

*Resort* OUR NEXT  
*Municipality* 20 YEARS

# Resort Municipality Strategic Plan

2020.09.11

UPLAND

# *Resort Municipality* OUR NEXT 20 YEARS

## **Acknowledgments**

UPLAND would like to thank all the community members, businesses, groups and Resort Municipality staff and officials who made this project possible. We would particularly like to thank the Planning Board for their expertise, time, and passion. Thank you to all the residents and visitors who dedicated time to share their experiences and values.

This Strategic Plan was prepared by UPLAND Planning + Design, including Ian Watson, Juniper Littlefield, Jason Genée, Bruce Mans, Angharad Wiley and Sasan Moradian.

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Section 1

# Introduction

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The Resort  
Municipality

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Regional  
Context

# The Resort Municipality

The Resort Municipality of Stanley Bridge, Hope River, Bayview, Cavendish, and North Rustico is cherished by residents and visitors alike. The Municipality's natural features and pastoral landscape reflect its history and provide the foundation for a thriving community. The Municipality is located on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with Routes 6 and 13 serving as the main commercial and transportation routes through the community. The land use is a mix of residences and cottages, tourist attractions, commercial uses, agriculture, and parkland.

## Administration

The Municipality has a very seasonal population. Because of this demographic reality, the Resort Municipality was incorporated in 1990 under a unique governing structure. Unlike any other municipality on the Island, councillors and voting members of the public do not need to be full-time residents.

A maximum of 50% of the seven council seats can be occupied by non-residents, as long as they are the registered owner of property in the Municipality, residents of Prince Edward Island, and do not hold office anywhere else on the Island. Similarly, in addition to standard provincial requirements, community members

are eligible to vote in municipal elections if they are either a resident of the Municipality or the registered owner of a property within the Municipality.

While the former *Municipal Government Act* permitted the incorporation of the Resort Municipality, the current 2017 Act does not allow the creation of new ones. The 2017 Act also stipulates that if the Resort Municipality grows to more than 2,000 qualified voters, it may be recommended that the area be converted to a different form of governance.

Another unique factor in this community's administration is the amount of federal land within its boundaries. Parks Canada manages the majority of the community's shoreline to the north, and this land is exempt from complying with municipal planning requirements.

## Demographics

The Resort Municipality's population has remained stable around 250 residents for much of the 21st century. However, this spiked in the 2016 census with a count of 328 residents. There are 350 private dwellings, 39% of which are occupied by year-round residents. Reflective of Island-wide trends (particularly in rural communities),

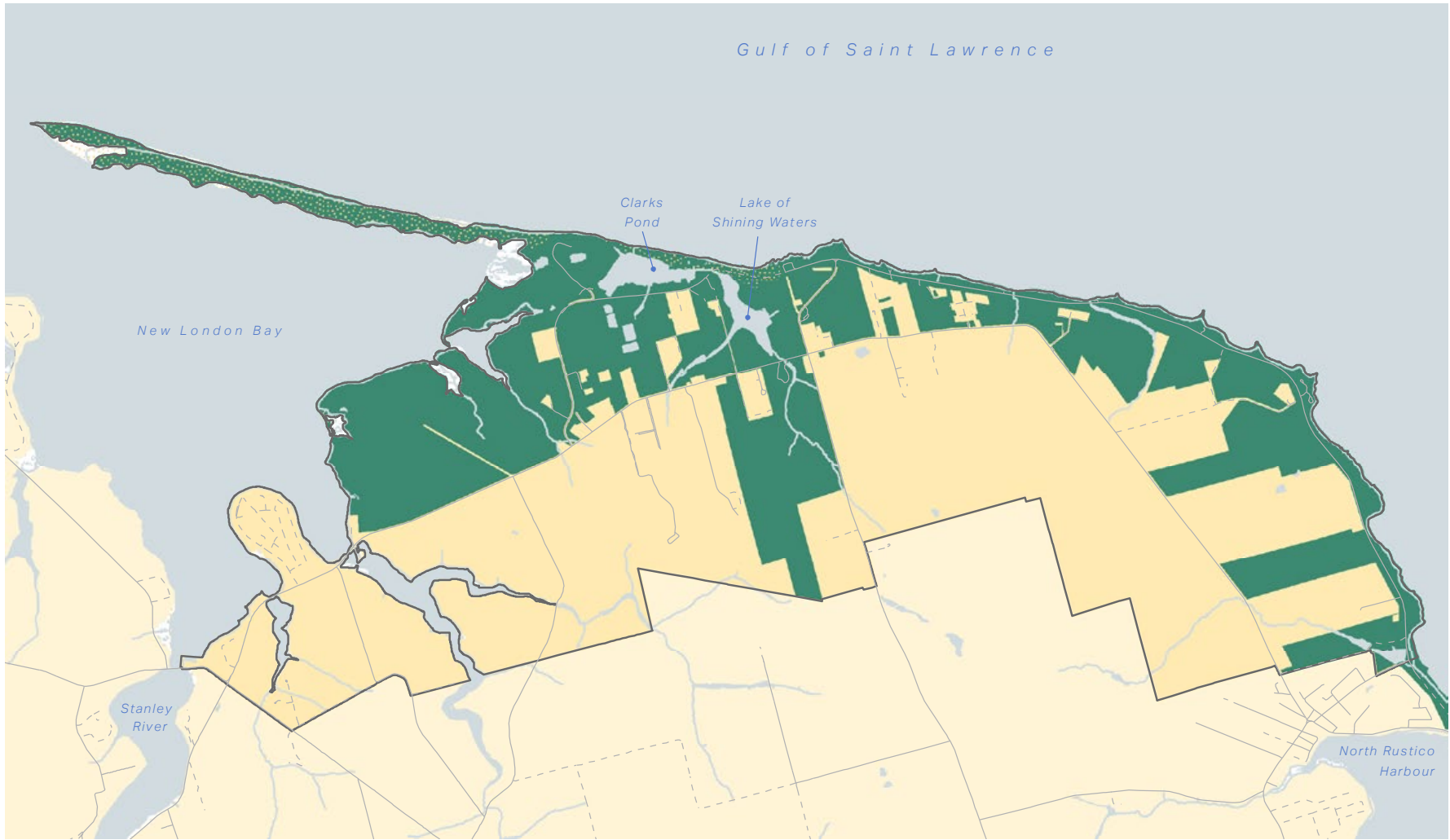
the population is aging, and the Resort Municipality has seen significant growth of residents over 50.

Much of the recent population growth has come from within PEI. The 2016 Census does not identify any recent immigrants; however, over 3% of residents are not Canadian citizens, which likely includes those seeking permanent residency through the Provincial Nominee program. Discussions with provincial newcomer organizations and local residents indicate that the community has become a popular destination among newcomer entrepreneurs, though some reside seasonally.

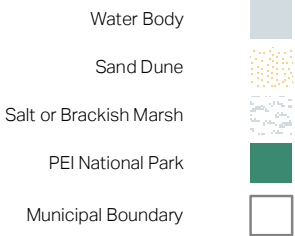
## Character

There is a long history of farming in this community, and rolling fields frame views of the water. This rural landscape is spread across five communities, with residential subdivisions dotted throughout, and residents know the importance of these individual identities.

Tourism is the Municipality's main export, built on the popularity of Lucy Maud Montgomery's novels and the warm coastal beaches. Cottages, campsites, beaches, and amusement parks attract families through the spring and summer, and the tourist season extends into the fall for golfers and visitors to the Park.



