



Town of Amherst  
Committee of the Whole

Date: Monday, June 24, 2019  
Time: 4:00 pm  
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

---

Pages

1. Call to Order
    - 1.1 Approval of Agenda
  2. In Camera
    - 2.1 Approval of In Camera Agenda
    - 2.2 MGA 22(2) (c) Personnel Matters
  3. Council Direction Requests
    - 3.1 Award of Capital Paving 1 - 2
  4. Information Items
    - 4.1 Economic Dashboard 3 - 23
  5. Adjournment
-



## COMMITTEE OF WHOLE

CDR# 2019065

Date: June 24, 2019

---

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jason MacDonald, Deputy CAO

**DATE:** June 24, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Award of 2019 Capital Paving Tender

---

**ORIGIN:** 2019/20 Approved Capital Budget

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:** Municipal Government Act Section 65

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council forward award of the 2019 Capital Paving Tender (T-19- 3) to the lowest compliant bidder, Costin Paving and Contracting, at their unit prices based on our estimated quantities in the total amount of \$ \$579,159.00 plus HST, and further, that staff be directed to negotiate a reduction in the amount of work to be completed, based on the unit prices submitted, to reflect the actual budget amount such that the value of the contract does not exceed \$588,000 including non-recoverable HST.

**BACKGROUND:** The capital paving program, as set out below, was approved by Council in the Capital Budget on May 15, 2019.

### **Pulverizing and Paving**

- 1) Abbey Road (East Victoria to Elmwood)
- 2) Abbey Road Spring Street Intersection
- 3) Taplin Drive (Agnew St to end)

### **Asphalt Paving Overlay**

- 1) Dunlap Street (Rupert to Charles)
- 2) Fairview Ave (Winston Ave to Myrtle)
- 3) Senior Street
- 4) Durley Street (Lamy to end)
- 5) Tantramar Crescent (South of Westins Bakery to Tupper)
- 6) Gladstone Ave (Church Street to end)
- 7) Robert Angus Drive Asphalt Trail Expansion (Dairy Queen Driveway to Church Street)



**DISCUSSION:** A tender for the 2019 capital paving program was issued with a closing date of June 11, 2019. The following two bids were received (non refundable taxes extra):

- Cumberland Paving \$592,717.00
- **Costin Paving and Contracting \$579,159.00**

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** The approved 2019- 20 capital paving budget was \$588,000 including non- recoverable taxes. The cost of the proposed work including non-refundable taxes is \$603,981 with funding to be provided from Gas Tax. In order to meet the approved capital paving budget amount after award we will negotiate with the low bidder to reduce the amount of work by \$16,000. This reduction can be achieved by reducing the overlay on Gladstone from 237 meters (entire street) to 93.5 meters (the older section of the street).

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The tendering process was followed. The Town issued a tender as per our Procurement Policy. A media release will be issued pending Council approval. Written notices will be hand delivered to all affected residents and businesses.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:** The material that will be removed or pulverized on the project will be recycled for either road bed material or used in future work such as trails.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS:** There are no social justice implications to repaving Town Streets. The widening of the existing sidewalk on Robert Angus Drive to create a two-way active transportation trail is intended to improve access to the Town's commercial area for people without access to vehicles.

**ALTERNATIVES:** Council may change the tender award by up to 15% of the tender amount without the requirement to re-tender the project.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

---

Report prepared by Jason MacDonald  
Report and Financial approved by:

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council  
FROM: Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer  
DATE: June 24, 2019  
SUBJECT: Amherst Economic Dashboard and Community Economic Analysis

---

## History

Over the past several years, the Town of Amherst has been involved with the creation of several reports and strategies related to the economic profile of the community.

- The 2003 Socio-economic Report prepared by planning student Andrew Fisher identified demographic and labour market trends over the previous 12 years.
- The 2014 Community Economic Development Strategy prepared jointly by the Town of Amherst and the Municipality of Cumberland County identified areas of focus for economic development initiatives.
- A 2015 report on population characteristics and projections was prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd.
- The 2016 Cumberland Vital Signs report offered insights to the Cumberland region's socio-economic conditions.

