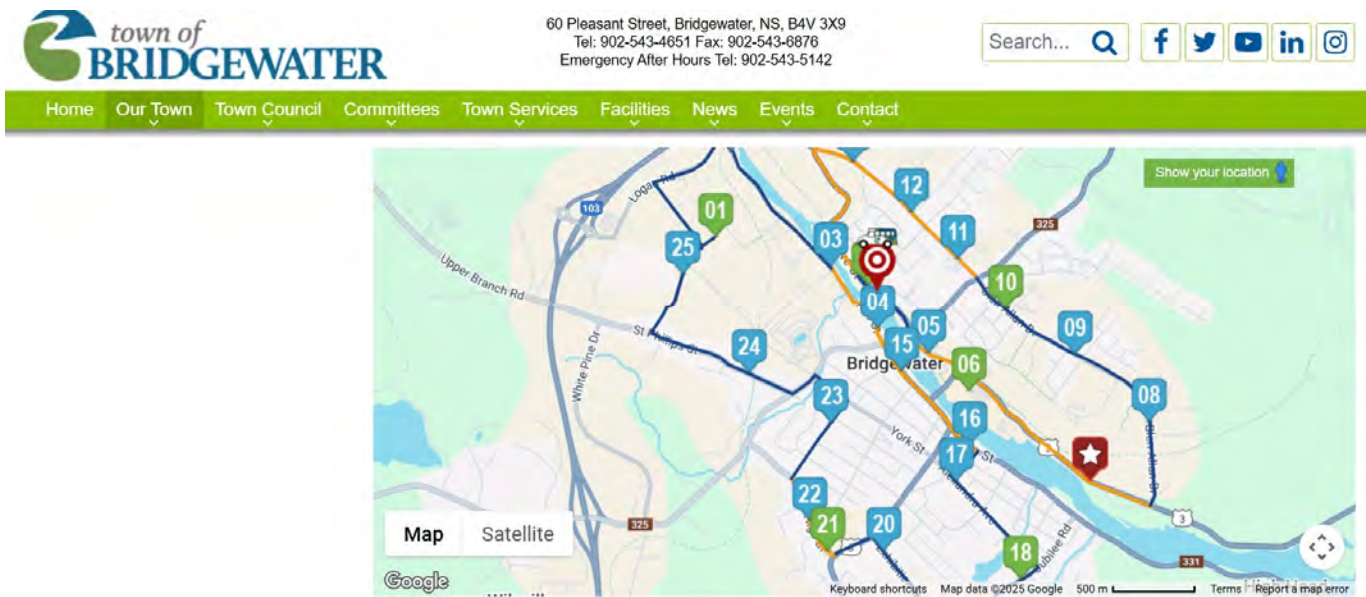


Figure 8-3: Simple Bus Tracking App (Bridgewater Transit)



8.10 Linkage to Active Transportation

Multi-modal trip-making can be an important element of good mobility within the Town of Amherst and can be greatly supported by the integration of public transit and active transportation. One challenge that fixed-route public transit faces is that not everyone is going to be picked up or dropped off right at their door. While we note in our analysis that a 400 meter walking distance from a transit stop is an acknowledged service area for fixed-route transit, well-maintained sidewalks or walking paths are an important element of that assumption. Bicycling can extend that 400 meter service distance for some if measures are taken to support bicycling (multi-mode paths, wide shoulders, bike lanes, etc.). Locating bus stops at locations where the Town's active transportation network intersects with the fixed transit route is important. Including a bike rack on the bus help accommodate those who combine a bicycling trip with transit.

8.11 Strategic Route Variations

While some destinations within the service area merit service throughout the day, others do not. We have shown, for example, route variation in Map A-3 where the bus will go outside of its normal route to service the Esso station on Victoria Road West only when it aligns with arrival and departure of Maritime Bus (which picks up and drops off passengers there). While the Industrial Park may also merit consideration for route variation to align with shift changes, we have not included it in the service plan due to the length of the route diversion required. Consideration may be given running a trial of this route variation once confidence is gained in the ability of the bus to meet its schedule.

9. Funding Opportunities

Securing necessary funding is essential for implementing and sustaining a public transit service. Municipalities have the potential to draw on various funding sources to cover capital and ongoing operation costs. There are potential funding sources provided by federal and provincial programs. Leveraging these resources could aid in supporting both the implementation and long-term viability of public transit in the Municipality.

9.1 Canada Public Transit Fund

The Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF) is a major federal program introduced in 2024 to enhance public transit and active transportation infrastructure nationwide. Starting 2026-2027, the CPTF will deliver \$3 billion annually in stable, predictable funding, enabling municipalities to plan and implement long-term transit projects with confidence. It will address diverse needs of communities across the country including large metropolitan areas, smaller municipalities, and rural, remote, northern and indigenous communities. CPTF funding will be allocated through three different streams as outlined in Table 9-1

Table 9-1: Summary of CPTF Funding Streams

Funding Stream	Purpose of Stream	Process and Eligibility
Metro-Region Agreements (MRAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets large urban areas with high transit demand and cross-boundary travel • Promotes integrated regional planning linking transit, housing and land use. • Supports major projects such as subway expansions, dedicated bus lanes and system maintenance 	<p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expression of interest (EOI): Metro-regions signal readiness 2. Integrated Regional Plan (IRP): Outlines 10-year investment strategy 3. Metro-Region Agreement: Formal long-term funding commitment 4. Project Funding Applications and Contribution Agreements: For specific projects <p>Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must include provincial governments and regional entities responsible for transit, housing and land use



Funding Stream	Purpose of Stream	Process and Eligibility
Baseline Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities with existing public transit systems • Provides \$500 million annually for communities with existing transit systems • Focuses on routine investments, system expansion, rehabilitation, and planning 	Eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide three to five years of historical ridership, population served and capital investment data • Existing public transit system includes fixed-route service • Have a minimum average historical investment of \$100,000 annually • Have a minimum annual ridership of 30,000 (likely below what Amherst could produce)
Targeted Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides regular opportunities for specific public transit and active transportation projects. • Supports initiatives such as rural transit, school transportation and active travel infrastructure 	Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different programming offered under this stream with varying requirements. • Current programming includes: Rural Transit Solutions Fund, Zero Emissions Transit Fund and Active Transportation Fund

Communities seeking CPTF funding must implement measures to unlock housing supply near transit, enabling faster and more affordable home construction.

9.2 Rural Transit Solutions Fund

The Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF) provides financial support to develop and expand locally driven transit services in rural, remote, indigenous and Northern communities. Its goal is to improve access to essential services, employment, education and social connections.

The RTSF supports a range of transit models including:

- Fixed-route services
- OnDemand transit
- Micromobility options (e.g. e-bikes)

Under the Capital Stream, applicants may receive up to \$10 million for eligible capital assets such as vehicles and infrastructure. Eligible capital costs include:

- Vehicles (buses, vans, zero-emission vehicles)
- Infrastructure (shelter, signage)
- Accessibility features
- Professional service fees
- Active transportation components (e.g. short walking/bike paths, bike racks, lighting)
- Micromobility (e-bikes, charging stations as part of larger transit projects)
- Start-up costs

To qualify, applicants must complete a feasibility study analysing community characteristics such as geography, population, and economic conditions to ensure the project is realistic and financially sustainable. **The feasibility study you are reading satisfies this objective.** Projects must also meet at least one of the following objectives:

1. Increase transit use relative to car travel
2. Contribute to climate change mitigation and resilience
3. Improve transit options for all, especially equity deserving groups

Additional application requirements are outlined in Table 9-2.



Table 9-2: Summary of RTSF Application Requirements

Requirements for Applications	Details Required
Project details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project rationale explaining how the project is supporting the objective of the RTSF and why the project is needed List of the type and quantity of assets that will be purchased Explanation of if/how the project will include reducing green house gas emissions and/or mitigate impacts of climate change Estimates on how the project will improve public transit, notably ridership
Project finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The federal funding being requested The organization’s financial contribution Other sources of funding, including in-kind contributions and partner funding
Cost estimates on assets applicants plan to acquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity and type of each asset Cost for acquiring assets Cost to meet regulatory requirements Cost of operations and maintenance Cost relating to consulting or engagement with Indigenous peoples

Table 9-3: Examples of Approved RTSF Applications

Program Name	Municipality	Federal Contribution (\$)	Program Contribution (% of Est. Total Project Cost)
Purchase of vehicles and charging stations for the on-demand service in Tecumseh, Ontario.	Tecumseh	1,050,550	80%
Installation of transit infrastructure to support T:GO transit system for the Town of Tillsonburg, Ontario	Tillsonburg	153,436	71%

Program Name	Municipality	Federal Contribution (\$)	Program Contribution (% of Est. Total Project Cost)
Purchase of an accessible vehicle to provide on demand transit services in Red Rock, Ontario	Red Rock	60,480	80%
Purchase of hybrid vehicles to support an existing transit service for rural regions surrounding City of Ottawa, Ontario	Russell	92,000	80%

9.3 Provincial Funding

In 2023, the Government of Nova Scotia announced an investment of \$5.1 million "to help municipalities and community organizations purchase vehicles, support operations and planning and make transportation more accessible." With the recent adoption of the JRTA's Regional Transportation Plan, there is optimism that further investment will be made in municipal public transit in support of the Plan's objectives.

Currently, the Public Transportation Assistance Program (PTAP) provides funding to municipalities and community organizations operating a fixed-route service for capital assets like vehicles, bus terminals and shelters. Funding is for capital purchases that support the long-term sustainability of the fixed-route transit service. Alternatively, the funds can be placed in a capital reserve until they're required. The funding is not for offsetting the cost of operating the transit service.

10. Summary and Recommendations

10.1 Summary

This study has used public engagement and interaction with Municipal staff to examine a variety of approaches to introducing fixed-route transit service within the Town of Amherst. From this examination, a routing pattern was selected that provides service every hour during weekdays with coverage that reaches nearly every town resident. Using a robust modeling process that examines a wide range of service frequencies and geographic coverage helps us to ensure that the recommended service plan has been optimized to best meet the key needs and expressed desires of the community.

The bulk of transit stop infrastructure has been delayed until Year Two to allow for time for the system to prove its longer-term value. A summary of costs for the first two years of service is provided for the recommended urban transit buses (Table 10-1) as well as the alternative of mini-buses (Table 10-2). Data in these tables is taken from the more detailed breakdown provided in Chapter 8.

Table 10-1: Cost Summary for Years One and Two (Urban Transit Bus)

	Year One	Year Two
CAPITAL COSTS		
Vehicles	\$1,360,000	
Stop Infrastructure	\$8,000	\$132,000
Start-up (procurement, promotion, engineering, etc.)	\$40,000	
TOTAL	\$1,408,000	\$132,000
OPERATING COSTS		
Fuel	\$31,000	\$32,200
Maintenance	\$40,000	\$41,600
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$43,000	\$43,000
Salaries (drivers and administration)	\$178,000	\$185,100
Miscellaneous (insurance, marketing, etc)	\$23,000	\$23,900
TOTAL	\$315,000	\$325,800

Note: Assumes an increase of four percent per year for operating costs



Table 10-2: Cost Summary for Years One and Two (Mini-buses)

	Year One	Year Two
CAPITAL COSTS		
Vehicles	\$400,000	
Stop Infrastructure	\$8,000	\$132,000
Start-up (procurement, promotion, engineering, etc.)	\$40,000	
TOTAL	\$448,000	\$132,000
OPERATING COSTS		
Fuel	\$24,000	\$25,000
Maintenance	\$40,000	\$41,600
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	\$25,000	\$38,000
Salaries (drivers and administration)	\$178,000	\$185,100
Miscellaneous (insurance, marketing, etc)	\$23,000	\$23,900
TOTAL	\$290,000	\$300,600

Note: Assumes an increase of four percent per year for operating costs

10.2 Operating Agreement

There are significant ‘economies of scale’ in transit service delivery. Operating a single-vehicle service brings significant challenges in providing back-up vehicles and drivers and in keeping abreast of best practices and emerging technologies. Essentially, adding transit vehicles to an existing transit service operation will have less impact than adding new transit vehicles to an existing municipal fleet without transit vehicles.

It is recommended that the Municipality enter into negotiations with a third-party contractor to operate and manage transit services. The third-party contractor would be responsible for staffing, ongoing vehicle maintenance, and management of daily operations including fare collection, monitoring cleanliness and state-of-good-repair of vehicles in operation, as well as responding to issues to support drivers and customers. While the municipality would not be required to operate or maintain fleet vehicles under this model, it is advised that the Municipality assign an employee as a primary point of contact with the contractor to streamline communications and management. This delivery method leverages



contractor knowledge and expertise and minimizes Municipal responsibilities for staffing and maintenance. CCTS might be considered as that third-party contractor.

To leverage available capital grants, it is recommended that the Municipality own the vehicles, thereby lowering ongoing contractor fees. Alternately, if transit is trialed as a pilot project, consideration could be given to additionally contracting vehicle provision to a third-party operator, which reduces upfront costs and risk to the Municipality.

Provision of supporting infrastructure such as sidewalks and shelters would remain the responsibility of the Municipality.

10.3 Implementation Considerations

Provided Council decides to move forward, a draft implementation schedule is provided in Table 10-3, pending Council approval.

Table 10-3: Draft Implementation Schedule

Activities	Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Q3 2027
Council Endorsement							
Funding Applications							
Service Procurement							
Contract Award							
Marketing & Education							
Service Launch							

10.4 Marketing and Education

Successful implementation of a new transit system will require strong communication and ongoing evaluation to ensure it meets community needs. Marketing and public education helps residents understand how to use the system, the routing and schedule, as well as benefits of using public transit.

When first introducing a public transit system to the Municipality, clear communication and outreach are essential to build awareness and encourage ridership. The Municipality should develop a focused marketing and education plan that explains the service, schedule, fare structure and accessibility features in simple terms. Steps may include the creation of a dedicated webpage, posting updates on social media and distributing printed materials such as brochures and posters at key community locations. Additionally, providing pop-ups at community events and festivals can help reach a broader audience.



Public education should include guidance on how to plan trips, pay fares, and access to the service safely. Outreach efforts should target seniors, students, people with disabilities, and the vulnerable population to ensure equitable access. These activities should begin before the service launch and continue during initial months to support adoption.

10.5 Phasing Considerations

A fixed-route system can be scaled up or down depending on demand and available resources. To ensure the service is responsive to community needs, a monitoring review should be conducted approximately one year after implementation. The review should include the following:

- A ridership analysis to assess usage and system performance.
- A community and rider survey gathered feedback from riders.
- Adjustments to routing and service hours are based on findings to improve convenience and efficiency.

Future phasing could include the addition of weekday evening, Saturday, or Sunday service, which would not require additional fleet. An additional day of 12-hour service would add incrementally to the cost of fuel, salaries and maintenance (approximately \$52,000 per year). Improving trip frequencies to a trip every 30 minutes would require either (1) substantial route shortening or (2) additional fleet and concurrent service hours (two buses in operation at the same time).

Over the longer term, the Municipality could evaluate the feasibility of introducing demand-responsive microtransit service. This delivery model could be explored if there is sufficient demand to justify investment. Longer-term considerations may include introducing a second route and restructuring the network.

Further long-term consideration could be given to working with the Municipality of Cumberland County to extend routing to destinations like Springhill, Oxford and/or Pugwash.

10.6 Ongoing Monitoring

Monitoring is essential to assess the performance of the new transit system and to determine whether adjustments or service changes are needed. The municipality should establish a structured monitoring framework that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Key indicators should include:

- **Ridership Levels:** Track daily and weekly passenger counts and boarding locations to understand demand patterns and identify peak activity times.
- **On-Time Performance:** Measure schedule adherence to ensure reliability and identify operational issues.
- **Customer Feedback:** Collect input through surveys to gauge the satisfaction of the community, identify areas for improvement, and evaluate additional prospective periods of operation.



- **Cost and Revenue Analysis:** Monitor operating costs against fare revenue to evaluate financial sustainability.
- **Safety and Accessibility Compliance:** Review safety performance and accessibility standards to ensure all riders can use the service comfortably.

Steps to implement monitoring include installing data collection systems that count boardings and setting up regular reporting. Findings should be used to guide adjustments such as potential route changes, schedule modifications or service expansion. If ridership remains low or costs exceed projections, the Municipality can consider scaling back the service. On the other hand, strong demand may justify adding stops, increasing frequency or expanding the route. Continuous monitoring ensures the service remains responsive to community needs while remaining financially viable.

Monitoring should be conducted after a ramp-up period of at least 1 year to allow time for travel patterns to adjust to the new service.

10.7 Alternatives to Fixed-Route Service

Chapter 7 of this report discusses alternatives to fixed-route service. Of these, we believe the most viable to be approving an annual operating grant of \$40,000 to CCTS and marketing the on-demand service to all residents of the town. This would be a fraction of the cost of operating a municipal fixed-route service, although it is beyond the scope of this study to project the comparative value of this service in terms of ridership.



APPENDIX A

Maps





MAP A-1

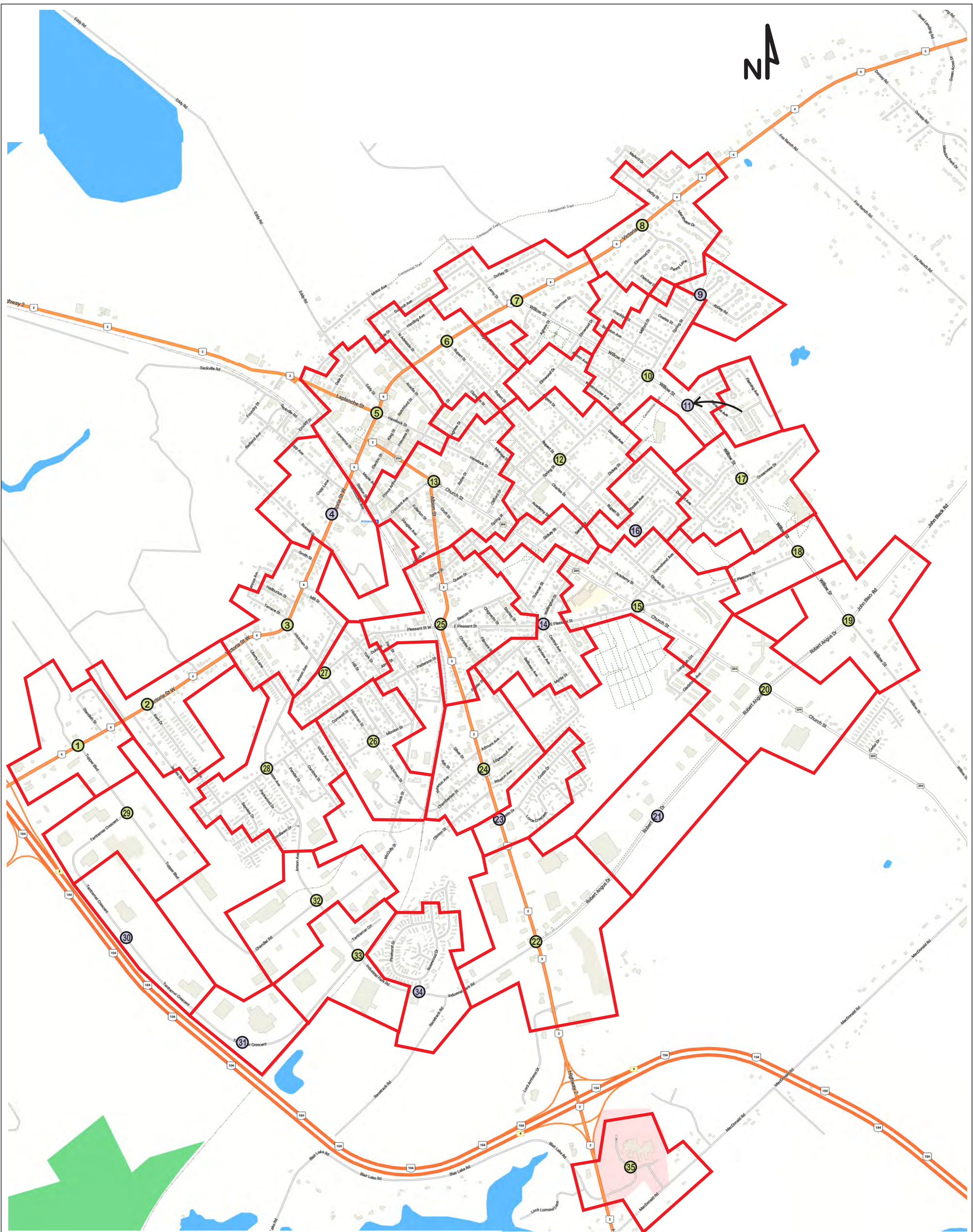
Road Classification (DRAFT)

SCHEDULE	LAST UPDATED	DATA SOURCE
	2025-01-09	Prov. of NS

NORTH + SCALE	PROJ.
	NAD83 CSRS UTM 20 N

LEGEND

- Trans-Canada Highway
- Local Arterial
- Local Collector
- Local



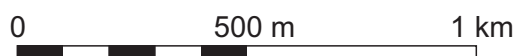
Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

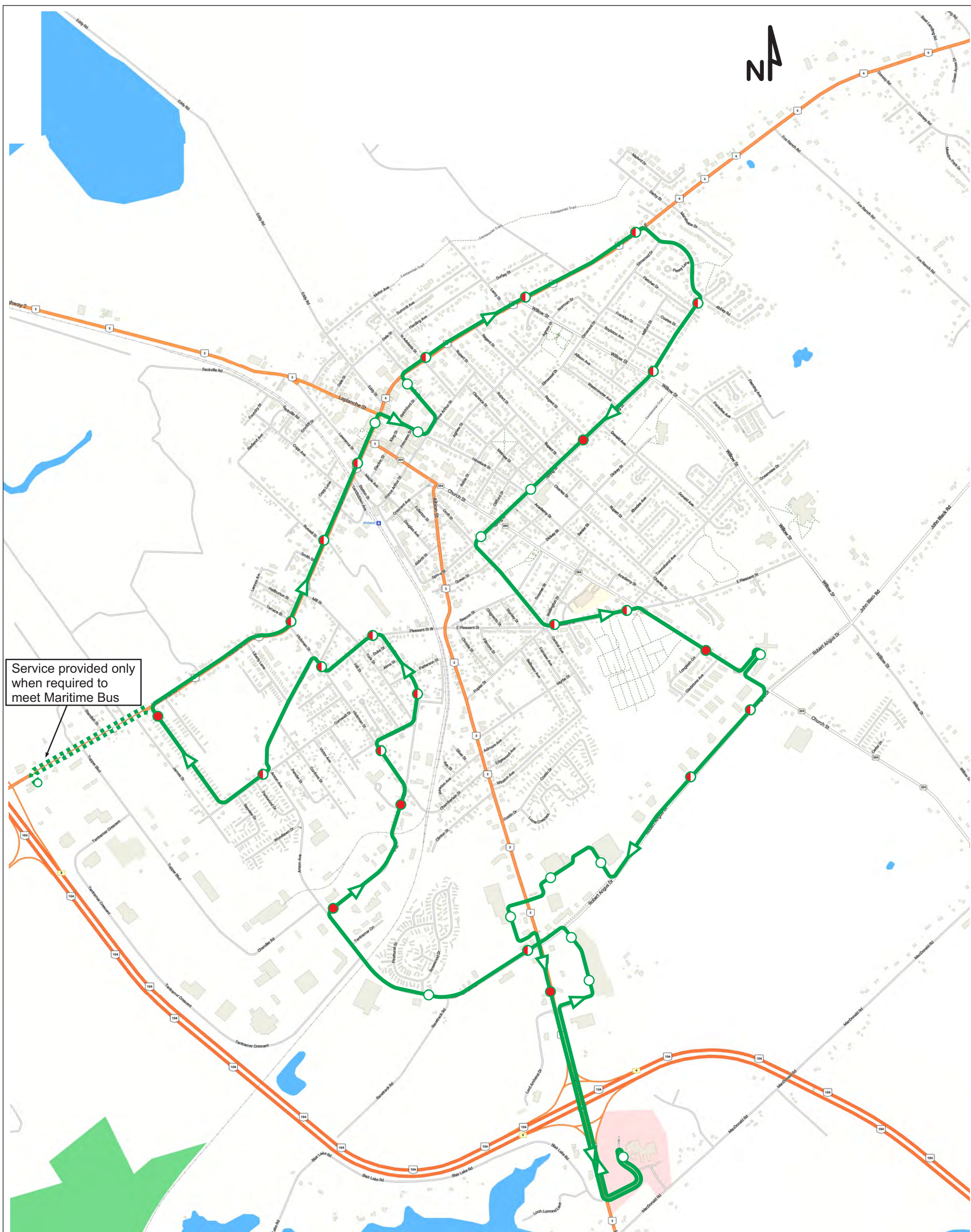


MAP A-2

TRANSIT NODES AND COLLECTION AREAS

SCALE





Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



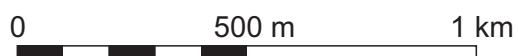
MAP A-3

RECOMMENDED FIXED ROUTE

KEY TO STOPS

- Sidewalk at curb
- Sidewalk separated from curb by grass strip
- No sidewalk

SCALE

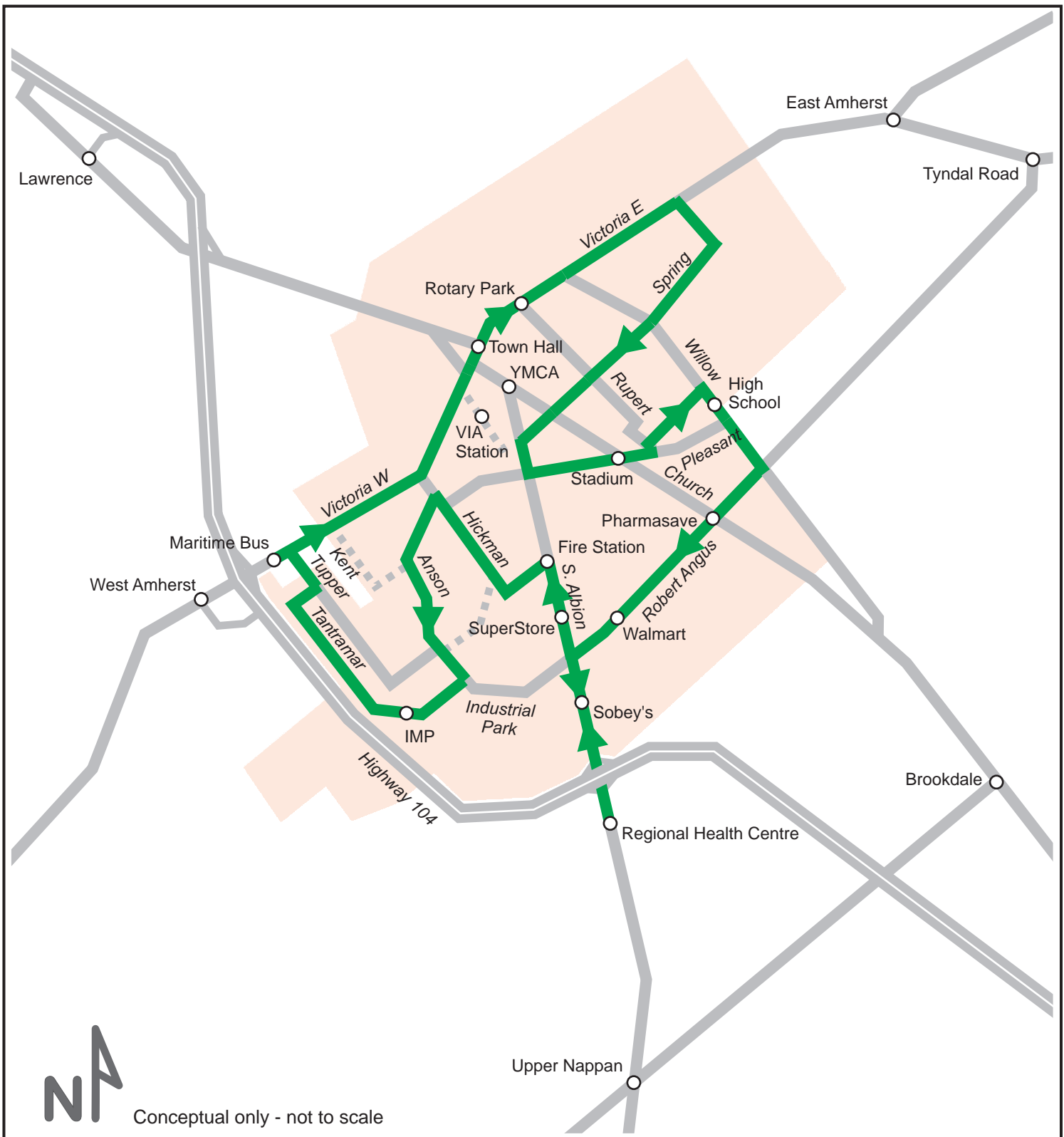






APPENDIX B

Concept Sketches





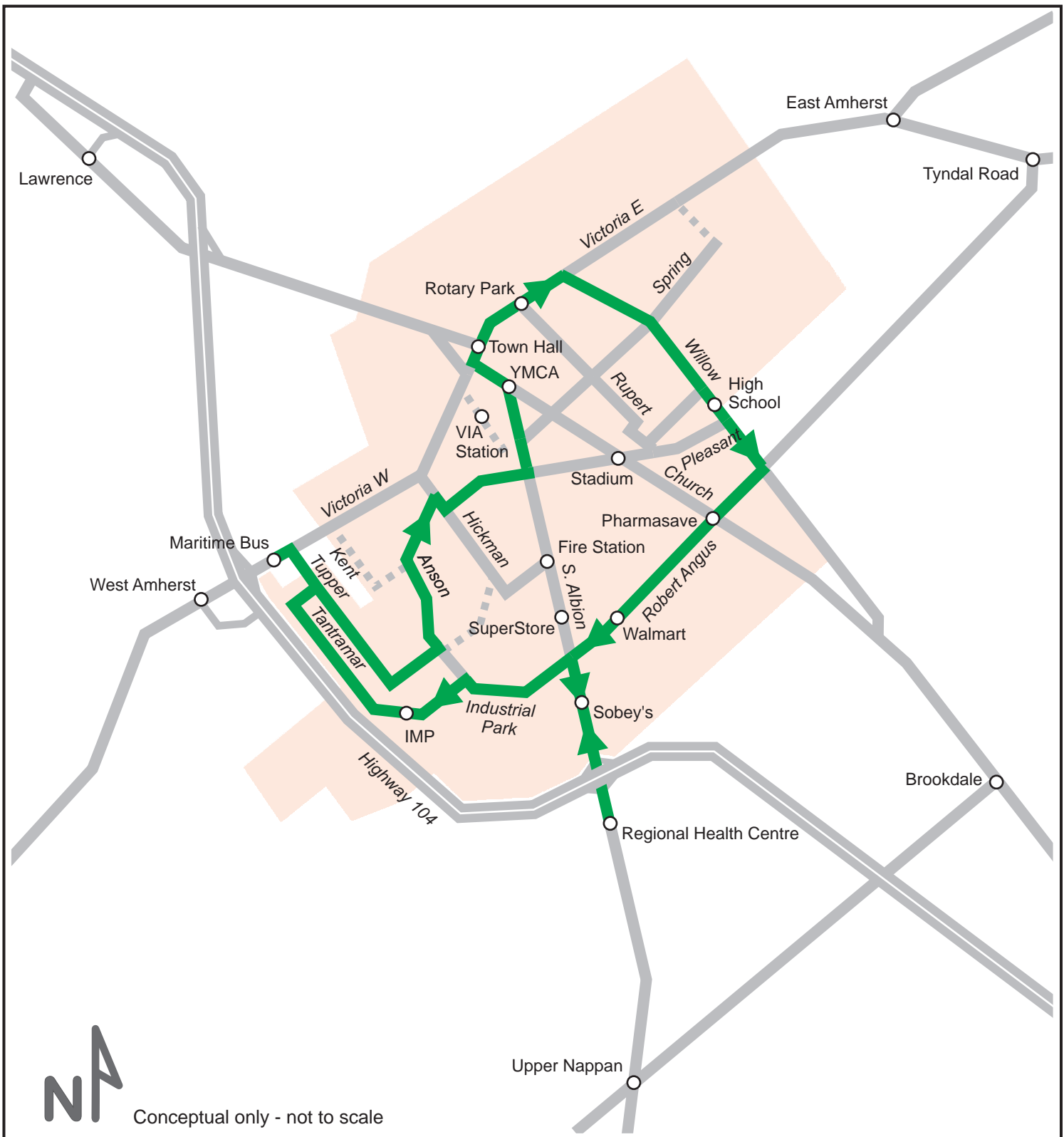
Conceptual only - not to scale



Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION A

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	47 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	71.9%
Destination Points in Service Area	53



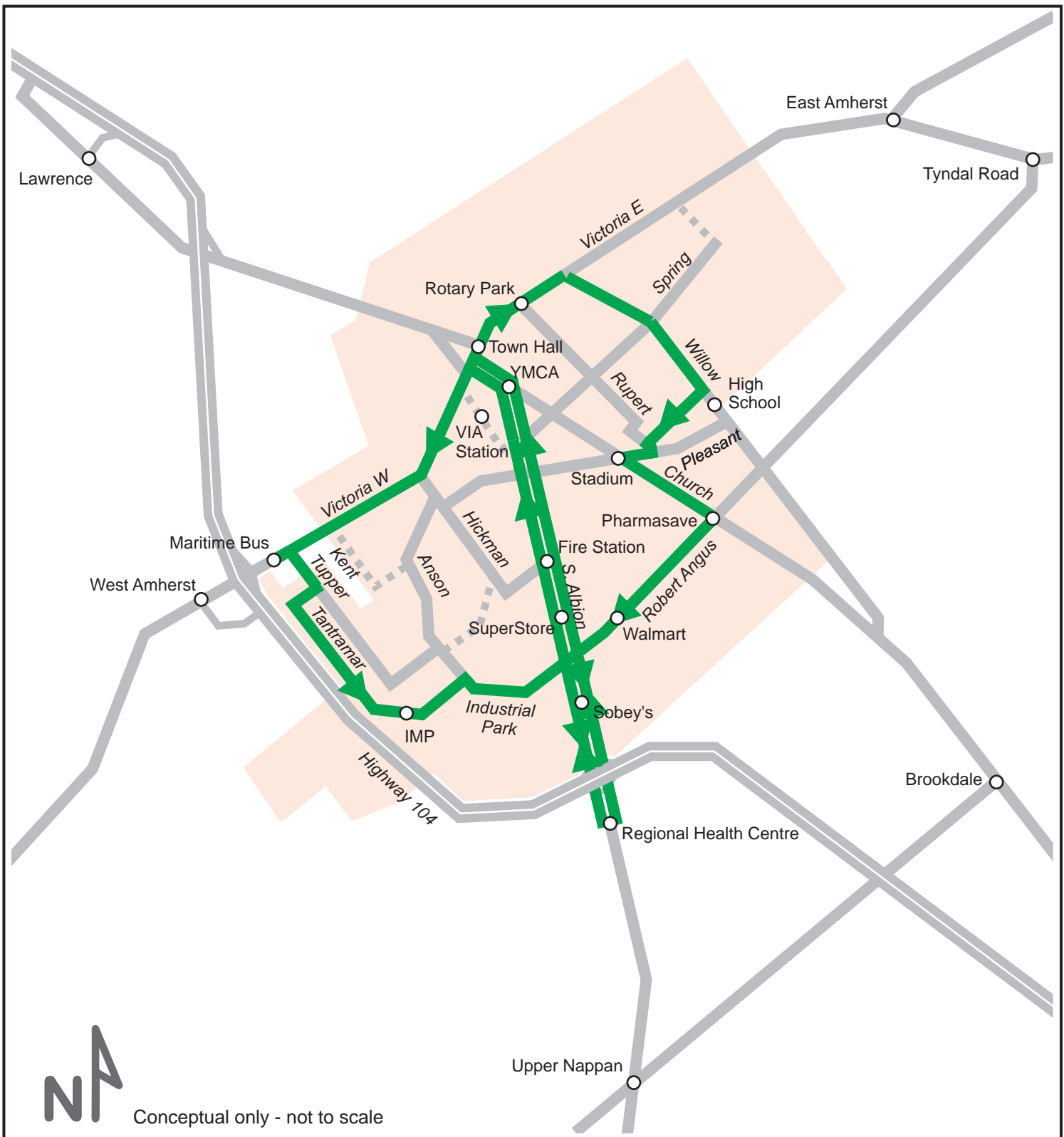
Conceptual only - not to scale



Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION B

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	40 min
In-Route Time	38 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	46.1%
Destination Points in Service Area	49