**Map 1: The Resort Municipality**



# Regional Context

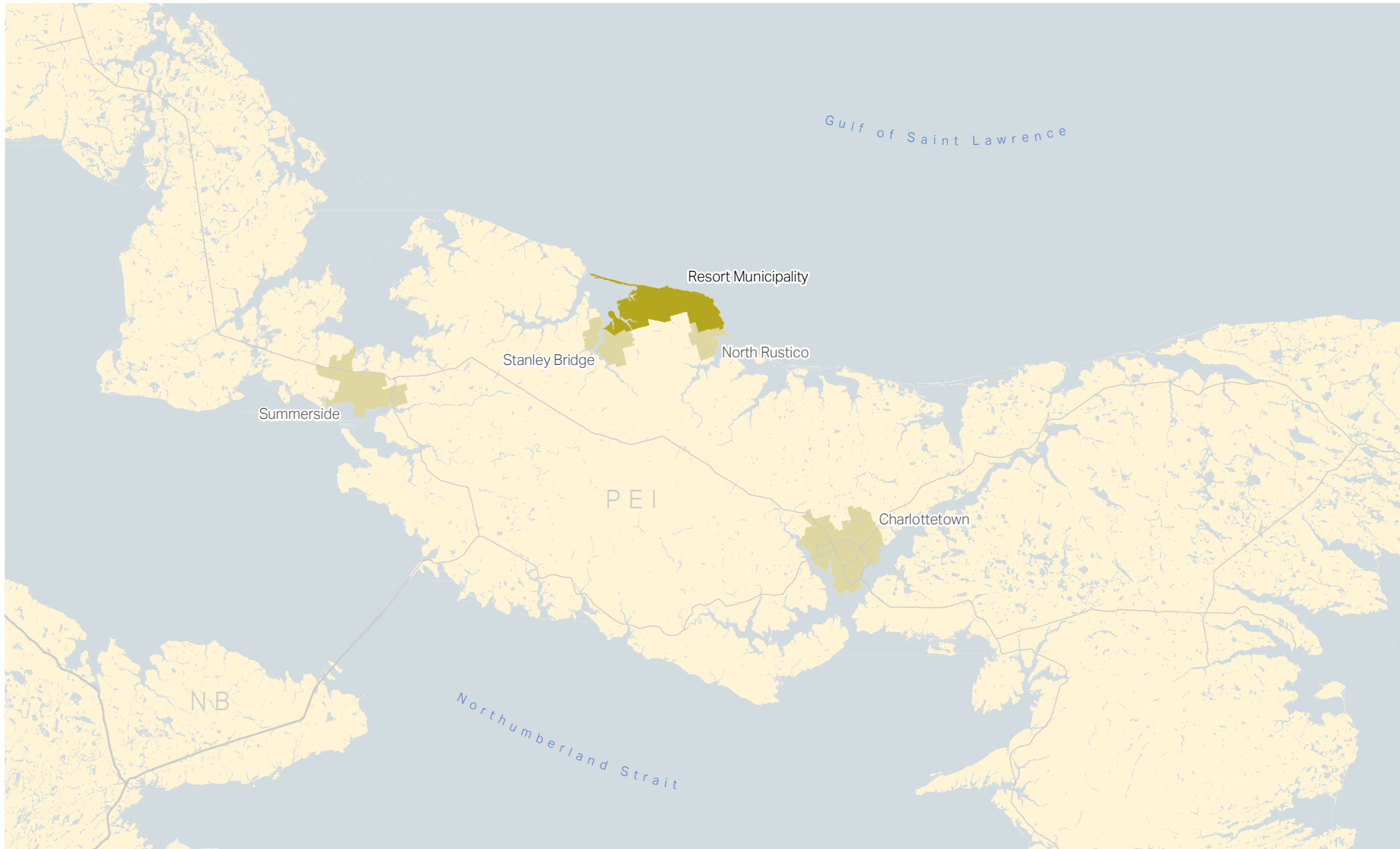
Located on the Island's north shore, the Resort Municipality is a forty-minute drive from the Island's capital, Charlottetown. The Municipality is situated on the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and bounded by Stanley River to the west and North Rustico Harbour to the east. A sand dune juts out to the west of the Municipality, forming the New London Bay. Here, the only municipally-owned coastline is accessible along Swimming Rock Municipal Park. The community is bordered by the municipalities of Stanley Bridge and North Rustico, with unincorporated land to the south.

The Resort Municipality serves an important role in the regional economy and tourism market, and the beaches and other amenities attract islanders from every direction. The unique character of this community makes it known world-wide and forms a welcome component of Island culture.

The small year-round population requires the Municipality to share some services with surrounding communities. Residents of the Resort Municipality support services in Rustico and North Rustico, with many everyday services including groceries located in these communities (and community efforts underway to attract a health centre). Other

amenities require a trip to Summerside or Charlottetown. Fire protection is provided by three departments from North Rustico, New Glasgow, and New London, while the local RCMP office is serviced by the Charlottetown detachment. Schooling options for local families include North Rustico, Rustico, Hampshire, and Charlottetown.





**Map 2: The Resort Municipality in the regional context**

# About the Project

PEI's Resort Municipality prepared this Strategic Plan in collaboration with residents, visitors, business operators, and farmers. The document covers many local issues including land use, parks, community programming, economics, and much more. This Plan provides overall direction for the community, matches resources to opportunities, and addresses challenges and barriers. It is also intended to influence the preparation of project-ready initiatives for upcoming and future infrastructure projects funded by federal and provincial governments.

The project began with a document review of existing local policy and research, followed by a background study and community profile. This study included detailed analysis of the Municipality with consideration of local history, demographics, the economy, infrastructure, development and the environment.

Following this initial phase, the project team began community engagement. To kick it off, a project launch and barbecue was hosted in August 2019 to announce the Strategic Plan and begin a visioning process among residents and visitors. A series of pop-up events were then hosted at locations throughout the Municipality and provided community members the opportunity to give more specific input on tourism and the economy, as well as infrastructure. A final event was held in October,

with two public workshops hosted at the Cavendish Visitor Information Centre. These workshops included a presentation on initial engagement themes, followed by structured group activities. These events reached about 75 residents and visitors, and provided spatial and qualitative information that has been referenced throughout this Strategic Plan.

The engagement phase also included several survey and interview components. An online survey for community members asked respondents to answer questions about their satisfaction with local amenities, and garnered 43 responses. It also allowed space to provide ideas and opportunities for the future. An additional survey targeting local tourism business operators reached 12 people with questions targeting the barriers for business in the Municipality.

An in-person visitor intercept survey polled 50 tourists on the details of their visit as well as their satisfaction with Municipal amenities. Surveys were conducted at the Green Gables Heritage Place within the Prince Edward Island National Park, as well as the Cavendish Boardwalk and Sandspit amusement park.

Finally, several stakeholder interviews were conducted over the phone with local organizations, including Tourism Cavendish

Beach, Central Coastal Tourism Partnership, PEI Connectors, Seawood Estates Association Limited, the RCMP, the Avonlea Women's Institute, and Parks Canada.

Events and online surveys were promoted through Facebook events and the municipal email list, while the pop-ups were also advertised through flyers distributed to local businesses, and the final workshop was promoted through phone calls to local residences. Posters for the Strategic Plan initiative were placed throughout the municipality, and a project website contained engagement details and project documents.

A range of concerns and values were identified from this engagement, and these have been shaped into eight key objectives that guide this Strategic Plan. The recommendations contained within the Plan are organized by theme and derived from community-identified opportunities and constraints. Project sheets for each recommendation include information about the necessary steps to implementation, prioritization, and potential community partners.

A final round of public engagement gathered feedback from around 20 participants through a public meeting and online survey, and results from this formed the final project prioritization, and adjustments to the Plan.

Section 2

# Key Issues

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Culture &  
Heritage

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Infrastructure

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Economy

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Environment

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Development

# Culture & Heritage

The first residents of Prince Edward Island or Epekwitk (resting on the waves) were the Mi'kmaq, whose roots trace back to at least 10,000 years ago. European explorers arrived on the Island in the 18th century, annexing it to Nova Scotia in 1758 under British control, and dividing the unceded land into 67 townships, soon parceled off in a European lottery.

British colonizers settled on the Island after Samuel Holland's survey in 1765. Following this the Island was separated from Nova Scotia. Early settlement of the Cavendish area began in 1790 with the arrival of the Simpson, MacNeill, and Clark families. Steep population increases across the Island reduced Mi'kmaq access to traditional land and resources, as colonizers created settlements and farms on traditional Indigenous territory.

Farming and fishing were the main incomes of settlers until the late 19th century, when summer resorts and hotels began catering to visitors. In 1908, Lucy Maud Montgomery of Cavendish published *Anne of Green Gables*. The book's instant success began to attract visitors to Green Gables Farmhouse, eventually preserved as a museum and incorporated as part of the Prince Edward Island National Park. The first Island ferry in 1917, and the creation of the National Park in 1937, supported the continuing popularity of Green Gables and Cavendish Beach, which attract an international crowd of visitors today.

Development and tourism continued to grow unregulated until the 1970s when the area's first land use planning document was created by a provincially appointed Planning Board composed of community residents. Another major turning point, the Confederation Bridge construction, was completed in 1997. It simplified transportation to and from the Island after more than a hundred years of discussion.

Today, most residents on Prince Edward Island are of European descent, though both the Lennox Island First Nation and the Abegweit First Nation remain, and many Mi'kmaq families choose to live off-reserve. Continuing the evolution of the area, Prince Edward Island has experienced an increase in immigration in recent years. Our consultation indicates that the community is popular among international visitors and newcomers, and translation services are increasingly in-demand.