## Discussion

Amherst Town Council has identified economic development as one of its key strategic priorities. In order to put resources toward the best strategies that will strengthen the economy while providing an environment where businesses can thrive and grow, Council and Economic Development staff need a clear understanding of the demographic and business development profile of the Town of Amherst.

A dashboard of economic indicators provides insight to the community's economic health. Updated regularly, these indicators can be used to track trends and measure effectiveness of interventions.

Sixteen economic indicators have been chosen, each falling under one of four categories. This enables us to measure different aspects of economic health while identifying areas that would benefit from initiatives and strategic interventions.

A community economic analysis provides details behind the data, comparisons between Amherst and other communities, and a competitive advantage analysis.

## Next Steps

The Economic Indicators Dashboard will be updated and presented to Council regularly.

Conclusions and recommendations in the 2019 Community Economic Analysis report may be used for strategic and operational planning purposes.

# Amherst Economic Dashboard and Community Economic Analysis

Rebecca Taylor, Business Development Officer  
Town of Amherst

# Amherst Economic Dashboard

Provides a clear understanding of the demographic and business development profile of the Town of Amherst.

Enables council and staff to direct resources toward the best economic development strategies.

Data can be updated regularly and frequently to measure changes over time.



## BUSINESS OUTLOOK

NUMBER OF  
BUSINESSES

NUMBER OF  
EMPLOYEES IN  
INDUSTRIAL  
PARK

AVG. # OF  
YEARS  
IN BUSINESS

TOTAL  
COMMERCIAL  
PROPERTY  
ASSESSMENT

## POPULATION

NUMBER OF  
PRIMARY  
STUDENTS

TOTAL  
POPULATION

ETHNIC  
DIVERSITY

MEDIAN  
AGE

## HOUSING

AVERAGE  
DAYS ON  
MARKET

HOUSING  
LISTINGS  
VOLUME

AVERAGE  
SELLING PRICE

TOTAL  
RESIDENTIAL  
PROPERTY  
VALUE

## LABOUR FORCE

PARTICIPATION  
RATE

UNEMPLOYMENT  
RATE

GRADUATION  
RATE

NSCC  
ENROLMENT  
AMHERST  
CAMPUS

# BUSINESS OUTLOOK

How well are businesses doing in Amherst?

- Increase in number of businesses
- Increase in number of employees in Industrial Park
- Increase in average number of years in business
- Increase in commercial property assessment

# POPULATION

Is our population growing or shrinking?

What are the characteristics of our population?

- Increase in primary registration
- Increase in annual population estimate
- Awareness of median age
- Increase in ethnic diversity