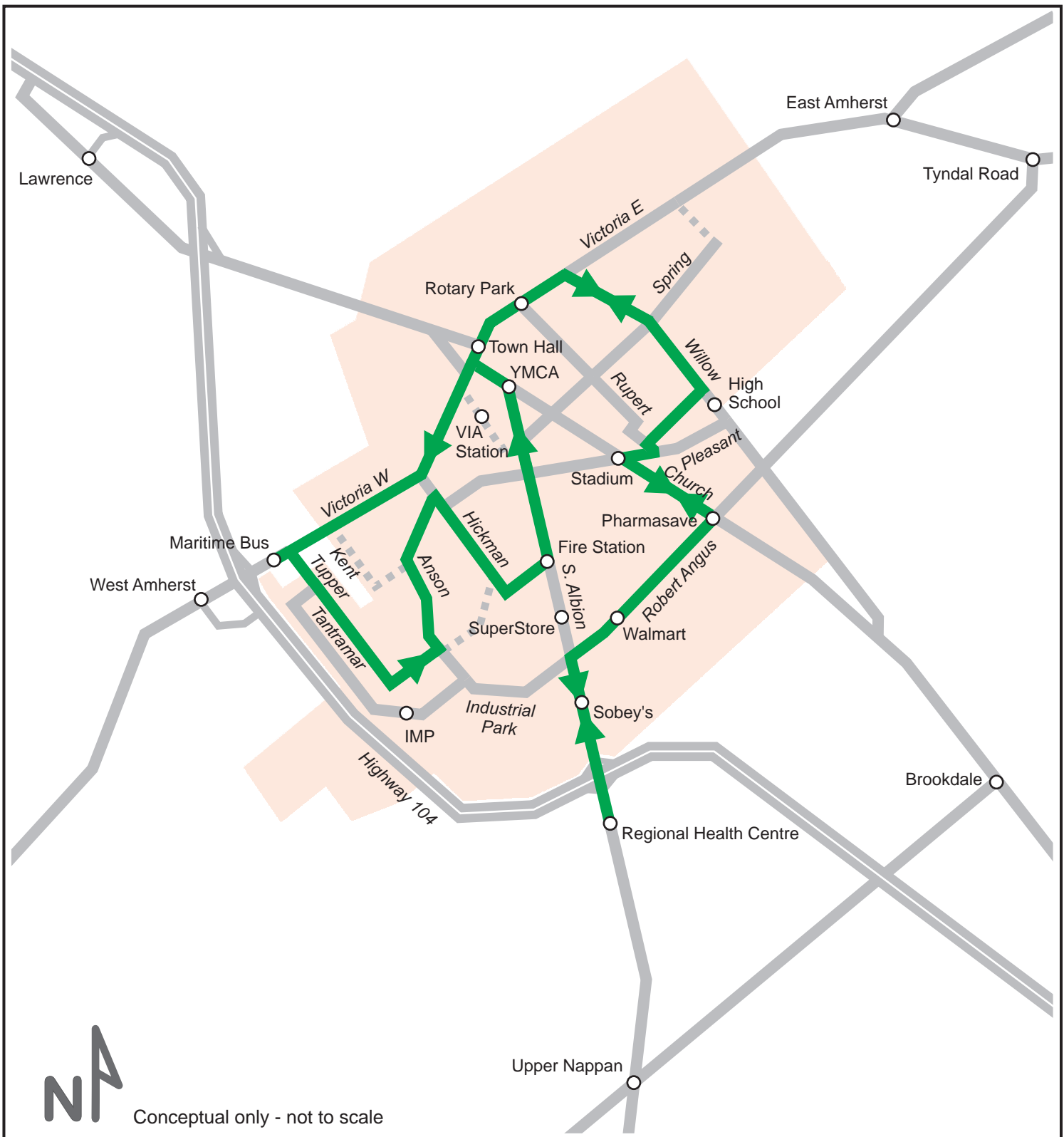
Conceptual only - not to scale

Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION C

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	46 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	58.5%
Destination Points in Service Area	51



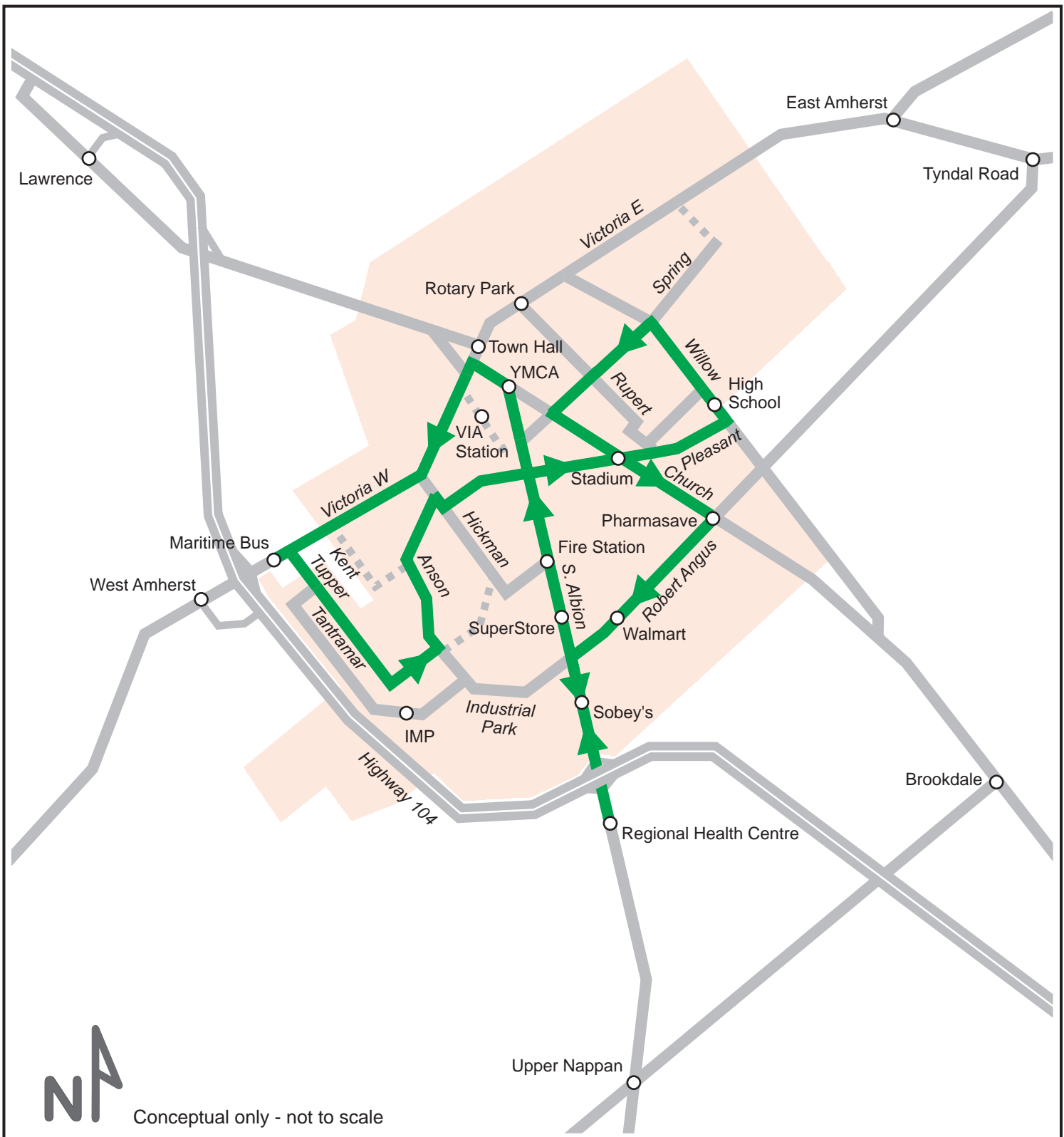
Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study





ROUTE OPTION F

ROUTE STATISTICS

Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	49 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	62.9%
Destination Points in Service Area	51



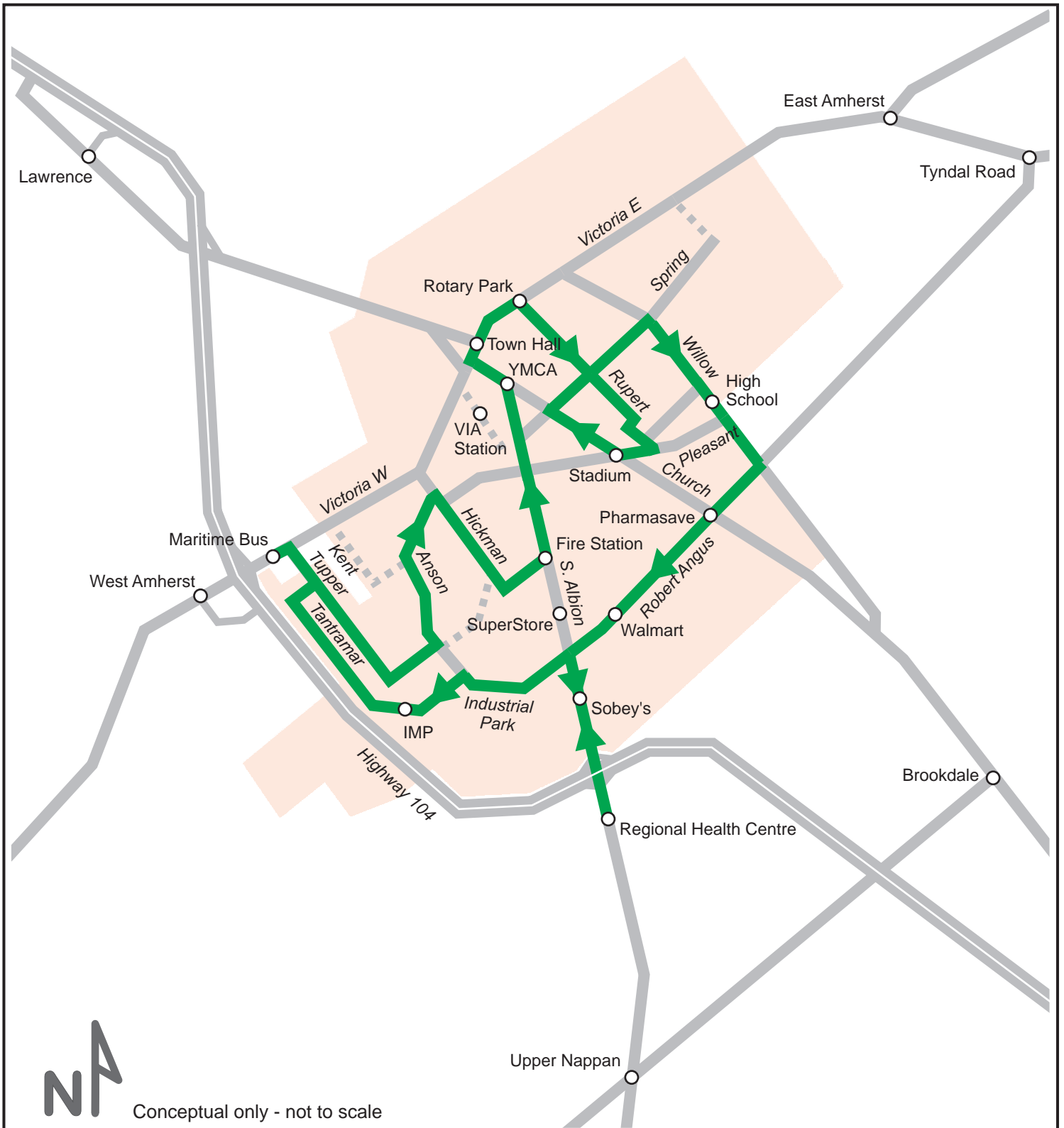
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Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION M

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	47 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	67.4%
Destination Points in Service Area	50



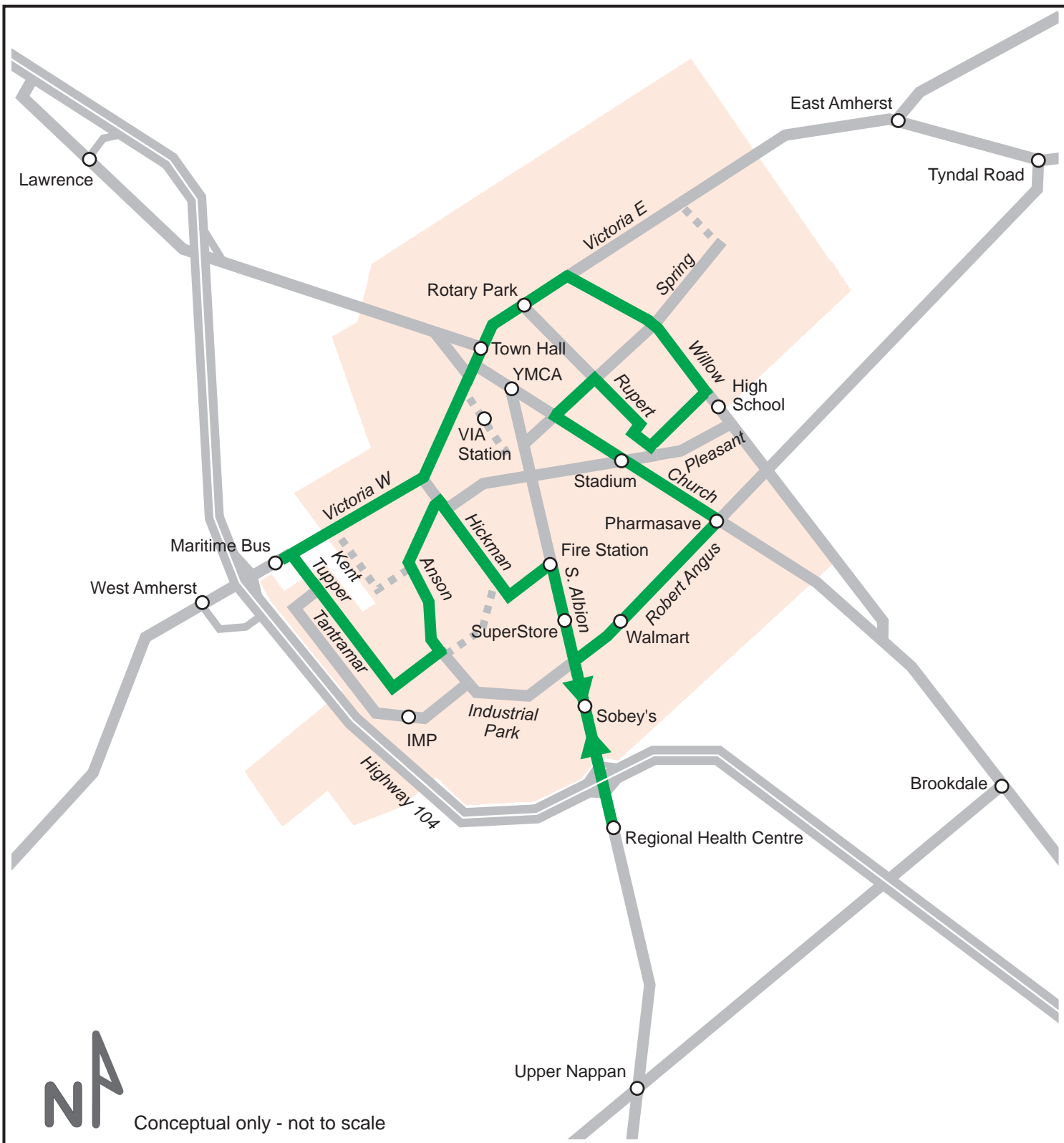
Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



ROUTE OPTION O

ROUTE STATISTICS


Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	51 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	63.2%
Destination Points in Service Area	52



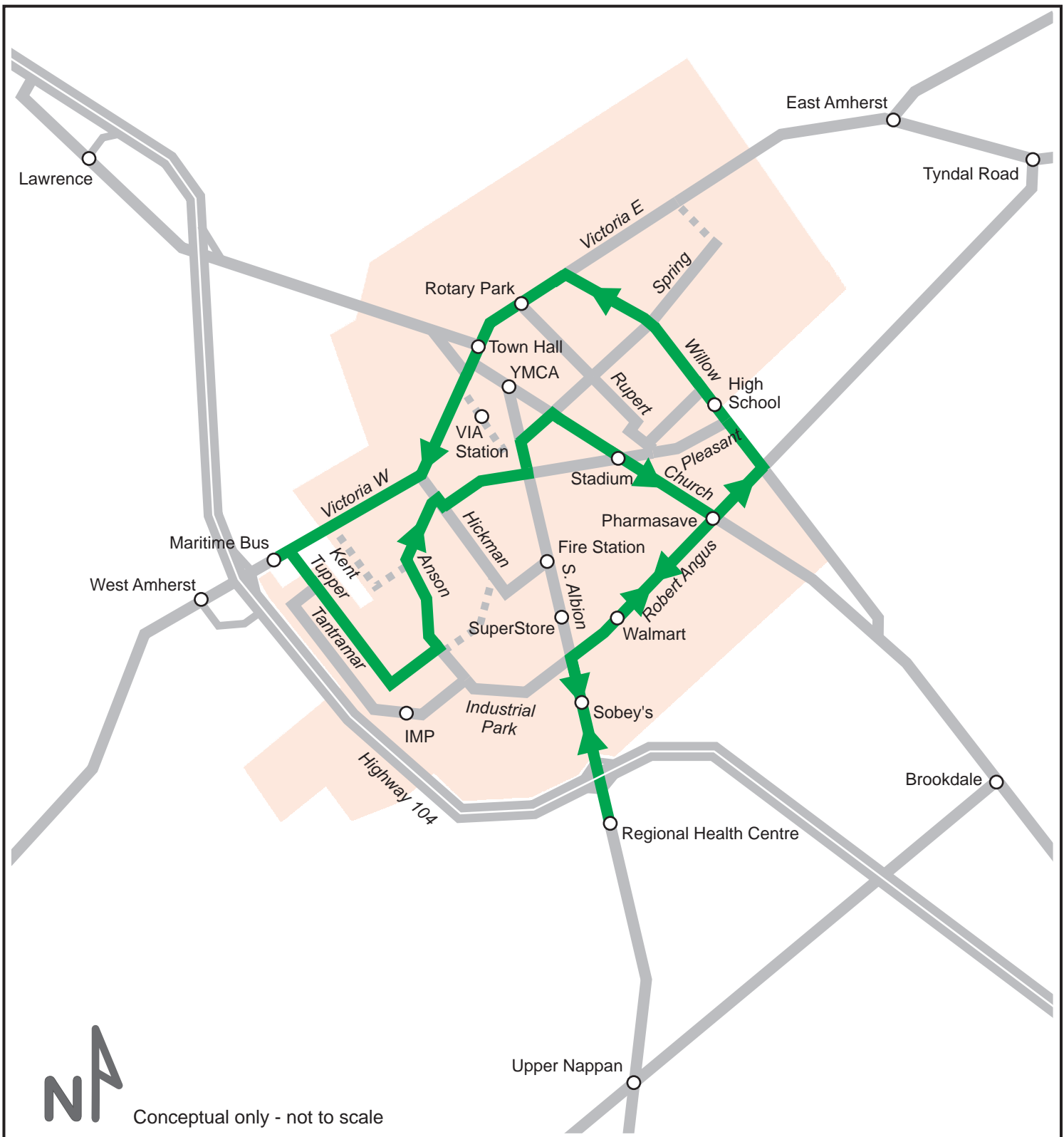
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wsp Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



ROUTE OPTION P



ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	45 min
In-Route Time	44 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	63.2%
Destination Points in Service Area	50



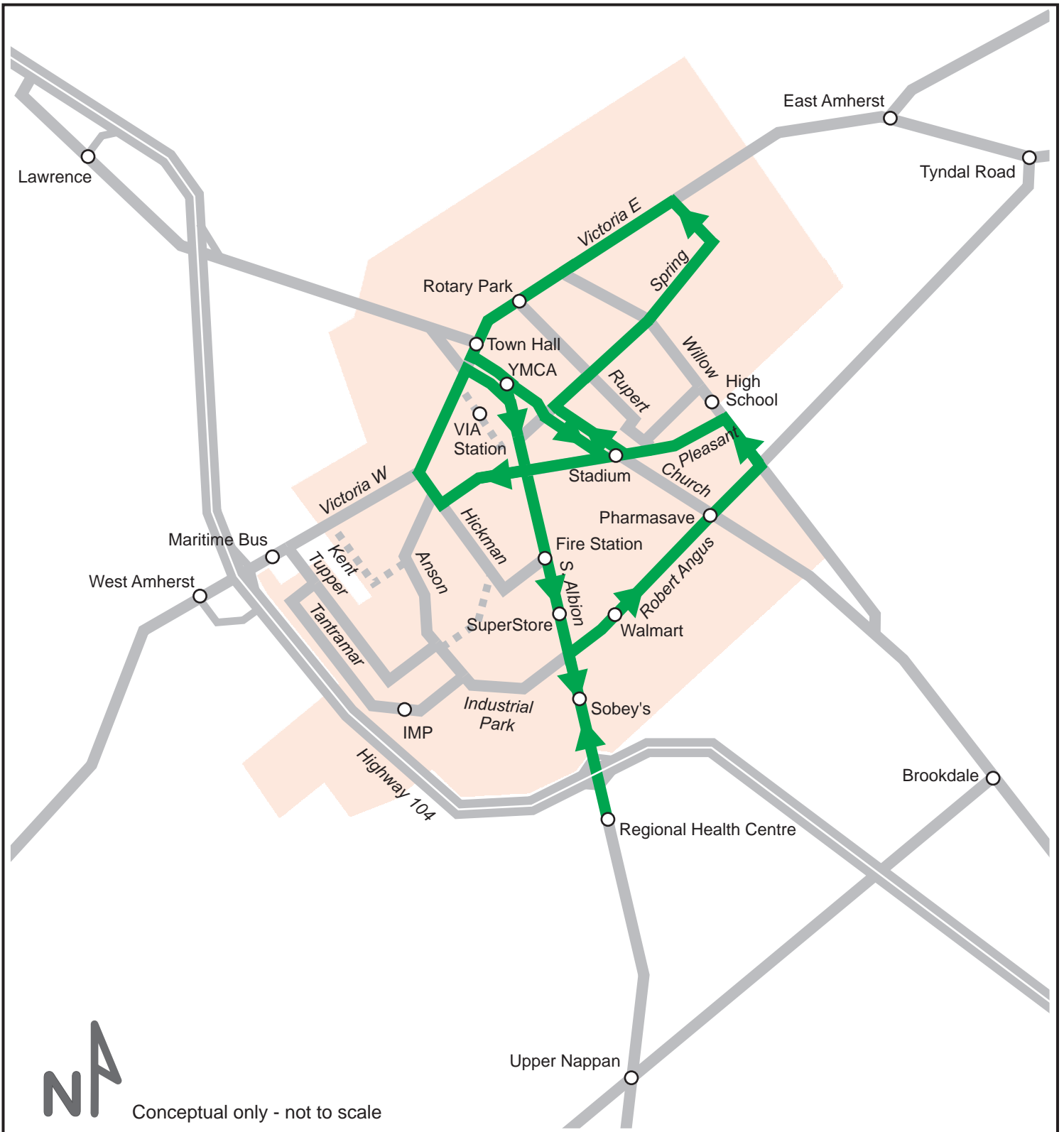
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Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION Q

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	45 min
In-Route Time	40 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	49.4%
Destination Points in Service Area	48



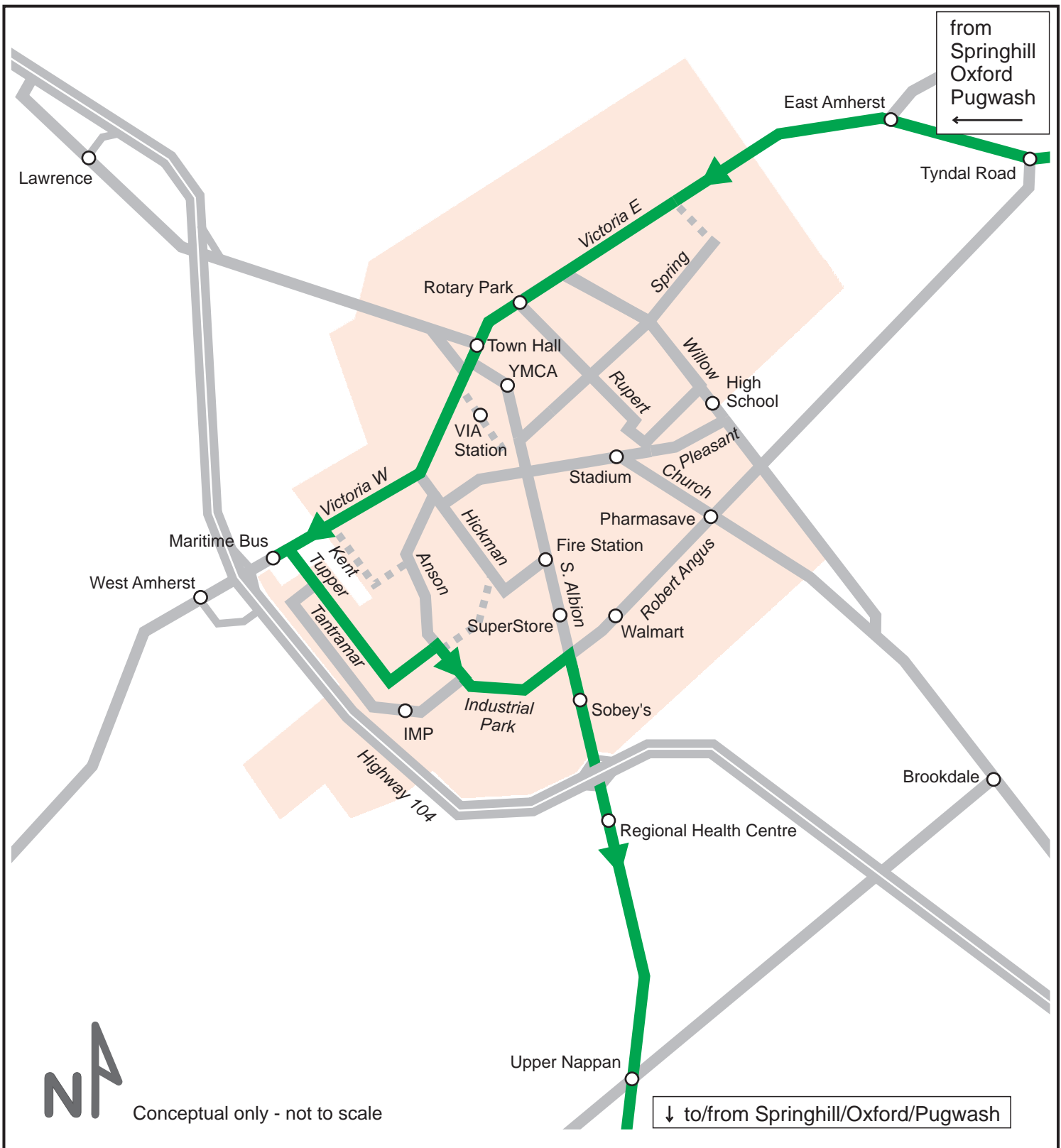
Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



ROUTE OPTION R

ROUTE STATISTICS

Cycle Time	60 min
In-Route Time	49 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	66.5%
Destination Points in Service Area	48



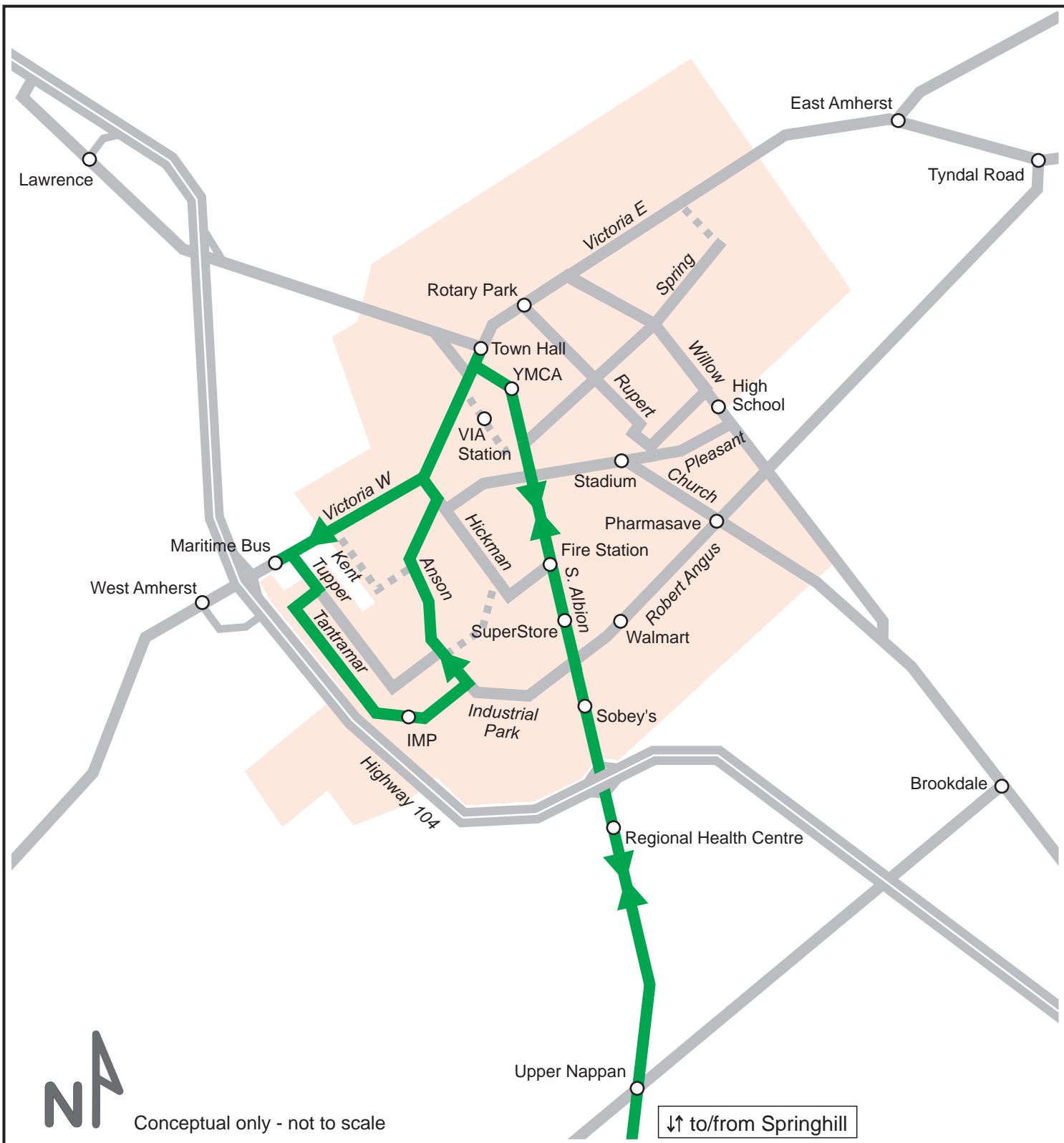
Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



ROUTE OPTION W



ROUTE STATISTICS

Cycle Time	120 min
In-Route Time	119 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	26.1%
Destination Points in Service Area	42



Conceptual only - not to scale

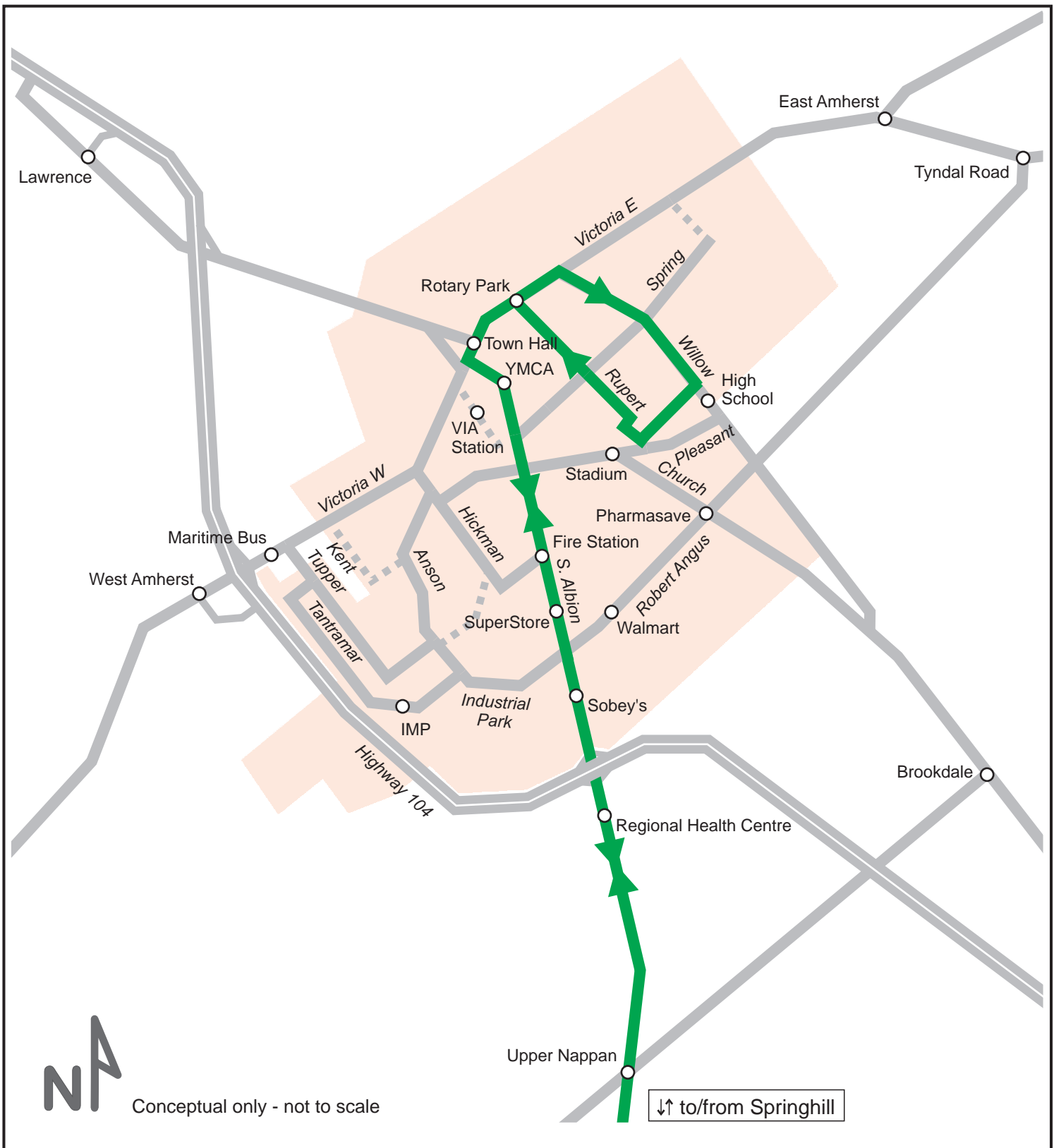
↕ to/from Springhill

Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study

ROUTE OPTION X

ROUTE STATISTICS	
Cycle Time	90 min
In-Route Time	82 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	36.6%
Destination Points in Service Area	46



Conceptual only - not to scale

↕ to/from Springhill



Town of Amherst - Transit Feasibility Study



ROUTE OPTION Y

ROUTE STATISTICS

Cycle Time	90 min
In-Route Time	76 min
Pct. of Dwelling Units in Service Area	45.3%
Destination Points in Service Area	44



APPENDIX C

What We Heard Report



An aerial photograph of a town square in Amherst, Nova Scotia, during autumn. The square is filled with people, tents, and colorful trees. A large, historic brick building with two prominent spires is the central focus. The sky is a soft, hazy blue.