Heritage character in the municipality is governed by the Development Bylaw, which regulates identification and protection of heritage places, by the Provincial *Heritage Places Protection Act*, and by Parks Canada in some locations. There are three designated heritage properties in the municipality including Lucy Maud Montgomery's National Historic Site, Simpson Farm, and Green Gables Heritage Place. The Municipality's Official Plan also

recognizes cultural landscapes such as family farms, hedgerows, fields, and ocean vistas.

Local culture plays a large part in shaping quality of life and the vibrant tourism economy. For book lovers, the residents of Seawood Estates has established a book club, while the L.M. Montgomery National Historic Site is a popular landmark honouring the area's most famous author. Fine art and handcraft is also an important part of local Island flavour, featuring unique pottery and artworks. Live music is another key feature, particularly the Cavendish Beach Music Festival which draws 60,000 visitors for an annual weekend of country music every July.

The heritage and culture of the Resort Municipality is very important to residents, and the historic connection to small-scale agriculture creates sprawling vistas for community members and visitors.

Throughout public engagement, participants noted the value of protecting heritage resources in the community. Some discussed the potential to expand heritage offerings in tourism, and the possibility of an Indigenous Centre that could highlight elders' stories of the Island's north shore.

# Economy

Statistics on the diversity of industries are difficult to develop on the municipal scale. However, the 2016 Census does enumerate resident employment (*i.e.* not workers commuting from other locations or working seasonally after May 1st), which gives some indication of the importance of certain industries. Looking at these numbers, over 40% of the resident labour force is employed in agriculture and accommodations / food services. Major employers include agricultural operations; tourist accommodations such as cottages, campgrounds, inns, and motels; as well as amusement uses and commercial businesses.

## Tourism

Although seasonal in nature, the tourism industry in the Resort Municipality draws significant crowds during the summer months. It is estimated that there can regularly be an additional 10,000 people in the municipality during tourist season, and even higher during special events. The Cavendish Beach Music Festival for example, can bring in 60,000 visitors for an annual weekend of music. The influence this area has on provincial tourism is particularly evident in its accommodations. The Green Gables shore (encompassing an area from Malpeque to Covehead), contains 39% of the province's accommodations, and 68% of all campsites. Between 2014 and 2018, municipal

permits have been approved for 70 new cottages and 196 new campsites (see Table 1 on page 12).

Despite this success, tourism is an unpredictable business, and long springs often shorten tourist seasons significantly. Development of the industry should be carefully considered to ensure the long-term economic sustainability of the community, as well as the quality of life for year-round residents.

Residents and stakeholders identified the opportunity to expand shoulder season operations. Keeping tourism businesses open longer could extend the window of economic gain while taking the pressure off peak periods and providing off-season amenities for permanent residents.

During engagement events for the preparation of this Plan, some residents worried the quality and design of tourist accommodations and commercial developments are slipping, and hope to diversify the industry to include activities which reflect the local character. New trends include eco-tourism, active tourism such as walking and cycling, and tourism related to history and cuisine. Some residents noted the community's connections to L.M. Montgomery positioned them well to offer literary activities such as writer's retreats.

## Agriculture

The local agricultural industry consists mainly of family-run farms grazing dairy or growing mixed-crops of wheat, grain, barley, and potatoes. Aquaculture is also a major industry, particularly in the municipality's western end. Much of the farmland in the Resort Municipality is leased Crown land, and Parks Canada places restrictions on the crops farmers are able to grow in order to maintain the quality of the soils and protect the natural environment.

The Official Plans from both 1989 and 2017 reference a time when farmers faced increasing pressure to take farmland out of production, particularly along Route 6. Today, some farmers face challenges around the succession of leased land, and summer traffic can impede daily operations like moving equipment. The Official Plan identifies a need for improved farmland protections, and local residents echo this concern.

Some community members feel the loss of farmland to Parks Canada has altered the local landscape over the years. Residents and farmers indicated that as farmland turns over, Parks Canada should lease the land in smaller portions to accommodate the needs of the industry and work with the local agricultural community to continue to ensure these lands are farmed in a sustainable way.

## 2020 Context

In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reached Canada, sending communities across the country into lockdown. While Prince Edward Island's geographical isolation and easily-controlled borders proved to be an asset during this public health crisis, the economic impacts triggered by the lockdown had major impacts on local communities. The social and mental health consequences of self-isolation further highlighted the crisis.

Restricted travel and a national recession effectively cancelled tourism seasons across the world, and put heightened pressure on agriculture and food production. The weight of this disaster was not equally distributed, and the event emphasized inequities where amenities such as employment, wealth, property, healthcare, and other social services are lacking.

With an economy built on tourism, businesses within the Resort Municipality were particularly hard-hit. At the time of this Plan's writing, the duration and full extent of the impacts are still unknown. While the COVID-19 crisis will eventually pass, it has highlighted vulnerabilities within communities and economies. In planning for the future, the key question then is, "how can we establish systems, services, and businesses that can weather major disruptions?"

# Development

Encouraged by tourism expansion, development has typically been steady in the municipality. The table on the next page indicates the number of permits issued from 2014 to 2018.

## Residential

Recent residential development has been clustered in the west where Seawood Estates—one of the densest residential developments in the municipality—is located. The uptake of local subdivisions has been slow; fewer than half of the Seawood Estates lots are developed, and one subdivision off of Simpsons Mill Road has sold lots but no road services these properties.

The majority of the community's housing stock is made up of single-detached homes. With the recent trend of finished cottages, it is almost impossible to tell the difference between seasonal and permanent residences. Some older dwellings can be seen within the National Park, remaining after Parks Canada's expropriation of the 1970s. In 2016, there were 136 permanent dwellings, and 214 seasonal dwellings.

Residents hope to see more diversified housing options in the municipality, and accommodations for seniors is top of mind. Smaller options and housing which incorporates healthcare and other services would be ideal for the aging community. Options that accommodate seasonal workers are also needed. Some residents pointed out that allocating housing such as dormitories or adaptive reuse of existing buildings for seasonal employees would be a first step in better engaging them in the community.

While seasonal visitors are the main source of income for the area, engagement identified an interest in increasing permanent residents through improved housing and amenities. Participants made it clear that expanding this population is a priority for the community, and could improve overall quality of life through the increased tax-base, spending at local businesses, and civic participation.

## Commercial

Route 6 is the primary location for tourism and commercial development, including the Avonlea Village shopping area built around a schoolhouse (relocated from its original location), Sandspit and Shining Waters amusement parks, the Cavendish Boardwalk shopping complex, the Cavendish Beach Music Festival Grounds, the Cavendish Tourist Mart, and many more accommodations, restaurants, and amusement uses.

These uses are spread throughout the municipality, something many feel is a barrier to cohesive sense of place. The need for an identifiable main street came up throughout consultation, and the Official Plan lays out supporting policy for this goal.

Seniors and other residents report having a sense of isolation during winter months when things start to close, and there is a desire for expanded commercial operations which reflect the visual identity of the area and offer a variety of year-round amenities. Needs include healthcare, groceries, restaurants and bars. The medical clinic in Hunter River recently closed and this gap is a concern for local residents, particularly during tourism season.

In order to attract these new and expanded offerings, it may be necessary to streamline the development process. Business owners and entrepreneurs have a sense that “red tape” and the need to navigate multiple layers of municipal, provincial, and federal regulations are a disincentive for new businesses, particularly newcomers to Canada.

### Planning for the Future

The municipality is an attractive location in which to live and do business. As the community's permanent and seasonal population continues to grow, it will be important to sustainably develop new areas to accommodate them. While the municipality has large areas of undeveloped land, development of this land must be done in a thoughtful manner to preserve the attractive landscape cherished by both residents and visitors. The Municipality's Official Plan is the document that provides this thoughtful planning. While the most recent version of the Official Plan was developed in 2017, it only represented an incremental update of the plan originally adopted in 1989. A more holistic update, building on the work of this Strategic Plan, will be needed in the near future.

**Table 1: Five-year breakdown of municipal permits**

Permit Type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	5-Year Total
New Commercial	-	10	-	-	-	10
New campsite	30	-	114	52	-	196
New residential	-	1	2	-	2	5
New cottage	3	4	6	21	32	66
Other new construction (not amusement)	-	1	4	3	1	9
Lot subdivision	1	5	3	2	7	18
Lot consolidation	1	5	4	1	8	19

# Infrastructure

With such a seasonal population, the demand on the municipality's infrastructure varies drastically throughout the year, so future planning will need to balance the needs of full-time residents and visitors in order to create sustainable systems.