# HOUSING

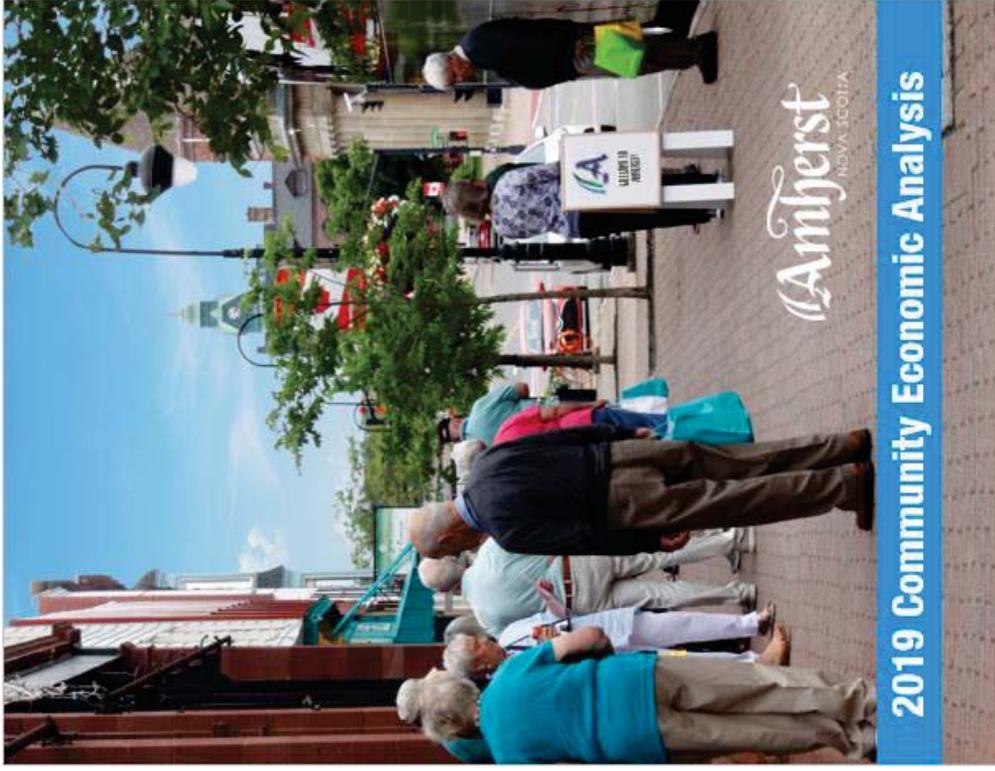
How desirable is Amherst as a place to live?

- Decrease in average length of time on market
- Increase in value of listing volumes
- Increase in average price of home
- Increase in total residential property value

# LABOUR FORCE

How strong is the labour pool in Amherst?

- Increase in participation rate
- Decrease in unemployment rate
- Increase in high school graduation rate
- Increase in NSCC enrolment



# Community Economic Analysis

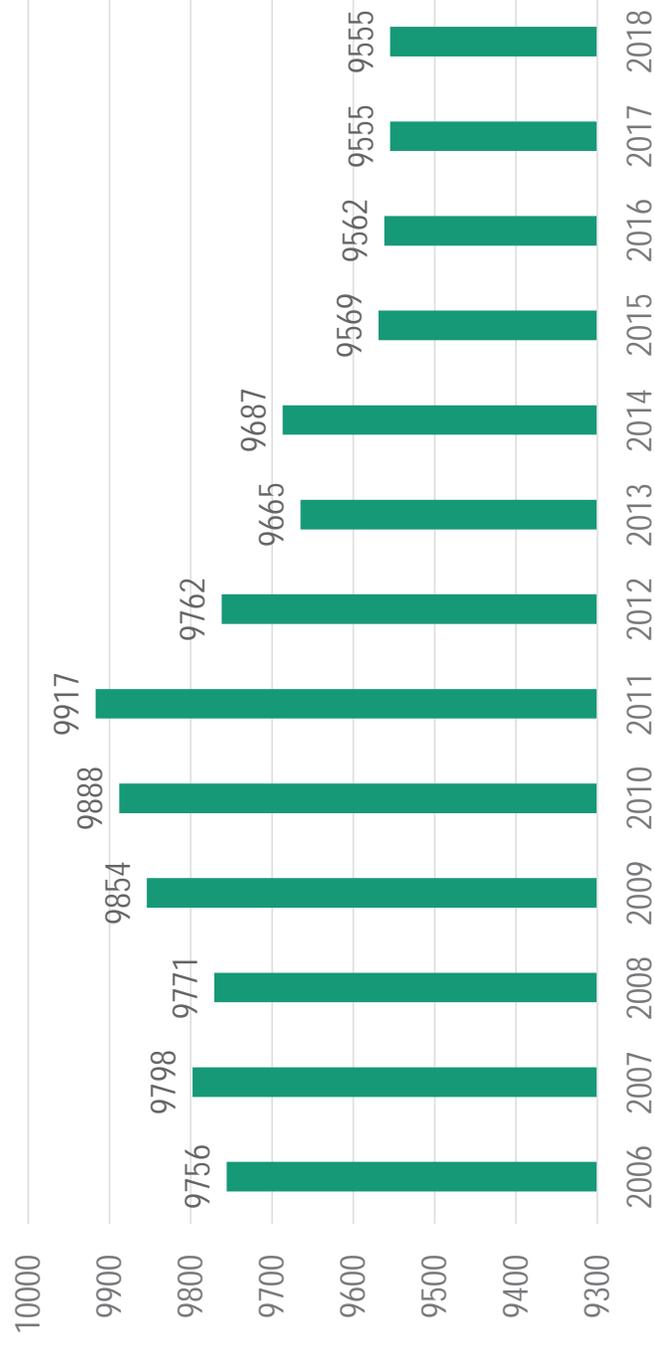
- Closer look at characteristics and trends.
- Comparisons with Canada, Nova Scotia and similar communities.
- Competitive advantage analysis.