Amherst
NOVA SCOTIA

What We Heard Report

Transit System Feasibility Study

Town of Amherst
November 2026

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Postcards

Appendix B – Open House Display Boards

Appendix C – Community Survey Results

1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Amherst, in collaboration with WSP Canada Inc., is undertaking a Transit System Feasibility Study (the “Study”) to assess the potential for implementing a local transit service within the Town. As part of this process, the project team carried out a comprehensive public engagement program designed to gather meaningful input from residents and stakeholders.

To promote the engagement opportunities, the Town used both digital and direct outreach methods. Event and online survey information was shared across municipal social media channels. These posts generated approximately 22,891 views, 9,762 reaches, 222 responses to the Open House event, and 17 interactions with the online survey. In addition, 6,347 postcards (Appendix A) were mailed to households within Amherst and beyond to notify residents of upcoming opportunities to get involved.

A variety of engagement events was offered throughout the process, including:

- Five (5) Stakeholder Interviews;
- Four (4) Staff Interviews;
- One (1) Public Open House; and
- One (1) Online Community Survey.

Together, the communication efforts and engagement events helped ensure broad participation and provided valuable insight into the community’s existing challenges, opportunities and aspirations of a transit service within the Town. The sections that follow summarize the engagement events completed and what we heard.



2 PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This section provides an overview of the stakeholder and community engagement activities conducted to inform the development of the Study.

2.1 TOWN STAFF INTERVIEWS

One-on-one interviews were conducted with four (4) key municipal staff members. The purpose of these interviews was to identify potential opportunities or constraints for the operation of public transit service within the Town, as well as establish a vision for how transit might be positioned with other municipal services. Staff interviewed represented the following Departments:

- 1 Operations
- 2 Planning & Economic Development
- 3 Community Living
- 4 Finance

An overview of the **key insights** from the interviews include:

- A few concerns were raised around the ability of transit vehicles to navigate the width of streets and overall street layout.
- Preference by Town staff to limit the number of transit shelters used to minimize additional burden on street maintenance.
- No concerns with flag stopping or buses stopping in traffic lanes to do loading.
- Recent polling, completed by the Town, of larger businesses suggests public transit is necessary for growth.
- In the past, there has been a shuttle service between Amherst and Springhill.
- Many individuals who work in Amherst, live outside the Town limits.
- The Town has a growing population of newcomers.
- Pharmasave and Lawton's (downtown) both have large clinics that will be an important destination for transit users.
- Lower income residential is mostly disbursed throughout the Town and not concentrated in any one neighbourhood.
- Cumberland County Transportation Society (CCTS) does not receive annual funding from the Town but applies from time to time for community support grants.

2.2 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Businesses and institutions that will most likely hold an important role or interest in the implementation of public transit were identified and interviewed. The interviews were conducted virtually and in some cases, follow-up information was exchanged through e-mail. A total of **three (3)** interviews were conducted and summarized below. Interview requests were also extended to Amherst and Area Chamber of Commerce, Nova Scotia Community College, Amherst Regional High School and IMP Aerospace, but no response was received, as of October 17, 2025.

1 Cumberland County Transportation Society (CCTS)

- Established in 2009 and provides a pre-booked door-to-door transportation service.
- Funding is provided by the Province, the County (annually), and the Town (from time to time).
- Fleet consists of six (6) vans (five of which are accessible) and have a new bus coming.
- NSCC, Pharmasave and the Hospital are the key destinations.
- Immigrants make up a large portion of their clients.
- Would consider the idea of taking on a fixed route service on behalf of the Town with proper funding.

Following the interview, CCTS shared helpful data on ride origins and destinations over a five (5) month period that will be referenced in the Study. Recent financial statements and a presentation made to Town Council in March 2025 were also provided.

2 Nova Scotia Public Health – Northern Zone

- The Transportation Support Program (Northern Zone) provides free transportation to residents for medical and wellness trips through CCTS.
- The program was initiated in 2023, and has had 37,000 trips booked within the first two (2) years.
- Buses with lifts are preferable than those with low-floor and ramp.
- Public transit can help with food insecurity issues.
- Cumberland County has a higher percentage of lower income residents than elsewhere in the Province.

Following the interview, NS Public Health provided additional information on trips provided through the Transportation Support Program which will be referenced in the Study.

3 Cumberland County

- As there are no sidewalks in Amherst to the Hospital, it makes driving a private vehicle the only choice for many.
- Future growth within the County is expected, especially in Parrsboro and Springhill. 100 residential units are coming to Springhill.
- Important destinations to consider providing transit services to include NSCC (Springhill) and Oxford Frozen Foods.

- Pugwash is an attraction for tourism, recreation (beaches), and has a manufacturing plant, and seniors residential complex.
- Part of annexation agreement with the Town has provided 400 units of sewer capacity for development along John Black Road and Willow Street.

2.3 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

On September 17, 2025, the Project Team held a 2-hour long Community Open House in a “drop-in” style format at the Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre. The intent of the open house was to provide an opportunity for the public to provide input on the vision, aspirations, opportunities and challenges with transit in Amherst. The questions asked at the Open House were similar to many of those in the online survey, providing both in-person and virtual opportunities for the community to share feedback. The Community Open House used interactive displays to gather feedback.

The Community Open House was promoted on the Town’s webpage (<https://www.amherst.ca/transit>) and social media platforms. A total of 40 participants attended the Community Open House. A copy of the Open House display boards can be found in **Appendix B**.

2.4 COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

A Community Survey was available on SurveyMonkey from August 25, 2025 to September 26, 2025. The survey included multiple choice, ranking questions, open-ended questions, as well as a general comments section, to gather information and feedback on a proposed transit system in the Town of Amherst. The information received will be used to inform the development of the Study.

The survey was promoted on the Town’s webpage ([Transit - Town of Amherst](#)) and social media channels. **The survey received an exceptional response rate receiving a total of 1049 responses, accounting for approximately 10.7% of the Town’s population.** A detailed summary of the survey feedback is presented in **Appendix C**.



3 WHAT WE HEARD

The findings from the stakeholder and community engagement activities conducted have been summarized into a series of “Key Themes”. The input collected through internal and external stakeholder interviews, the community survey, and an open house provide valuable insight into the barriers, opportunities, and aspirations to help inform the development of the Transit Feasibility Study.

While the feedback received varies, several key themes were identified, which will support the development of the Study’s recommendations. This section provides an overview of key themes heard throughout these engagement efforts, which have been categorized into four (4) “Key Themes” which are outlined below:

- 1 Safe and Equitable Transportation
 - 2 Shifting from Car Culture to Choice
 - 3 Design a Service that Fits Daily Life
 - 4 Building a Sustainable and Scalable Service
-

3.1 KEY THEMES

SAFE AND EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION

The engagement feedback emphasized that equity, safety, and affordability are central to developing a successful transit system in Amherst. Respondents consistently noted that a successful transit system must be inclusive and accessible for all, particularly seniors, youth, newcomers, and individuals with mobility challenges. Participants highlighted that public transit can play a vital role in promoting independence, reducing social isolation and enhancing overall quality of life, especially for those who rely on it as their primary mode of travel.

Feedback also highlighted that safety and comfort at both bus stops and on board are key to encouraging usage. Investments in shelters, lighting, benches, and accessible design were viewed as essential to ensuring all users feel confident and secure when using transit services.

The Study should consider:

- **Accessible Vehicles and Barrier-Free Stops**
 - Design all vehicles and stops with universal accessibility in mind, ensuring safe, comfortable, and convenient use by people of all ages and abilities.
 - Consider vehicles with lifts, rather than low-floor/ramp buses to promote ridership for all users.
- **Investment in Supportive Infrastructure**
 - Prioritize infrastructure improvements that promote safety, comfort, and convenience, including lighting, shelters, benches and clear wayfinding signage at transit stops.
 - Ensure that new infrastructure aligns with accessibility standards and supports equitable access to public spaces and transportation services.

- **Affordable Fare Structures and Flexible Payment Options**

- Explore opportunities to provide affordable fare options that maintain long-term financial sustainability while ensuring accessibility for all users.
- Consider multi-faceted payment methods, including electronic payment (e.g., app or tap cards), prepaid tickets or passes, and cash options to accommodate diverse user preferences and needs.
- Engagement results indicated that 42% of survey respondents indicated they would be willing to pay a maximum of \$2.01-\$3.00 for a one-way trip, while 19% would be willing to pay \$3.01-\$4.00 and 5% would be willing to pay more than \$4.00.

How do riders want to pay?

Survey results show that 73% of respondents prefer to pay for bus tickets electronically (such as through an app or tap card), 54% would like to buy tickets online, and 43% still want the option to purchase tickets in person.

- **Social and Community Benefits of Transit**

- Recognize the broader social value of transit in promoting independence and inclusion, particularly for individuals who do not drive.
- Strengthen connections between transit planning and community well-being by reducing social isolation and enhancing access to daily needs, services, and employment opportunities.



2

SHIFTING FROM CAR CULTURE TO CHOICE

Engagement feedback revealed that most Amherst residents rely heavily on private vehicles for transportation, indicating that a meaningful shift toward public transit will require both cultural and infrastructural change. Participants emphasized the need for improved pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, to enable residents to safely and conveniently choose alternatives to driving.

Respondents also acknowledged that transitioning to a transit-supportive community will take time and should focus on increasing awareness, improving connectivity, and demonstrating the convenience and reliability of transit as a viable travel option.

The Study should consider:

- **Encourage Mode Shift From Private Vehicle Use**
 - Introduce awareness campaigns and pilot initiatives to showcase the benefits of transit use, such as cost savings, environmental impacts, and improved accessibility.
 - Partner with schools, major employers, and community groups to build ridership and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips. Of survey respondents, 68% indicated they would consider using a public transit system if it were available to them.
- **Supporting Behavioural Change**
 - Provide early demonstration projects or temporary routes to build familiarity and trust in new services.
 - Use consistent branding and clear communication to reinforce the reliability and value of the system.
- **Addressing Infrastructure Barriers**
 - Integrate pedestrian and cycling connections within transit planning to create a truly multi-modal network.

67% of survey respondents use a personal vehicle as their primary means of transportation

3

DESIGNING A SERVICE THAT FITS DAILY LIFE

Participants expressed a strong desire for a transit system that reflects how and where residents travel in their daily routines. Convenience, reliability, and accessibility of routes and schedules were identified as critical factors that would influence ridership. Survey results indicated that 74% of respondents would be more likely to use public transportation if routes and schedules aligned with their work, school, and shopping patterns.

The Study should consider:

- **Convenient Routes and Schedules**

- o Design transit routes and service frequencies that align with residents' daily travel needs and common destinations. Key destinations identified by survey respondents included, the Hospital, Amherst Centre Mall/Town Square, and the Downtown Core.
- o Ensure schedules are predictable, reliable, and easy to understand, allowing users to plan trips with confidence.

68% of survey respondents indicated they would consider using a public transit system if it were available

- **Strategic Stop Placement**

- o Prioritize transit stops near high-demand areas such as employment centres, healthcare facilities, retail hubs, and schools.
- o Explore opportunities to enhance comfort and accessibility at stops, such as lighting, benches, and shelters.

- **Optimizing Access to Transit**

- o Recognize that 57% of survey respondents are willing to walk up to five minutes to reach a bus stop and plan routes to reflect that comfort range.
- o Implement pedestrian-friendly design and wayfinding to make access routes to stops clear and safe.



4 BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND SCALABLE SERVICE

Participants emphasized that a future transit system should be both adaptable and scalable to respond to the community’s changing needs. The system should not only meet current travel demands but be capable of evolving alongside population growth, employment shifts, and regional development.

There was a strong interest in partnerships, with employers, educational institutions, and surrounding municipalities, to increase transit efficiency, ridership, and reach. Several respondents expressed a desire for potential regional routes connecting Amherst with neighbouring communities such as Oxford, Springhill, and Parrsboro.

The Study should consider:

- **Flexible and Responsive Service Design**

- o Build flexibility into service design to accommodate changes in population, ridership, and travel patterns.
- o Explore phased implementation to test, refine, and expand service over time.
- o Incorporate pilot programs or phased implementation to test and refine service options.

- **Partnerships for Success**

- o Collaborate with local employers, schools, and institutions to explore transit partnerships that support employee and student transportation.
- o Pursue funding and resource-sharing partnerships that support long-term operational sustainability.

- **Regional Connectivity**

- o Evaluate options for expanding transit beyond Amherst’s boundaries to strengthen regional access to jobs, education and services.
- o Assess opportunities to expand service to nearby communities such as Oxford, Springhill, and Parrsboro to support regional mobility and economic ties.

74% of survey respondents indicated they would be more likely to use a transit service if schedules and routes worked with their schedule

4 NEXT STEPS

The Town of Amherst and the Project Team will use the feedback presented in this report as inputs to support the development and evaluation in the Transit System Feasibility Study.

Thank you to all that have provided input throughout this process, so far. It is invaluable for the Project Team to develop a better understanding of the transit needs, wants, and challenges throughout the community. Your continued input and participation is crucial in the success of the project overall. For more information and to stay up to date on the project, please visit: <https://www.amherst.ca/transit>.



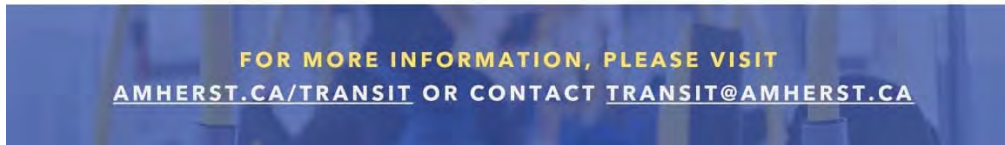
APPENDIX A – POSTCARD

Postcard – Front



**THE TOWN OF AMHERST WANTS TO KNOW IF PUBLIC
TRANSIT COULD WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

**WE WANT TO MAKE TRANSPORTATION EASIER, MORE
AFFORDABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE.**



Postcard – Back



JOIN US AT OUR OPEN HOUSE OR FILL OUT OUR SURVEY

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

SEPT. 17 | 6:30–8:30 P.M.

5 RATCHFORD ST
AMHERST

DROP IN ANYTIME

ONLINE SURVEY
OPEN UNTIL SEPT. 26



SCAN THE QR CODE OR
VISIT WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/AMHERST-TRANSIT

THIS PROJECT IS IN COLLABORATION WITH WSP CANADA INC.

APPENDIX B – OPEN HOUSE DISPLAY BOARDS



WELCOME!

Town of Amherst Transit System Study

Public Open House
September 17, 2025
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Please sign-in and feel free to speak with a member of Amherst Staff and/or WSP to share your comments or ask questions.

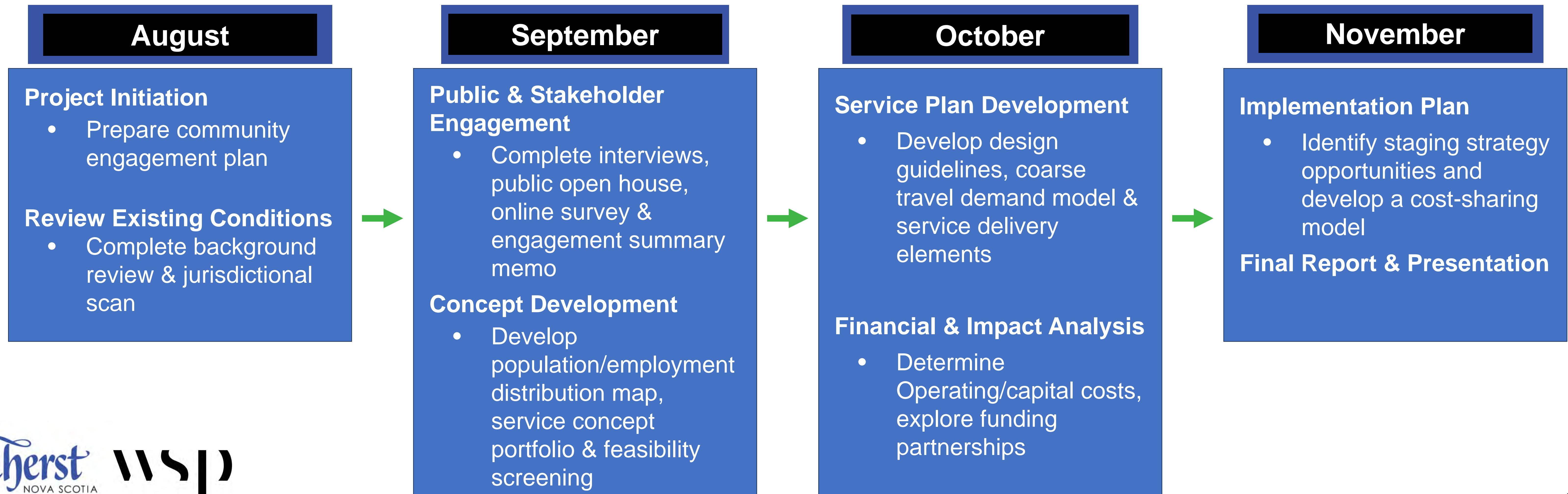


About the Project

The Town of Amherst has initiated a **Transit System Study** to assess the potential for a fixed-route public transit service within the Town.

The study will evaluate **route options, how the system would operate, public needs, vehicle requirements, and integration with existing services.**

Project Timeline



Why Public Transit?

Social Equity: Providing more employment and social opportunities for low income and mobility-challenged residents.

Economic: Opening up a larger potential worker pool for employers.

Transportation Demand Management: Reducing parking space requirements and congestion impacts of private vehicles.

Environmental: Reducing emissions and noise impacts of private vehicles, creating greater efficiency by attracting trips away from private vehicle travel, and creating opportunities to employ electric vehicle technology.

Public Transit in Nova Scotia



The map illustrates Regions and Towns throughout Nova Scotia with existing fixed-route transit services, and those currently developing plans/evaluating feasibility.

Transit Service Needs

Different ways **Public Transit Service** can be delivered

DEMAND-RESPONSIVE ROUTING



A van or bus will come to my door to pick me up if I call in advance to book a trip. I will get dropped off at my destination or at a bus stop on the fixed route. Other riders may be picked up or dropped off along the way. The cost depends on the length of my trip, but may be more than the normal fixed route fare.



TEMPORAL ROUTING

A van or bus will come to a location(s) in my community several times a day, one day a week. I plan my shopping, medical and social trips to be on that day.

DYNAMIC ROUTING

The bus will divert from its route to come to the bus stop(s) in my community only if I call in advance (or use the transit app on my phone) to indicate that I want to be picked up. When I'm returning on the bus, I tell the driver I'd like to get off at the bus stop in my community.

FIXED ROUTING

My bus arrives on a regular schedule and travels along a consistent route.



Transit Service Needs

What is your current **primary** means of transportation?

Place a **dot** next to your answer!

Personal Vehicle (Driver)	Taxi
Personal Vehicle (Passenger)	Carpool
Walking/Cycling	Other (Please Specify)

Exploring the Future

What would make you more likely to use a fixed-route transit service?

Place a dot underneath your top 3 choices!

Schedules & routes that work with my schedule	Stops close to where I work/travel	Ability to track buses in real time	Reliability & Accessibility	Other (please specify)

What time of day would you be most likely to use a fixed-route transit service?

Place a dot underneath all choices that apply!

Early Morning (Before 7 am)	Morning (7 am to 10 am)	Midday (10am to 4 pm)
Late Afternoon (4 pm to 6pm)	Evenings (6 pm to 9 pm)	Late Evenings (9 pm to 11 pm)

Sharing your Vision



Use a sticky note to share your thoughts below, or add to the Maps on the tables!

Where would you be most likely to take transit to/from?

Example Locations:

- Downtown Core (Victoria St., Church St., Albion St.)
- Amherst Centre Mall / Amherst Town Square Mall
- Amherst Train Station / Via Rail Station
- Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (Hospital)
- Amherst Industrial Park
- Maritime Bus Stop (Esso)

Thank you for Participating!

Next Steps

- Service Plan Development - **October 2025**
- Financial & Impact Analysis - **October 2025**
- Implementation Plan - **November 2025**
- Final Report & Presentation - **November 2025**

How to Stay Involved

Stay informed on future project milestones:

Project Webpage: amherst.ca/transit

Contact Information:

If you have comments or questions: transit@amherst.ca.

We Want to Hear From You!

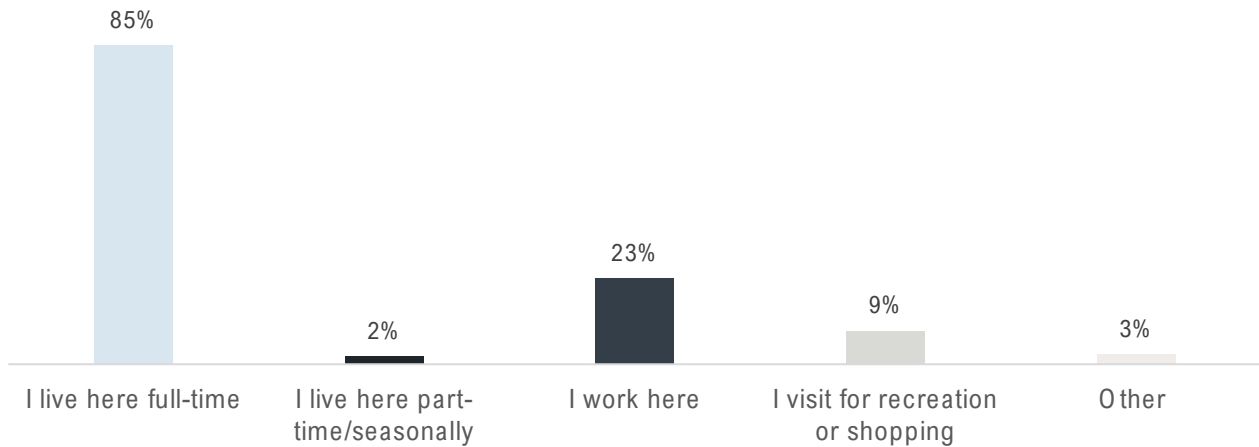
Please take the community survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/amherst-transit> or scan the QR code below!



The survey closes September 26, 2025.

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Question: Select which best describes you? Select all that apply.



Survey respondents were asked to identify which best describes their connection to Amherst. Based on responses provided, over three-quarters (85%) live in Amherst full-time. Just under one-quarter (23%) work in Amherst, while 9% visit for recreation or shopping, and 2% live in Amherst part-time/seasonally. Approximately, 3% of survey respondents indicated “other”. Common ‘other’ responses included:

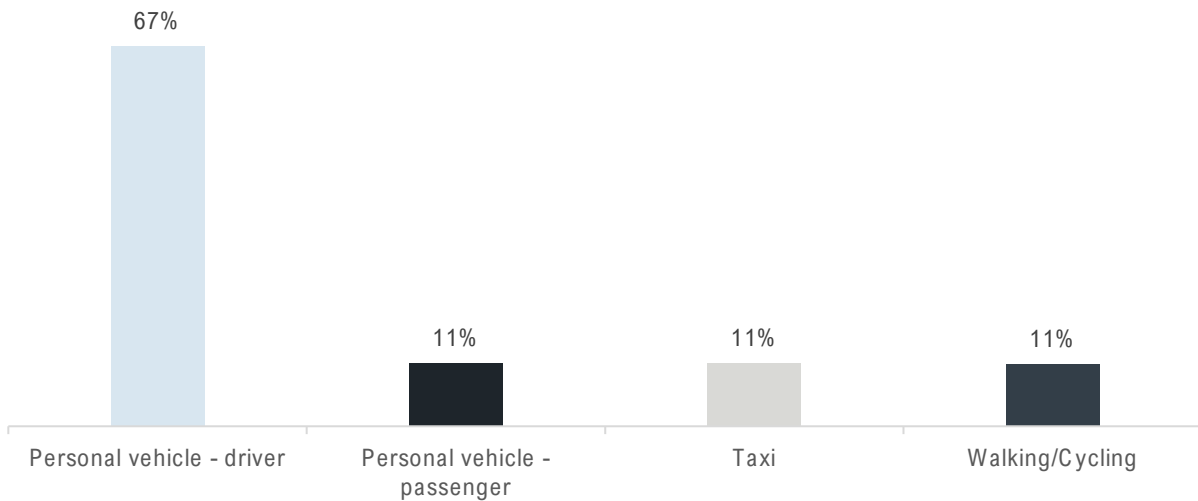
- Visiting family who live in Amherst
- Previously lived in Amherst
- Visit Amherst for medical appointments
- Live outside the Town limits

Question: What is your age?



Participants were asked to identify their age to better understand survey demographics. The responses indicate a broad range of survey respondents. Among the age categories shown, the most common age groups of participants were 40-64 years old (46%), 20-39 years old (34%), and 65+ (18%). Participants within the 19 or under category only accounted for 2% of respondents.

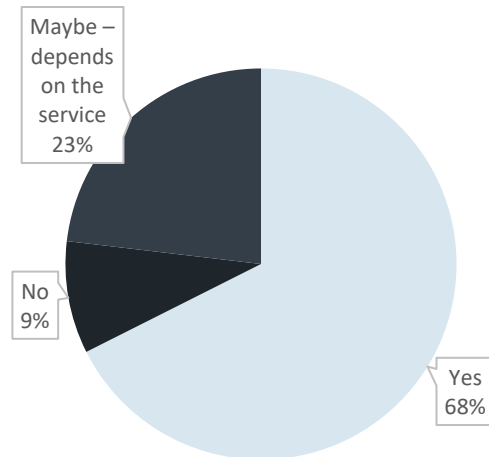
Question: What is your current primary means of transportation?



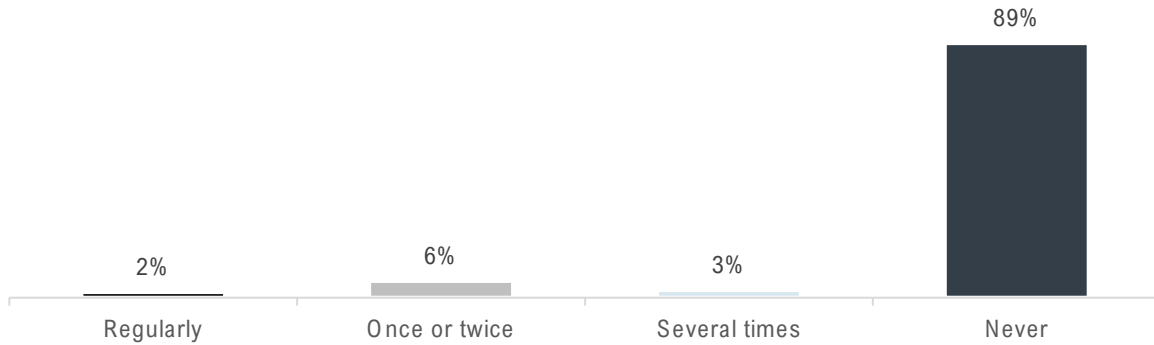
Survey respondents were asked to identify their primary means of transportation. Over two-thirds (67%) indicated they primarily drive a personal vehicle. A small portion of respondents reported being passengers in person vehicles (11%), using taxis (11%), or walking/cycling (11%) as their main mode of travel, each representing just over one-tenth of responses.

Question: Would you consider using a public transit system if it were available?

Survey respondents were asked whether they would consider using a public transit system if one was available. Over two-thirds (68%) indicated they would use public transit, while just under one-quarter (23%) said they might, depending on the service. A small portion of respondents (9%) indicated they would not consider using it.

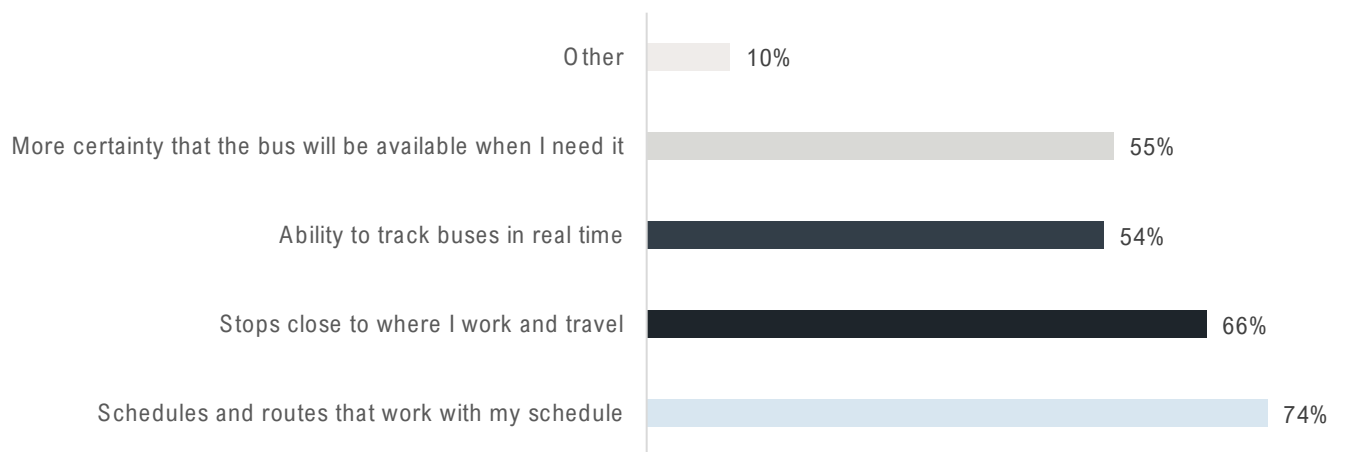


Question: In the past year, have you used the transit service provided by Cumberland County Transportation Service (CCTS)? Please explain why.



Participants were asked to identify if they have used Cumberland County Transportation Service (CCTS) within the last year. Over three-quarters (89%) indicated they have never used CCTS, and when asked to explain why the most common reasons included not aware of the service or assumed the service is only for those with mobility challenges, prefer to use a personal vehicle, or haven't needed the service. 6% of survey respondents indicated they've used their service once or twice most commonly for medical appointments/hospital appointments, use the service on a as-needed basis, or for occasional events. 3% of survey respondents indicated they have used CCTS's service several times, primarily for medical appointments/hospital appointments, commuting for work, or when an accessible transport is required. 2% of the respondents indicated they use CCTS on a regular basis and when asked to explain why the most common reason for using the service included medical appointments/hospital appointments.

Question: What would make you more likely to use a fixed-route transit service in Amherst? (Select your top three)



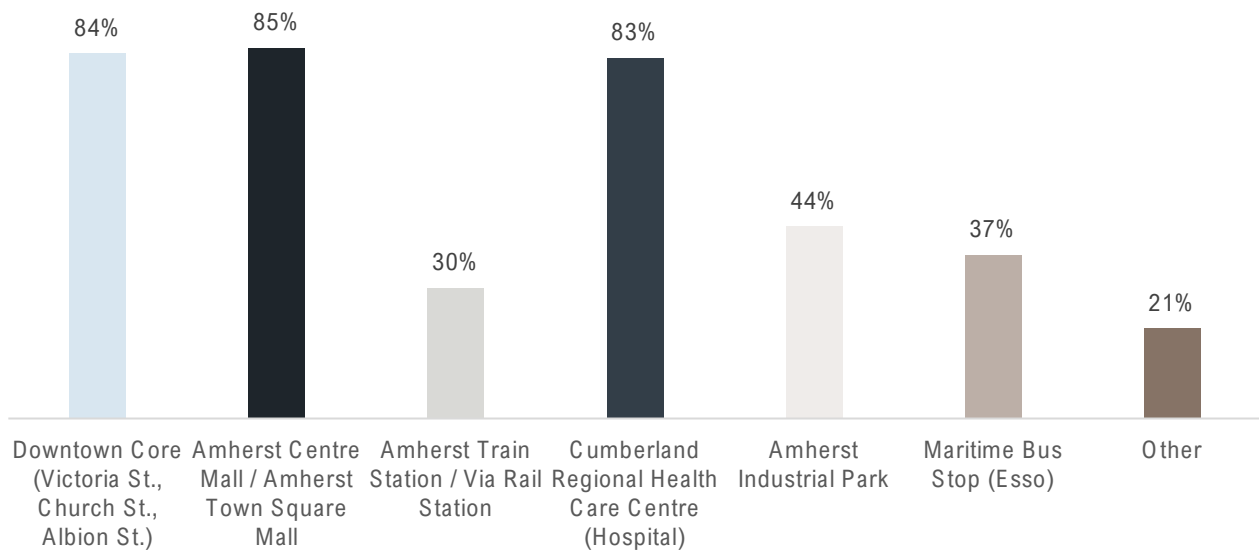
Participants were asked to identify what factors would make them more likely to use a fixed-route transit service in Amherst. The most common response, with just under three-quarters (74%), was having schedules and routes that align with their personal schedules, followed by having stops close to where they work or travel (66%). Over half of the respondents also indicated the importance of being able to

Appendix C – Community Survey Results

track buses in real time (54%) and having greater certainty that a bus would be available when needed (55%). Approximately, 10% of survey respondents indicated “other”. Common ‘other’ responses included:

- Affordable transit for all
- Needs to be easily accessible that travels to common locations (e.g. grocery stores, business areas, downtown, etc.)
- Transit service needs to be frequent and reliable
- Not interested in using public transit

Question: Thinking about where you travel in Amherst, where would you like to see a fixed-route transit service provided to/from? Select all that apply.