## Servicing

This community has no municipal water system, so the majority of drinking water is accessed through dug wells that tap into groundwater aquifers. Improved septic standards and water sampling have reduced the contamination of drinking water, but as development increases, the potential for contaminants to penetrate these wells increases. For these reasons, development of a municipal water system is a priority laid out in the current Official Plan.

The central sewer system was first installed in 1992 and has since been expanded. Wastewater flows to the retention system within the National Park, where it is treated by a system of lagoons and approved by the Department of Environment for discharge into the Gulf of St. Lawrence two times per year. Residents are generally satisfied with this system, though many respondents during engagement for this Plan note that sewer connections should be required in areas where sewer services are available.

## Transportation

Transportation within the municipality is structured around the use of private vehicles, with 65 kilometres of provincial, federal, and private roadways. The only public transportation to service the municipality is the City Beach Shuttle Service, transporting employees and visitors from Charlottetown to Cavendish.

Active transportation was identified as a priority among local residents and visitors. Current cycling opportunities are limited to those along the Route 6 paved shoulder and within the National Park. The local boardwalk system serves as a wooden sidewalk, though access is only provided on one side of the road and they are not maintained in the winter. Active transportation is already popular among visitors, but safety and inconsistent infrastructure are a concern along Routes 6 and 13. Connectivity between routes as well as to regional networks was discussed as a prime opportunity for sustainable transportation.

## Community Facilities

The municipality has very limited access to public daily-use facilities for residents, with most recreation opportunities aimed at visitors. Access to health and emergency services is also of particular concern, and with no ambulance stationed in the area residents worry about safety during peak tourist season.

Most existing community facilities are open seasonally and include the National Park (with entry-fee), the recently updated Montgomery Park, Swimming Rock Municipal Park, and the Visitor Information Centre (also housing offices for the Municipality, RCMP, and local tourism associations). Cavendish United and Baptist churches also hold important value as community space within the municipality.

The need for free and year-round community spaces reflects the lack of a community core, and residents have identified other potential "anchor" facilities such as a playground and storm shelter.

# Environment

A vulnerability assessment of the neighbouring municipality of North Rustico recounts local residents' stories of increasing storm surges, flooding, shoreline erosion, and a disappearance of sea ice. Local sea levels are expected to rise 1 metre by 2100, with average annual temperatures rising by over 3°C and the rate of erosion doubling.

Because the majority of the Resort Municipality's shoreline is within the boundary of the National Park, the Municipality does not have the ability to implement erosion management strategies for these areas. The National Park's Management Plan prioritizes restoration and retreat practices to prepare for coastal erosion. As shorelines retreat inland, land outside the park may need to accommodate the relocation of buildings and land uses.

The impact of climate change on water supply will be another concern for this community as salt water intrusion and warmer temperatures threaten to contaminate or drain groundwater aquifers, especially during periods of peak demand in tourist season. This also has the potential to limit agricultural productivity by limiting irrigation supplies.

Community members feel future planning must balance public access to the coast with environmental protections. Some residents are worried about the density of aquaculture industry in the area and want to see regular testing for surrounding marine areas. The community hopes to be involved and engaged on government monitoring relating to the human and climate impacts on their land.

The purchase of parkland by the federal government marked a significant shift in the Resort Municipality's relationship to the coast as well as inland natural landscapes. Some residents note that the limited access to this wilderness has caused a disconnect with the land and traditional practices such as cranberry picking have been lost since the Park's founding. The community wants to pursue a strong relationship with Park administration in order to best accommodate all interests and stay involved in the federal plans for the area.





Section 3

# Implementation

# Implementation

The following chapter includes 8 objectives for the Municipality that arose out of engagement activities, and 29 project sheets identifying potential projects that help achieve these objectives. These projects were identified by stakeholders, residents, visitors, through the project team's background review, and through the project team's professional expertise and observation of conditions in the municipality.

Each project sheet includes a brief description of the rationale and key components for the project, the level of priority, potential partners, the objectives the project helps achieve, and a high-level road map for undertaking the project.

Prioritization of these projects depends, to a degree, on partner willingness to engage and on municipal resources. Additionally, some projects are "projects of opportunity"—to be conducted if funding opportunities or other types of provincial or federal assistance are available. Some lower priority projects may also work best implemented in conjunction with other higher priority projects.

Working with feedback from community members, the project team has identified an implementation plan which classifies projects by priority, including high, medium, and low. High priority recommendations are those that have the potential for significant impact on quality of life in the Resort Municipality, or lay the foundation for other proposed projects.

It is important to remember that these community improvements are meant to be ongoing—as the environment, demographics and technology shift, adjustments and changes will be needed. This Strategic Plan should be referenced regularly, and should be reviewed annually (likely during budget season) to identify new ideas, track project progress, and establish priorities for the coming year. The Strategic Plan should be updated at five-year intervals to reflect major shifts in priorities, opportunities, and resources.

Page 20 illustrates the expected time frame required to undertake the project. These timelines do not represent a prioritization; many of the longer tasks include a number of smaller actions that should be started sooner rather than later, but the overall execution will take a longer time. For example, updating the Development Bylaw can be done within two years, but the development outcomes of those changes could take five years or more. The timeline is intended to indicate the duration of a project, though implementation should follow the prioritization indicated on page 19, which reflects community values.

I = Infrastructure

LH = Living Here

C = Coastal

LU = Land Use

TE = Tourism & Economy

G = Governance

## HIGH PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- G-01 Conduct a Review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw
- G-02 Continue to Liaise with Parks Canada
- I-01 Conduct a Review of Central Servicing
- I-02 Expand the Pedestrian Network
- I-06 Work with All Levels of Government to Expand Rural Internet
- LH-01 Encourage a Variety of Housing Options
- LH-02 Prioritize the Provision of Healthcare and Social Services
- LU-01 Encourage the Creation of a Community Hub
- TE-01 Encourage Home Businesses
- TE-06 Encourage Economic Diversity

## MEDIUM PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- G-03 Work with Other Communities
- G-04 Foster Community Involvement
- I-04 Improve Cycling Connections to Nearby Trails and Destinations
- LH-03 Encourage Expanded Commercial Amenities
- LH-04 Support Energy Independence
- C-01 Review Waterways and Aquaculture Regulations
- C-03 Protect and Enhance Shoreline Access
- LU-03 Encourage the Protection of Agricultural Land
- LU-04 Expand Use of Cavendish Beach Music Festival Grounds
- LU-05 Protect View Plans
- TE-04 Co-ordinate an Extended Tourism Season
- TE-05 Support Diversified Tourism Opportunities

## LOW PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- I-03 Improve Cycling Conditions Within the Municipality
- I-05 Encourage Development of a Second Access Route
- LH-05 Encourage Winter Recreation
- C-02 Protect Municipal Land from Flooding and Erosion
- LU-02 Re-examine Recreational Vehicle Regulations
- TE-02 Create a Regulatory Guide for Business
- TE-03 Develop a Wayfinding Program

**SHORT-TERM COMPLETION  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
(1-3 YEARS)**

G-01 Conduct a Review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw

I-06 Work with All Levels of Government to Expand Rural Internet

LH-01 Encourage a Variety of Housing Options

LH-03 Encourage Expanded Commercial Amenities

LH-04 Support Energy Independence

C-01 Review Waterways and Aquaculture Regulations

LU-02 Re-examine Recreational Vehicle Regulations

TE-01 Encourage Home Businesses

TE-05 Support Diversified Tourism Opportunities

**MEDIUM-TERM COMPLETION  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
(3-10 YEARS)**

I-01 Conduct a Review of Central Servicing

I-02 Expand the Pedestrian Network

I-03 Improve Cycling Conditions Within the Municipality

I-04 Improve Cycling Connections to Nearby Trails and Destinations

LH-02 Prioritize the Provision of Healthcare and Social Services

LH-05 Encourage Winter Recreation

C-03 Protect and Enhance Shoreline Access

LU-04 Expand Use of Cavendish Beach Music Festival Grounds

TE-02 Create a Regulatory Guide for Business

TE-03 Develop a Wayfinding Program

TE-04 Co-ordinate an Extended Tourism Season

**LONGER-TERM COMPLETION  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
(10-20 YEARS)**

G-03 Work with Other Communities

I-05 Encourage Development of a Second Access Route

C-02 Protect Municipal Land from Flooding and Erosion

LU-01 Encourage the Creation of a Community Hub

LU-03 Encourage the Protection of Agricultural Land

LU-05 Protect View Plans

**CONTINUAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

G-02 Continue to Liaise with Parks Canada

G-04 Foster Community Involvement

TE-06 Encourage Economic Diversity





DUNELANDS

Cavendish Dunelands Trail    Sentier Cavendish Dunelands

Section 4

# Actions

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Approach

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Coastal

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Governance

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Land Use

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Infrastructure

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Tourism &  
Economy

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Living Here

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# Approach

## Vision

A unique Island community, the Resort Municipality of future generations will ensure a high quality of life for each of its residents. The historic rural lifestyle will be preserved and strengthened. Entrepreneurs and newcomers will be welcomed with many opportunities, and visitors will explore freely. Connections between places will be clear and intuitive for all.