## Business Outlook Survey

- 77 per cent maintained or increased sales volumes.
- 63% anticipate things will stay the same or slightly improve.
- An additional 33% anticipate significant positive changes.
- 2/3 of businesses would recommend Amherst as a place to do business.

# Population Estimates: Town of Amherst

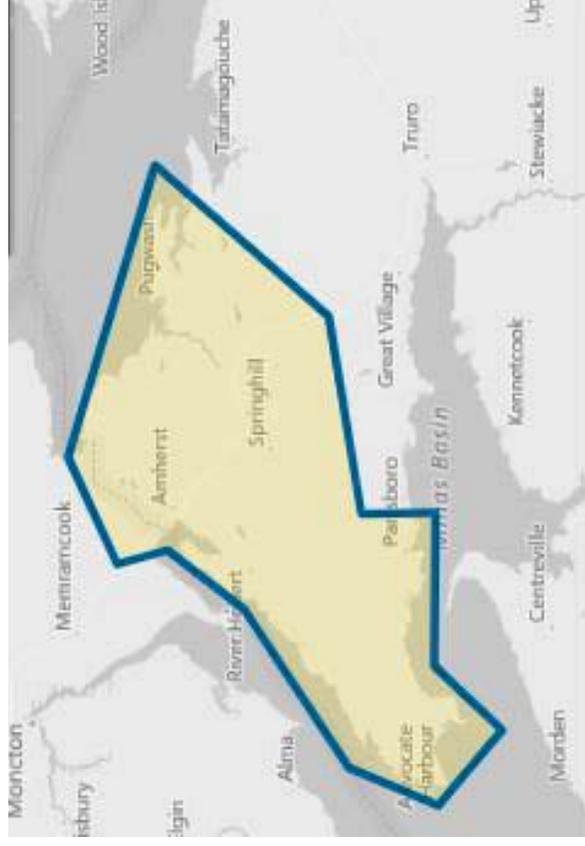
source: Nova Scotia Finance & Treasury Board



Over the 10-year period from 2006 to 2016, the median age in Amherst increased at a 5% faster rate than comparable small towns and 2.9% faster than the province.