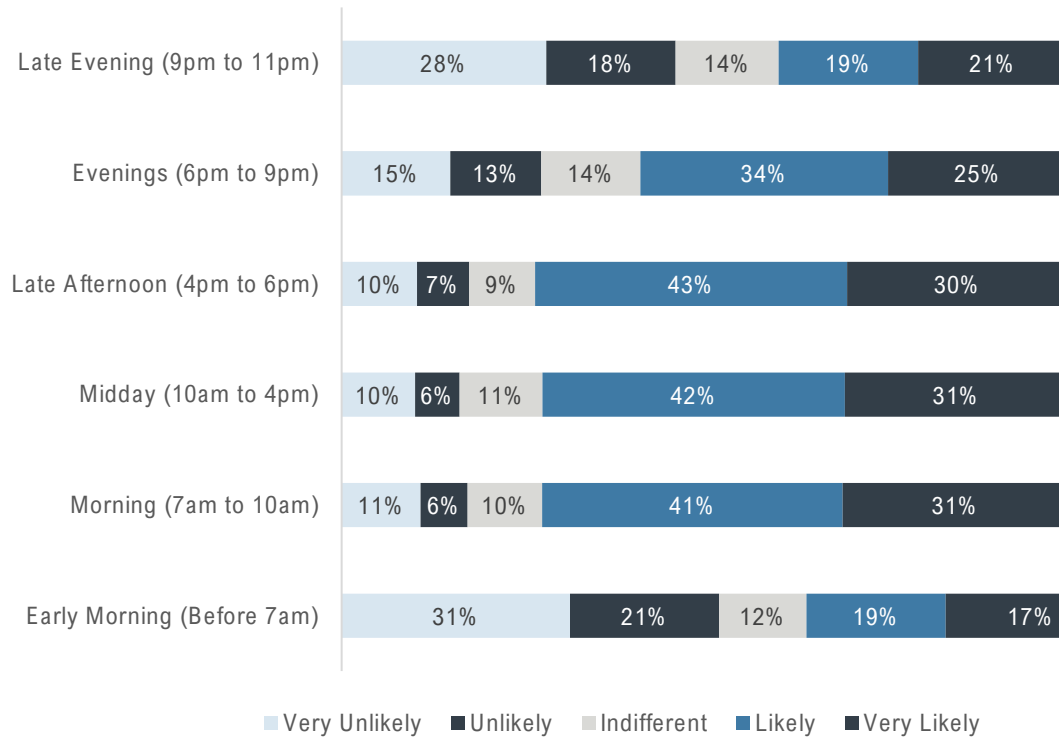


Respondents were asked to identify where they would like to see a fixed-route transit service provided to and from within Amherst. The most predominant responses with more than three-quarters of respondents included the Amherst Centre Mall/Town Square Mall (85%), the Downtown Core (84%), and the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (83%). Just under half (44%) respondents indicated the Amherst Industrial Park (44%), followed by the Maritime Bus Stop (Esso) (37%) as preferred destinations, while about one-third (30%) selected the Amherst Train Station/VIA Rail Station. Of the respondents who indicated other (21%), the most common responses included:

- Commercial areas (e.g., Walmart, grocery stores, Pharmasave)
- Amherst Stadium
- Locations beyond Town limits (e.g., Springhill, Oxford, Sackville, Moncton)
- Not interested in using public transit

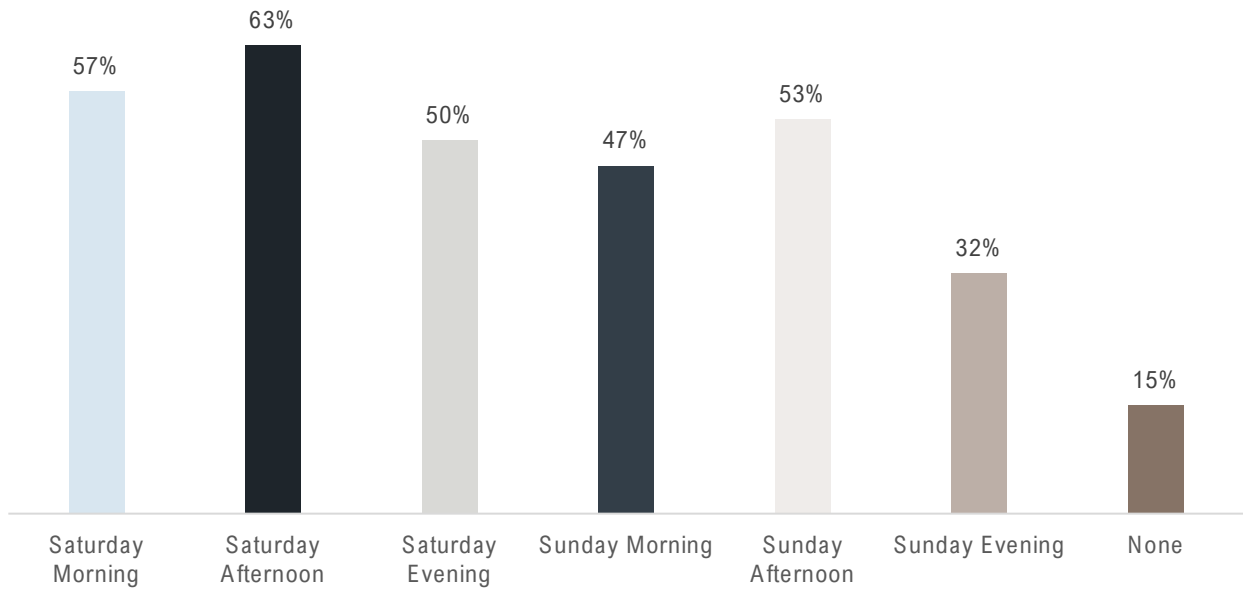
Appendix C – Community Survey Results

Question: From “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely” select when you would be most likely to use a fixed-route transit service. (Weekdays only)



Survey respondents were asked to identify what time they would be most likely to use a fixed-route transit service on weekdays. Responses show that the highest interest in using transit would be in the late afternoon (4-6pm), midday (10am-4pm), and morning (7-10am) periods, with 41-43% of respondents indicating that they would be “likely” and 30-31% indicating they would be “very likely” to use transit at these times. Evening (6-9pm) and late evening (9-11pm) service received moderate interest, while early morning (before 7am) had the lowest likelihood of use. Overall, week day transit demand appears to be strongest during traditional commuting and daytime hours.

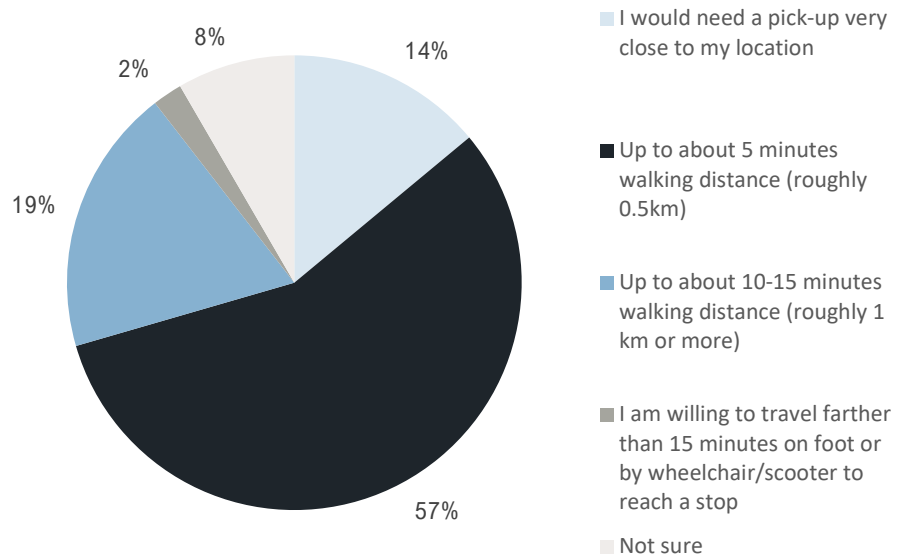
Question: If a fixed-route transit service was available on weekends, during which times of the day would you be most likely to use it? Select all that apply.



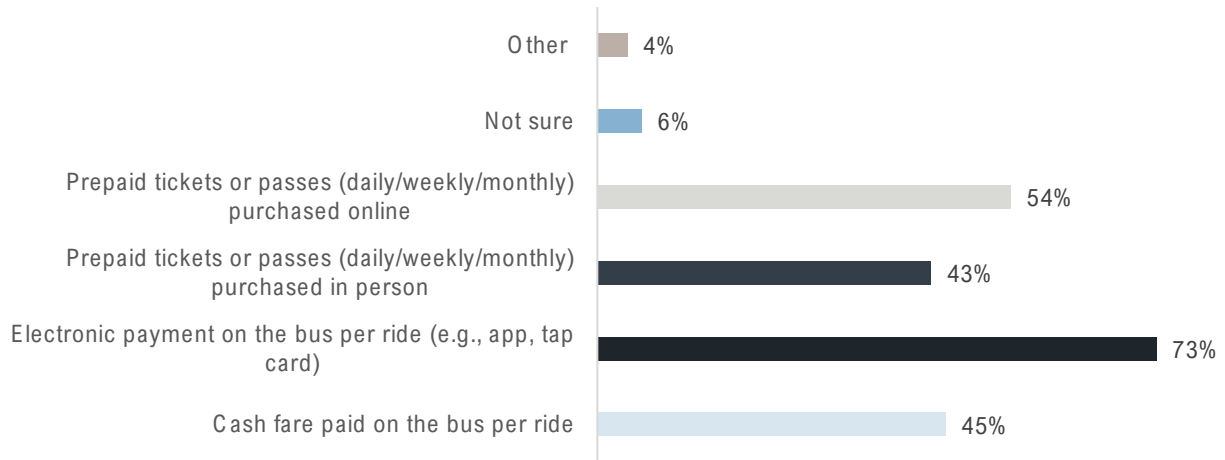
Respondents were asked to identify when they would be most likely to use a fixed-route transit service on weekends. The highest service interest was shown on Saturday, particularly in the afternoon (63%) and morning (57%). Just over half of the respondents (53%) also indicated interest in Sunday afternoon and morning service (47%), while fewer identified Sunday evening (32%) as a preferred time. A small portion (15%) of respondents indicated they would not use weekend transit service.

Question: How far would you be willing to walk from your location to reach a bus stop?

Participants were asked how far they would be willing to walk to reach a bus stop. The majority (57%) indicated they would walk up to about five minutes, or roughly 0.5 km. Just under one-fifth of respondents (19%) indicated they would walk up to 10-15 minutes, while very few (2%) were willing to travel farther than that. Some respondents (14%) noted they would need a pickup very close to their location, and a small number (8%) were unsure.



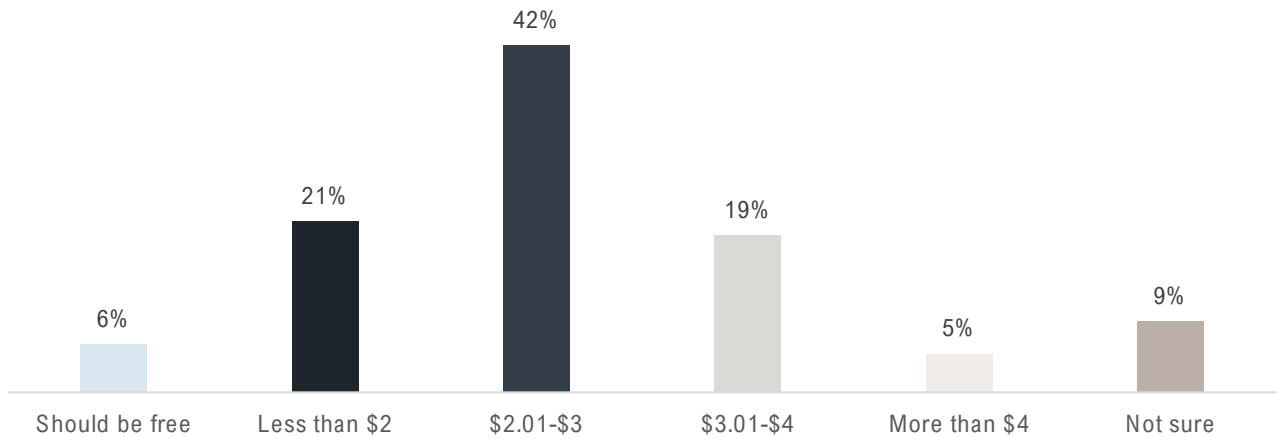
Question: How would you prefer to pay for your transit trips? Select all that apply.



Survey respondents were asked how they would prefer to pay for their transit trips. The most common preference was for electronic payment on the bus using an app or tap card (73%), followed by over half (54%) respondents identifying purchasing prepaid tickets or passes online. Nearly half of the respondents (45%) also indicated interest in paying cash fares on the bus or buying prepaid passes in person (43%). A small portion (10%) of respondents were unsure or selected “other”. Of the respondents who indicated other, common responses included:

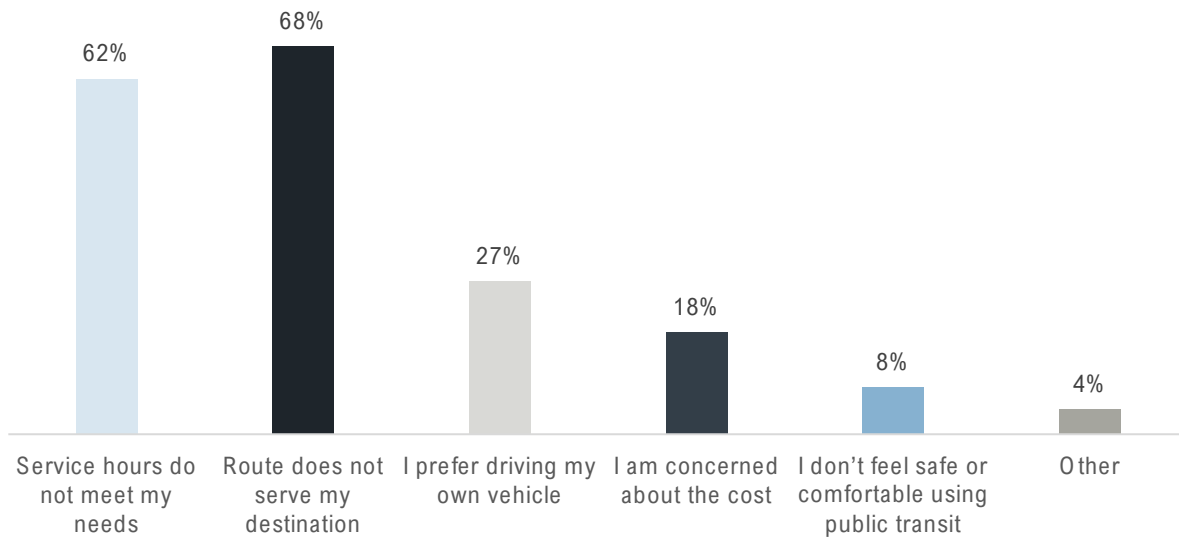
- Variety of options to purchase tickets (paper tickets, on an app, etc.) to meet the needs of all users
- Transit should be free
- Not interested in public transit

Question: What is the maximum one-way fare you would consider paying for a trip?



Participants asked what the maximum amount for a one-way fare they would consider paying for a trip would be. The largest share (42%) indicated a preferred fare between \$2.01 and \$3, while just over one-fifth (21%) were willing to pay less than \$2, and 19% were willing to pay between \$3.01 and \$4. A few respondents (6%) felt transit should be free, while a very small number (5%) were willing to pay more than \$4. 9% of respondents were unsure the maximum amount they would be willing to spend for a trip.

Question: What are the main reasons you might not use a fixed-route service? Select all that apply.



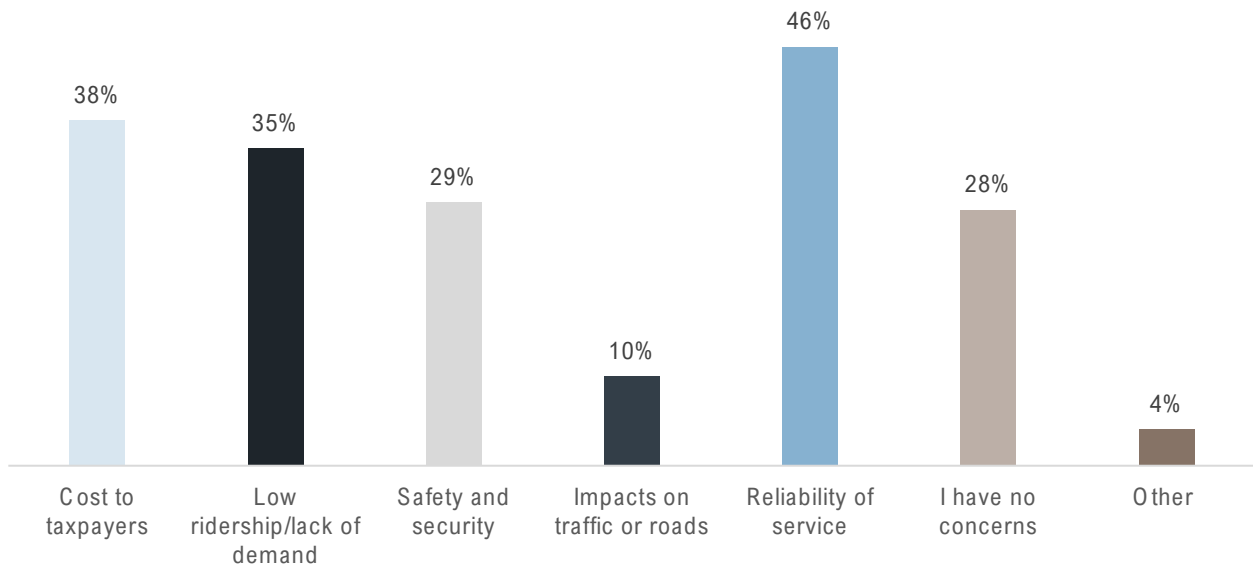
Survey respondents were asked to identify the main reasons they might not use a fixed-route transit service. The most common responses were that the route does not serve their destination (68%) and that service hours do not meet their needs (62%). Smaller portions of respondents indicated they prefer to drive their own vehicle (27%) or were concerned about cost (18%). A few respondents (8%) mentioned safety or comfort concerns, while a small number (4%) selected “other”. Common ‘other’ responses included:

- Prefer to walk

Appendix C – Community Survey Results

- Accessibility to and from bus stop locations
- Concerns with travelling with children by public transit
- No reason/are not supportive of a fixed-route service

Question: What concerns do you have about introducing public transit in your area? Select all that apply.



Respondents were asked what concerns they have about introducing public transit in their area. The most common concern identified by just under half respondents (46%) was the reliability of service, followed by cost to taxpayers (38%) and low ridership or lack of demand (35%). Over a quarter of respondents (28%) also identified safety and security, with another 28% identifying they have no concerns. Only 10% identified concern with potential impacts on traffic and roads. Of the respondents who indicated “other” (4%), common responses included:

- Concern with the impacts to existing transit providers (CCTS, taxi, etc.)
- Concerns with maintained ridership following implementation
- Time of operations could limit ridership
- Not realistic for the size of Amherst

ADDITIONAL SURVEY COMMENTS

Question: Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to share with the project team regarding future transit in Amherst?

All participants were given the opportunity to provide additional comments to the Project Team. 361 survey respondents chose to add their own input. The comments provided have been summarized into key themes in **Table 2** below:

Table 1: Summary of Additional Survey Feedback

Topic	Feedback Received
Transit Service & Route Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for routes that cover key destinations and neighbourhoods • Requests for convenient and frequent service • Suggestions for clear and reliable scheduling • Ensure information about the service is well publicized
Transit Affordability and Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of keeping fares affordable for all users • Concerns about the long-term financial viability of the system • Suggestions for funding models that minimize taxpayer burden
Community Engagement and Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the project move forward to implementation, ensure the Town is adaptable to changing community needs • Requests to consider diverse community needs and feedback • Emphasis on transparent communication about transit plans
Accessibility and Support for Mobility-Challenged/Senior/Underserved Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for accessible vehicles and stops • Importance of services tailored to seniors and those with mobility challenges • Ensure equitable access for underserved groups
Regional Connectivity and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in connecting Amherst with neighbouring towns and municipalities • Requests for infrastructure such as dedicated bus stops and shelters • Include stops in front of businesses and services, not just along the street
Flexible and On-Demand Transit Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for on-demand or flexible transit services • Requests for services that adapt to varying schedules and needs • Suggestions for pilot programs or technology-driven solutions

wsp



TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Kim Jones, Deputy CAO

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Draft Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

ORIGIN: A complete policy and bylaw review is a one of Council's strategic priorities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA sections 47 and 48 authorize council to make, amend and repeal bylaws and policies.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy.

BACKGROUND: It is important to establish the guidelines and expectations of municipal volunteers serving our organization.

DISCUSSION: Volunteers who serve our Town on various Boards, committees and events are an extension of our organization. In their role, they are representatives of the Town of Amherst. This new policy outlines the values of the Town of Amherst and clarifies the expectations of volunteers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications associated with the proposed policy.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: There are no social justice implications

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications.

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

ALTERNATIVES: Do not approve the policy or direct staff to make additional revisions.

ATTACHMENTS: Draft Policy



TITLE: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEERS
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OFFICE
POLICY NO: 10350-02

APPROVAL DATE: _____ **CAO Signature:** _____

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations for the conduct of volunteers serving the Municipality. Volunteers play an essential role in delivering programs, services, and events, and are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and respect in representing the Municipality.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals who volunteer their time, skills, and services to the Municipality, whether on a regular, seasonal, or one-time basis, including members of advisory committees, boards, community events, and recreational programs.

Volunteer members of the Amherst Fire Department and Amherst Police Department are covered under their own specific policies or standing orders.

3. Principles

Volunteers are expected to:

- Act in the best interests of the Municipality and its residents.
- Conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, and inclusive manner.
- Comply with all applicable laws, municipal policies, and safety regulations.
- **Refrain** from any conflicts of interest or actions that could harm the Municipality's reputation.
- Maintain a high standard of integrity

4. Standards of Conduct

Volunteers must:

a) Respect and Inclusivity

- Treat all persons with courtesy, dignity, and fairness, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics.
- **Refrain** from any form of harassment, discrimination, or bullying.

b) Integrity and Accountability

- Perform volunteer duties honestly, ethically, and to the best of their ability.
- Follow through on commitments and notify the appropriate supervisor if unable to attend or complete assigned tasks.
- **Shall not use** their volunteer position for personal gain.

c) Confidentiality

- Protect confidential and sensitive information obtained through volunteer activities.
- Refrain from disclosing personal or municipal information without proper authorization.

d) Safety and Conduct in the Workplace

- Comply with all municipal health and safety rules.
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions, or incidents immediately.
- **Refrain** from the use of alcohol, cannabis, or impairing substances while performing volunteer duties.

e) Use of Municipal Resources

TITLE: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEERS
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OFFICE
POLICY NO: 10350-02

- Use municipal property, equipment, and materials only for authorized purposes.
- Return any borrowed items promptly and in good condition.

5. Conflict of Interest

Volunteers must:

- Disclose any personal, financial, or professional interest that may conflict with their volunteer role.
- Refrain from participating in decisions or activities where such conflicts exist or could be perceived.

6. Social Media and Public Representation

- Volunteers shall not speak on behalf of the Municipality unless specifically authorized **in advance by the Mayor, CAO or designate.**
- When expressing personal opinions publicly, volunteers must make it clear they do not represent the Municipality's official position.
- Avoid posting or sharing content that could damage the Municipality's reputation.

7. Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings.
- Reassignment of duties.
- Dismissal from the volunteer position **by the CAO. In the event the volunteer(s) had been formally appointed by Council, the CAO shall recommend dismissal to Council who shall make the final decision through a motion of direction.**

8. Acknowledgment

All volunteers must review and sign the **Volunteer Code of Conduct Acknowledgment Form** before commencing their duties, confirming that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policy.

TITLE: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEERS
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OFFICE
POLICY NO: 10350-02

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
CAO	Administer policy
Directors/Supervisors	Report and potential breaches of policy to the CAO

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
New Policy	Deputy CAO	Council	

Minutes reference date:

TITLE: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEERS
SECTION: EXECUTIVE OFFICE
POLICY NO: 10350-02

APPENDIX



I, _____ declare that as a volunteer for the Town of Amherst, I acknowledge that I have read and support the Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy.

Signed: _____

Dated this ___ day of _____, 2026.



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2026014

Date: February 17, 2026

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy #10350-25

ORIGIN: October 2025 Council appointments to External Boards, Committees and Commissions

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

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the amendments to the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees & Commissions Policy #10350-28.

BACKGROUND: At the October 25, 2025, regular meeting, Council made the annual appointments of members to external Boards, Committees and Commissions. No appointment was made to the Senior Safety Advisory Committee as that Committee had dissolved.

DISCUSSION: Appendix A of the Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy still lists the Senior Safety Advisory Committee as a Committee Council will appoint a member to. Appendix A of this policy also states that the purpose of appointing a member to the LA Animal Shelter Board is due to Capital Funding. Capital Funding for their new facility is now complete, however there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Shelter wherein funding is still provided.

The proposed amendments to this policy are to remove the Senior Safety Advisory Committee from Appendix A and change the purpose for appointing a member to the LA Animal Shelter Board from Capital Funding to Memorandum of Understanding.

CAO Note: The continued appointment of a member of Council to the LA Animal Shelter Board can be further considered as part of the current MOU re-negotiation currently taking place.

As per Section 9 of this policy, the list of external bodies without Council appointment is also attached for Council's annual review.



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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: There has been no community engagement.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Although there is no longer a formal committee, staff and Council will continue to advocate for senior safety.

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

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Appointment of Members of Council to External Board, Committees & Commissions with proposed amendments.
2. List of external bodies without Council appointment.

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

APPROVAL DATE: February 24, 2025 **CAO Signature:** _____

Short Title

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

Purposes

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

Interpretation

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

Roles and Responsibilities

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

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

External Bodies

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

Council Appointments to External Bodies

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

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

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

(4) Reporting

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

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

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

External Bodies Without Council Appointment

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

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

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

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

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

Conflict of Interest

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

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

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

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

Appendices

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

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

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

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

Board, Committee or Commission	Members Appointed	Act, Legislation, By-Law, Agreement or Membership
Cumberland Public Libraries Board	1 Member appointed	By-laws of Board
Regional Emergency Management	2 Members appointed	Intermunicipal Agreement
Northern Region Solid Waste	1 Member appointed	Intermunicipal Agreement
Cumberland YMCA	1 Member appointed	Contribution Agreement
LA Animal Shelter	1 Member appointed	Capital Funding Memorandum of Understanding
Senior Safety Advisory Committee	1 Member appointed	By Request of Organization
GFL Community Liaison Committee	1 Member appointed	Residential Three Stream Solid Waste Collection Agreement

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

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Amend Appendix A to reflect current Council appointments	Clerk	Council	February 24, 2025
Include a provision that states: The report should include any matters that affect the organization's governance, financial structure, or service delivery capacity, remove Appendix B and C.	Clerk	Council	June 24, 2024
Remove Senior Safety Advisory Committee from Appendix A and change LA Animal Shelter Board purpose of appointment from Capital Funding to MOU	Clerk	Council	

Minutes reference date: February 26, 2018 February 22, 2021 April 25, 2022 June 24, 2024 February 24, 2025

2026 External Bodies Without Council Appointment

Organization	Council Member
Amherst Lions Club	Mayor Rob Small
Rotary Club Board of Directors	Councillor Dwayne Ripley
Amherst Minor Basketball Association	Councillor Dwayne Ripley
Bacon Elliott Scholarship Society Chair	Councillor Kathy Wells
Canadian Ski Patrol Member	Councillor Kathy Wells
Anchor - Caregiver Advisory Committee	Councillor Kathy Wells



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2026016

Date: February 17, 2026

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Repeal of the Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy #10350-17 and the Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy #10350-18.

ORIGIN: Policy and By-law review

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: MGA sections 47 and 48 authorize council to make, amend and repeal bylaws and policies.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, the repeal of the Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy #10350-17 as well the repeal of the Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy #10350-18.

BACKGROUND: These two policies were approved in 2005. No amendments have been made to them since that time, and they are currently on the schedule for review.

DISCUSSION: Upon review of these two policies, staff feel that since we now have a Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy, an Appointment of Members of Council to External Boards, Committees and Commissions Policy, as well as a more robust Expense Reimbursement Policy that safeguards the appropriate use of municipal funds through clearly defining permitted expenses and authorized travel, the Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy #10350-17 and the Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy #10350-18 are redundant and should be repealed.

CAO Note: For greater clarity, the Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy could be amended to add Section 13 which could state, "Membership for elected officials on a board or committee of a provincial or national organization (NSFM / FCM) is also governed by this policy. An elected official who intends to put their name forward for appointment as a Board member on such an organization should review this policy and seek approval from Council when expenses are likely or expected to exceed those set out in policy."

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no financial implications to repealing these two policies.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: There has been no community engagement.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: There are no environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: There are no social justice implications.

ALTERNATIVES: Do not repeal the two policies and direct staff to further review them.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Membership on National Boards and Committees Policy #10350-17
2. Membership in Clubs, Societies and Associations Policy #10350-18.
3. Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development Policy #10350-26
4. Expense Reimbursement Policy #03000-07.

DEPARTMENT: COUNCIL AND ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS

TITLE: **MEMBERSHIP ON NATIONAL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Minutes reference date: 24 January 2005

PURPOSE:

To set out policy and guidelines for members of Council and staff who may wish to become members on national boards or committees. While Council recognizes the benefits to be obtained by the Town from national exposure, certain policy limits need to be set.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. (a) All members of Council who wish to become members on any national committees must have permission of Council prior to accepting such appointment or office.
- (b) Fifty percent (50%) of the cost of travel (including meals and accommodations) must be covered by the relevant provincial or national organization or the individual.
2. (a) All members of administration must obtain the permission of the Town Manager prior to accepting any appointment or position.
- (b) Fifty percent (50%) of the costs must be covered by the provincial or national association.
- (c) Time off for meetings or duties at this level must not exceed ten working days per year and normal duties must not be affected.

DEPARTMENT: Council and All Departments

TITLE: **MEMBERSHIPS IN CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS**

Minutes reference date: 21 February 2005

PURPOSE:

The Town of Amherst has in the past and will continue in the future to hold membership in various organizations and associations that advocate similar viewpoints and visions that help increase our competitiveness and enhance the level of services we provide to our residents.

In addition, Town employees have in the past and will continue to become affiliated with and actively participate in professional organizations that enhance their career competencies and provide the ability to learn new skills and improve existing skills in both a formal and informal setting.

The Town acknowledges that affiliations with organizations that provide advocacy support and professional development opportunities is important and should be supported accordingly.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The Town will pay annual membership fees to associations and organizations that have been deemed by council to benefit the towns overall ability to enhance the quality of services provided for residents. Council may appoint an employee or elected official who will represent the Town at meetings and events and may provide reports from time to time that will keep council informed of initiatives or issues that may affect our community.
2. The Town will pay the annual membership fees for employees to relevant professional association to which they are affiliated and are duly authorized by both Department Head and Town Manager. These organizations must be relevant to the work the employee performs on a day to day basis and should demonstrate the ability to enhance the employee's skill levels.
3. The Town continues to encourage employees to contribute to their community through active participation in various community based service organizations that add to a strong social and community environment. For greater clarity, dues for local social and service organizations will be the personal responsibility of the employee.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10350-26

APPROVAL DATE: October 27, 2025

CAO Signature: 

PURPOSE:

To set out policy and guidelines for effective professional development for the Mayor and members of Council to ensure proper representation at national and provincial conferences and to allow a fair and equitable schedule for participation at these conferences by the members of Council, including the Mayor. In addition, the policy will also provide for appropriate professional development for the Mayor and members of Council.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. Staff will prepare a list of known conferences and professional development opportunities for Council, including locations, as information becomes available. Typically, this would include Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) annual conference, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) spring conference, NSFM fall conference, the Atlantic Mayors' Congress, the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) conference, and the joint conference of the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association (NSCPA) and Nova Scotia Association of Police Governance (NSAPG).
2. Members of Council will submit conference attendance requests to the Clerk. Staff will compare these requests to the approved attendance in Section 3 of this policy and advise Council accordingly.
3. To ensure adequate representation and appropriate opportunities for Mayor and members of Council to attend, the following maximum numbers will apply and will be included in the annual operating budget:
 - a. NSFM spring conference –three members of Council;
 - b. NSFM fall conference – all members of Council;
 - c. FCM annual conference – three members of Council
 - d. Atlantic Mayors' Congress – Mayor or Deputy Mayor
 - e. CAPG national conference – one member of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners, not necessarily a Council member
 - f. NSCPA/NSAPG fall conference – all three members of Council on the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners
4. In cases where more members of Council wish to attend an event than is permitted as per paragraph 3 above, Council shall determine which members will be authorized to attend.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10350-26

5. All members of Council will be permitted to attend the NSFM spring conference when it is in the Cumberland Region.
6. All members of Council will be permitted to attend the FCM Annual Conference when it is held in the Maritime Provinces.
7. Each member of Council will be provided the opportunity to attend at least one FCM conference or conference other than those listed in paragraph 3 during their four-year term as long as the content of the conference supports the strategic direction of Council, and attendance has been approved by Council.
8. The Mayor may attend one conference other than those listed in paragraph 3 per year.
9. Members of Council wishing to attend other conferences, or workshops, educational courses or other learning opportunities, not included in paragraph 3 of this policy, will submit the request to Council for approval, provided there are budgeted monies for same, and the content is considered relevant to municipal government.
10. Members of Council wishing to attend functions or meetings may request to do so to the Mayor, who may approve the request provided reimbursable expenses are less than \$500 and the function or meeting is relevant to the municipality. Council pre-approval is required for amounts over \$500.
11. Where budget allows, the Town will support members of Council interested in participating in the NSFM / AMA Leadership Education Modules. Information on these modules will be provided to Council by the Clerk as it becomes available.
12. For all members of Council attending a conference or workshop on behalf of the Town of Amherst, a brief written report describing the purpose and results achieved must be submitted to Council for information within 60 days of the date of the conference or workshop.

TITLE: Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development
SECTION: Executive Office
POLICY NO: 10350-26

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title Role	Responsibilities
Clerk	Ensure Mayor and Council are adhering to the requirements of the policy.
Mayor / Council	Approve requests for additional learning opportunities as per Section 9 and 10 of the policy.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Housekeeping amendments to reflect current names of current Boards. Add Section 11 to include additional learning opportunities. 	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	May 23, 2023
Add language to sections 9 and 10 to clarify other educational / learning opportunities, and the requirement for Mayor/Council to approve attendance when costs are above \$500.	Clerk, LeBlanc	Council	October 27, 2025

Minutes reference date: 24 April 2017 23 May 2023 27 October 2025

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

APPROVAL DATE: January 27, 2025

CAO Signature: 

PURPOSE

1. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of municipal funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting reimbursement of expenses incurred by Council members, the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”), and Town of Amherst employees, Committee members and Commissioners in relation to Town of Amherst business.