## Objectives

The following objectives are derived from community engagement, site visits, and document reviews. These objectives will serve as a guide for the Strategic Plan and its recommendations. The icon associated with each objective is used on each of the project recommendations to indicate which objectives the project supports. The purpose throughout these objectives is to foster a Resort Municipality that supports residents, encourages local businesses, and continues to provide satisfying visitor experiences.



### Foster a strong sense of place

There is a lack of centre in the community, and visitors are often left wondering if they have reached their destination. Another need identified by local plans and engagement is for free public spaces. The development of a core area will create space for public life and encourage people to linger. Fostering social spaces like this will facilitate connections between residents and support civic involvement.



### Preserve the historic rural quality

The Resort Municipality is characterized by rolling farmland, historic homes and churches, and clusters of cottages. The low-density, rural quality of the landscape can sometimes be challenging but it is what draws people to the community and forms its identity. Protecting the historic and natural landscapes of the community is important to residents, and future plans and development should aim to reflect this rural quality.



### Enable access to local amenities

Although the community has a strong commercial base, there is little in the way of basic, everyday amenities. To access services such as groceries, healthcare, or retail options often requires a trip to the adjacent Rustico or farther, to the centres of Summerside and Charlottetown. Initiatives that extend the season of existing services, encourage diverse local business and social services, and attract permanent residents will go a long way to improving quality of life and visitor satisfaction.



### Set strong infrastructure standards

The community's infrastructure must support high peak populations during the summer tourism season, while also experiencing periods of little demand in the winter. Future expansions of services and transportation infrastructure must be feasible and sustainable while balancing the desires of the small resident population with that of visitors. Infrastructure decisions must also accommodate emergency management measures for a fluctuating seasonal population and increased storm intensity as a result of climate change.



### **Improve active transportation**

The Resort Municipality has been designed to prioritize cars, but community engagement identified a strong desire for alternative options. Expanding networks for pedestrians and bikes (as well as other modes of transportation) is a priority for both residents and visitors who would like opportunities to wander outside the National Parks boundaries.



### **Make it easy & intuitive to explore**

With five individual communities and a large area of land, wayfinding in the Rural Municipality can be confusing to new residents and visitors. With visitors and workers from around the world, language barriers add a new challenge to navigation. Recommendations for intuitive orientation and wayfinding are identified in this Strategic Plan, which will encourage exploration and discovery.



### **Create clear & consistent regulations**

The Resort Municipality continues to expand and change, and clear regulatory frameworks level the playing field for all business and development. Community engagement indicated that consistent enforcement will be key to ensuring equitable opportunity for both old and new businesses. For those that are new to the area, it is especially important to have simple and coherent directives.



### **Support community resiliency**

The Resort Municipality has undergone several major shifts in its identity throughout history, and the environment will continue to shift with the changing times. The quality of life for all community members depends on the ability to adapt to ongoing change as well as major events and disruptions, whether they be environmental, cultural, or economic.

# Governance

Recommendations in this section are intended to create connections and consistency between this Strategic Plan and other municipal documents and practices. This will allow the Resort Municipality to implement strategic directions and ensure all local policies are coherent and compatible.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

## G-01 Conduct a Review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw

## G-02 Continue to Liaise with Parks Canada

## G-03 Work With Other Communities

## G-04 Foster Community Involvement



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation



Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency

G/01

## Conduct a Review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw

### DESCRIPTION

While the existing Official Plan and Development Bylaw were adopted in 2017, they only represent incremental updates to the original 1989 documents. With plan review required every five years, the Municipality hopes to use the results of this Strategic Plan to inform a more comprehensive overhaul of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw.

This plan review should reflect modern concerns such as tourism growth, climate change impacts, and seniors housing. It should also aim to improve the clarity and consistency of policies and regulations.

The Official Plan reflects a plan for the entire community, and should allow everyone to easily understand and interpret it. A clear and coherent plan should use plain language wherever possible and make use of illustrative graphics.

Some key outcomes for the Plan content should include streamlining the permitting processes for both new and existing businesses, zoning updates which encourage the creation of a community core, and expanding housing options.

It will also be necessary to ensure that these regulations are enforceable and that enforcement processes are both consistent and efficient. This will allow the best use of municipal resources and staff time, as well as creating a clearer and more reliable planning framework.

Building on this Strategic Plan, engagement conducted throughout the Official plan review process will provide the Municipality with another opportunity to consult with the community on specific policy directions and regulations.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

n/a

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Issue a Request for Proposals and acquire consulting services.
- Conduct community engagement in partnership with consultants.
- Review draft Official Plan and Development Bylaw and bring to the public for feedback.
- Present final plan to Council.

GOVERNANCE		High Priority
G/02	Continue to Liaise with Parks Canada	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Parks Canada owns and manages a large portion of the land, and the majority of the shoreline, within the Municipality's boundaries. While this arrangement brings many benefits to the local community, it can also be a challenge to have local issues reflected in Parks Canada's priorities.</p> <p>Ongoing partnership is essential to productive and meaningful relationships between the community and Parks Canada. To this end, the Municipality has established a liaison with Parks Canada. This should be continued.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p>		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Parks Canada; local staff and stakeholder group(s).</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to liaise with Parks Canada on matters of land management, land access, special events, and other topics of community interest.</li> <li>Consider forming a local residents committee or appointing staff to organize and redistribute communications.</li> </ul>		

GOVERNANCE		Medium Priority
G/03	Work with Other Communities	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>While the Municipality may have defined boundaries, its residents benefit from services in other communities, and <i>vice versa</i>. The Municipality is also adjacent to unincorporated areas that may wish become part of a like-minded community and share in the services the Municipality provides.</p> <p>Municipal partnerships or amalgamations can allow for greater sharing of services, such as administration, infrastructure, and emergency management.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p>		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Adjacent municipalities; residents of unincorporated areas; PEI Municipal Affairs.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake consultation with stakeholders and the community.</li> <li>Explore ongoing opportunities for shared servicing, such as emergency management.</li> <li>Explore opportunities for municipal partnerships or amalgamations.</li> </ul>		

G/04

Foster Community Involvement

DESCRIPTION

The Resort Municipality is a diverse and fluctuating population of long-term residents, seasonal residents, newcomers, business owners, seasonal employees, and visitors. Although community members are invested in the local goings-on, it can be difficult to reach all segments of this population effectively.

The Municipality's current work to foster community involvement could be supported by the creation of an engagement strategy. Creating an engagement strategy does not have to be a labourious undertaking—it can be completed as a part of the Official Plan review process, or as a separate document. Drafting a comprehensive strategy will help to address some of the unique difficulties of engagement in the Resort Municipality, and help to establish standards and partnerships for the distribution of information. This document should prioritize inclusive and accessible engagement which accommodates all residents across the spectrums of age, ability, language, income, race, gender, and sexuality.

This strategy should dictate when engagement is necessary and to what extent, the target groups, as well as preferred methods. Calling individual households is an

effective tool for reaching permanent residents and tourists can be reached through popular destination sites, while a centralized municipal calendar and email list may be best for reaching seasonal residents and employees.

PEI Connectors is a provincial program serving immigrant entrepreneurs, which often participates in visioning exercises and engagement activities for local municipalities. This inclusion can be particularly useful in determining the needs of newcomer Canadians who may wish to settle down in the Resort Municipality now or in the future. Local resident and tourism associations may also be able to help distribute this information.

Working with local and regional partners will allow the Municipality to access hard-to-reach groups and ensure community members are getting the information they need about all local projects and issues. Residents noted feeling a disconnect between regional management of aquaculture and coastal protections, as well as the National Park. It will be important to identify ways to highlight news that affects the local communities, and to assist in distributing information from these regional partners.

