

Town of Amherst

Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Version: December 10, 2025

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Situational Analysis	3
2.1 Town Overview	3
2.2 Mission, Vision	3
2.3 Core Values, Guiding Principles	3
2.4 Market Research & Insights	4
2.5 PESTLE Analysis	4
2.6 SWOT Analysis	6
Internal Analysis	6
External Analysis	6
2.7 Competitive Analysis	7
1. Truro, NS	7
2. Bridgewater, NS	8
3. Sackville, NB	8
2.8 What This Means for Amherst	9
3. Audiences	9
3.1 Target Markets	10
3.2 Target Audiences	10
Secondary Audiences	11
Emerging & Underserved Audiences	11
3.3 Audience Personas	12
Persona 1: Carla	12
Persona 2: Jake	13
Persona 3: Emily	14
4. Brand Strategy	15
4.1 Positioning Statement	15
4.2 Brand Promise	15
4.3 Brand Strategy Goal	15
4.4 Brand Strategy Objectives	15

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

4.5 Brand Pyramid	16
4.6 Messaging Themes.....	17
4.7 Next Steps	19
5.0 Strategic Marketing Pillars	20
Internal Departments & Staff Roles	20
6.0 Communications Plan	26
7.0 Marketing Channels & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).....	29
1. Website (amherst.ca)	29
2. Social Media – Facebook (Town + Community Living & Recreation)	29
3. Social Media – Instagram	29
4. Social Media – TikTok	29
5. Email Newsletter	30
6. Print Communications	30
7. Voyent Alert!	30
8. Radio	30
9. Community Engagement Activities	30
7.0 Appendices	31

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

1. Executive Summary

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

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

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

2. Situational Analysis

2.1 Town Overview

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

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

2.2 Mission, Vision

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

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

2.3 Core Values, Guiding Principles

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

2.4 Market Research & Insights

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

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

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

2.5 PESTLE Analysis

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

Political factors:

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Economic factors:

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

Social factors:

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

Technological factors:

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

Legal factors:

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

Environmental factors:

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

- Environmental sustainability expectations are growing among residents and visitors

2.6 SWOT Analysis

Internal Analysis

Strengths:

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

Weaknesses:

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

External Analysis

Opportunities:

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Threats:

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

2.7 Competitive Analysis

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

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

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

1. Truro, NS

“Make the Connection”

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

What Truro Does Well:

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

Key Lessons for Amherst:

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

2. Bridgewater, NS

“Main Street of Nova Scotia’s South Shore”

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

What Bridgewater Does Well

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

Key Lessons for Amherst

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

3. Sackville, NB

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

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

What Sackville Does Well

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

Key Lessons for Amherst

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

2.8 What This Means for Amherst

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

3. Audiences

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

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

3.1 Target Markets

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

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

3.2 Target Audiences

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

The detailed findings are included in the Research Report.

Primary Audiences

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

Adults (35–64)

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

Seniors 65+

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

Families and caregivers

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

Secondary Audiences

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

Local Businesses & Organizations

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

Visitors (including tourists and day-trippers)

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

Former residents

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

Commuters

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

Emerging & Underserved Audiences

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Youth (13-17)

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

Young adults (18–34)

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

Newcomers & ESL households

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

Hard-to-Reach Residents

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

3.3 Audience Personas

Persona 1: Carla

The Established Amherst Resident (Primary Audience)

Age: 50

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

Owns a home, raising teens and caring for aging parents

Works in town, involved in community events and recreation

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

What Carla Cares About

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

Where Carla Gets Information

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

Persona 2: Jake

Youth & Young Adult (18–34):

Age: 23

Location: Lives in Amherst, recently moved back after school

Household: Renting with partner

Employment: Works locally; budget-conscious

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

What Jake Cares About

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

Where Jake Gets Information

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

Persona 3: Emily

Visitor (Daytrip)

Age: 34

Location: Lives in Pugwash

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

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

What Emily Cares About:

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

Where Emily Gets Information

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

4. Brand Strategy

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

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

4.1 Positioning Statement

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

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

4.2 Brand Promise

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

4.3 Brand Strategy Goal

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

4.4 Brand Strategy Objectives

Residents – Strengthening Community Belonging

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

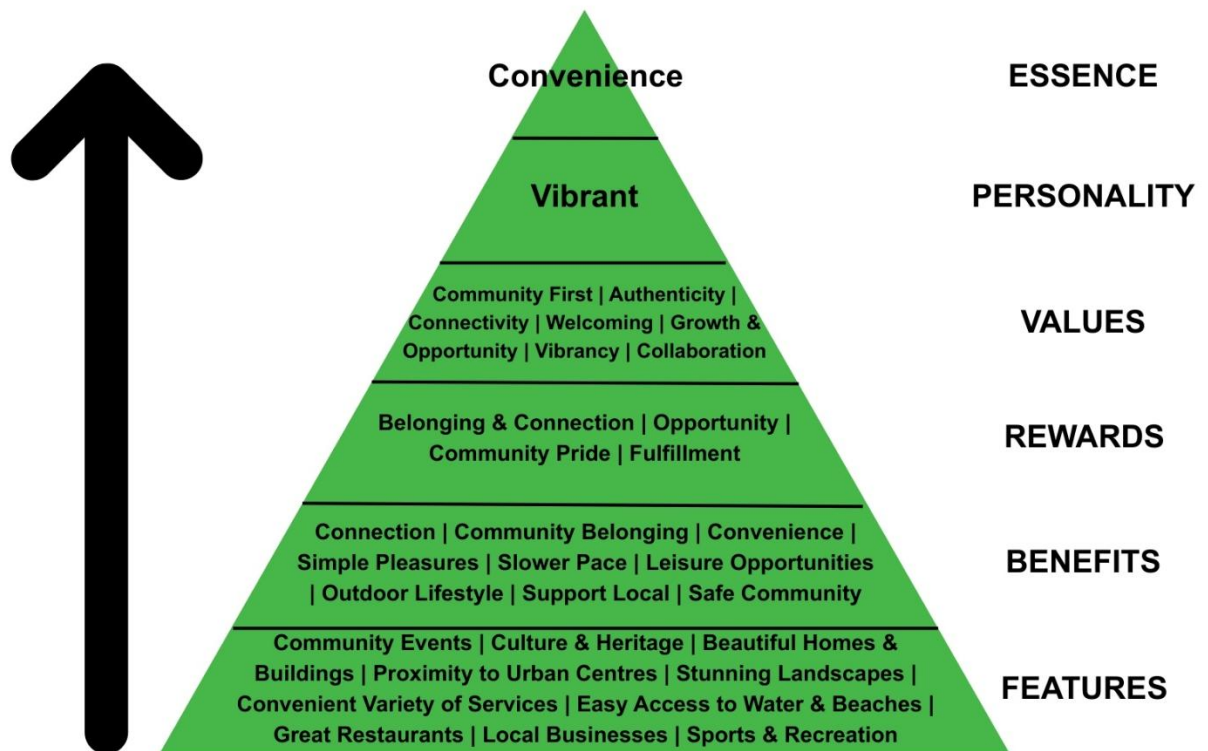
Businesses – Driving growth and opportunity

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

Visitors – Highlighting vibrancy, convenience and variety

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

4.5 Brand Pyramid



Tagline:

“The Centre of It All”

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

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

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

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

Adaptation possibilities:

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

4.6 Messaging Themes

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

1. *Community & Belonging*

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

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

2. Vibrancy

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

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

3. Opportunity & Growth

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

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

4. The Centre of it All

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

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

5. Quality of Life

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

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

6. *People*

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

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

7. *Beautiful Amherst*

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

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

4.7 Next Steps

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

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

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Note:

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

5.0 Strategic Marketing Pillars

Internal Departments & Staff Roles

MarComm – Marketing & Communications Officers

CL – Community Living Department

EDO – Economic Development Officer

CWB Mgr – Community Well-Being Manager

Events – Event Coordinator / Events Team

PW / Facilities – Public Works & Facilities

IT – Information Technology

Mayor & Council

APD – Amherst Police Department

AFD / AFFA – Amherst Fire Department / Amherst Firefighters Association

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

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

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

6.0 Communications Plan

Goal 1	Improve access to Town of Amherst information
Objective 1.1	Make it easier to access, understand and use information about living, visiting, and doing business in Amherst.
Actions	- Confirm how audiences prefer to access and receive information and use these channels consistently – update channels as driven by audience feedback - Anticipate questions and provide information proactively - Provide plain language summaries for complex documents when applicable - Maintain information relevance on message boards (digital and physical) - Evaluate the effectiveness of physical information kiosks and create a plan for their use moving forward - Evaluate the effectiveness of the mayor’s radio segment and identify opportunities for improvement - Explore additional opportunities for sharing information
Objective 1.2	Ensure accessibility practices are used consistently in everyday communications
Actions	- Write content using plain language whenever possible - Ensure digital content functions well with assistive technologies - Review the Town’s website and implement updates to improve accessibility - Use high contrast colours in design - Plan for potential accessibility needs when organizing public communications and events
Objective 1.3	Strengthen internal communications practices to improve the flow of information
Actions	- Provide Town staff with regular information updates - Establish a process where staff can easily submit feedback they receive from the public - Work with Human Resources to fully develop an internal communications plan

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Objectives and actions for Goal 1 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 2	Be consistent with and ensure effectiveness of our communications channels
Objective 2.1	Ensure all channels are used in the most effective way
Actions	- Complete an audit of all communications channels - Identify the purpose and the content strategy for each communications channel - Evaluate and optimize platform performance
Objective 2.2	Create guidelines required to manage content delivery
Actions	- Develop posting standards (how we post) - Develop content guidelines (what we post) - Develop social media terms of use
Objective 2.3	Improve the Town of Amherst website
Actions	- Conduct a complete audit of the website - Create a plan to implement all recommended updates - Improve Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to deliver better website search results - Establish guidelines for regular website content updates
Objectives and actions for Goal 2 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 3	Improve engagement
Objective 3.1	Diversify communications channels
Actions	- Research and identifying new platforms for use as needs evolve - Identify and adopt new trends as appropriate to reach new audiences - Annual review of our communication channels to determine preference and performance
Objective 3.2	Create more opportunities for people to share feedback
Actions	- Determine the best ways for people to provide comments and feedback, which may include selected social media comments, alternate platforms for feedback, or directing comments to official channels - Implement feedback mechanisms

Town of Amherst Strategic Marketing Plan 2026-2028 and Communications Plan

Objective 3.3	Improve proactivity of Town communications
Actions	- Work with all departments to better streamline public communications - Ensure timely posting of major updates - Develop an Outlook calendar to be populated and used internally to proactively address communications requirements
Objective 3.4	Increase participation in Town programs, events, and public processes
Actions	- Use targeted and audience specific tactics to boost engagement with social media content - Consider the use of incentives to boost participation - Track event attendance and registration data to create a baseline for ongoing measurement - Look for opportunities to expand partnerships with schools and community organizations
Objectives and actions for Goal 3 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	
Goal 4	Increase audience reach
Objective 4.1	Ensure more people receive the information that we share
Actions	- Use a mix of channels to share information, based on audience preferences - Optimize web content to improve SEO - Pay to boost certain content on social - Create cross-promotional opportunities with businesses and organization
Objective 4.2	Reach underserved or hard-to-reach audiences
Actions	- Identify hard-to-reach audiences - Determine how best to communicate with them moving forward, such as direct mail or new communications channels
Objective 4.3	Use data, analytics and resident feedback to guide our strategies to strengthen our reach
Action	- Review communications channels analytics - Identify high-reach content - Optimize communication strategies
Objectives and actions for Goal 4 will begin in Jan 2026 and will be ongoing throughout the next several years, updated and refined as we learn more from our metrics.	

7.0 Marketing Channels & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. Website (amherst.ca)

Primary KPIs

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

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

Primary KPIs

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

3. Social Media – Instagram

Primary KPIs

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

4. Social Media – TikTok

Primary KPIs

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

5. Email Newsletter

Primary KPIs

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

6. Print Communications

Primary KPIs

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

7. Voyent Alert!

(or replacement system)

Primary KPIs:

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

8. Radio

Primary KPIs

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

9. Community Engagement Activities

Primary KPIs

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

7.0 Appendices

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