APPLICATION

SIGNING AUTHORITY:

2. The following are the Signing Authorities for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Mayor	CAO / Designate
Members of Council & CAO	Mayor / Designate
Town Employees	Director or CAO / Designate
Committee member or Commissioner	CAO / Designate

3. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority in their absence. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
4. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing expenses incurred on their own behalf.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Everyone who incurs an expense in relation to Town business is responsible for:
 - (1) Familiarizing themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy;
 - (2) By April 1 of each year signing an acknowledgment document certifying that they have reviewed this policy and sought all clarifications necessary for a complete understanding of its provisions and their responsibilities pursuant to it. Failure to sign this acknowledgement document annually will disqualify the individual from claiming expenses for reimbursement under this policy until the document has been signed for that year.
 - (3) Completing and submitting expense claims with necessary supporting documentation;
 - (4) Exercising reasonable diligence and incurring expenses prudently and responsibly; and
 - (5) With respect to travel, cancelling reservations as required, safeguarding travel advances and funds provided, and considering alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

PERMITTED EXPENSES

6. Subject to and in accordance with this policy, the following expenses incurred by a member of Council, the CAO or a Town employee, Committee member or Commissioner are eligible for reimbursement:
- (1) Pre-approved travel including transportation, accommodation, meal costs and training or continuing education costs.

AUTHORIZED TRAVEL

7. Council members shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending:
- (1) Conferences and professional development authorized by Policy 10350-26 Council Conference Attendance and Professional Development;
 - (2) Meetings or conferences at which the Council member's attendance is authorized or requested by Council;
 - (3) A meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the Council member has been appointed by Council, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Town if the Council member is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;
 - (4) If the Mayor or Deputy Mayor are invited to attend a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Town, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval by Council will not be required.
 - (5) If a Council member attends a function, meeting or conference on behalf of the Town, and if reimbursable expenses are less than \$500, pre-approval of Council will not be required if:
 - a) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend on their behalf;
 - b) At the request of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to attend as a Council member who has a special interest in, or connection with the subject of the meeting or conference or because of special knowledge and experience of the Council member relative to the subject of the meeting or conference; and
 - (6) A training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training and education.
8. The CAO shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses pursuant to the CAO's employment contract.
9. An employee of the Town of Amherst, Committee member or Commissioner shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses, if pre-approved, incurred:
- (a) In the carrying out of the duties and responsibilities associated with their employment and duly authorized by the Director and/or CAO on the Prior Approval Form;
 - (b) For meetings, conferences, or professional development events at which the attendance of the employee, Committee member or Commissioner is authorized or is requested by the CAO;

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (c) For attendance at a meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the employee has been appointed, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Town of Amherst if the employee, Committee member or Commissioner is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization; and
- (d) At a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training or education.

TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE MARITIMES

Travel Outside of the Maritimes means travel outside of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

10. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes shall be made in writing and shall contain the following information:
 - (a) The purpose and duration of the trip;
 - (b) The location(s) to be visited;
 - (c) The dates and times of arrival and departure;
 - (d) Any pre-paid transportation, meals, or accommodation; and
 - (e) Any other anticipated expenses.
11. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes by Council members shall be reviewed by the CAO, Mayor or Designate who shall consider the necessity of travel based on the information provided.
12. All travel outside of the Maritimes by the CAO, other than that pursuant to the employment contract, shall be reviewed by the Mayor or Designate who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.
13. If a request for travel outside of the Maritimes is approved, and the Claimant (not Town of Amherst) pays all or some of the expenses for the travel, the Claimant will be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses after submitting an expense claim in accordance with this policy.
14. All requests for travel outside of the Maritimes by Town of Amherst employees, Committee members or Commissioners shall be reviewed by the CAO, who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.

LIMITS ON REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

15. Notwithstanding any other provision of the policy, the following limits shall apply to the reimbursement of expenses:

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (1) Subject to payment of per diem, a claimant shall only be reimbursed for costs that they have incurred;
- (2) The expenses of a Council member for political activity associated with election or re-election is not reimbursable by the Town of Amherst;
- (3) Airplane travel shall be booked by Town of Amherst staff or shall only be reimbursed at the lowest rate which would have been available if Town of Amherst staff had booked the airfare. Reasonable costs for airport improvement or similar fees and luggage shall be reimbursed at actual costs.
- (4) Accommodation costs shall be reimbursed at actual costs. Government rates should be obtained whenever possible. Hotel upgrades shall be at the personal expense of the Claimant unless there are ergonomic necessities attributable to physical requirements included, but not limited to, wheel chair accessibility;
- (5) Reimbursement for meals shall not exceed the per diem meal amounts set out in this policy, except in the case of travel outside of the Maritimes, in which event the applicable Signing Authority may authorize reimbursement of meals expenses at a comparable standard. Reimbursement for meals shall not be claimed in respect of meals that are included as part of registration fees for conferences or seminars;
- (6) The cost of any alcoholic beverages shall not be reimbursed;
- (7) Fees, deposits, interest and surcharges incurred on a personal credit card shall not be reimbursed;
- (8) When personal and Town of Amherst travel is combined, only documented expenses directly related to the Town of Amherst portion are reimbursable. Extended travel time and related expenses are at the traveler's own expense;
- (9) Reimbursement shall not be provided for loss of personal effects; for medical and hospital treatment; for purchase of luggage, clothing and other personal equipment; or for personal services such as shoe shines, valet services, dry-cleaning, laundry, haircuts and other personal services;
- (10) There shall be no reimbursement of travel and related expense for individuals other than a Council member, the CAO, or an employee, Committee member or Commissioner of the Town of Amherst;
- (11) There shall be no reimbursement for travel by a Council member within the Town of Amherst because such travel is deemed to be included in the monthly vehicle allowance.
- (12) If a personal vehicle is used in lieu of airplane travel, reimbursement will be based on the lesser of the lowest airfare rate which would have been available had the flight been booked by Town of Amherst staff or the kilometrage reimbursement.
- (13) Hotel services including room service and video rentals shall not be charged to the room.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

16. Advances are not routinely approved. The following limits shall apply to the use of advances:

- (1) All advances must be approved by the CAO;
- (2) Advances will only be issued where an overnight stay is required;
- (3) Advances will not be made for less than \$200;

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

- (4) The CAO must not approve an advance unless the CAO is satisfied that there is a reasonable need for the advance;
- (5) Upon completion of the travel for which an advance has been made, the recipient must complete an expense claim in relation to the travel costs that reconciles the amount of the advance with the actual reimbursable expenses incurred. The recipient must repay any part of the advance owing to the Town of Amherst within 10 days of completing the travel.

USE OF TOWN OF AMHERST CREDIT CARDS

17. Town of Amherst credit cards, in respect of travel expenses, shall only be used for parking, accommodations, airfare, vehicle rentals and event registration fees. Town of Amherst credit cards shall not be used for tolls or per diem meal allowances.

PER DIEM MEAL ALLOWANCES

18. For each day or part day or when overnight accommodation forms part of an authorized expense, the Claimant shall be paid a meal allowance for each meal for which the Claimant is required to pay, in the amounts authorized as per diem meal allowances in the amount of \$15 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$30 for supper. This allowance includes gratuities and taxes.
19. Claimants whose religious beliefs or medical requirements prohibit them from consuming certain foods should be aware the appropriate meals can normally be obtained from caterers, provided that adequate notice of a special requirement is given. Should special dietary requirements negate the ability to participate in a meal that is provided free of cost, and as a result the Claimant must pay for a meal, they shall be paid a meal allowance for that meal.

KILOMETRAGE

20. The kilometrage allowance reimbursed for Claimants using personal vehicles for authorized travel shall be at the rate stipulated from time to time by the Province of Nova Scotia as the maximum kilometrage rate for its employees.
21. Where several Council members, the CAO, and/or employees, Committee members or Commissioners of the Town of Amherst, or any combination thereof, attend the same meeting, conference, or function, each shall make reasonable efforts to share a vehicle.

VEHICLE RENTALS

22. The cost of rental of a vehicle shall be a reimbursable expense in instances where:
 - (1) Reasonable ground transportation services such as public transit, taxis or hotel shuttles are unavailable; or

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
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- (2) Two or more Council members, the CAO, and/or employees, Committee members or Commissioners of the Town of Amherst or any combination thereof, are traveling together, and it is more economical than the combined cost of other reasonable ground transportation.
23. Compact, economical vehicles must be used unless three or more persons are travelling together, the bulk or weight of goods being transported necessitates a larger vehicle or a compact, economical vehicle is unavailable.
24. For the protection of the Claimant and the Town of Amherst, Claimants must ensure that adequate insurance (collision, comprehensive and third-party liability insurance) is in place for all drivers by either renting the vehicle using a personal credit card with an insurance option, or by purchasing a policy from the rental agency. The applicable deductible must be the lowest available given the coverage described above.

EXPENSE CLAIMS

25. Expense claims must be submitted on the form provided by the Town of Amherst and shall be signed by the Claimant.
26. The business reason for each expense must be submitted with all expense claims and a detailed itemized receipt is required for all expense claims except:
- (1) Claims for per diem meal allowances;
 - (2) Tolls and parking under \$10 only; and
 - (3) Claims for personal vehicle kilometrage for authorized travel.
27. If no receipt is available, a written attestation signed by the Claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expenses must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.
28. Expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
29. No expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by the Signing Authority who has authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:
- (1) The claim is consistent with policy;
 - (2) The expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
 - (3) Appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and the claim documentation is appropriately filed; and
 - (4) The expenses claimed have appropriate justification.

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

30. In considering an expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the Claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy.
31. The use of petty cash to pay an expense claim is prohibited.

TIMEFRAME

32. A claim for reimbursement of an expense shall be submitted for approval within thirty (30) days of the expense being incurred.
33. Expenses must be submitted and charged to the year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forward to future years.

FRAUD, MISUSE OR MISAPPROPRIATION OF MUNICIPAL FUNDS

34. Fraudulent irregularity, misuse or misappropriation of Town of Amherst funds may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
35. Suspicious activity and potential misuse of funds must be reported immediately to the CAO. If such activity relates to the CAO it must be reported immediately to the Mayor.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

36. Pursuant to section 65D of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Town of Amherst does the following:
- (1) within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts an expense report on the Town of Amherst website for the Mayor, CAO (including an employee of the Town of Amherst delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*) and each member of Council on their expenses regarding the following:
 - a. Travel and travel related expenses, including transportation, accommodation and incidentals;
 - b. Meals; and
 - c. Training and education.
 - (2) by September 30th of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the expenses for the preceding fiscal year for each reportable individual that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

TITLE: Expense Reimbursement Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-07

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

- 37. The Town of Amherst Audit Committee shall review the expense annual summary report, relevant to section 36, by September 30th of each year.
- 38. By January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Finance	Ensure policy is reviewed by January 31 st following an election year and that annual summary is filed with the Province by September 30 th each year.
Accounts Payable	Ensure all Expense Reimbursements submitted are per policy.
Council, CAO, Employees, Committee Members	Ensure policy is followed when claiming expense reimbursements.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Policy Review updates. Amend Out of Province Travel to Travel Outside of Maritimes, updated meal per diems. Other updates for clarity.	Director of Finance	Council	May 23, 2023
Policy review following municipal election. Minor grammar and reporting requirement revisions.	Director of Finance	Council	January 27, 2025

Minutes reference date: March 25, 2019 November 26, 2018 February 24, 2020 May 23, 2023
 January 27, 2025



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2026015

Date: February 17, 2026

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Commercial Development Support Program By-law P-9

ORIGIN: October 2025 COW Agenda Memo from CAO.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Town of Amherst Commercial Development Support Program By-law P-9.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting First Reading of the By-law to Amend the Commercial Development Support Program Bylaw P-9.

BACKGROUND: The Commercial Development Support Program Bylaw P-9 was adopted in September of 2017. The original bylaw provided tax savings to businesses over a period of 10 years. These savings were automatically provided to the businesses annually.

DISCUSSION: Our current Commercial Development Support Program Bylaw allows a property owner who is undertaking a new construction or a significant expansion to phase in the increased taxes as a result of the increased assessment of their property over a ten-year period. This provides a tax savings of 50%, over ten years for the property owner. Obviously, this means that the Town does not realize the total value of the increased assessment for 10 years. Anecdotally, this practice has not had a huge impact on the decision to build or expand most businesses that have benefited from this initiative. In the last year, the Town paid out \$426,516 for this initiative.

Totally removing this support may be detrimental to our new industrial park. However, we could alter our phase-in schedule to provide the Town with additional revenue earlier, while still supporting new business development. The proposed by-law amendment phases in the taxes for the new assessment over five years (for agreements from May 1, 2026 on) as opposed to the current ten years.

YEARS	Rebate %
1	90%
2	80%
3	70%
4	60%
5	50%
6	50%
7	40%
8	30%
9	20%
10	10%

YEARS	Rebate %
1	90%
2	70%
3	50%
4	20%
5	10%



In addition, amendments include capping the rebate paid to a maximum of \$100,000 annually and updating the map in Schedule A – Land Use Zoning Map.

These changes will only impact new agreements from May 1, 2026, on; all current agreements would be honoured in their current form.

Given our significant capital investment in our new industrial park, the above changes will allow the Town to recoup our costs earlier and grow our assessment base to the benefit of all taxpayers.

It should be noted that Cumberland County currently has a Commercial Development Support By-law that phases in the assessment increase over a ten-year period. Colchester County and Moncton do not have such a by-law.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: These changes will allow the Town to recoup our costs earlier and grow our assessment base to the benefit of all taxpayers.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement. If Council gives First Reading at their regular meeting on February 23, 2026, Notice of Intent to amend the by-law will be advertised as per the MGA requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: There are no social justice implications.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Do not accept the recommended changes and keep the by-law as is.
2. Make additional changes to the bylaw.

ATTACHMENTS: Commercial Development Support Program Bylaw P-9 with changes in red.

BY-LAW TO AMEND THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW P-9

The Commercial Development Support Program By-law P-9 is hereby amended as follows:

In the first paragraph, change 10 years to 5 years and add the wording “from May 1, 2026, forward”

SHORT TITLE

Fix spelling errors to change aslo to “also” and know to “known”

APPLICATION

Add the words “Mixed Use, Business Park, and”

REBATE CALCULATION

Remove the current table and add the following table

Year	Rebate (as % of the rebate eligible assessment)	Maximum Annual Rebate Amount Paid
1	90	\$100,000
2	70	\$100,000
3	50	\$100,000
4	20	\$100,000
5	10	\$100,000

REBATE LIMITS

Add the words “The maximum annual rebate paid will be \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.”

PAYMENT

Section 26 - Remove the word “disposition” and replace it with ‘decision”

SCHEDULE A OF THE BY-LAW

Replace the Land Use By-law Zoning Map in its entirety

SCHEDULE B - THE AGREEMENT - DEFINITIONS

Section 2.5 - Change 10 years to 5 years and add the words “for agreements from May 1, 2026, forward.”

ASSESSMENT REBATE FUNDING CALCULATION

Section 4.2 - Add the words “The maximum annual rebate will be \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.”

Section 4.6 - Change ten to “five”

FUNDING PAYMENT

Section 5.1 Change ten (10) to “five (5)” and add the words “(for agreements from May 1, 2026, forward)”

CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT

Section 6.2 change “A” to “An”

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 12.1(c) change 10 to 5 and add the words “for agreements from May 1, 2026, on”

REGISTRATION

Section 12.4 - Remove this section in its entirety and renumber the remaining parts in this section.

SCHEDULE B – EXAMPLE OF ASSESMENT REBATE CALCULATION

Remove this section in its entirety and replace it with the following

SCHEDULE B
EXAMPLE OF ASSESMENT REBATE CALCULATION

A. Pre-Development Base Year Taxable Assessed Value:

(1)	
Base Year	Base Year Taxable Assessed Value
2026	\$150,000

B. Post-Development Actual Taxable Assessment Value:

		(2)	(3)
Years	Rebate Year	Actual Taxable Assessed Value	Current Commercial Municipal General Tax Rate (excluding any area rates)
1	2027	\$350,000 *	4.059
2	2028	350,000	4.059
3	2029	350,000	4.059
4	2030	350,000	4.059
5	2031	350,000	4.059

*The PVSC assessment in the year following the completion of the development. This amount will NOT change for purposes of the rebate calculation.

C. Assessment Rebates:

	(4)	(5)=(2-1)	(6) = (5 x 3)	(7) = (6 x 4)	(8) = (7/6)	
Years	Rebate %	Rebate Eligible Assessment	Rebate Eligible Taxes	Rebate Amount \$	Cumulative % Payable	Maximum Annual Rebate Amount \$100,000
1	90	\$200,000	\$8,118	\$7,306	90.0%	
2	70	200,000	8,118	5,683	80.0%	
3	50	200,000	8,118	4,059	70.0%	
4	20	200,000	8,118	1,624	57.5%	
5	10	200,000	8,118	812	48.0%	
Totals (9) & (10):			\$40,590	\$19,483		
Re-calculate:			50%			
Total Allowable Rebate:			\$20,295	\$19,483		

- If the program ends at any point before the cumulative payout falls below 50%, the rebate needs to be adjusted down accordingly.
- The cumulative payable must be below 50% by the end of the phase-in period.
- The maximum annual rebate amount is \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.

SCHEDULE C OF THE AGREEMENT

Remove the second "S" to correctly read "CDS Bylaw – Town of Amherst"

SCHEDULE E OF THE AGREEMENT - ASSESSMENT REBATE CALCULATION

Remove this section in its entirety and replace it with the following

SCHEDULE E
ASSESSMENT REBATE CALCULATION

Address:

Property Identification No:

A. Pre-Development Base Year Taxable Assessed Value:

(1)	
Base Year	Base Year Taxable Assessed Value
	\$

B. Post-Development Actual Taxable Assessment Value:

		(2)	(3)
Years	Rebate Year	Actual Taxable Assessed Value*	Current Commercial Municipal General Tax Rate (excluding any area rates)
1		\$	
2		\$	
3		\$	
4		\$	
5		\$	

*The PVSC assessment in the year following the completion of the development. This amount will not change for purposes of the rebate calculation.

C. Assessment Rebates:

	(4)	(5)=(2-1)	(6) = (5 x 3)	(7) = (6 x 4)	(8)	
Years	Rebate %	Rebate Eligible Assessment	Rebate Eligible Taxes	Rebate Amount \$	Cumulative % Payable	Maximum Annual Rebate Amount \$100,000
1	90	\$	\$	\$		
2	70	\$	\$	\$		
3	50	\$	\$	\$		
4	20	\$	\$	\$		
5	10	\$	\$	\$		
Totals (9) & (10):			\$	\$		
Re-calculate:			50%	\$		
Total Allowable Rebate:			\$	\$		

- If the program ends at any point before the cumulative payout falls below 50%, the rebate needs to be adjusted down accordingly.
- The cumulative payable must be below 50% by the end of the phase-in period.
- The maximum annual rebate amount is \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

APPROVAL DATE: _____ **CAO Signature:** _____

~~TOWN OF AMHERST~~
~~BYLAW RESPECTING A COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM~~
~~IN THE TOWN OF AMHERST~~

WHEREAS it is desirable to permit the phasing-in, over a period of up to ~~40~~ 5 years from May 1, 2026 forward, of an increase to the taxable assessed value of commercial properties located in the Town of Amherst Commercial Development District and further to provide a partial rebate of taxes paid by the owner during the phasing-in period;

AND WHEREAS Chapter 13 of the Acts of 2016 amended the Municipal Government Act (Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998) to create Sections 71C and 71D, which allows the Town with the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs to pass this Bylaw;
The Council of the Town of Amherst, under the authority of the Municipal Government Act, pursuant to Section 71C and subject to approval of the Minister in Section 71D, enacts the following Bylaw:

SHORT TITLE

1. This Bylaw shall be known as Bylaw No. P-9, and may be cited as the “Commercial Development Support Bylaw”. (~~also~~ also known as the CDS Bylaw)

APPLICATION

2. This Bylaw shall apply to a property which meets the definition of an eligible property as defined in subsection 71C(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*, if that property is located within the **Commercial Development District (CDD)** as prescribed in the *Town of Amherst Municipal Planning Strategy* and as depicted in the Industrial, Comprehensive Development District, **Mixed Use, Business Park, and** all Commercial Zones on the Land Use Zoning Map, attached as Schedule A of this Bylaw.

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

3. The **Development Support Program** is established to provide assistance to owners of eligible property by providing the possibility of an annual partial rebate on taxes paid by the owner if the owner has undertaken development of their property in the CDD. The rebates are designed to stimulate building construction and the expansion of the economy of the Town.
4. The Development Support Program may provide a participating owner with a partial rebate on taxes paid on an eligible property by utilizing all or a portion of the “Rebate Eligible Assessment.”
5. Prior to receiving a Development Support, an owner of an eligible property must enter into Phased In Assessment Agreement with the Town.

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
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DEVELOPMENT

6. An eligible property must undergo development before the owner of the property can participate in the Development Support Program.

DEFINITIONS

7. **Development** means any new building, expansion of an existing building, or any renovation that requires a Building Permit and has a minimum project cost of \$25,000.

8. **Rebate Eligible Assessment** means the amount calculated using the following formula:

Rebate Eligible Assessment = Actual Taxable Assessed Value – Base Year Taxable Assessed Value

9. **Base Year Taxable Assessed Value** means the Taxable Assessed Value applicable for the taxation year in which a Phased In Assessment Agreement is signed for the eligible property upon which development is to be constructed. The Base Year Taxable Assessed Value means the Taxable Assessed Value shall be fixed in this manner for the purpose of determining the Rebate Eligible Assessment for the development of the eligible property subject to any adjustment arising from assessment appeals or changes to the Taxable Assessed Value made by the Property Valuation Service Corporation (PVSC) through requests for reconsideration, and shall remain unchanged for the duration of the term of the Development Support Program for the eligible property.
10. **Actual Taxable Assessed Value** means the Taxable Assessed Value is established by the PVSC in the year following the completion of the Development. For further clarity, the Actual Taxable Assessed Value will not change for the purposes of the Development Support over the course of the program.

PHASED IN ASSESSMENT AGREEMENT

11. (1) As a condition of the Development Support Program, an owner of an eligible property must enter into an agreement with the Town (hereinafter referred to as the “**Phased In Assessment Agreement**”). The Phased In Assessment Agreement signed by the parties will be substantially the same as the form agreement attached as Schedule B to this Bylaw and forming part of the Bylaw.
- (2) A Phase In Assessment Agreement establishes the eligibility criteria for the Development Support Program and the limits on the program as established in this Bylaw. In the event of a conflict between a Phased In Assessment Agreement and the Bylaw, the provisions of this Bylaw shall prevail.

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REBATE CALCULATION

12. An annual Assessment Rebate amount shall be calculated as the following percentage of the equivalent of the Rebate Eligible Assessment:

Year	Rebate (as % of the rebate eligible assessment)
1	90
2	80
3	70
4	60
5	50
6	50
7	40
8	30
9	20
10	10

Year	Rebate (as % of the rebate eligible assessment)	Maximum Annual Rebate Amount Paid
1	90	\$100,000
2	70	\$100,000
3	50	\$100,000
4	20	\$100,000
5	10	\$100,000

REBATE LIMITS

13. The total of Assessment Rebates provided over the term of participation in the program must not result in calculation of the total increase in taxes payable during the phase-in period being less than fifty percent of the total increase in taxes that would be payable during the same period in the absence of the application of the program formula.

The maximum annual rebate paid will be \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.

ADJUSTMENTS

14. In the event there are any subsequent changes to the total taxes payable in any year due to reductions resulting from assessment appeals, and where such tax changes occur after rebate amounts have been paid, future year rebate entitlements may be reduced accordingly. Any overpayment of rebate amounts arising from subsequent assessment or tax reductions will be deemed to be a debt owing to the Town.

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DURATION

15. Assessment Rebates will only become payable to the owner after the eligible property is first reassessed by PVSC to fully reflect the development that the owner is receiving the rebate for.
16. All rebates will cease if during the program term the building is demolished except to expand an eligible use. Rebate amounts that would have been payable in the year in which the demolition occurs will be adjusted on a pro-rated bases to reflect the date of the demolition.

STAGED DEVELOPMENT

17. In the case of a staged development, where one portion of a property is developed in advance of others, each portion of the property will be treated as a separate property. The first rebate payment of the component of the Development Support Program will be based on the Rebate Eligible Assessment arising from the increased assessment on the first portion of the development. As other portions of the property are developed, and which result in further assessment increases, the property owner may apply to further participate in the Development Support Program based on the additional Rebate Eligible Assessment, subject to the continued availability of the Development Support Program and the owner's ability to meet the eligibility requirements and rebate entitlements in place at that time.

CONDOMINIUMS

18. If a development of an eligible property is condominiumized, each condominium unit will be treated as a stand-alone development and must be able to meet all eligibility requirements of the Development Support Program, independent of other condominium units.

REPEAL

19. (1) In the event that this Bylaw, or any portion thereof, is repealed, any owner who has been accepted to participate in the Development Support Program prior to the date of repeal will benefit from the program, as applicable, in accordance with this Bylaw, despite its whole or partial repeal.

OTHER CONDITIONS

20. An owner's application to the Development Support Program must be made prior to the issuance of a Building Permit for the Development of the property.
21. All proposed development must conform to all Provincial laws, Town Bylaws, policies, and processes and all improvements must be made pursuant to an approved Building Permit and applicable zoning requirements and Development approvals.
22. The applicant must be the owner of the eligible property or have the owner's written authorization to apply for the Development Support Program.

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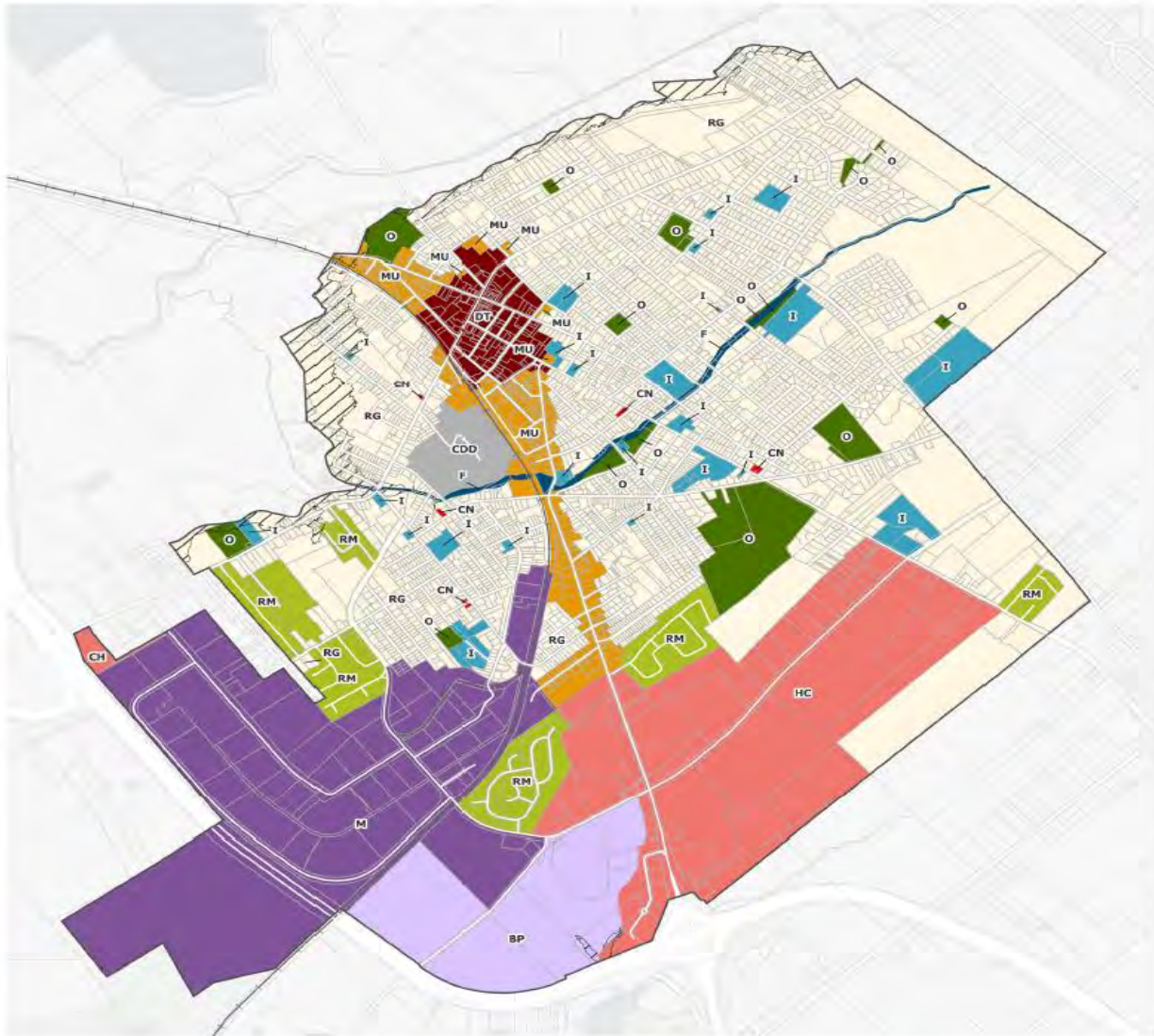
23. The owner of an eligible property must not be in arrears of property taxes or other fees and charges on the date that the Phased In Assessment Agreement is signed.

PAYMENT

24. Rebates may be provided once annually, in the last quarter of the year, provided that:
- a. There are no outstanding taxes, water rates, or other sums owed to the Town with respect to the property;
 - b. There are no outstanding work orders or orders or requests to comply from any municipal or provincial entity; and
 - c. All other eligibility criteria and conditions are met.
25. Assessment Rebates will not be applied as tax credits against property tax accounts.
26. In case of an assessment appeal, the Town reserves the right to withhold any further Assessment Rebates pending final ~~disposition~~ **decision** of the appeal.

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SCHEDULE "A"



MAP

Amherst Zoning

SCHEDULE	LAST UPDATED	DATA SOURCE
—	2025.11.24	Prov. of NS
NORTH + SCALE		PROJ.
		NAD83 CSRS UTM 20 N

LEGEND

	CDD Comprehensive Development District		BP Business Park
	DT Downtown Commercial		I Institutional
	F Flood Plain		MU Mixed Use
	RG General Residential		RM Mini Home Residential
	CH Highway Commercial		CN Neighbourhood Commercial
	M Industrial		O Open Space
			Floodway Fringe Overlay

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SCHEDULE “B” **Town of Amherst**
Phased In Assessment Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT made as of the _____ day of _____, 20 _____

BETWEEN:

(the “**Applicant**”)

- and -

TOWN OF AMHERST
(the “**Town**”)

WHEREAS the Town adopted Bylaw No. P-9 cited as the “Commercial Development Support Bylaw” (CDS Bylaw), a partial rebate program consisting of annual rebates to participating owners who undertake development on eligible property in the Commercial Development District;

AND WHEREAS the Applicant is the registered owner or the person having the owner’s authorization, of an eligible property which is located within the Commercial Development District and has applied to the Town for participation in the Development Support Program for the Property described below in section 1 and in Schedule “A” of this Agreement (the “Property”);

AND WHEREAS the Town requires that a Phased In Assessment Agreement be entered into between the Applicant and the Town;

NOW THEREFORE THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH THAT in consideration of the premises, covenants and agreements hereinafter contained on the part of the Applicant to be observed, fulfilled and performed as hereinafter required and the approval of the Applicant’s application for participation in the Development Support Program by the Town, subject to and in accordance with, the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the parties covenant and agree as follows:

1. PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Applicant:

Name of registered Property Owner:

Address of Property:

Property Identification Number(s):

Mailing Address of Owner:

Name of Agreement Recipient:

Mailing Address of Recipient:

The Legal Description of the Property as set out in Schedule “A” of this Agreement.

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2. DEFINITIONS:

Save and except as may be otherwise defined in this Agreement, the definitions of terms used in this Agreement shall be the same as the definitions for those terms as set out in the CDS Bylaw, No. P-9, and Section 71C of the Municipal Government Act, C18 of the Acts of 1998.

Please note: the terms Actual Taxable Assessed Value, Base Year Taxable Assessed Value, Development, Rebate Eligible Assessment are defined in the CDS Bylaw.

The following terms shall have the meaning set out below:

- 2.1 **Agreement** means this Phased-In Assessment Agreement which is entered into between the parties pursuant to sections 71C and 71D of the *Municipal Government Act*, and the CDS Bylaw No. P-9 enacted by the Council of the Town of Amherst and as amended from time to time.
- 2.2 **Applicant** means the owner of the property or a person having the owner's authorization to apply for the Development Support Program.
- 2.3 **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town. The CAO is the approving authority for purposes of this Agreement where authority is not required to come from Council.
- 2.4 **Treasurer** means the Director of Finance of the Town.
- 2.5 **Development Support Program** means program established by CDS Bylaw for a maximum period of ~~40~~ 5 years for agreements from May 1, 2026, forward.
- 2.6 **Assessment Rebate** means annual rebate amount calculated each year as set out in section 12 of the CDS Bylaw.
- 2.7 **Eligible Costs** means:
- Construction/retrofit/expansion costs as shown by the main Building Permit for the development;
 - The cost of associated studies and surveys;
 - The cost of development of plans and specifications; and
 - The cost of implementation and administration of the project including staff and professional service costs for architectural, engineering, legal, financial and planning services.

Eligible costs do not include any costs or portion thereof covered by any form of financial assistance from a Provincial or Federal government or a board or agency of such government.

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- 2.8 **Eligible Use** means permitted commercial or industrial uses as set out in the Town of Amherst Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw.
- 2.9 **Owner** means the registered owner(s) of the Property at the date this Agreement is signed.
- 2.10 **Property** means the Property described in section 1 and Schedule “A” of this Agreement.
- 2.11 **Recipient** means the Applicant, authorized to receive a Assessment Rebate.
- 2.12 **Town Solicitor** means the lawyer appointed by the Town for the purpose of registering this Agreement in the Registry of Deeds or under the Land Registration System, whichever is applicable.

3. PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENT REBATES PROGRAM

- 3.1 The Applicant’s participation in the Development Support Program is conditional on the Applicant ensuring that at all times the following conditions are met:
- (a) The objectives and participation requirements of this Agreement and the CDS Bylaw, attached as Schedule “C” to this Agreement, are met from year to year;
 - (b) All applicable Provincial and Town requirements, policies and procedures are met;
 - (c) The Applicant is in compliance with all of the terms and conditions of this Agreement and is in conformance with all Building Permits and other regulatory approvals pertaining to the Property; and
 - (d) The property has undergone development.