OBJECTIVES



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

PEI Department of Fisheries and Communities; PEI Department of Environment, Water, and Climate Change; Parks Canada; new residents; PEI Connectors; PEI Association for Newcomers; Central PEI Community Navigator; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; SEAL.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Identify partners for local engagement and promotions.
- Work with regional partners to best distribute information about local issues, events and engagement.
- Draft a municipal engagement strategy with a focus on inclusion and accessibility.

# Infrastructure

Recommendations in this section aim to improve local services and transportation options. Implementation of these actions will improve connectivity within the community and target the safety and comfort of local residents and visitors.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

## I-01 Conduct a Review of Central Servicing

## I-02 Expand the Pedestrian Network

## I-03 Improve Cycling Conditions Within the Municipality

## I-04 Improve Cycling Connections to Nearby Trails and Destinations

## I-05 Encourage Development of a Second Access Route

## I-06 Work with All Levels of Government to Expand Rural Internet



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation



Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency



I / 01

Conduct a Review of Central Servicing

**DESCRIPTION**

The busy tourist season creates increased demand on the local sewer system, requiring the system to accommodate these high-pressure periods while remaining feasible for the smaller year-round population.

Recommendations aim to make the most efficient use of the existing system, ensuring connections are optimized and protections are in place to protect against storm impacts.

Residents feel the quality of tourism operations are particularly compromised by the lack of servicing. Currently, all zones except for the Residential (R1) and Public Service and Institutional (PSI) Zones require sewer connections "where available".

Within the review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw, this regulation should be expanded to all zones (excluding the National Park Zone). In addition, the review should detail the distance from a service line which requires a connection. To further maximize use of existing services, a review of sewer fees should also be conducted.

Impacts of climate change have led to increased frequency and strength of storms in the area, and a back-up generator is standard practice to protect against outages in the sewer system.

Water quality within the municipality is good and there have not yet been any issues with supply. However, it would be proactive for the upcoming Plan Review should reevaluate the need for a central water system and determine whether this remains a priority for the community. If the Municipality proceeds with this process, potential wellfields must be identified.

**OBJECTIVES**

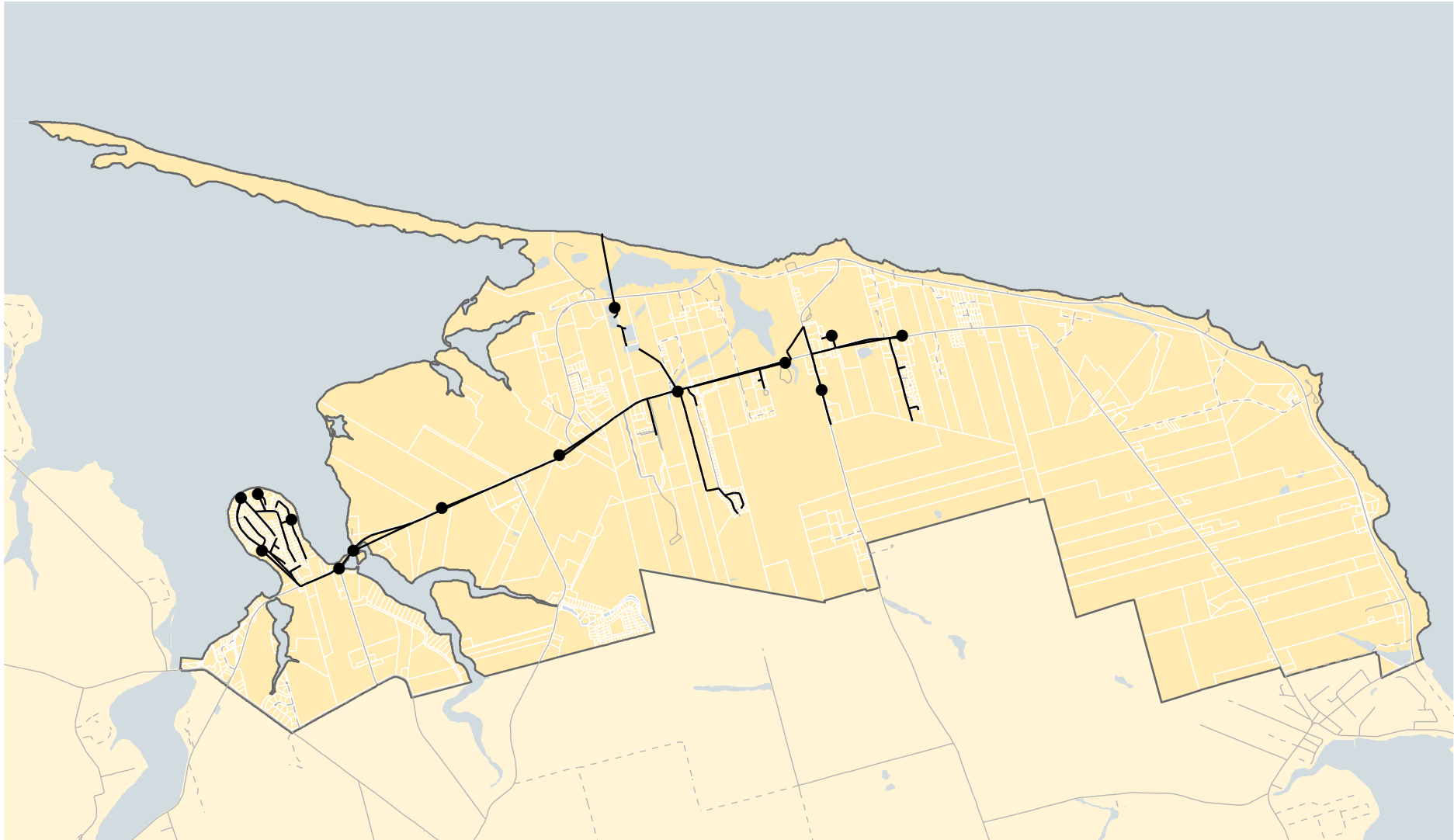


**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

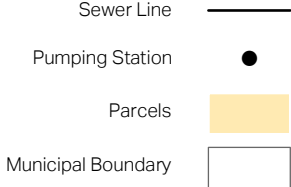
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**STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Review required sewer connections within the Official Plan and Development Bylaw review.
- Review fees for sewer connections.
- Continue to maintain back-up generator for the central sewer system.
- Reexamine establishing a central water system, and identify potential wellfields.



Map 3: Existing sewer services



I/02

## Expand the Pedestrian Network

### DESCRIPTION

Withing the Municipality and the National Park there are kilometres of trails and boardwalks that form the pedestrian network. The Municipality is served by a wooden boardwalk system that runs almost 5 kilometres along Route 6 and Route 13. This system forms the backbone of pedestrian circulation through the Municipality and is used quite extensively in the summer.

There is increasing pedestrian volume on Route 6, particularly along the segment between Route 13 and the Cavendish Boardwalk development (near Graham's Lane). Expanding the boardwalk system along both sides of street would improve circulation and safety for pedestrians. Although wooden boardwalks could be considered on both sides of Route 6, it could be advantageous to use concrete, which can be plowed in the winter and is a more comfortable surface for people who use assistive devices. Alternatively, a wide asphalt path could be considered to serve as a multi-use trail accommodating both pedestrians and cyclists.

The existing boardwalk system links into the trail system within the National Park in several areas, which allows visitors to walk along circular loops that connect the Park to the Municipality. Parks Canada offers one link into Graham's Lane, but there is an opportunity to develop an additional link into the Homestead Trail by working with Parks Canada to extend the boardwalk and build a short trail along a farm road located on federal property.

As the pedestrian network is expanded, it will be important to offer pedestrians safe and convenient opportunities to cross Route 6. Crosswalks should be placed in areas with high pedestrian volume and business traffic.

Whenever possible, crosswalks should be signalized to improve safety. At existing signalized intersections (like Route 6 and Route 13), improvements to the refuge areas would improve safety so that pedestrians do not need to stand on the road before crossing.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Parks Canada; PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Seek funding (including the gas tax program) for a pedestrian network study and implementation.
- Complete an active transportation plan or prioritization plan for the pedestrian network to identify immediate needs.
- Consult with Parks Canada about trail connections on parkland.
- Implement improvements and continued maintenance.