## Retail Trade Zone

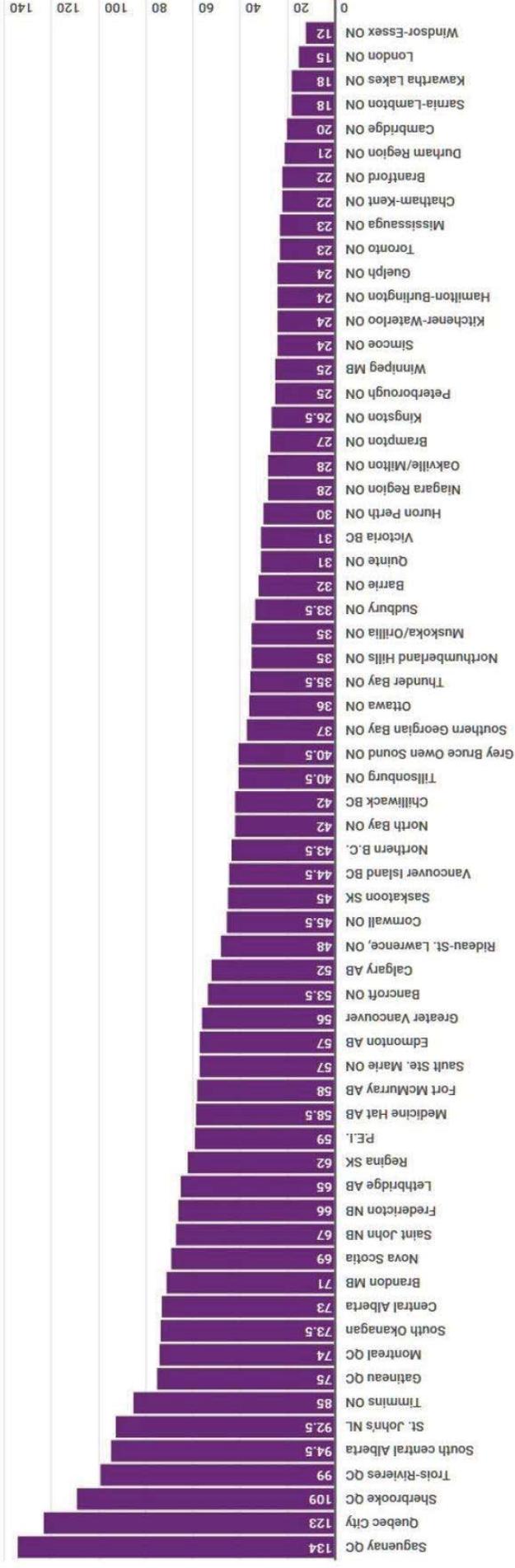
34,661 people live within Amherst's retail trade zone.



# 1,114,894

Amherst has more people living within  
a 150-km radius than any other  
municipality in the Maritimes.

# Days on Market



Amherst has more people working in manufacturing, management of companies and retail trade compared to the rest of Nova Scotia.



Amherst is experiencing a downward trend in population that, when paired with downward trends in labour force participation and unemployment levels, can make recruitment and retention difficult for employers.

Recommendations:

- Survey employers to identify whether recruitment and retention challenges exist in any sectors.
- Develop and implement a strategy to attract working age people to Amherst from other parts of Canada and through international immigration.

Residential real estate shows signs of a trend towards a housing shortage, with prices remaining low while volumes are down. This suggests a lack of suitable housing stock for home buyers looking for specific characteristics.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a housing study to determine potential real estate development needs.
- Use Amherst's appealing housing options as an advantage in population recruitment efforts.

Amherst's labour pool shows growth in manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and public administration, but declines in retail and accommodations/food sectors are cause for concern.

**Recommendation:**

Conduct business retention and expansion visits to identify economic development strategies that will support future growth in strong sectors and assist important sectors that are struggling.

Amherst's labour pool shows growth in manufacturing, health care and social assistance, and public administration, but declines in retail and accommodations/food sectors are cause for concern.

**Recommendation:**

Conduct business retention and expansion visits to identify economic development strategies that will support future growth in strong sectors and assist important sectors that are struggling.

The small population and lower household incomes in Amherst's functional economic zone might not be sufficient to support business growth.

Recommendations:

- Focus economic development efforts on attracting more residents. People attraction is the top priority.
- Conduct a business mix analysis for the functional economic zone to identify gaps and surpluses.
- Analyse the success of thriving communities that share similar characteristics with Amherst.
- Develop and implement a targeted business recruitment strategy.
- Develop and implement strategies to increase visitor spending.