4. ASSESSMENT REBATE FUNDING CALCULATION

- 4.1 An Assessment Rebate is calculated by the Treasurer as a percentage of the Rebate Eligible Assessment as shown in Schedule “F” of this Agreement.
- 4.2 Prior to the commencement of the Development Support Program, the Treasurer shall determine the Base Year Taxable Assessed Value used to calculate the annual Rebate Eligible Tax Assessment and the corresponding annual Assessment Rebate payable to the Applicant. Following this determination, Schedule “F” will be amended annually to show the Actual Taxable Assessed Value, the Rebate Eligible Taxes, and the annual Assessment Rebate amount payable as determined by the Treasurer. **The maximum**

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annual rebate paid will be \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.

- 4.3 The Applicant shall have an opportunity to review the TREASURER's calculation of the Base Year Taxable Assessed Value prior to the finalization of Schedule "F"; however, the TREASURER's determination as to the calculation of the Base Year Taxable Assessed Value, and the amount of the Assessment Rebate, shall be final.
- 4.4 In calculating the annual Assessment Rebate payable for the development, the Rebate Eligible Assessment shall be calculated annually from the first year that the subject Assessment Rebate is payable, or the first year that the Owner elects to make the Annual Taxable Assessed Value election in accordance with this Agreement and CDS Bylaw.
- 4.5 The Assessment Rebate will be reduced by the Treasurer for the year in which an Assessment Rebate is paid, to reflect the amount of any rebate(s) of municipal taxes paid to the Owner, including but not limited to, rebates to reflect charitable status tax rebates related to the development. Any such reductions shall be in an amount reflecting the product of the municipal portion of taxes rebated and the Assessment Rebate percentage level applicable to that year.
- 4.6 The total of Assessment Rebates paid over a ~~ten~~ five year maximum term of the program must not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total increase in taxes that would be payable during the same period in the absence of the application of the formula.

REBATE ELIGIBLE ASSESSMENT

- 4.7 Subject to sections 4.9 and 4.10 of this Agreement, the Base Year Taxable Assessed Value shall remain fixed for the duration of the Development Support Program.
- 4.8 The Rebate Eligible Assessment will be amended by the Treasurer, as necessary, to reflect changes to the total Municipal Property Taxes payable in any year, as a result of successful assessment appeals, requests for reconsideration, equity changes, gross errors or other changes to Actual Taxable Assessed Value that have the effect of changing the amount used to calculate the Actual Taxable Assessed Value.
- 4.9 Where the Rebate Eligible Assessment is amended in accordance with section 4.8, future Assessment Rebates shall be adjusted accordingly for the duration of the Development Support Program period. Such adjustments may reflect any overpayment of Assessment Rebate arising from successful assessment appeals that occur subsequent to the commencement of payment of Assessment Rebates.
- 4.10 If at any time the Owner appeals any assessment relating to the development that, in the opinion of the CAO, may impact the calculation of the Rebate Eligible Assessment, the

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Town shall withhold any or all of the Assessment Rebate that would otherwise be paid for the development, based on a reasonable estimate of the reduction in assessment being sought, pending final disposition of the appeal. If as a result of the decision of the appeal body, the Actual Taxable Assessed Value is reduced below the amount determined in calculating the Rebate Eligible Assessment, then the reduced Rebate Eligible Assessment shall be the basis for determining the Assessment Rebate payable under this Agreement.

- 4.11 Where section 4.9 and 4.10 apply, any overpayment of an Assessment Rebate arising from subsequent assessment or tax reductions will be deemed to be a debt owing to the Town which the Owner shall pay forthwith together with the same interest charged for overdue accounts by the Town.
- 4.12 If at any point after the development is complete, additional work is proposed on the Property that is not part of the original Program application, but may serve to further increase the current year tax assessed value, such additional work shall not be included in the calculation of the Assessment Rebate in this Agreement, but may be the subject of a further Development Support Program application, subject to the continued availability of the Development Support Program and the eligibility requirements and rebate entitlements in effect at that time.

5. FUNDING PAYMENT

- 5.1 Subject to Section 6 of this Agreement, Assessment Rebate payments to a maximum of ~~ten (10)~~ five (5) annual payments (for agreements from May 1, 2026, forward) will commence being paid the first taxation year in which the Rebate Eligible Assessment is capable of being determined.
- 5.2 Assessment Rebates cannot be applied as tax credits against the Property Tax Account.

6. CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT

- 6.1 The CAO shall determine whether the Applicant has satisfied the participation requirements of this Agreement and the Schedules attached hereto.
- 6.2 An Assessment Rebate will only become payable after the property is first reassessed by the PVSC to fully reflect the development for which the Applicant might receive a rebate.
- 6.3 A rebate can only be paid once annually, in the last quarter of the year, provided that:
- (a) There are no outstanding taxes, water rates or other sums owed to the Town with respect to the property;
 - (b) There are no outstanding work orders and/or orders or requests to comply from any municipal or provincial entity; and
 - (c) All other required criteria and conditions are met.

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7. OWNERS OBLIGATIONS

Compliance with Rebate Application

- 7.1 The Applicant shall undertake the development in accordance with the Development Support Program.

Compliance with Town Directives

- 7.2 The Applicant shall strictly comply with and observe all material requirements, stipulations, guidelines and directives related to the Development Support Program as required by the Town, and shall undertake all necessary courses of action to ensure compliance.
- 7.3 The Applicant agrees that the development shall be completed in compliance with all required Building Permits, and constructed in accordance with the Nova Scotia Building Code Act and all applicable Land Use Bylaw requirements, Municipal requirements and other approvals required at law.

Demolition/Conversion

- 7.4 The Applicant covenants to the Town that the development will not be demolished, in whole or in part or converted to an ineligible use, in whole or in part, prior to the advance of all of the payments over the term of this Agreement unless such demolition is required to enable property enhancement approved by the Town under the terms of this Agreement.
- 7.5 The Applicant shall ensure that the Property is maintained in its redeveloped condition in accordance with this Agreement.
- 7.6 The Applicant further covenants that if at any time during the Development Support Program the building which underwent development is demolished, in whole or in part, or converted to an ineligible use, in whole or in part, the CAO in his or her sole discretion will cease to advance future Assessment Rebates or reduce the amount of future Assessment Rebates on a pro-rated basis to reflect the date of the demolition or conversion.

Payment of Costs

- 7.7 The Applicant acknowledges that without limiting the generality of the other provisions of this Agreement:
- a) The onus and responsibility is upon the Applicant at all times to assume all costs of development and to apply for and obtain, at the Applicant's expense, all approvals and permits required from the Town and all other agencies including but not limited to all Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments, Land Use Bylaw Amendments, minor variances, site plan approval and building permits in accordance with all applicable legislation; and

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- b) The Owner remains responsible at all times for the payment in full of all amounts in respect of property taxes, water and any other charges that may be levied by the Town relating to the Property as and when they fall due.

Development Permits

- 7.8 Applications for Development Support Program must be made prior to the issuance of the first Building Permit for the development.

8. ASSIGNMENT

- 8.1 The Applicant covenants to the Town that if the Owner intends to sell, transfer or assign the Property or if for any reason the Property ceases to be registered in the Owner's name prior to the advance of all of the Assessment Rebate payments, the Applicant will immediately notify the CAO in writing of such change or proposed change of ownership.
- 8.2 The payment of Assessment Rebates shall cease upon the sale, transfer or assignment of the Property, unless, prior to the completion of such sale, transfer or assignment, the Owner and the new owner enter into an agreement with the Town, in a form and content satisfactory to the CAO and the Town Solicitor, in which it is agreed that either:
 - a) the new owner shall have the right to participate in the Development Support Program;
or
 - b) the Applicant shall continue to receive the Assessment Rebates

Provided that:

- c) the new owner shall assume the Applicant's obligations under this Agreement from and after the date of completion of such sale, transfer or assignment;
- and**
- d) the new owner shall require that any subsequent owner(s) of the Property shall assume the Applicant's obligations under this Agreement.
- 8.3 It is the responsibility of the Applicant or Owner to provide in writing to the CAO change in Recipient. It is at the discretion of the CAO to determine if an adjustment to the Assessment Rebate identification of a new Recipient by the Applicant.

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9. TOWN RIGHTS

No Representation

- 9.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to be a representation by the Town regarding compliance of the Property with any applicable legislation, regulations, policies, standards, permits, approvals or Bylaws.

No Claim for Compensation or Reimbursement

- 9.2 In the event that any of the conditions of this Agreement are not fulfilled and an Assessment Rebate is not advanced, or required to be repaid, or the Assessment Rebate payments cease, or are delayed, the Applicant or Owner agrees that notwithstanding any costs or expenses incurred by the Applicant or Owner, the Applicant or Owner shall not have any claim for compensation or reimbursement of these costs and expenses against the Town and that the Town is not liable to the Applicant or Owner for losses, damages, interest, or claims which the Applicant or Owner may bear as a result of the lapse of time (if any) where the Town is exercising its rights herein to either delay a payment pending the Applicant or Owner's compliance with this Agreement or to terminate this Agreement.

10. DEFAULT AND REMEDIES

- 10.1 Subject to section 10.3, on the occurrence of a Default under this Agreement, the Town shall be entitled to all available remedies to terminate or enforce this Agreement, including but not limited to:
- a) immediate termination and cessation or delay of the release of an Assessment Rebate otherwise payable to the Applicant; and
 - b) requiring the Applicant or Owner to immediately repay to the Town all or a portion of any Assessment Rebates paid to the Applicant or Owner together with interest at the established Town rates.
- 10.2 A default under this Agreement (“**Default**”) shall be deemed to occur upon the failure of the Applicant or Owner to perform any of the obligations of the Applicant or Owner contained in this Agreement or to comply with all of the terms and conditions contained in this Agreement, included but not limited to the following:
- a) failure by the Applicant or Owner to satisfy the minimum requirements as set out in this Agreement and the CDS Bylaw;
 - b) failure by the Applicant or Owner in any material respect, to perform any of the obligations contained in this Agreement;

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- c) failure by the Applicant or Owner to pay and keep in good standing all real property taxes with respect to the Property and all other charges against the Property in favour of the Town, including but not limited to development charges, special assessments, local improvement charges, sewer and water and utility rates.
 - d) the making of an assignment by the Applicant or owner for the benefit of creditors, or if the Applicant or Owner assigns in bankruptcy or takes advantage of any statute for relief in bankruptcy, moratorium, settlement with creditors, or similar relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors; receipt of a receiving order against the Applicant or Owner, or if the Applicant or Owner is adjudged bankrupt or insolvent, or if a liquidator or receiver is appointed by reason of any actual or alleged mortgage or other obligation, or if the Property or the interest of the Applicant or Owner in the Property is taken or sold by any creditors or under any writ of execution or other like process.
 - e) failure by the Applicant or Owner to remain in contact with the Town such that the Town is unable to contact the Applicant or Owner for a period of time exceeding one (1) year.
 - f) Any representation or warranty made by the Applicant or Owner in this Agreement or the Development Support Program is incorrect in any material respect.
 - g) Willful defaults by the Applicant or Owner in the payment of moneys to any contractor, supplier or creditor, who has undertaken the works that are the subject of this Agreement.
- 10.3 If a Default occurs, the Town shall give written notice to the Applicant or Owner specifying the nature of the Default. The Applicant or Owner shall then have sixty (60) days, or such additional time as may be agreed to by the Town, acting reasonably, from the receipt of such notice of Default to rectify the Default, during which time all Assessment Rebate payments pay, in the CAO's sole discretion, be suspended, provided that if the Default is such that it cannot with due diligence be wholly rectified within sixty (60) days, or such additional period of time as may be agreed to by the CAO, and the Applicant or Owner has commenced and continues diligently working to correct the Default, the Applicant or Owner shall not be deemed to be in Default of this Agreement so long as it proceeds with due diligence to rectify the Default. If the Applicant or Owner fails to rectify the Default within the sixty (60) day time period or such additional time as may be agreed to by the CAO, and provided that the Applicant or Owner has not commenced and continued diligently working to correct the subject Default, the CAO shall have the option, in the CAO's sole discretion, to exercise the remedies under Subsection 10.1.
- 10.4 Wherever in this Agreement the Town requires repayment of all or part of any Assessment Rebate and the Applicant or Owner fails to repay as required the unpaid amounts shall be deemed to be a debt owing to the Town, and may be added to the tax roll for the property, together with interest at the Town rate.

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11. INDEMNIFY

11.1 The Applicant or Owner shall indemnify, save, defend and keep harmless from time to time and at all times, the Town and its elected officials, officers, employees and agents from and against all claims, actions, causes of action, interest, demands, costs, charges, damages, expenses and loss made by any person arising directly or indirectly:

- a) in respect of any failure by the Applicant or Owner to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement; and
- b) in respect of any loss, damage or injury (including death resulting from injury) to any person or property, however caused, directly or indirectly resulting or sustained by reason of an act or omission of the Applicant or Owner or any person for whom the Applicant or Owner is in law responsible in connection with any of the purposes set out in this Agreement or the failure by the Applicant or Owner to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement;

This indemnification shall, in respect of any matter arising prior to the termination of this Agreement, remain in force following termination or expiry of this Agreement.

12. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Term

12.1 This Agreement shall remain in effect from the date of its execution by the Town to the earlier of:

- a) the Applicant informing the Town in writing prior to the first Assessment Rebate payment that it has decided not to accept any Assessment Rebates;
- b) subject to the provisions of section 10 of this Agreement, the Town informing the Applicant or Owner in writing that due to the non-fulfillment of a required condition or due to Default, this Agreement is at an end;
- c) the expiry of the Development Support Program period after ~~40~~ 5 years for agreements from May 1, 2026, on; and
- d) the Applicant informing the Town in writing at any point after receiving the first Assessment Rebate payment that it no longer wishes to receive Assessment Rebates.

Time of the Essence

12.2 Time shall be of the essence with respect to all covenants, agreements and matters contained in this Agreement.

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Extension of Time

12.3 Where a time limit or deadline is provided for under this Agreement, the CAO, acting reasonably, may extend such time limit or deadline without an amendment to this Agreement.

Registration

~~12.4 Upon executing of this Agreement the Town at the Owner's expense, shall register or cause this Agreement to be registered on title to the Property immediately following execution by the Town.~~

Schedules

12.5 The following Schedules are attached to and form part of this Agreement:

- Schedule "A" Legal Description of the Property
- Schedule "B" Example of Assessment Rebate Calculation
- Schedule "C" CDS Bylaw
- Schedule "D" List of Development Plans & Drawings
- Schedule "E" Assessment Rebate Calculation

Survival of Covenants

12.6 Any terms or conditions of this Agreement that require performance by the Town or the Applicant or Owner after the expiration or other termination of this Agreement remain enforceable notwithstanding such expiration or other termination of this Agreement for any reason whatsoever.

Notice

12.7 Any notice required to be given by either party to the other shall be given in writing and delivered in person or by facsimile transmission to:

- a) **In the case of the Town to:**
Town of Amherst, Attention: CAO
PO Box 516
Amherst, Nova Scotia
B4H 4A1

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b) in the case of the Applicant to:

c) in the case of the Owner to:

Notice shall be deemed to have been received on the day of personal delivery or facsimile transmission if such a day is a business day and delivery is made prior to 4:00 p.m. and otherwise on the next business day. The parties agree to notify each other immediately, in writing, of any changes of address from those set out above.

Entire Agreement

12.8 This Agreement and the Schedules attached to it constitute the entire Agreement between the parties and there are no agreements collateral to it other than as referred to herein and no representations or warranties, express or implied, written or verbal, statutory or otherwise, other than as expressly set forth or referred to in this Agreement.

Municipal Government Act

12.9 Nothing in this Agreement limits or fetters the Town in exercising its statutory jurisdiction under the *Municipal Government Act*, or under any other legislative authority or Bylaw and in the event that the Town decides to grant or deny any request or oppose or appeal any decision made pursuant to any such legislation, such action by the Town is not in any manner affected or limited by reason of the Town entering into this Agreement.

Governing Law

12.10 This Agreement will be exclusively governed, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the Province of Nova Scotia and the Owner agrees to attorn to the jurisdiction of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Waiver and Consent

12.11 No consent or waiver, express or implied, by either party to or of any breach or Default by either party of any or all of its obligations under this Agreement or any amendment of this Agreement will:

a) be valid unless it is in writing and stated to be a consent or waiver pursuant to this Agreement;

b) be relied upon as a consent or waiver to or of any other breach or Default of the same or any other obligation;

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

- c) constitute a general waiver under this Agreement; or
- d) eliminate or modify the need for a specific consent or waiver pursuant to this section in any other instance.

Headings

12.12 The division of this Agreement into articles, sections, subsections and schedules and the insertion of headings are for convenience of reference only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of this Agreement. These articles, sections, subsections and schedule headings in this Agreement are not intended to be full or precise descriptions of the text to which they refer and should not be considered part of this Agreement.

Extended Meanings

12.13 Words expressed in the singular include the plural and vice-versa and words in one gender include all genders.

Severability

12.14 If any provision of this Agreement is invalid, illegal or unenforceable, it shall not affect the validity, legality or enforceability of any other provision of this Agreement.

Further Assurances

12.15 The parties agree that they shall each execute, deliver or cause to be made, done, executed and delivered all such further acts, deeds, assurances and things as may be required or as the other party may reasonably request in order to give full effect to this Agreement.

Force Majeure

12.16 If either party is prevented or delayed from performing any of the obligations on its part to be performed hereunder by reason of an Act of God, strike, labour dispute, lockout, threat of imminent strike, fire, flood, interruption or delay in transportation, war, acts of terrorism, insurrection or mob violence, requirement or regulation of government, or statute, unavoidable casualties, shortage of labour, equipment or material, plant breakdown or failure of operation, equipment or any disabling cause (other than lack of funds) without regard to the foregoing enumeration, beyond the control of the parties which cannot be overcome by the means normally employed in performance, then and in every such event, any such prevention or delay shall not be deemed a breach of this Agreement but performance of any of the said obligations or requirements shall be suspended during such period of disability and the period of all such delays resulting from any such causes shall be excluded in computing the time within which anything required or permitted by

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

either party to be done is to be done hereunder, it being understood and agreed that the time within which anything is done, or made pursuant thereto shall be extended by the total period of all such delays.

Successors and Assigns

12.17 The terms and provisions of this Agreement shall ensure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties and their respective successors and permitted assigns.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this Agreement by their duly authorized representatives effective this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

TOWN OF AMHERST

PROPERTY OWNER

Name and Title

Name

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE A
LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF OWNER'S LAND

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE B
EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT REBATE CALCULATION

A. Pre-Development Base Year Taxable Assessed Value:

(1)	
Base Year	Base Year Taxable Assessed Value
2007	\$150,000

B. Post-Development Actual Taxable Assessment Value:

Years	Rebate Year	(2)	(3)
		Actual Taxable Assessed Value	Current Commercial Municipal Tax
1	2008	\$350,000*	3.78
2	2009	350,000	3.98
3	2010	350,000	4.21
4	2011	350,000	4.52
5	2012	350,000	4.52
6	2013	350,000	4.52
7	2014	350,000	4.51
8	2015	350,000	4.45
9	2016	350,000	4.39
10	2017	350,000	4.31

*The PVSC assessment in the year following the completion of the development. This amount will NOT change for purposes of the rebate calculation.

C. Assessment Rebates:

Years	(4)	(5) = (2 - 1)	(6) = (5 x 3)	(7) = (6 x 4)	(8) = (7/6)
	Rebate %	Rebate Eligible Assessment	Rebate Eligible Taxes	Rebate Amount \$	Cumulative % Payable
1	90	\$200,000	\$7,560	\$6,804	90.0%
2	80	-200,000	7,960	6,368	84.9%
3	70	-200,000	8,420	5,894	79.6%
4	60	-200,000	9,040	5,424	74.3%
5	50	-200,000	9,040	4,520	69.0%
6	50	-200,000	9,040	4,520	65.7%
7	40	-200,000	9,020	3,608	61.8%
8	30	-200,000	8,900	2,670	57.7%
9	20	-200,000	8,780	1,756	53.5%
10	10	200,000	8,620	862	49.1%
Totals (9) & (10):			\$86,380	\$42,426	
Re-calculate:			50%		
Total Allowable Rebate:			\$43,190	\$42,426	

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

- ~~— If the program ends at any point before the cumulative payout falls below 50%, the rebate needs to be adjusted down accordingly.~~
- ~~— The cumulative payable must be below 50% by the end of the phase-in period.~~

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE C
CDS§ BYLAW – TOWN OF AMHERST

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE D
LIST OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS & DRAWINGS

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE E
ASSESSMENT REBATE CALCULATION

Address: _____ Property Identification No: _____

A. Pre-Development Base Year Taxable Assessed Value:
 _____ (1)

Base Year	Base Year Taxable Assessed Value
	\$

B. Post-Development Actual Taxable Assessment Value:

Years	Rebate Year	(2) Actual Taxable Assessed Value*	(3) Current Commercial Municipal General Tax Rate (excluding any area rates)
1		\$	
2		\$	
3		\$	
4		\$	
5		\$	
6		\$	
7		\$	
8		\$	
9		\$	
10		\$	

*The PVSC assessment in the year following the completion of the development. This amount will not change for purposes of the rebate calculation.

C. Assessment Rebates:

_____ (4) _____ (5) = (2-1) _____ (6) = (5 x 3) _____ (7) = (6 x 4) _____ (8)

Years	Rebate %	Rebate Eligible Assessment	Rebate Eligible Taxes	Rebate Amount \$	Cumulative % Payable
1	90	\$	\$	\$	
2	80	\$	\$	\$	
3	70	\$	\$	\$	
4	60	\$	\$	\$	
5	50	\$	\$	\$	
6	50	\$	\$	\$	
7	40	\$	\$	\$	
8	30	\$	\$	\$	
9	20	\$	\$	\$	
10	10	\$	\$	\$	
Totals (9) & (10):			\$	\$	
Re-calculate:			50%	\$	
Total Allowable Rebate:			\$	\$	

- If the program ends at any point before the cumulative payout falls below 50%, the rebate needs to be adjusted down accordingly.
- The cumulative payable must be below 50% by the end of the phase-in period.

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

SCHEDULE E

ASSESSMENT REBATE CALCULATION

Address:

Property Identification No:

A. Pre-Development Base Year Taxable Assessed Value:

(1)

Base Year	Base Year Taxable Assessed Value
	\$

B. Post-Development Actual Taxable Assessment Value:

Years	Rebate Year	(2) Actual Taxable Assessed Value*	(3) Current Commercial Municipal General Tax Rate (excluding any area rates)
1		\$	
2		\$	
3		\$	
4		\$	
5		\$	

*The PVSC assessment in the year following the completion of the development. This amount will not change for purposes of the rebate calculation.

C. Assessment Rebates:

Years	(4) Rebate %	(5)=(2-1) Rebate Eligible Assessment	(6) = (5 x 3) Rebate Eligible Taxes	(7) = (6 x 4) Rebate Amount \$	(8) Cumulative % Payable	Maximum Annual Rebate Amount \$100,000
1	90	\$	\$	\$		
2	70	\$	\$	\$		
3	50	\$	\$	\$		
4	20	\$	\$	\$		
5	10	\$	\$	\$		
Totals (9) & (10):			\$	\$		
Re-calculate:			50%	\$		
Total Allowable Rebate:			\$	\$		

- If the program ends at any point before the cumulative payout falls below 50%, the rebate needs to be adjusted down accordingly.
- The cumulative payable must be below 50% by the end of the phase-in period.
- The maximum annual rebate amount is \$100,000. Any assessment increase that calculates a rebate amount over \$100,000 will be capped at \$100,000 annually.

TITLE: COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM BY-LAW
SECTION: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
BYLAW NO: P-9

For Administrative Use Only:

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Commercial Development Support Program By-law P-9 Adoption	
First reading:	
Notice of Intent:	
Second Reading:	
Notice of Publication and Effective Date of Bylaw:	
Notice to Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations:	

VERSION LOG

Bylaw Owner	Amendment Description	Council Approval Date
Director of Planning & Economic Development / Director of Finance	Phase in the taxes for the new assessment over 5 years instead of 10(for agreements from May 1, 2026 forward), capping the rebate paid to a maximum of \$100,000 annually, updating the map in Schedule A – Land Use Zoning Map, and correct minor grammatical errors.	

Minutes reference date:



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2026013

Date: February 17, 2026

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Amherst Town Council
SUBMITTED BY: Sarah Wilson, Director of Finance
DATE: February 17, 2026
SUBJECT: Policy Review - Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy

ORIGIN: By-law and Policy Review.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: Town of Amherst Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy, # 03000-04.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council forward to the February 23, 2026, regular meeting, approval of the Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy as amended.

BACKGROUND: This policy was originally adopted in 2013 as the Royal Canadian Mint was no longer distributing pennies and they were gradually being removed from circulation.

DISCUSSION: As part of the policy review, this policy has been reviewed and a copy of the policy is attached. The only changes to the policy being recommended are to change some of the wording from current tense to past tense and to put this policy on the new policy template.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: All cash transactions of the Town of Amherst are rounded down to the nearest five cent increment. This applies to cash payments only. All other methods must pay the exact amount.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: No community engagement required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: No environmental implications.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: There are no social justice implications.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Do not accept the policy as is and recommend changes.

ATTACHMENTS: Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy, # 03000-04.



TITLE: ROUNDING OF CASH TRANSACTIONS POLICY
SECTION: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
POLICY NO: 03000-04

APPROVAL DATE: _____

CAO Signature: _____

PURPOSE

As of February 4, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mint ~~is~~ no longer ~~distributing~~ distributes pennies ~~and as they are gradually being were~~ removed from circulation.

POLICY STATEMENT

All cash transactions of the Town of Amherst will be rounded down to the nearest five cent increment.

This applies to cash payments only. All other payment methods must pay the exact amount.

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Finance	Ensure Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy is followed.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Policy created	Director of Finance	Council	May 27, 2013
Policy review – update wording from current tense to past tense.	Director of Finance	Council	

Minutes reference date: May 27, 2013

DEPARTMENT: CORPORATE SERVICES

TITLE: **Rounding of Cash Transactions Policy**

Minutes reference date: 27 May 2013

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

As of February 4, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mint is no longer distributing pennies and they are gradually being removed from circulation.

POLICY STATEMENT:

All cash transactions of the Town of Amherst will be rounded down to the nearest five cent increment.

This applies to cash payments only. All other payment methods must pay the exact amount.

MEMO

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Andrew Fisher, Director of Planning & Economic Development

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: **Strategic Priority “Points to Capture” – Rewarding Development**

As part of the 2025 Strategic Priorities process, the Points to Capture included a, “Reward for Development (ex. Tax Phase-in Program)”. Staff are unclear of Council’s intention with this item and are seeking further direction.

For context, the Town of Amherst currently offers a Commercial Development Support (aka. Tax Phase-in Program) that rebates up to 50% of an increase in assessment over 10 years as a result of an investment. This program is currently under review. For residential development the Town currently subsidizes new street infrastructure by finishing new streets with topcoat asphalt and curb. The Town also has a Housing Infrastructure Investment Policy that provides financing options to developers of new street subdivisions.

Nova Scotia municipalities are bound by the powers provided under the Municipal Government Act, that restricts municipalities from providing direct financial assistance or benefits (such as grants, tax breaks, direct subsidies, etc.) to private businesses or industries, except in limited circumstances. The Act also includes exceptions allowing direct financial assistance for specific purposes like grants to non-profit organizations, improving accessibility for people with disabilities or increasing the availability of affordable housing.

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

SUBMITTED BY: Andrew Fisher, Director of Planning & Economic Development

DATE: February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: Bike Lockers

ORIGIN: A request from a resident that the town consider installing bike lockers in strategic locations throughout town as a pilot project.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY: *MGA section 56 (1) A municipality may: (d) establish or maintain parking facilities.*

RECOMMENDATION: That Council not proceed with a bike locker pilot project at this time.

BACKGROUND: The attached email from Nancy Pryce requests that the Town undertake a bike locker pilot project, with lockers placed in strategic locations throughout the community. Suggested locations include the YMCA and major grocery stores in the South Albion Street area.

Bike lockers provide greater security and weather protection than standard bike racks. Typically constructed of metal or composite materials, lockers are enclosed units that are rented or otherwise made available for a fee (generally in the range of \$10 per month). They are most commonly found in larger urban centres, particularly near transit hubs, university campuses, and other high-traffic destinations.



Costs vary depending on the size and type of locker. A preliminary review of Canadian suppliers indicates a purchase price of approximately \$1,000–\$4,000 per unit, plus tax, shipping, and installation. Ongoing administrative costs would include fee collection, oversight, and maintenance. Initial capital costs could potentially be offset through grant funding, modest rental revenue, and limited advertising opportunities.

DISCUSSION:

Bike lockers are generally installed in high-traffic areas where secure, longer-term bicycle parking is required. Many larger Canadian municipalities have implemented lockers as part of broader, multi-modal transportation systems that integrate active transportation and public transit infrastructure. Lockers provide enhanced security and protection from weather, which may encourage cycling among users who require secure storage during the day.

While staff acknowledge the benefits of secure bicycle storage, bike lockers could be considered a more advanced component within the active transportation infrastructure continuum. Communities often prioritize foundational investments—such as connected and protected cycling routes, improved signage, traffic calming measures, and visible, short-term bike rack parking—before implementing specialized storage solutions.

Given current budget constraints and competing infrastructure priorities, staff recommend focusing available resources on strengthening the Town’s core active transportation network. As cycling infrastructure expands and ridership grows, Council may wish to revisit secure bike storage options, including lockers, as a potential future enhancement.

CAO Note: Most of the locations suggested by the individual are on private property (grocery stores for example) and the Town would not pay for / manage this infrastructure on private property. This business can decide if this is a service they want to provide their customers / employees.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: \$1,000-\$4,000 per parking pod, plus tax, shipping and installation.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS: Bike lockers can support active transportation systems, which promote social justice.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS: Active transportation systems provide an alternative personal vehicle use.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: None specific to this issue.





COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CDR# 2026018

Date: February 17, 2026

ALTERNATIVES: Direct staff to further investigate bike lockers as a pilot project and incorporate cost estimates into the upcoming budget process.

ATTACHMENTS: Nancy Pryce correspondence.



Sarah Wilson

From: Jason MacDonald
Sent: August 12, 2025 10:35 AM
To: Directors
Subject: FW: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Jason MacDonald, MCIP, LPP (he/him)

Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Amherst
Cell: 902-664-8367
Email: jmacdonald@amherst.ca
www.amherst.ca | #seewhyweloveit

“We acknowledge that we are in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq People. We celebrate 400+ years of African Nova Scotian descent. We strive to foster a diverse community that values everything that makes us unique including our visible differences, such as race or gender expression, as well as our non-visible differences, such as gender identity and diversity of thought. We are committed to equity, fairness and dignity for all.”



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From: Jason MacDonald <JMacDonald@amherst.ca>
Sent: August 11, 2025 5:00 PM
To: Jason MacDonald <JMacDonald@amherst.ca>
Subject: FW: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Jason MacDonald, MCIP, LPP (he/him)

Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Amherst
Cell: 902-664-8367
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From: Jason MacDonald
Sent: August 11, 2025 5:00 PM
To: nancy pryce <nepryce@outlook.com>; Robert Small <rsmall@amherst.ca>
Subject: RE: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Hi Nancy

Thanks for checking back. I have asked staff to do some research into this, and bring a recommendation to me when staff have our budget meetings. This takes place just prior to Christmas. In the new year staff will present a budget to Council for deliberation with a goal of approval sometime around March / April.

Jason MacDonald, MCIP, LPP (he/him)

Chief Administrative Officer

Town of Amherst

Cell: 902-664-8367

Email: jmacdonald@amherst.ca

www.amherst.ca | #seewhyweloveit

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From: nancy pryce <nepryce@outlook.com>
Sent: August 11, 2025 4:27 PM
To: Robert Small <rsmall@amherst.ca>
Cc: Jason MacDonald <JMacDonald@amherst.ca>
Subject: Re: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Good afternoon.

I am following up on Jason's update to me that this would be looked into for 2026. I realize that this is the time of year that budgets start getting set, so I was wondering if there has been any further research and discussion on the town providing proper bicycle lockers strategically placed around town, prompting participation and safety for people's property in Amherst.

Thank you.
Nancy Pryce

Sent from my Bell Samsung device over Canada's largest network.

From: Robert Small <rsmall@amherst.ca>
Sent: Friday, May 9, 2025 9:08:22 AM
To: nancy pryce <nepryce@outlook.com>
Cc: Jason MacDonald <JMacDonald@amherst.ca>
Subject: Re: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Good Morning

Thank you for the follow up on your request for bike lockers to be purchased and installed at the YMCA, Superstore and Sobeys.
I have forwarded your request to staff to investigate this, to determine if we can do this.

Again thanks,

Rob Small
Mayor

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: nancy pryce <nepryce@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, May 9, 2025 7:46:26 AM

To: Robert Small <rsmall@amherst.ca>

Subject: Fw: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

Good Morning Mayor Small. I thought I would follow up on the below email. I look forward to receiving a response from you.

Thank you.

Nan Pryce

From: nancy pryce

Sent: May 5, 2025 6:57 PM

To: rsmall@amherst.ca <rsmall@amherst.ca>

Subject: Installation of bicycle lockers within the Town of Amherst

To Mayor Small.

I am writing to request you and the Town of Amherst, to request consideration for the installation of bike lockers in our locality, strategically placed in the Town of Amherst suggested locations as a pilot project are Town parking lot beside the YMCA, Superstore and Sobeys. The availability of secure and convenient bike parking is crucial for promoting sustainable transportation and encouraging more residents to use bicycles.

As a concerned citizen that rather ride my bike to work or to do errands, I believe that the installation of bike racks will contribute to a greener and healthier community, as well as the feeling of security for our bicycles. Therefore, I kindly request the Town of Amherst to initiate the installation of bike lockers, making it easier for residents to park their bicycles safely, as the theft of bicycles in Amherst is so prevalent.

For your reference I have attached links to articles on how Bicycle Lockers have helped communities. These articles also include ways to rent these lockers, whether it be for a day, a week, a month or a season (I know I would rent one for a season, close to work.). I have also included the link to a Canadian company who makes and sells the bicycle lockers

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in promoting eco-friendly transportation options within our community.

<https://www.fredericton.ca/en/resident-services/parking/bike-lockers>

<https://london.ca/living-london/roads-sidewalks-transportation/cycling-active-green-transportation/cycling/bike>

<https://www.baywardbulletin.ca/secure-bike-parking-lockers-are-now-available/>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/ottawa-bike-lockers>

[Cycle Sitter - 1 Door Access | Greenspoke](#)

Sincerely

Nancy Pryce

4 Ralston Pl. Amherst, NS

902-614-5057

MEMO

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Jason MacDonald, CAO

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: Invitation To Mayor Mitchell

I spoke to the CAO of Bridgewater and explained why we were inviting Mayor Mitchell to speak to us regarding municipal social media usage. The CAO spoke to Mayor Mitchell who was to contact me regarding this invitation. As of yet, I have not heard from him.

Staff are seeking direction if Council wants to continue to pursue this opportunity. If so, it may be best for Mayor Small to contact him directly.