Map 4: Pedestrian network, existing and proposed

I / 03

Improve Cycling Conditions Within the Municipality

DESCRIPTION

The flat, coastal and scenic landscape of the Resort Municipality makes for a great destination for cyclists. Currently, many locals and visitors get around the community by bike. Parks Canada has recently built a protected, bi-directional bikeway along the Gulf Parkway area that connects North Rustico to Cavendish Beach. This cycling facility offers a pleasant experience for cyclists with off-road protection and comfort and scenic views of the coastline.

The Resort Municipality can capitalize on this experience by extending similar bike routes through the heart of the community. In particular, bike lanes along Route 6 and Route 13 would offer visitors and locals an opportunity to loop through the community and along the Parks Canada route.

A new bicycle lane along Route 6, between the intersection of Route 13 to Stanley Bridge would offer visitors a safe, direct and comfortable route to bike through the community. This section of road features paved shoulders throughout, however, the shoulders tend to get narrower as you travel from east to west.

Nevertheless, there is enough space for bicycle lanes on both sides of the highway. Painting bicycle icons and installing signs along the street would be all that is required to make these spaces more inviting for cyclists. A bike path along Route 6 between Route 13 and North Rustico would not be necessary due the presence of the protected bikeway in the Park that runs parallel to the highway.

Currently, the Parks Canada bike route ends just short of the North Rustico Harbour and boardwalk area. If the bike route was extended to and along Harbourview Drive, it could connect with Route 6, Line Road and Route 13 to form a 20 km bicycle loop between Cavendish and North Rustico. Cyclists tend to enjoy loops because they do not require them to ride up and down the same route twice.

Similar to Route 6, bicycle lanes along Route 13 would also offer great bicycle linkages and connections within the community. Currently, there are no paved shoulders along this road, so shoulders would need to be extended when the road is next paved.

OBJECTIVES



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy; Tourism PEI; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; the Town of North Rustico; Parks Canada.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Seek funding for studies and implementation.
- Develop a functional plan/preliminary design to expand and improve bicycle facilities throughout the community and into adjacent communities.
- Consult with partners about trail connections throughout the Municipality.
- Implement improvements and continued maintenance.
- Integrate cycling with wayfinding / signage efforts (project TE/03)



Map 5: Cycling network, existing and proposed

I / 04

## Improve Cycling Connections to Nearby Trails and Destinations

### DESCRIPTION

With cooperation from the Province, these new and future bicycle routes could be extended to connect with other nearby facilities. For example, the Route 6 bicycle lanes could continue **west** beyond the municipal boundary to Kensington, where it could link up with the Confederation Trail.

Heading **east**, bicycle routes along Route 6 could connect the Resort Municipality to the Stanhope area of PEI National Park where there is another section of protected bi-directional bicycle lanes.

On Route 13, the paved shoulders could continue **south** beyond the Municipal boundary toward Hunter River, where it could connect with the Confederation Trail. If this route is developed along with the Route 6 bicycle route, it would form a convenient scenic route for cyclists traveling along the Confederation Trail to travel up and through the Cavendish area.

### OBJECTIVES

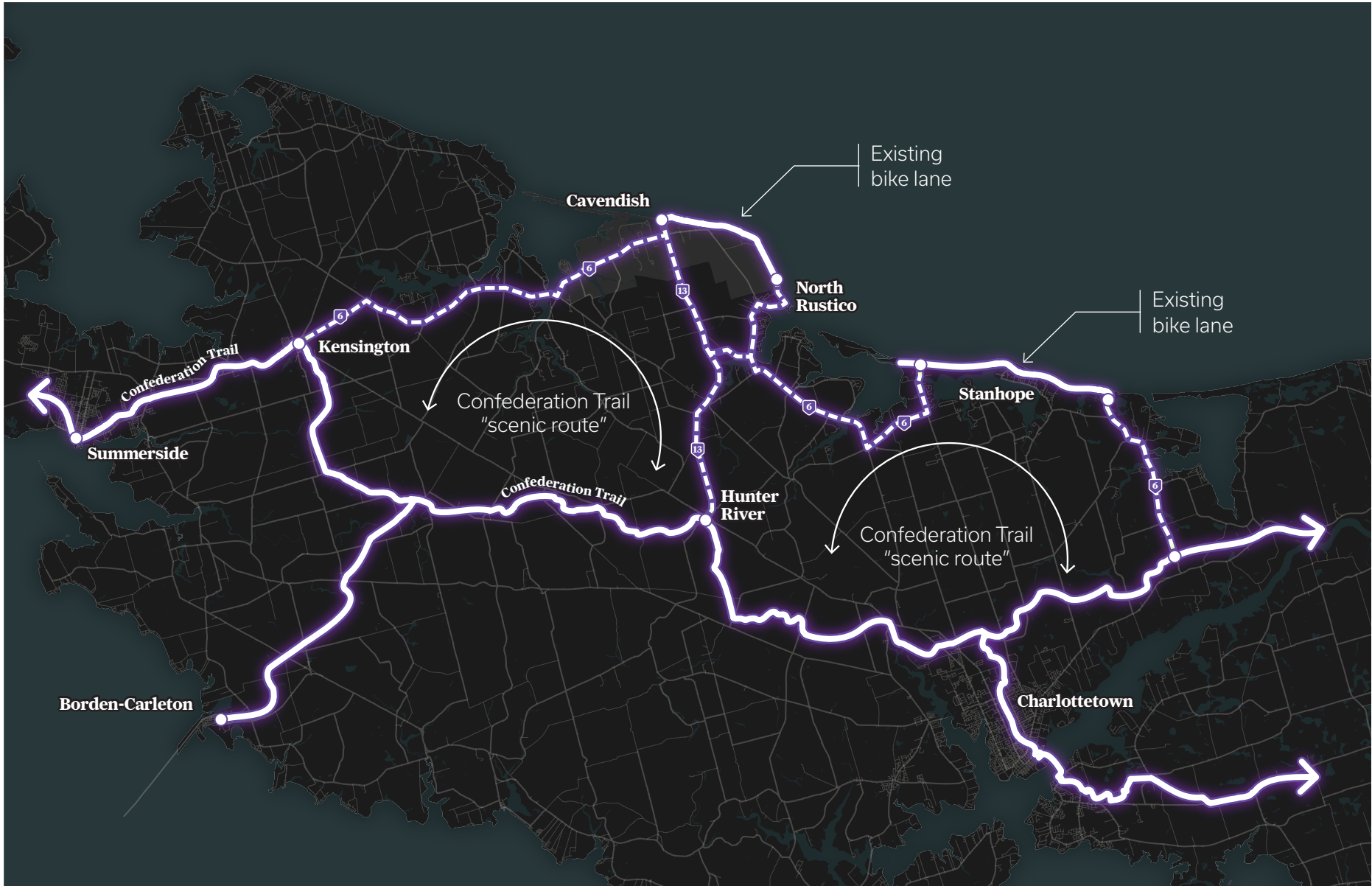


### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy; Tourism PEI; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Island Trails; Parks Canada.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Seek funding for studies and implementation.
- Develop a functional plan/preliminary design to expand and improve bicycle facilities throughout the community and into adjacent communities.
- Advocate for facilities outside the municipal boundaries.
- Consult with partners about trail connections throughout the Municipality.
- Implement improvements and continued maintenance.



Map 6: Regional cycling connections, existing and proposed

I/05

## Encourage Development of Second Access Route

### DESCRIPTION

While Gulf Shore Parkway and Grahams Lane are currently disconnected, this was not always the case. A continuous road along this route provided a second option for traveling east-west through the municipality, lessening the burden on Route 6. However, coastal erosion eventually forced the closure of the portion of this road adjacent to Lake of Shining Waters, and all traffic is now forced to use Route 6.

During major events, this can result in significant traffic issues. For example, the Cavendish Beach Music Festival can draw 60,000 visitors for an annual weekend of music and concerts. This festival has a major effect on surrounding businesses and residences, and dramatically increases traffic in the area.

A secondary, inland, access route would provide an alternate option for traffic, and also provide road access for development on landlocked parcels.

There is also a possibility of connecting the access route into the southern end of the Festival Grounds to provide traffic relief during the Cavendish Beach Music Festival.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

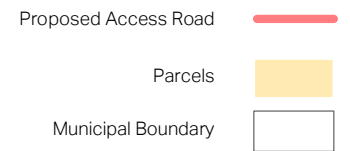
PEI Department of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Energy; Cavendish Beach Music Festival; Forest Hills Golf Course.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Work with the Province and land owners to advocate for the construction of an access connecting Simpsons Mill Road to Route 13.