MEMO

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Jason MacDonald, CAO

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: Pain Clinic

The attached letter regarding the Pain Clinic is self explanatory, as are the letter from Mayor Small to Minister Thompspon and Minister Thompson's response. Further action has been requested by Ms. Hunter.

As you know the provision of health care is a provincial responsibility and staff do not have any expertise to provide a credible recommendation on this matter, other than to say that in general providing official written correspondence on complex issues (provision of health care) that we know little about may not be the best course of action.

From: Nancy Hunter <nancyejhunter79@gmail.com>

Sent: February 6, 2026 4:28 PM

To: Charlie Chambers <cchambers@amherst.ca>; Dwayne Ripley <dripley@amherst.ca>; Hal Davidson <HDavidson@amherst.ca>; Jason MacDonald <JMacDonald@amherst.ca>; Kathy Wells <kwells@amherst.ca>; Nic Furlong <nfurlong@amherst.ca>; Robert Small <rsmall@amherst.ca>; Terry McManaman <tmcmanaman@amherst.ca>

Subject: Call to Action re: Amherst Pain Clinic

Hello Amherst Town Council,

I am writing as a citizen of Amherst, and a patient of the recently closed local Pain Clinic in Cumberland. I wish to make a formal request for a call to action from the Town Council to communicate their concern with the current status of this service in Cumberland to the Health Minister, Premier, and/or any other relevant individuals and venues that may be appropriate to encourage public awareness, support, and/or action. My hope is to gain a larger presence and voice to influence resolution of this issue. I am hoping our council will join us with official support and advocacy.

The impact of this closure on myself, and many other citizens, has been severe and distressing. The consequences for clients/patients in similar situations to mine may include loss of medications and services that were extending both our life expectations as well as the quality of life we're able to access. This service allows some to return to or continue working, others to independently meet their ADLs (activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, eating, etc.) and/or IADLs (instrumental activities of daily living such as shopping, meal prep, managing finances, etc.), and yet others to simply find occasional moments of joy while coping with extreme health problems.

We have two highly skilled doctors in this community who wish to provide this service safely for a population that is often overlooked. It is not optional, but essential healthcare; something I have always thought of as a basic right for all Canadians. It appears that creating a unified group and finding persons willing to assist with their time to address this issue is needed. Although not a formal request, if there are members who have time, advice, or information that could help with this, it would be most appreciated.

I have enclosed (below) the link to a video interview I participated in and was posted by Elizabeth McCrossin yesterday. Additionally, I have enclosed a letter I have written about my personal experience to provide just one example of how detrimental this service is for the many patients affected by this situation. I ask that you watch the video and read the letter, then if inclined, please share them freely to assist with meeting this request for a call to action and/or promoting additional support for this cause. Please feel free to reach out to me if there are questions, advice, or other relevant information.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Nancy Hunter

To view video interview with Elizabeth McCrossin see her Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1H7K3pyPYV/>

I am a former patient of Dr. Dan Stojanovic of the Northern Zone Pain Clinic. The recent closure of our pain clinic in Amherst, Nova Scotia has caused me (and many others) unreasonable and severe distress! I (we) have been left without access to critical and essential healthcare services.

This is my story:

My name is Nancy Hunter. I am (or was) a highly educated, motivated, and valuable person in this community. All my life, I have always worked hard to be a contributing member of our society. I was raised with many "old school" values, including the importance of hardwork. Before I got sick I was a parent, wife, friend, volunteer, advocate for children, and a professional. I was busy. I had purpose. I possessed a humble pride in my work as I continued to learn, develop new skills, and grow to be the best I could for the clients I worked with. I worked full-time in our system, Nova Scotia Health (Mental Health & Addictions, Child & Adolescent team), for over 16 years. I worked with passion, commitment, and dedication. I put 150% into my work and took pride in my roles as an Autism Support Worker, and later, as a Clinical Child Therapist (RCT-C). I have passion for these areas and looked forward to practicing and improving my skills in that setting. I was literally only a few short supervision hours away from the long journey to completing the requirements for my candidacy and acquiring my full license as a registered clinician. I never wanted to, nor imagined, I would leave my career so young. I never imagined after all the hard work, I would fall just short of becoming an "official" therapist. With so much left, both to learn and to give to others, I was happy. I looked forward with warmth, excitement and feeling like I was a useful human. Certainly not perfect, but definitely useful and generally good.

In 2016 I was put off work for the first time. Other health issues were brewing, but primarily, the orthopedic surgeon dictated my short-term future, telling me I had no choice. I needed a new job. He couldn't do anything for me yet. I was too young to consider knee replacements as a viable option - yet that was the only hope for any meaningful improvement. I wasn't capable of continuing my beloved work with young children who had autism. I could no longer sit in little chairs, chase children around outside, travel, carry bags of toys, and get down on the floor. It physically hurt me to simply get down on their level to communicate. I probably could've stayed off work, on long term disability, for a long time at that point. Honestly, my income isn't significantly affected by that option. We're exceptionally lucky. We have a great health plan. I could've taken a long luxurious break... if I'd wanted to. Many people around me were very quick to suggest it. Instead, I immediately enrolled into a Masters program and worked tirelessly to forge a new path for myself. I was only off work for around six months or so that first time. I completed an

intensive physiotherapy program, worked with my wonderful family doctor and other professionals to address additional health concerns, went to a psychologist, started my masters, and negotiated a plan to return to work on a part-time basis, working cautiously back up to full-time. We implemented accommodations for me to work as best I could as I eventually transferred into my new career path. I finished my coursework 2.5 years later, and at the end of 2019 I was able to transfer to a new job as a Clinical Therapist. I was a candidate, requiring what felt like an enormous number of client hours and supervision from a licensed therapist, but I'd made it.

Once again, I was a fully functioning member of society. I had to slow down. I had stopped my volunteer work for the most part. I had to start saying "no" when requests for my time or energy came. I had to accept I couldn't function at 150%. I had to let that go. So, I became a parent who watched sports from the sidelines instead of assisting my special needs child and/or coaches (I admit, there was a beauty in that too), I learned to take care of myself and had no choice but to rest my body and choose carefully how I used my energy. I gave my job what I could during the hours I was paid for. I stopped working "for free;" staying late regularly to keep up and go the extra mile was a thing of the past. If I wanted my life I had to be very mindful of realistic expectations and self-care. I was happy and fulfilled again, at least for an incredibly "too quick minute" it seems.

Much to my dismay, no matter how hard I worked, no matter my motivation, nor my engrained worth ethic, my health continued to decline. No one seemed to be able to figure out what was going on in my body, causing problem after problem, symptom after symptom interfering with my ability to live a normal life. I held on, using every sick hour and vacation hour I could, taking several brief times off trying to heal and stay working, and eventually reluctantly reducing hours (and my income) trying to hold on to life as I knew it. I saw doctor after doctor, tried working with a variety of practitioners, and went through assessment after assessment to no avail. Not for one second though did I consider the real and obvious implications of what was happening.

I lost the battle about five years ago. In the spring of 2021, I was forced to leave work due to my health conditions. I continued to work until the last possible moment. I literally had no choice when I walked (more like hobbled) out those doors and away from my life. I did everything I possibly could to stay in my career; I loved it. Even as I was leaving, suffering and unable to function, I had resolved that I was going to be back in six months. I felt deflated, but not defeated. Little did I know.

I haven't really been back since. I was in complete denial. When the PATH worker expressed to me that he felt fairly certain (something he reported he wasn't allowed to promise, nor ever before tempted to tell clients) that I would have no trouble being

approved for Long Term Disability. It was the first time a professional really sat and went through all my medical history with me. It was the first time I heard my health referred to as "complicated." I didn't take time to understand his comments. I was just relieved that maybe I wasn't going to fight for benefits. I'd been warned by so many that it was going to be a very challenging process. It wasn't. I was approved immediately. No fuss, no mess. I didn't want to see what this all meant. I didn't ask. I just moved on.

The first month or two being off I quite literally just slept. My body so exhausted from my attempts to hold on. Then I got to work planning how I was going to get back. Nothing was going to stop me. I was going to get better. Eventually (I believe in the fall of 2021?) after seeing multiple specialists, numerous med trials, years of wait lists, a host of challenges trying to get through our healthcare system (a whole other very sad and scary story), extreme frustration, and so many tears, I walked into Dr. Dan Stojanovic's office in the Amherst hospital. That doctor, and that pain clinic were going to change my life. I knew it that very first day.

I was not in a good state of mind. I was disappointed, terrified, angry, felt our healthcare system was failing me, and so profoundly sick. My husband had left when my health hit rock bottom. I vaguely remember him yelling at me because he was doing "90%" at a time when I was sleeping almost 100% of the time. I couldn't feed myself, or stay awake to even eat a whole meal, and he was annoyed that I wasn't doing my share. Me, the one who took care of our home and child almost completely on my own for years, wasn't doing my share. Me, the one who had worked tirelessly all my life to have the life we had, wasn't doing my share. Wow. How my life had fallen apart. I couldn't take care of myself. I couldn't take care of my son. It quite literally seemed like I was slowly dying. My mother, a retired nurse, stood at the end of my bed shaking one day, at a loss, tearful because she was so devastated watching me wither away while no one seemed to be able or willing to help. My son, in junior high, looking at me with evident pity and so much fear. There was nothing left I could do. Every door had been either the wrong door or shut in my face. The medical community as a whole was awful. They were closed minded, uncaring, and inflexible. There were occasional kind professionals, but as a whole they beat me down at every turn and showed little to no concern or compassion for my situation. It was as if they decided before I walked in the room that I didn't belong there and they wanted to simply get rid of me as quickly as possible. The reports were even more devastating. Dismissive or sometimes containing completely inaccurate details about even my basic factual information, obvious that most had never even read my files, there was most often not one single helpful medical test offered to even rule things out, nor any theories or suggestions for where to look next. Some accurately, others not so much, but most lacking any kindness, useful feedback, or hope. It was truly and deeply devastating.

So... I walked into his office that day ready to take every morsel of frustration and anger out on that poor doctor. I was ready to blow, and God help him, he was going to take the brunt of everything I had held onto for years, bubbling up to the surface ready to explode. I can laugh about it now, but that moment was my breaking point. When I looked at Dr. Dan for the very first time I was immediately disappointed. He looked so young, so innocent, and so very kind. He had a beautiful genuine smile and a warmth that filled the room. I felt my resolve falter slightly, wondering how I was going to explode at this poor doctor. I shook it off and sat stone faced in the chair across from him. Too bad. I didn't care. I wasn't going to let this baby faced child take one more thing away from me. He was going to be just like all the others anyway.

Except he wasn't. He introduced himself and started telling me about my "complicated" (there it was again) medical history. He'd not only read my file, but he'd studied it. He knew it inside and out. He'd taken notes and had questions. He wanted to clarify things he didn't know the answers to. And you know what!? Incredulously, intentionally, and genuinely... he believed me. We sat in that office talking. He listened. He really listened. He asked questions and looked at me thoughtfully. As all my anger and frustration melted away, replaced by relief and just the tiniest spark of hope, this innocent child turned into a brilliant man, and this truly amazing human, this doctor, sat there and changed my life. He didn't have any answers that day. He didn't fix anything or provide any treatment. He actually admitted that he really didn't know what was happening to me. He made no promises and expressed remorse that he couldn't fix my problems or even help relieve any symptoms that day.

You know what he did do... He heard me. He respected me. He treated me with humanity. He formed the beginnings of a plan with me. He promised me nothing concrete, but simply that he would do everything he possibly could to attempt to figure this out. No promises of anything but his time and genuine effort. It took us months to make real progress, and that never bothered me for a moment. Not once did he treat me like I was lying or imagining my problems. Not once did he treat me like I knew nothing nor did he ever make me feel like I didn't belong there, or was some kind of burden. We researched, did test after test, ruled things out, formed and reformed theories, took data, did blind trials and compared my reporting to the results (it was always 100% verified by those results by the way), and slowly got closer to finding answers. He was open to my questions and theories. He told me respectfully when he thought I was headed in the wrong direction and he jumped aboard when he thought I might be on to something. It was true collaboration between doctor and patient. It was the gold standard of patient care in my opinion. Always professional, always goal oriented, and just personal enough to provide truly compassionate and respectful care.

We never did find all the answers to my condition, but we made real progress. All our work led to several treatments, but most importantly, he prescribed methotrexate. For the first time in years, the trajectory swung in a different direction. I was slowly getting better. There were real life changes in my functioning that gave me back some quality of life. I even made several attempts to return to work in those early days. Although no one was asking me to, I would've done anything to have my "normal" life back. I still hadn't allowed myself to examine that one very meaningful word "complicated," that seemed to randomly pop up regularly these days. I struggled with my failure to successfully return to work, but I was experiencing joy again. I could manage things around my home a bit better, I could enjoy time with other people, I could relax and feel relief at times. I could enjoy the beach, my favourite place on earth again. I was so grateful.

Fast forward to a year ago, when the medication was obviously beginning to lose its effectiveness (as expected), Dr. Dan and I were still trying to adjust things. It was getting harder. He'd put countless hours into trying to treat my conditions. We both had. We have much more information, but still have unanswered questions and continue to wait for other specialists to weigh in. Here we were though, still working, still trying. He'd fulfilled his promise and more. He hasn't given up. He does everything he can to help. He educates me, challenges me, treats what he can, and remains ever steady in his exceptional patient care.

In August 2025 I walked into his office, a well formed habit by now, for the last time. We discussed the closure, he gave me my last prescription, stuck some needles in my knees and back, and told me about the most recent discussion he'd had with colleagues about my "complicated " health. We laughed about how I could confuse a whole room full of even the brightest doctors. I've finally accepted the truth about that word everyone else seems to have known for years. "Complicated" means I'm not going to find a cure. I'm not ever going back to work. I'll never live the life I expected. I can't work myself out of it. I can't motivate it or pray it away. This is my life. The best I can hope for is good treatment of symptoms for as long as possible and gold standard patient care. I left that day, in significant pain, but feeling light and happy. I told Dr. Dan goodbye and laughed, saying "see you soon!" I never imagined this closure would actually take place. I was certain it was politics of some kind. No one was ever going to really follow through with this threat. It was crazy. We live in Canada. Taking essential healthcare from thousands of chronically ill patients was absurd. It simply wasn't possible... was it!?

Several months later I'm at home, unable to function in even basic daily life. My meds are slowly losing effectiveness. I've had to begin homecare services. I'm in the process of getting a walker and other medical equipment to help me even manage within my own

house. My ability to even get outside has been greatly reduced. I can't drive most of the time or even go to church. Soon (April) my restricted medication will run out and I have no one to prescribe more, let alone try anything new. After that I will be almost completely bedridden, unable to hold my own silverware. I won't be able to hold a glass of water without spilling it. I will be barely conscious, my immune system in a constant state of war, attacking my organs. My body will need every bit of energy I have just to keep fighting a losing battle. Over many years my organs will begin to shut down one by one causing irreversible damage and I can do nothing but wait and suffer through it.

This isn't possible right!? When I tell my story people can't believe it. Our essential healthcare is a right we all have... isn't it? I wouldn't believe it either, except this is my current situation.

My family doctor has made referrals to both the Halifax pain clinic and to Truro for specialist assessments with doctors who may or may not listen, who may or may not feel I belong in their office, who may or may not have the client care, time, or ability to do what's needed to figure out how to treat my "complicated" situation. Oh! And let's not forget... they both had long waiting lists before the 3000+ patients lost access to our pain clinic. I wonder how many years long they are now? Just how long will I wait to meet the next person, who in my experience is most likely going to turn me away without so much as even reading my file? How long before I find one who can and will provide real help?

So, my only option right now is to sit at home and suffer while I continue to decline. It's unimaginable that exploring MAID (medical assistance in dying) is the rational thing for me to be thinking about right now. Not because it's unavoidable. Not because there's no doctor to treat me. But because someone decided they needed the space our pain clinic was using. Really!? This is the reason? I have lost essential medical care over someone's desire to have our space? This doesn't make sense. It's unethical. Is this even legal? Something my family may wish to pursue while I fade away to nothing in my bed at home this coming spring. I certainly won't be in any shape to advocate for myself without the services I had in our pain clinic.

I don't know the true reason for the decision to close the pain clinic or the refusal to compromise, but I do feel relatively certain it has absolutely nothing to do with client/patient care. This is our lifeline! Without this clinic we're going to experience true suffering. The kind of suffering few people could ever truly even imagine. The kind of suffering we wouldn't allow our dogs to live through. It's our healthcare for crying out loud!

I have a friend with stage four cancer, living on borrowed time, who feels bad for me because of the pain and suffering she sees me deal with... even with the best care we had.

Neither of us see me as the lucky one because I get to "live" longer. If she gets this bad, she's already applied, and been approved, for MAID (medical assistance in dying) should she decide to use it. Yet not one single person would ever dream of taking cancer treatment or services from cancer patients. No one would want to. It wouldn't be considered a viable option. The uproar would be incredible.

So, I ask you this...

How can you possibly justify this decision? What makes some of the most chronically ill patients dispensable? What are you going to do when my mother, a nurse who dedicated her life working in your hospital, shows up on your doorstep asking you why it's a rational discussion to explore MAID services with her 46 year old child (who also spent her life dedicated to working in your system)? A discussion that is a direct result of your decision. Where are the ethical decision making tools you used to follow through with this insanity? What kind of power do you hold that you can close a service that is not only essential and an ethical impossibility, but is going to stress our broken healthcare system even more? How can you possibly believe there's anything right about your decision?

My advice to you...

Fix it. Fix it now. Admit you were wrong. Move whoever you need to move and get that clinic up and running again. Give them what they need to provide gold standard care. Change your budget. Alter your plans. Swallow it and move on. There's nothing that can ever justify what you've done. Do it today... before other areas start screaming because we're knocking on their doors and filling up their spaces. Before someone dies or engages in MAID because you gave them no other logical or rational choice. Before people start exploding and spraying their rage all over your office. Do it now before we start seeking legal solutions and more money to care for our needs. Do it right now, before your pretty new ER space is full from our complex cases filling up space and taking all those new beds for extended periods of time because you took our lifeline!



October 16, 2025

The Honourable Michelle Thompson
Minister of Health and Wellness
Province of Nova Scotia
PO Box 488
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8

E-mail: michellethompsonmla@gmail.com

Subject: Request for Clarification – Status of the Pain Clinic at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre

Dear Minister Thompson,

On behalf of Amherst Town Council, I am writing to request clarification regarding the current status and future plans for the Pain Clinic at the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre.

Council has received inquiries from residents who have expressed concern and uncertainty surrounding the availability of chronic pain management services in our region. As you know, the Pain Clinic has been an essential resource for many individuals in Cumberland County and surrounding areas, providing specialized care that significantly improves quality of life.

Given the importance of this service to our community, we respectfully request an update on the clinic's current operations, staffing, and future direction. Specifically, we are seeking confirmation on whether the clinic will continue to provide pain management services locally, and if there are any anticipated changes or plans for relocation or restructuring.

We would appreciate any information you can provide to help Council communicate accurate details to our residents and to ensure continued access to this much-needed service.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to healthcare access in rural Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Small".

Mayor Rob Small
Town of Amherst

Cc: Hon. Tory Rushton





**Health and Wellness
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 488, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2R8 • Telephone 902-424-5818 Fax 902-424-0559 • Health.Minister@novascotia.ca

November 6, 2025

Mayor Rob Small
Town of Amherst

Care of: Kim Jones, Deputy CAO, Town of Amherst | KJones@amherst.ca

Dear Mayor Small:

Re: Request for Clarification – Status of the Pain Clinic at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre

Thank you for your letter, dated October 16, 2025, sharing the concerns of your colleagues and residents regarding the future of the Chronic Pain Clinic at Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre. I appreciate your advocacy and the collaborative spirit with which you approach these important community health issues.

I want to clearly state that we are committed to maintaining chronic pain services at the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre, and I know the Nova Scotia Health Authority is working closely with the physicians to find a solution that works for patients. While bookings are currently not being accepted, I am confident that all involved will be able to come to a collective understanding and agreement on the best locations to deliver the variety of services offered by the clinic.

As this situation has unfolded, both MLA Rushton and I have been in contact with the Nova Scotia Health Leadership team to communicate the real hardship this disruption in service is causing patients and families who rely on the clinic's specialized care. The clinic's role in supporting those living with chronic pain is well recognized, and we share your commitment to ensuring continued access to these vital services.

I understand how important it is for Council to communicate accurate and timely information to residents. Please be assured that my office will be monitoring this situation closely in the weeks ahead. Thank you again for reaching out and for your ongoing commitment to the people of Amherst and Cumberland County.

Sincerely,

Michelle Thompson
Minister of Health and Wellness

Cc: Tory Rushton, toryrushtonmla@bellaliant.com

MEMO

To: Mayor Small and Members of Council

From: Aaron Bourgeois, Director of Operations

Date: February 17, 2026

Re: Snow and Ice Management Policy Review

At the January Committee of the Whole meeting, the following motion was passed:

That staff be directed to undertake a comprehensive review of the Snow and Ice Management Policy and report back to Council no later than the March Committee of the Whole meeting.

Staff are working through the review of the policy and are seeking Council direction regarding the desired service level for road salting.

Current Policy Standards

Under the existing policy, road salting level of service is:

- The priority salt route (arterial / collector streets and steep hills) is closely monitored during the winter and this route that consists of approximately 48% of our streets is salted when conditions warrant every time the salt truck is dispatched.
- Lower traffic volume local streets are not routinely salted at the same level. These streets are typically managed through plowing first, with salt only being applied later and as needed when intersections become slippery, or refreezing creates hazardous conditions. Snowpack is an acceptable level of service on these streets.

This intent of this approach is to balance public safety, responsible use of road salt, and operational capacity.

Salting All Streets

Salting all streets represents a significant change in service level and operational practice.

- Salt Costs: Would require 35-40% more road salt at an increased cost of approximately \$60,000. (Actual salt costs for 2024/25 were \$163,687)
- Labour and Overtime: Increased afterhours callouts. Typically, there are about 225-250 overtime hours for salt truck callouts at a cost of approximately \$11,000, this would double to \$22,000.
- Equipment Requirements: Our small salt truck unit is not adequate; it would require 2 passes on every street and has only 1/3 of the capacity of our large salt truck. A new salt body could be purchased and mounted on one of our existing dump trucks, the one-time capital cost would be about \$125,000, plus recurring maintenance and fuel costs of approximately \$4,000 annually. This equipment typically needs to be replaced every 12-15 years.

In summary, there would be an additional annual operating cost of approximately \$75,000, plus a one-time capital cost of \$125,000.

Options

1. Maintain the Status Quo – Priority route salted first; residential streets salted only on an as-needed basis

Pros

- Lowest financial impact – No significant increase in salt, fuel, labour, or equipment costs
- Environmentally responsible – Minimizes salt use
- Operationally manageable – Aligns with existing staffing, equipment, and response times
- Efficient use of resources – Focuses effort where traffic volumes and risk are highest

Cons

- Perceived inequity – Residents on side streets may feel service levels are lower
- Inconsistent surface conditions – Some residential streets may remain snow-packed or icy longer
- Public expectation gap – Residents assume all streets are treated equally

2. Expanded Salting After Priority Route – Priority route salted first; salt all residential streets after all other snow and ice operations are complete.

Pros

- Improved consistency – More uniform road conditions across the municipality
- Reduced ice buildup – Less ice and snowpack hardening on residential streets
- Improved public perception – Residents see visible service on all streets
- Moderate safety improvement – Reduces slippery conditions in neighbourhoods

Cons

- Operational cost increase – More salt, fuel, and operator overtime time required
- Increased environmental impact – More salt being used
- Operational strain – Higher demand on equipment and staff during extended events

3. Full Street Network Salting – Treat all streets with the same service level as the current priority salt route.

Pros

- Highest level of consistency – Road conditions more uniform
- Maximum reduction in icy conditions – Little snowpack and ice accumulation on residential streets
- Strong public perception of service – Clear, visible response in all areas
- Lower risk of localized slippery spots – minimizes slippery conditions in neighbourhoods

Cons

- Highest financial impact
 - 35-40% increase in salt usage
 - Significant increase in fuel and maintenance costs
 - Overtime costs likely to double for after-hours callouts
- Capital cost requirement – Additional salt body required, current smaller unit inadequate
- Increased environmental impact – More salt being used

Should Council wish to move toward salting all municipal streets staff would recommend **Option-2.**

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Council
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police
Date: February 17, 2026
Subject: Graffiti and Graffiti Bylaws

Graffiti has always posed a challenge to property owners and municipalities. While graffiti is primarily considered a 'property crime', its impact can pose a significant threat to community safety, well-being and inclusivity if it is offensive, racist, hate-based imagery or terms. To mitigate such negative impacts on communities, bylaws are often developed to provide guidance and protocols when dealing with complaints of graffiti on public or private property.

Challenges

There are several challenges associated to graffiti. These include:

- The victimization of property owners – Property owners find themselves not only victims of the property damage but are also responsible for the costs associated to removing graffiti, increasing the feeling of being a 'victim'.
- Safety hazards relating to placement of graffiti and removal efforts - Graffiti is often placed in hard-to-reach, but highly visible areas, purposely to interfere with removal efforts. Graffiti vandals often place their 'pieces' and 'tags' where they can be easily seen by more people and will be there longer as a result of the 'hard to get at' location. We often see graffiti on overpasses, signs and areas that are very risky to reach.
- Hate Speech and Racist imagery or themes - Statistically, police reported hate-crimes have doubled in Canada between 2018 and 2025. These types of crimes have a staggering and significant impact on our community, jeopardizing inclusivity, pride and our sense of community safety. When visible, such graffiti has a very negative impact.
- The 'Broken Window' Effect - When discussing property damage, including graffiti, the 'broken window effect' often comes into play if actions are not taken to immediately remedy the problem. The broken window theory is often used to explain the decay of neighbourhoods, and that visible signs of 'disorder' such as property damage, graffiti and other crimes has a tendency to encourage further crimes, causing communities to further deteriorate and can lead to much more serious crime and disorder as well as decreased property values. This theory supports the idea that fixing smaller problems immediately can often immediately stop and reverse such decline. As a result, graffiti by-laws often include sections that deal with the *immediate* removal of graffiti.

Graffiti By-Laws

In 2007, Halifax proposed a Graffiti Bylaw, but it was never passed, and instead, regulations regarding graffiti are addressed under 'Dangerous or Unsightly Premises' of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter. Responses to graffiti are also covered under a "Graffiti Management Plan". It appears that Halifax may have approached it this way to avoid the creation of new complex definitions that may be challenged in court and chose to rely on 'unsightly' or 'offensive' qualifying wording. The Halifax approach also appears to lack the desired timelines for taking action in regards to graffiti removal, often resulting in long delays instead of immediate action.

A jurisdictional scan in the Atlantic Provinces indicates that bylaws respecting graffiti are not common. In some cases, issues relating to defacing property, unsightly premises or similar problems are partially captured by other bylaws or policies. Often, when dealing with the offender, the Criminal Code (Section 430 – Mischief/Damage to Property) is utilized, but municipal bylaws and policies provide a means for ensuring that such material is removed.

Outside of the Atlantic Provinces, the most robust of Graffiti Bylaws is likely that found in Toronto Ontario. Under Municipal Code Chapter 485 this 'bylaw', standard states graffiti must be removed from private property within 72 hours. Hate-based or gang-related graffiti must be removed in 24 hours. If the property owner fails to take action, then the city can do it and add the cost to the property owners' tax bill.

In Vancouver British Columbia, Bylaw N. 7343 focuses on 'unsightliness' and occupiers of premises are responsible to remove 'unsightly accumulations' of graffiti within 10 days of receiving a notice.

In Calgary Alberta, incidents of graffiti are covered under the 'Community Standards Bylaw' in which property owners are responsible to ensure that graffiti is permanently blocked from public view. Property owners also have the option of joining the "Private Graffiti Abatement Program" and small businesses can benefit from free graffiti removal services provided by the city as long as they sign a waiver.

Council may have an interest in having staff prepare a more in-depth analysis of a means to deal with graffiti, especially when it is racist or contains hate-based or offensive imagery, symbolism or terminology. Such a policy, bylaw or procedure would be over and above any criminal investigation or actions taken by the police and would focus on a prohibition of graffiti on private and public property as well as a protocol to ensure that it was removed immediately. The immediate removal of graffiti, especially when it is racist, hate-based or offensive is paramount as such actions have been proven to be effective against recidivism.

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Small and Council
From: Dwayne Pike, Chief of Police
Date: February 17, 2026
Subject: Citizens on Patrol

As you are aware, the 5-year Amherst Police Department Strategic Plan runs from 2025 to 2030 and utilized community and partner input to design our approach to community safety. Our strategic goals are focused on 4 areas: 1) Recruitment and Retention, 2) Training, 3) Community Partnerships and 4) Communication.

One area that we have seen an expression of interest is having our community take an active role in public safety initiatives that are aimed at promoting neighborhood safety and community well-being. We have launched an Auxiliary Policing Program that has established a link between the police department and our community by developing Auxiliary Policing positions as authorized by the Nova Scotia Police Act and the Police Act Regulations. Our next focus is on another level of public safety by introducing a community program that is community led but acts as “eyes and ears” for police agencies, utilizing community members to reduce crime by adding a community presence that assists with gathering information that can be relayed to the Police.

Citizens on Patrol (COP): On January 15, 2026, Inspector Tom Wood and our Civilian Crime Prevention Coordinator met with Loring Day of the COP program. Citizens on Patrol utilizes members of the public to strengthen our response and awareness of public safety issues. This organization is working with police agencies to recruit local people who have an interest in taking an active role in community safety, focusing on building strong partnerships between community stakeholders and crime prevention. The NSCOPA (Nova Scotia Citizens on Patrol Association) provides training and support for volunteers and have 5 goals relating to community Safety and Engagement:

- 1) Deterrence – to observe, document and report suspicious activity while helping to deter crime through visibility;
- 2) Education – aimed at empowering their volunteers to be informed and effective in their roles;
- 3) Awareness – increasing situational awareness and proactive reporting;
- 4) Safety – protecting volunteers and the community during patrols;
- 5) Have Fun – Building camaraderie and make volunteering rewarding;

Citizens on Patrol also have a ‘Code of Conduct’ and rules for professional conduct.

Volunteers patrol and report any concerning issues to police via a Mobile Application that has already been approved by the Nova Scotia RCMP. The “ACOPA Patrol App’ is available free of charge and is utilized to notify local police of any observed issues or concerns. Training and instruction are provided to those selected as volunteers.

Both the Halifax Regional Police and the Nova Scotia RCMP are actively involved in recruiting volunteers for this program with several other municipal agencies in discussions. APD’s role would be to assist with the recruitment and selection members of the public who may be interested, including input into volunteer selection. This also extends to input concerning a volunteer’s continued association with Citizens on Patrol. We do not direct their activities, but local COP groups have their own guidelines on what kind of activities they will be involved in. APD would also provide input into these guidelines. The role of the volunteers is to observe and report, not to intervene in any way. They are provided with a COP ID card/tag that identifies them as a volunteer.

Volunteers from COP may also be recruited to assist with community events to support security and safety initiatives.

There is no cost to us aside from providing the Criminal Record Checks. Their website can be found at <https://www.nscopa.ca/>

We are reviewing the information that has been provided to us and are considering assisting with this initiative.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Small and Amherst Town Council
FROM: Sharon Bristol, Director, Community Living
DATE: February 17, 2026
SUBJECT: World's Largest Photo Op

Staff have recently begun discussions with a local manufacturer on working together to create a potential "worlds largest photo" opportunity. These are very preliminary ideas at this point. An update will be provided at either April or May COW.

MEMO

TO: Mayor Small and Members of Council

FROM: Andrew Fisher, Director of Planning & Economic Development

DATE: February 17, 2026

RE: **Tourism Strategy Update**

The 2025 Strategic Priorities “Points to Capture” document includes an update on the current plan for tourism. Although not comprehensive of everything, the following provides a summary of the activities staff are undertaking and planning for the coming year.

Renewed MOU - High-level discussions have started between Town and County staff about how and what the two municipal units will work together on for regional tourism. Through these discussions, a Terms of Reference is being developed to outline the work agreement. It is anticipated that the details of these discussions will be shaped into an MOU for Council approval.

Tourism Sector Strategic Plan for Nova Scotia - Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) has released a 5-Year Tourism Sector Strategic Plan. The plan is to guide community, industry, and government actions to support sustainable tourism growth throughout the Province. Town and County staff have attended multiple engagement sessions with TNS to inform the plan with pathways that will benefit the Cumberland Region.

Bannikin Report – this 2024 report analyzed the Cumberland Region’s tourism landscape and marketing efforts, engaged diverse stakeholders for input, and evaluated the considerations involved in implementing a marketing levy. The study found that the region is not ready for a levy, but provided an extensive list of recommendations to develop the regional tourism sector. County and town staff are planning to implement several high-impact recommendations.

Cumberland Region Tourism Strategic Plan - A work plan is being developed to create a new Joint Municipal Tourism Strategy for the Cumberland Region. Built on the last strategies' foundational work, a merger of key takeaways and goals from the NS Tourism Sector Strategic Plan and Bannikin Report mentioned above, will provide a modern tourism strategy for our region and alignment of the Town and County’s shared responsibilities.

ExploreCumberland Brand and Explorecumberland.ca - Created around 2021 through a partnership with the County, the brand and website highlight the region's tourism offerings and are linked to the Tourism Nova Scotia website, novascotia.com. In addition to receiving ongoing updates, a section specific to Amherst has been added, which will allow town-specific content to be added to the site. The ExploreCumberland Brand will be an important component in the Cumberland Region Tourism Strategic Plan.

Novascotia.com – Over 9 million potential visitors view the Provincial website annually. The Town of Amherst has its own landing page on the site that showcases local businesses and attractions. In order for an attraction to be included on the page, the organization must be approved and registered with TNS. The increase in local businesses found on novascotia.com not only benefits the business but also builds the list of available attractions in Amherst. An effort to explain the benefit for local tourism operators to register and offer assistance to register is being developed. It's important to note that any content added to novascotia.com, related to our region, is also sent to and populated on the Explorecumberland.ca website, building the relevance of the platform.

Tourism Student – In 2025, a summer student was hired as a tourism ambassador, with a focus on community engagement, visitor services, and promotional projects to showcase Amherst as a welcoming destination. Duties included video and blog creation as well as visitor engagement. In 2026, this position will continue with added duties to support local tourism operators with registering on Novascotia.com and building their online presence, as mentioned above.

Industry Training – In partnership with Tourism NS and the Mind Your Business Workshop Committee, Town and County staff host Tourism training opportunities for tourism operators. Experiential Tourism, Website and Online training, and Industry collaboration sessions offer operators chances to learn how to build and grow their business, and also introduce them to organizations that can support their business.

Tourism NS's Digital Content Marketing Program (DCMP) - The Town has participated in two DCMP's and has applied again for this year. The program is comprised of two parts: 1) one creates professional videos and images for use in marketing and tourism products, and 2) the other is a social media and digital marketing campaign focused on reaching visitors in specific markets. This year's DCMP will be designed to showcase our area during the Spring and Winter seasons.

Marketing/Branding Integration – With the recent approval of the Communications, Marketing, and Branding Strategies, those standards and practices will be integrated into all new content development going forward.



**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	
	03450-03	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				
	B 02-1	DEED TRANSFER TAX BYLAW	FINANCE	
	66000-05	HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT POLICY	PLANNING	
	66580-01	NEW SUBDIVISION STREETS - FINAL SUBDIVISION APPROVAL PRIOR TO STREET PAVING	PLANNING	
	10350-14	REQUESTS FOR FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS (210-24)	CAO	amended January 2026
Feb-26				
		Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy	Exec	
	31600-02	Street Light Policy	Operations	
		Commercial Development Support Bylaw		
	03000-04	Rounding of Cash Transactions	Finance	
	10350-17	MEMBERSHIP ON NATIONAL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES (211-32)	CLERK	
	10350-18	MEMBERSHIP IN CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS (211-33)	CLERK	
Mar-26				
		Sale of Beer/Liquor - Robbs Park	Operations	
		Beer Garden Policy - Stadium	Operations	
	10350-05	INQUIRIES FROM COUNCIL (210-07)	CLERK / COMMUNICATIONS	
	04500-03	SCENT REDUCTION POLICY	HR	
	D 06	BUILDING BY LAW	PLANNING	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
	04000-08	ATTENDANCE ADMINISTRATION (211-24)	HR	
Apr-26	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	
		PACE BYLAW	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	
	04000-09	EMPLOYEE/FAMILY ASSISTANCE (211-30)	HR	
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	
	04000-04	INQUIRIES REGARDING EMPLOYEES (211-16)	HR	
Nov-26	04000-07	HIRING POLICY (211-23)	HR	



**TOWN OF AMHERST
BYLAW LISTING**

DEADLINE	BYLAW/POLICY NO.	BYLAW / POLICY	ASSIGNED TO	NOTES
		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	
	03000-05	AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE POLICY	FINANCE	
Jan-27				
		Catch Basins and Laterals	Operations	
	03000-10	Inventory of Non Capital Equipment Policy	Finance	
	31700-04	NORTH TYNDAL LAND ACQUISITION (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
	72000-01	RECOGNITION OF ATHLETIC ACHIEVERS (210-22)	COMMUNITY LIVING	
	10350-01	RECOGNITION OF SERVICE OF BOARDS (210-01)	CLERK	
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	
	P 07	SUBDIVISION BYLAW	PLANNING	
	P 03	CIVIC ADDRESS BY LAW	PLANNING	
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	
	04000-11	MATERNITY, PATERNAL AND ADOPTION LEAVE POLICY (20071126)	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				

CAO Task Report

February 2026

Task Updates:

Task: Municipal Boundary Change

Cumberland has sent their MPS amendments to the province for review. Province has 60 days. Our part is complete.

Status: In Progress

Task: Committee Review

Last item remaining was to repeal Joint Council Terms of Reference Policy completed at the last Council meeting.

Status: Complete

Task: Request to Present – Social Media and Communication

Memo included in February COW agenda.

Status: In Progress

Task: Visitor Information Centre

Mayor Small has been in contact with the MCC who has been speaking with the appropriate Minister. Minister in investigating and will circle back with MCC who will contact us.

Status: In Progress

Task: Community Centre and Council Remuneration

Tour and discussion held January 15th at the Amherst Stadium

Status: In Progress

Monthly Report

Community Living

February 2026

Over the months of January and February the Community Living Department has been working on the following things:

Events:

- Winter Carnival planning
- French Toast Festival planning
- Working with Canada Post on Ad campaign
- Development of ads for Marketing (Economic Development)

Community Well Being:

- African Heritage Month reception
- Developing volunteer screening and training procedure
- Grant writing for Accessible Playground
- Working with Amherst Youth Town Council, Anchor
- Indigenous celebrations planning

Community Health Navigator:

- Separate report attached

Active Living:

- Volunteer recruitment 55+ Committee
- Multisport start-up January-June
- Winter Carnival planning
- Grant writing/working with community groups

Marketing/Communication:

- Brand strategy, marketing plan, and communications plan follow up
- Radio station Mayoral address prep
- Website updates inc. public notices, street closures
- Tourism communications planning
- Proclamations for upcoming events

Task Updates:

Task: Accessible playground

Update: Design plans complete, grant submitted for NS, working on community and Federal grants

Status: In Progress

Task: "A" Special Day

Update: Working on concept of a multi-day music festival, applying for funding from NS government

Status: In Progress

Task: Green Space Veterans Park

Update: Meeting January 29th with Indigenous Elders and Indigenous affairs to discuss multiple initiatives including this.

Status: In Progress

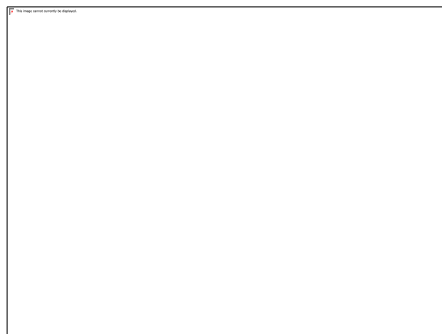
Community Navigator Cumberland County Council Report
January 2026

January was another busy month of meetings and organizing and implementing events.

Completed:

- Held a Healthcare night at the Amherst Stadium with staff from all five hospitals, Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (CRHCC) - Amherst, All Saints Springhill Hospital (ASSH) – Springhill, Bayview Memorial Health Centre (BMHC) – Advocate, North Cumberland Health Care Centre (NCHCC) – Pugwash and South Cumberland (SCCCC) Community Care Centre – Parrsboro. The weather did not cooperate, however we still had at least 42 in attendance out of the 100 that signed up. They enjoyed the Amherst Jr A Hockey game and had received a coupon for a small fries and drink from the canteen.
 - It was a great partnership between the Ramblers organization, Curly's canteen and the Community Navigator.
 - Ramblers event attendance:
 - Amherst – 13 of 33
 - Pugwash – 8 of 15
 - Springhill – 7 of 17
 - Parrsboro – 3 of 10
 - Advocate - 11 of 25
- Met with a colleague from Inverness Cape Breton to discuss what events and recognition he provides to his location.
 - Received lots of new ideas and information to implement in the coming months. Still in the opening planning stages.
- The monthly Navigators meeting was cancelled as many attendees had conflicting schedules during that time.
 - We still communicate via text group chat if anything arises.
- Renewed membership to the Canadian Society of Physician Recruitment (CaSPR)
 - Signed up for and attended a lunch and learn: More than just a job
 - Spoke about becoming an ambassador for rural areas and the importance of working in partnership with others to ensure candidates feel welcomed, supported and heard when coming to your local area.
 - Upcoming conference to be held in Charlottetown May 3-5, 2026.
- Sent emails to site leads for all hospitals to discuss upcoming recognition events for all staff

- Valentines event – where co-workers get to recognize each other with a small treat
- Movie night – date to be determined – held at the Amherst Theatre and open to all staff and their families.
 - This will be a joint event with all five hospitals
- With a suggestion from one of the nurse managers of Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (CRHCC), we will be implementing a self-care cart that provides resources and comfort items for staff that they can utilize in difficult situations. We sometimes forget that healthcare staff must go from helping family members say goodbye to loved ones straight to being cheerful and helpful to other patients. This cart will assist in being able to unwind, feel heard and appreciated. It will be called a “lavender cart” and will hold such things as, but not limited to:
 - Herbal teas
 - Fidget toys
 - Relaxation tools
 - Inspirational cards/notes that co-workers can give to one another
 - Pamphlets for counselling resources
- Received documentation to complete the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) project status check in reports
 - Finalizing budgets per line for up-to-date spending as well as forecasting spending to the end of the fiscal year, March 2026.
- Met with Mindy with NS Health to discuss any upcoming recruitment opportunities in our area. There are potentially a few positions opening within the next year due to retirements that we are actively looking for replacements. No site visits scheduled at this time.
- South Cumberland Community Care Centre held a paint night workshop with Alicia Kate Pottery in January where 13 staff members signed up and participated.



- Supported Special Olympics by purchasing the featured donuts from Tim Horton’s to supply to Bayview Memorial in Advocate as well as South Cumberland Community Care Centre in Parrsboro. These were delivered on Friday, January 30th, 2026.



Coming up:

- Monthly meeting with Nova Scotia navigators.
- Research and plan upcoming recruitment conferences.
- Plan recognition events for physicians and all staff.
 - Movie Night
 - Physicians' week
- 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

February 2026

IT Services:

Completed Server updates.

Completed the first part of the Firewall update at APD.

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

Continuing to work on reviewing the IT asset list

Cleaned up the server racks at APD. Installed a new UPS for the new Phone system.

Ordered an additional UPS for the Server Rack at APD and 2 more for the workstations in Dispatch so the computers will not turn off when the power goes off.

Procurement:

ID	Type	Project	Process Type	Budget Type	Released	Closed	App'd	App'd By
	RFP	Bedding plants	Regular	O			X	CAO
	RFP	Hanging flower baskets	Regular	O			X	CAO

Other:

E-11 Customer service

There were 151 cases opened in January

Top categories this month were: Icy Streets (78 cases), Solid Waste / Bin replacements or repairs (10 cases), Snow Clearing (9 cases), Potholes/Damaged asphalt (6 cases)

Task: Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy.

In Progress. I will bring this back to COW for Council's consideration in February.

Monthly Report

Cumberland Business Connector

February 2026

Priority: Support Businesses (primarily 0-50 employees)

Business Retention and Expansion visits are going well. Some highlights include:

- We have connected a business to Invest Nova Scotia who helped cover some exploratory travel costs to investigate new equipment to establish another manufacturing plant in this region. This research has increased the business' comfort level. They are planning on proceeding with the development of this second business in our region.
- Another local business that has grown significantly over the past year is struggling to balance their available labour force during a slower period of the year. We discussed ways to proactively manage the ebb and flow of work for next winter while keeping the workforce productive.
- We are working with a local business that lost their US market this past year. We sat down to discuss what their options are.
 - I have discussed this specific business' challenges with Nova Scotia Intergovernmental Affairs to see if there are ways to support the business
- A company that is rebuilding had questions around rebuilding and zoning. I have connected them to the relevant staff at the Municipality
- Forestry
 - We developed and submitted an application for a grant to Complete a BDO Zone rating for the Cumberland Region
 - We met with the Maritime Lumber Bureau to discuss the current state of the industry and potential opportunities that may be relevant to the Cumberland Region.
 - Attended Forest Nova Scotia's AGM
 - Attended the quarterly CFAC (Cumberland Forestry Advisory Committee) meeting. One action item that came out of this was writing a letter in support of expanding the Low Grade Forest Products Assistance Program.
- I followed up with the Atlantic Economic Council re: the Chignecto Isthmus Economic Impact to get additional information on specific industries that would benefit from a project like this.
- Other businesses have been helped who want to
 - Grow their sales outside if the Cumberland Region
 - Standardize and document HR practices
 - Strategic planning prior to selling a business
 - Strategic planning for creating a prototype for a new product
 - Strategic planning for market readiness of innovative products and services

New Businesses

- We continue to see people interested in entrepreneurship.
 - We are continuing to meet with an entrepreneur who has moved to the area and wants to start up a business in the service sector
 - We have met with a professional services company that is setting up an office in the region.

Workshops

In collaboration with our local economic development partners, workshops are taking place through the winter and spring of 2026.

- The Tax Filing for Small Businesses workshop in Pugwash was well attended with 15 people in attendance.
- The upcoming Tax Filing for Small Businesses workshop in Parrsboro has 19 people registered.
- The Experiential Tourism Workshop (led by Eileen Davage and Jeff Bacon) have 20 people registered

Social Media

- The Business Spotlight program continues to highlight small businesses on social media.
- We continue to share information that is relevant to the local business community from economic development partners and government departments.

Other Work

- The Atlantic Economic Council prepared an overview of the potential economic impact of the multi-year Isthmus of Chignecto Resiliency Project. We are reviewing this now in order to prepare our region to be able to maximize the impact of this project on our local economy.
- Our website has been updated and now has a dedicated page for local businesses and organizations to post local jobs. Additionally, the Business Directory is now searchable.

Monthly Report

Finance

February 2026

FINANCE

The third quarter financial review is complete, and the Third Quarter Financial Report will be presented to the Audit Committee on February 18th. The financial results continue to be favourable.

Staff are finalizing the 2026/27 operating and capital budgets. Both budgets will be presented to Council at the end of February.

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

TAX / ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE / COLLECTIONS

2025/26 60 Day Tax Sale Notice – There were five, 60-day tax sale notices posted on properties Tuesday, January 13, 2026. The tax sale is anticipated to be on March 26, 2026.

2025 Assessment Appeals – The 2025 assessment appeal inventory from PVSC has 79 accounts with appeals as of January 1, 2026.

	# of Accounts Appealing		Appeal Completed as of Feb 1/26	Pending as of Feb 1/26	Withdrawn as of Feb 1/26	Outstanding Appeals as of Feb 1/26	Appeals Successful as of Feb 1/26	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 6 residential and 1 commercial property sales in January as well as 15 tax certificate requests completed during the month of January.

WATER/SEWER

The 3rd quarter water/sewer bills were mailed out on January 30 as anticipated and are due on February 27. Service requests for residences requiring meter repair or replacement will be sent out through the month of February in an effort to have any meters needing maintenance completed.

TASK UPDATES

Task: By-Law to Amend the Deed Transfer Tax By-Law

Motion: That Council defer this item to be discussed during budget deliberations.

Update: This information will be included in the operating budget for further discussion.

Status: Ongoing.

Monthly Report

Fire Department

February 2026

RESPONSES (January)

	<u>Town of Amherst</u>	<u>District 2</u>
Flue fire	1	
Monitored alarm	12	1
Motor vehicle accidents	1	6
Mutual aid requests	3	
Open burn / Wildland fire / Mulch	1	
Smell of smoke / Air quality check	2	
Total events	20	7

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Weekly fire fighter training

During the month of January, the Fire Department focused its training efforts on pre-incident planning and mental health awareness. As part of this initiative, a representative from the Nova Scotia Fire Service Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team delivered a refresher session for our firefighters, auxiliary members, and junior firefighters. The NS CISM Team is part of the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia and is a volunteer-based group composed of trained firefighter peers and mental health professionals who provide crisis intervention support following traumatic incidents. The team operates under International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) standards and offers a range of services including pre-incident education, on scene support, defusings, formal debriefings, and ongoing follow-up, supporting several hundred fire and emergency personnel across the province each year. In addition, Dr. Luke Schneider, RPsych, provided an in-depth update on Public Safety Personnel Network (PSPNET), a free and confidential Internet-delivered Cognitive Behavioral Therapy program tailored specifically for public safety personnel, offering structured online courses, including the PSP Wellbeing and PSP PTSD programs which are supported by trained clinicians to assist members in managing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress injuries.

Recruit fire fighter training

The new recruit firefighters have begun the in person training program, marking the start of a comprehensive, multi-month development process. Throughout the coming months, recruits will receive instruction in a broad range of foundational firefighting skills and competencies. Their curriculum includes mental health and wellness awareness through the resilient minds program, firefighter safety practices, ground ladder deployment, radio and on-scene communication protocols, fire hose handling, hose operations and stream management, as well as core fire suppression techniques. This structured training following the essentials 8 International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) curriculum and ensures that each recruit gains the essential knowledge, practical skills, and situational readiness required to operate safely and effectively within the fire service.

Junior firefighter program

The Junior Firefighters Program continues to provide youth with a structured combination of theoretical instruction and hands-on training that introduces them to the core responsibilities of the fire service. Participants train weekly, supplemented by monthly weekend sessions designed to reinforce skill development and teamwork. Their learning pathway follows the Essentials 8 IFSTA curriculum, ensuring alignment with industry-recognized standards and exposing them to foundational knowledge in areas such as fire behavior, equipment familiarization, safety practices, and basic operational skills. This program not only builds practical competency but also fosters leadership, confidence, and a strong understanding of fire service values, preparing interested youth for future progression into the department.

RECRUITMENT

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

TASK UPDATES

Task: No open tasks at this time

Monthly Report

Human Resources

February 2026

Current Recruitment

Police Cadet Program: APD hosted an additional information session on January 21, 2026, for individuals who may be interested in applying to attend the Atlantic Police Academy for future Cadet sponsorship opportunities. The session was well attended, and potential candidates to progress through the program are currently be screened.

CUPE Lead Hand, Utilities and Operator (Internal): The internal competitions for both positions have been completed. Allen Martin was the successful candidate for the Lead Hand Utilities position and Jordan Brown was the successful candidate for the full-time Operator position. Congratulations to both Allen and Jordan!

Summer Students: HR staff are preparing to launch this year's recruitment campaign for summer students. Postings will be released in the coming weeks with selection to begin in late March.

Other HR News

Market Review

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

Wellness Committee

The Wellness Committee met on January 29 to plan for the next few months of employee wellness initiatives which include:

February 9: "Fur Real: Pizza & Valentine's Kisses". A pizza lunch with surprise kissing booth guests Rocky & Lola. A total of \$115 was raised for the LA Animal Shelter along with various cat/dog food and toys.

February 12: "Show the Love Campaign". An event to further staff recognition and appreciation efforts.

February 19: With the release of 2025 T4's, tax-season tips and resources will be shared with all staff to further support the financial literacy wellness pillar of our wellness plan.

HR staff are working to implement the action items from the People Strategy. Key initiatives in February include:

Goal #3: Employee Engagement & Retention

- Conduct annual employee engagement survey

Goal #4: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

- Update all job postings to remove biased language and highlight flexible work

Goal #7: Operational Excellence in HR Services

- Improve performance management processes with standardized criteria
- Research manager training sessions on how to provide effective performance feedback

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 finalized year-end payroll. T4 documents will be available February 20.

Monthly Report

Operations

February 2026

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

RECREATION & HORTICULTURE

- Dickey Park washroom is open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm.
- The walking track at the stadium is generally available for use daily from 7:00am to 9:00pm.
- The weather has been favorable for the outdoor rink and staff are removing snow and flooding the ice surface on a regular basis.
- Stadium Events in February include:
 - U9 Jamboree February 12- 15
 - Amherst Junior A Ramblers have 3 home games on February 7, 14, 21
 - NS Figure Skating Provincials February 27 to March 1
- Dickey Park is hosting the Coldest Night of the Year event on February 28.
- The RFPs for 2026 hanging baskets and bedding flowers were closed and are being evaluated by staff and staff are busy developing work plans for the Spring and Summer
- Staff approved the shop drawings for the replacement of the Robb Complex dugouts; work will be completed before the end of March.
- Staff will be assisting the Community Living team with Winter Carnival Events
- Staff have noticed increased usage of the walking track at Dickey Park this winter.

PUBLIC WORKS

- In the past month, the streets and sidewalks were plowed 7 times and snow was removed from the downtown core on 2 occasions.
- Sidewalk salting took place 12 times, and the salt truck was dispatched 18 times due to icy conditions.
- There were 5 broken water mains, and 2 water service leaks repaired in the past month.
- Staff have been patching potholes with recycled asphalt, 6 days were dedicated to patching in January.
- Quarterly meter reading was completed and staff investigated high and zero consumption meter reads.
- Staff placed 13 temporary traffic signposts during the month; the signs will be permanently repaired in the Spring.
- Staff are working on the annual reports for the wastewater treatment facility and the Amherst water utility
- Staff replaced a fire hydrant 157 East Victoria Street that was hit by a car.

SOLID WASTE

- The Solid Waste Hotline received 348 calls in January; these are collection inquires from residents across Cumberland County and Amherst.
- Staff have been sharing sorting information, collection updates, and safety reminders on the Cumberland Region Solid Waste Facebook page as well as continuing to post social media updates regarding the new recycling changes.
- An updated sorting guide has been included on the back of the water bills which were mailed out the end of January.
- On January 28, the Town received their first payment from Circular Materials for collection & education.
- Staff facilitated a half-day educational session with a group of nine students, focusing on solid waste management in Cumberland County. The participants were actively engaged in discussions, and each student was awarded a certificate at the end of the day. The session covered:
 - An overview of Cumberland County's waste management facilities
 - Proper waste sorting practices
 - Enforcement measures and local litter concerns
 - Provincial solid waste programs and initiatives
- There was a total of 268 curbside rejections in January for the Town:

Not Dual Stream	99
Late	19
Not accessible	86
Recycle contains garbage	41
Other	23

- Due to the large number of rejections for “Not Dual Stream” & “Not Accessible”, staff will be focusing our social media efforts on these topics.

UPCOMING

- Snow and de-icing operations of streets, sidewalks and VIA rail platform as needed.
- Patching of potholes with recycled asphalt is ongoing.
- Hosting Amherst Figure Skating Club Skatefest on March 4.
- Hosting the Bates / Merrill Friendship Hockey Tournament March 6, 7 and 8.
- Hosting U18A provincial playdowns March 13 – 15.
- Ramblers last Regular Season home game is on March 7 with playoffs starting following week.

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: In Progress

Task: Capital Budget Amendment West Victoria Street Engineering Design

Update: Capital Budget was amended, and the work is ongoing. Engineering design is at 60% complete.

Status: In Progress

Task: Banner Request

Update: Staff are actively working on the documents and will present the draft documents to Council at March COW.

Status: In Progress

Task: Street Light Policy

Update: Staff directed to make further amendments to the Street Light Policy and bring back to Council at the February Committee of the Whole meeting. Amended policy will be presented at February COW for approval.

Status: In Progress

Task: Request for Policy Review (Snow and Ice Management)

Update: Staff will be seeking additional feedback from Council at February COW and have the revised policy on the Agenda at March COW.

Status: In Progress

Task: Construction of New Residential Streets Policy

Update: Staff given direction to amend the existing policy. Draft policy should be ready for Council review at March COW.

Status: In Progress

Monthly Report

Planning & Economic Development

February 2026

Planning & Development

The attached report outlines permits issued in January and a 2025-26 year-over-year comparison. Of note is the \$8,000,000 - 20,000 sqft expansion at Gordon Food Services.

Following Council's approval of the new planning documents (MPS & LUB) in November, the provincial review that was anticipated to be complete by the end of January has been delayed. The Provincial review found that regulations around wind turbines are too restrictive in the planning documents. Town staff met with provincial staff last week to agree on amended wind turbine regulations that better align with provincial regulations. Approval of the documents with the amended changes will be forwarded to the Minister for approval in the coming weeks. With the Minister's approval, no further approvals will be required by the town and the documents will take effect. In the meantime, staff have been finalizing new guide materials and meeting with developers to ensure their projects are ready once the new documents are approved.

Transit Feasibility Study final report is complete and will be presented by the consultant. Decisions around transit will take place as part of the budget process at a later date.

New business recognition certificates were presented to Bonafide Dog Cuts, Condors Golf Lounge, Cross Roads at the Amherst Mall, and Rockin' Roan Tack and Apparel from members of Council, and their businesses were promoted on the Town's social media page.

Also, the new Amherst company, Raymex Lift, was featured on CBC television's Dragon's Den on January 29th, seeking investment in their business. The leaders at Raymex are excited to join the Amherst business community and have committed to invest in and support Amherst in any way they can.

Local companies continue to receive support through the Commercial Development Support Program, incentivizing their growth and supporting their business development. TN Trenholm Holdings Ltd. and 2017 Holdings Ltd. are recent program participants.

Staff have submitted an application for the 2026/2027 Digital Content Marketing Campaign Program with Tourism NS. The application will invest in the development of professional content for use on future marketing initiatives. The Town has participated in the digital campaign in the last two years and has seen a significant increase in reach and connectivity with potential visitors, validating the investment. This year's campaign will drive traffic to the new Town of Amherst landing page on the ExploreCumberland.ca website. In partnership with the Municipality of Cumberland, any new content and marketing material developed by the Town can be uploaded to the site, building its value to visitors.

Staff from the Town and Municipality attended a regional tourism workshop in Truro. Tourism stakeholders joined the conversation on how to drive sustainable year-round tourism growth in the region, in line with the Nova Scotia Tourism Sector Strategic Plan.

Mind Your Business Workshops are underway with two sessions of Tax Filing and Bookkeeping for Small Business held on January 21st and February 11th, and the upcoming Experiential Tourism Education Workshop on February 26th. The Economic Development Officers from Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland, along with TourismNS staff, will be sharing ideas and opportunities that tourism operators can include in their offer to visitors that will expand their experience and have a lasting impact. The 2026 Youth Entrepreneur Challenge has been announced, and participant registration closes in March. Last year's challenge had over 40 young participants, and this year's numbers are trending to exceed that amount.

The trade for JD Irving land is still in progress and awaiting final approval from the Federal Government. The Town has entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Delco Forestry Ltd. for their property located directly in the North Tyndal Wellfield drawdown zone. Both opportunities are scheduled to close before the end of March to meet the NS Nature Agreement funding closure on March 31st.

The purchase of the six properties in the future business park expansion area is complete, and the Town now has ownership of the entire area. The site development study is underway to design potential road and infrastructure requirements. A forestry professional has been engaged to conduct a timber assessment that will identify harvestable areas, clearing estimates and cost estimates. This information will inform the land clearing and development costs going forward. Development of marketing materials to promote this new park is underway.

Organization of the Town of Amherst Business Engagement Forum in April has begun with the reengagement of a facilitator. Continuing the work from the preliminary plan, questions and discussion topics will be tailored to align with the findings and recommendations of the Dalhousie University Community engagement report released in December 2025.

A new group called The Maritime Market is holding a Saturday market at the Lions Club Den on March 7th. Organizers plan to gauge attendance and public reception of this new market once a month until June to decide if this will be an ongoing event, and the possibility of growing it into a permanent market.

Staff from the Town, Municipality, and Cumberland Business Connector are working on updating the Joint Community Economic Development Strategy for the Cumberland Region. All three organizations will develop strategic objectives and goals that will require a collective effort to benefit the region.

Task Updates

<p>Task: Nature Challenge Fund Land Acquisition Survey and legal work to complete. Federal approval of the land trade with JDI is ongoing. An agreement of purchase and sale has been signed to acquire 120 acres from Delco. The Nature Challenge Fund program will end March 31st and is not expected to be extended. Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: MPS & LUB Provincial staff have drafted changes to how wind turbines are regulated in the planning documents to better align with provincial regulations. The planning documents with the proposed changes are being forwarded to the Minister for approval. Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: ATV Access Council directed staff to further investigate a western route through the sod farm and industrial park. Staff have begun this work. Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: Industrial Park Land Purchase – Cumberland Ridge Inc. Property Transaction is complete – now under town ownership. Status: Complete</p>
<p>Task: Industrial Park Land Purchase – Roop property Transaction is complete – now under town ownership. Status: Complete</p>
<p>Task: Industrial Park Land Purchase – Pederson property Transaction is complete – now under town ownership. Status: Complete</p>
<p>Task: Economic Forum Plans for a forum in April 2026 have started. Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Task: Transit Feasibility Study Final report has been provided to Council. The Consultant will present their findings at February COW. Status: Complete</p>

Permits Issued: January 2025

PERMIT APPLICATIONS								For the Month of January
Number	PID	Civc Address	New Units	Work Type	Bldg Type	Proposed Use	Permit Fee	Value
B2026-001	25391509	12 Lawrence St	0	Renovate	Single Detached Dwelling	Roof	80.00	12,000.00
C2025-128	25519810	35 Marshview Dr	1	Construction	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	302.00	375,000.00
D2026-002	25009689	37 Albion St	0	Construction	Commercial	Com - Permanent Sign	50.00	6,064.00
D2026-003	25371287	26 Industrial Park Dr	0	Construction	Commercial	Com - Permanent Sign	50.00	6,064.00
B2026-004	25008483	68 Academy St	0	Repair	Single Detached Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	820.00	308,000.00
C2025-107	25010562	38 Industrial Park Dr	0	Addition	Commercial	Warehousing	3,618.00	8,000,000.00
Total	6		1				4,920.00	8,707,128.00

2025 – 2026 Comparison

ACTIVITY REPORT							For Month of January 2026-01-31
Type	Jan 2025			Jan 2026			
	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	Permits	Units	Value of Construction	
Single Family	10	9	1,861,000	3	1	695,000	
Duplex/Semi	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Apartments	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other Residential	1	0	25,000	0	0	0	
Commercial	1	0	5,000	3	0	8,012,128	
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	12	9	1,891,000	6	1	8,707,128	
Year To Date	12	9	1,891,000	6	1	8,707,128	

Monthly Report

Police Services

February 2026

TRAINING:

Collision Reporting and Occurrence Management System (CROMS) Training: All members and staff attended a short training session on CROMS in the month of January. CROMS is an online reporting tool for accident reporting, that also incorporates tow truck callouts and tracking. This system will facilitate the completion and submission of accident reports as well as keep additional statistical information on accidents and collisions.

Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) Maintenance: Shannon King, (Dispatch/Bylaw) completed the weeklong CPIC Maintenance Course from January 19th-23rd. CPIC maintenance courses are required to add, remove, edit and audit orders that our department adds to the national system CPIC.

PERSONNEL:

APA Cadet – Cadet Cameron MacLeod, who is being sponsored by the Amherst Police Department and is attending the Atlantic Police Academy, started his On-the-Job training on January 9th, 2026. Cadet MacLeod will be working with D Platoon with Cst Greg Pavlovic as his immediate field trainer. Cadet MacLeod will be returning to the APA in late March and graduation is scheduled for April 2nd, 2026. On January 21st, 2026, APD held an information session in the Francis Smith Community Room for applicants interested in a sponsorship to the Atlantic Police Academy for the next APA class. We currently have 2 other cadets we've sponsored who are attending the Academy and who will be here for their OJT during the summer of 2026.



OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS:

Fraud Exceeding \$5,000: Two (2) adult men are facing multiple charges that include fraud over \$5,000 and possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000 x2 regarding a complaint from a local financial institution. The alleged fraud is in excess of \$290,000. Both were arrested on January 20th and were held in custody. Since that time both have been released on conditions and are scheduled to appear in court at a later date. The matter is being investigated by the APD Major Crime Unit.

Impaired Driving: A 57-year-old New Brunswick man is facing impaired driving charges following an incident on January 16th, 2026. An APD patrol observed a van travelling across the Amherst Centre Mall parking lot and watched as the male driver stopped the van, got out and urinated in the parking lot. The member checked the driver who showed signs of intoxication, subsequently failed a sobriety test and was returned to the Police Station for a breathalyzer test. He is scheduled to appear in court on March 18th, 2026, to answer to the charges.

Fleeing Police: A 39-year-old male is facing charges that include fleeing police following an incident on January 6th, 2026. An off-duty APD member observed the driver, who was wanted by Police on other matters and has a revoked license, driving on South Albion Street. Patrols located the vehicle and activated the emergency equipment and the vehicle fled, refusing to stop for Police. The pursuit was terminated as Police were able to identify the driver. A few days later, on January 14th, 2026, the same driver was spotted by Police and fled when there was an attempt to pull him over. As a result, additional charges including fleeing police, dangerous driver and MVA charges are pending.

Fraud Exceeding \$5,000: A 42-year-old New Brunswick female has been arrested and is facing several charges in relation to uttering a forged document and fraud over \$5,000 in relation to an attempt to commit a fraud at a local business on January 6th, 2026. The accused allegedly provided false documentation when attempting to make a large purchase. APD was contacted and the female was arrested and is scheduled to appear in court on April 1st, 2026 in relation to the charges.

Forcible Confinement/Assault: A 33-year-old Amherst man is facing charges that include forcible confinement and assault following an incident on January 3rd, 2026. The accused was arrested on these charges as well as outstanding warrants and was held for court. He is scheduled to appear again for plea on February 23rd, 2026

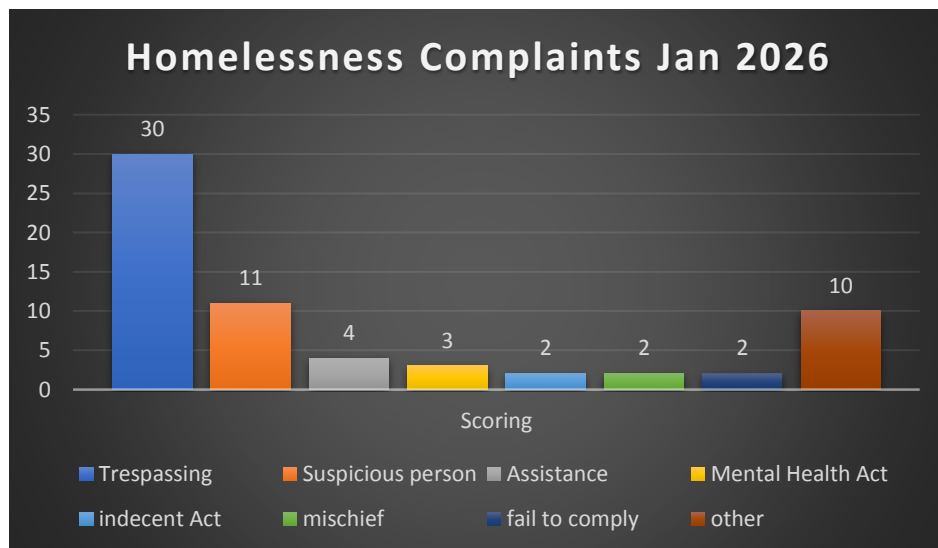
GENERAL OPERATIONAL UPDATES:

Police Pursuits/Failing to Stop: Police dealt with 2 instances in which drivers fled from Police in January, and in both cases, it was the same driver who is facing associated charges. In December police recorded 2 incidents in which motorists failed to stop for Police. This compares to 2 incidents in November and 9 incidents in October. In total for 2025, police logged 47 incidents where vehicles fled from Police. This is an increase from 33 in 2024.

Shoplifting/Theft Complaints: There were 7 complaints of shoplifting received in January. This is an increase from the sharp decline we saw in December with only one occurrence logged. This compares to 17 in November, 14 in October and 19 complaints in September.

Trespassing: For the month of January, APD logged 49 complaints of ‘trespassing’. Of these, 30 were related to homelessness issues, with 15 complaints concerning banks and 15 complaints coming from other businesses. This compares to 34 complaints from December and 25 complaints in November. As with most homelessness complaints, the majority of the 30 complaints in January are surrounding 2-3 individuals.

Homelessness Files: We observed a slight drop in the number of files associated to homelessness in January, logging 64 complaints in contrast to 79 in December 2025. There were 29 such complaints in November and 43 in October. The vast majority of these complaints were relating to trespassing issues as noted above. Along with the 30 files scored as trespassing there were 11 files scored as ‘suspicious person’. Most occurrences are cleared as non-criminal incidents. 43 of the 64 complaints were concerning 3 individuals, with one person logging 17 complaints, another logging 14 and the third logging 12 complaints, the majority of which are related to trespassing.



OPERATIONAL STATS – January 2026

Occurrences:	394	Criminal Code Charges:	42
Impaired by Alcohol:	1	CDSA:	0
Impaired by Drug:	0	CBCA:	0
Traffic Tickets:	34	Traffic Written Warnings:	14
Vehicle Checks:	118	LCA:	5
Foot Patrol Hours:	29hrs, 51 min	PPA:	3
Parking Tickets(police):	6 (members)	Parking Tickets(bylaw):	1
Parking Warnings:	12 (members)	Parking Warnings (bylaw)	2

TASK REPORT

Currently no outstanding tasks.