**Map 7: Potential second access route**



I / 06

## Work with All Levels of Government to Expand Rural Internet

### Description

Internet access is increasingly a determining factor in the success of businesses, and the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a rise in remote work which likely won't be going away. While much work has been done to expand internet in areas such as Stanley Bridge and North Rustico, the lack of rural internet in other areas has been a challenge to newcomer businesses as well as residents and visitors.

In order to accommodate home-based businesses and access to online services, such as tele-health, internet expansions should focus on both commercial zones and residential land.

In 2019, the federal and provincial governments announced a project with Bell Canada and Xplornet to expand rural internet throughout the province. An outcome of this partnership is the Broadband Fund for Communities, open for applications in 2019. The program is administered by Innovation PEI and provides up to 50% of eligible costs

for enhanced broadband services.

The Resort Municipality has the opportunity to communicate with these departments to explore funding opportunities for local broadband infrastructure.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Department of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture; Innovation PEI; Infrastructure Canada.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Complete an application to the Broadband Fund for Communities
- Identify additional funding sources.
- Acquire service quotes and complete a project budget and timeline.
- Work with Innovation PEI on the preparation of the Municipality's application.
- Submit funding application.

# Additional Recommendations

## Support and Expand Public Transportation, Such As the City Beach Express

The Resort Municipality depends on surrounding communities and urban centres for shopping and amenities, and many seasonal employees and tourists come into the community via Charlottetown or Summerside. Public transportation, currently limited to the City Beach Express bus, is essential to facilitating simple, affordable, and sustainable transportation to the Resort Municipality, particularly for students who may not own a car.

The Municipality should support the continued service of the City Beach Express, and explore opportunities to expand public transportation options as they arise.

## Create Policy Allowing the Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Ownership of Electric Vehicles (EVs) has continued to increase over the past several years. EVs are automobiles that run completely or partially on electrical energy. As many EVs require an external energy source to charge the batteries that provide propulsion for the automobile, municipalities have begun requiring EV charging equipment to be installed for different types of development. Currently, there are two stations in the Resort Municipality.

As part of their *Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2033*, the Province committed to designing and installing a province-wide electric vehicle charging network; this has been done on an ad hoc basis as funding has become available. As a popular tourist destination, the Municipality should, through a stand-alone policy or within the Official Plan and Development Bylaw, permit and require electric vehicle charging stations for certain types of development. The Municipality should also work with Tourism PEI and Parks Canada to ensure an adequate number of EV charging stations are available to the traveling public.

## Conduct a Review of Firefighting and Emergency Response Capacity

Fire protection services in the Resort Municipality are provided by three fire departments outside of the boundaries of the municipality. The eastern portion and the National Park are covered by the North Rustico Fire Department; the core area of the municipality by the New Glasgow Fire Department; and the west portion of the municipality by the New London Fire Department.

While there was limited feedback throughout the engagement regarding fire suppression and fire fighting capacity, the Municipality should review its ability to fight fires over the life of this Plan. Reinforcing the current firefighting and emergency response capacity through implementations such as dry hydrants and adequate road standards could improve current capacity.

### Explore Possible Areas for a Dog Park

There are no designated off-leash dog parks within the Municipality for residents and visitors to bring their dogs. Visitors frequently base their vacation decisions around dog-friendly spaces and communities when traveling with pets. One of the main tourist draws in the region, the Prince Edward Island National Park has strict rules that prohibit pets on the Park's beaches between April and October, and pets must be kept on a leash year-round.

The Municipality should consider providing space for an off-leash dog park for residents and visitors to the area to use. An off-leash dog park could be integrated into the community core area recommended within this Strategic Plan or within other future outdoor open space developments the Municipality may undertake.

### Work with the Provincial and Federal Government to Evaluate RCMP Needs

For the majority of the year, police calls are serviced from the Charlottetown Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) office. During the busy summer months additional RCMP resources are based out of the Cavendish Visitor Information Center to help deal with the increased activity. While the policing demands have not grown with increased visitorship, traffic control demands are outpacing the detachment's resources.

To ensure the community remains adequately policed, the Municipality should continue to work with Provincial and Federal Governments to evaluate the Municipality's policing needs. The Municipality may explore cost sharing a local RCMP detachment with the community of North Rustico or request additional policing during the summer months to keep up with local demand.



Royal  
Canadian  
Mounted  
Police

Gendarmerie  
royale  
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Canada



# Living Here

Recommendations in this section look to allocate appropriate amenities and housing for all residents. The section focuses on changes that directly impact and prioritize permanent residents.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

## LH-01 Encourage a Variety of Housing Options

## LH-02 Prioritize the Provision of Healthcare and Social Services

## LH-03 Encourage Expanded Commercial Amenities

## LH-04 Support Energy Independence

## LH-05 Encourage Winter Recreation



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation



Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency

LH / 01

Encourage a Variety of Housing Options

DESCRIPTION

The Resort Municipality's current Development Bylaw allows single family dwellings and summer cottages (or seasonal residences) with the R1 Residential Zone, the RD2 Resort Accommodations Zone and the RR Rural Zone. Multiple family dwellings are allowed as a special permit use in the R1 and RD2 Zones, while duplexes and semi-detached homes are a special permitted use in the RD2 Zone.

Seniors housing is split into three categories, and the PSI Public Service and Institutional Zone permits senior citizen homes, nursing homes, and community care facilities (as well as group homes), while community care facilities are included as a special permit use within the RD2 zone.

While this zoning does not reflect it, residents are interested in housing diversity which improves quality of life by attracting new permanent residents and addressing the needs of seniors and seasonal workers. There are three key ways local housing policy can be expanded to meet need:

1. Modest forms of multiple unit dwellings such as duplexes and townhouses would expand development opportunities in the community and provide affordable home ownership options, while still conforming to the small, rural community.
2. Supportive housing, particularly models targeting the senior population, should be encouraged to incorporate healthcare services and locate near to amenities and pedestrian infrastructure.
3. Employee housing is in high demand during the summer, and land use policy that allows for dormitory housing and adaptive reuse of existing buildings near or within tourism accommodation properties would help meet this demand.

These recommendations can be implemented through a review of the Official Plan by streamlining the residential development process, expanding allowed uses, and encouraging centralized development. Community engagement with local stakeholder groups will help to clarify housing needs and opportunities.

OBJECTIVES



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

PEI Connectors; PEI Senior Citizens' Federation; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI, neighbouring Municipalities.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Conduct a review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw.
- Consult with local groups representing recent immigrants, seniors, businesses, and employees.
- Expand residential uses to allow for smaller housing options.
- Encourage housing development within walkable areas.
- Streamline the development process for alternative housing options.

LH / 02

## Prioritize the Provision of Healthcare and Social Services

### DESCRIPTION

Timely access to health and community services is an important issue for local residents, since the nearest hospital is about 40 minutes away and there is no ambulance stationed in the local area (other than during the Cavendish Beach Music Festival).

The Municipality has recognized the importance of providing timely 24/7 access to defibrillators (AED) in case of cardiac emergency and has posted signage at the local registered massage clinic (where one is available for public access) and at the Visitor Information Centre.

Otherwise, there is no local walk-in clinic or other physician services within the municipality, although a walk-in clinic has been proposed for consideration in nearby North Rustico.

The Gulf Shore Medical Board has lobbied to establish an emergency medical service (EMS) within the community, beginning seasonally. By working with local stakeholders, this addition could make a major difference in the municipality, and remove some strain from fire services.

Other social services such as recreation programming and daycare are also limited. It will be important moving forward to ensure that local land use policies do not limit the ability of such services to locate in the area.

Advocacy among provincial partners will help to locate public services where they are most needed.

### OBJECTIVES





### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Health PEI; Gulf Shore Medical Board.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Work with partners to explore the creation of a Resort Municipality EMS centre within the municipality.
- Identify existing public AEDs and review need for more.
- Define healthcare facilities and clinics within the Development Bylaw.
- Consider streamlining the development process for social services such as professional centres and child care facilities.
- Work with Health PEI to identify other gaps within the municipality.

LIVING HERE		Medium Priority
LH/03	Encourage Expanded Commercial Amenities	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Both residents and visitors report difficulties accessing everyday services such as groceries, shopping, and public services like a post office. Outside the tourist season, many businesses such as the Tourist Mart close, requiring longer travel even for simple shopping needs.</p> <p>Encouraging expanded commercial amenities will better accommodate visitors and residents and encourage new permanent households.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> 		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Local business community; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage centralized commercial development along route 6 through a review of the zoning map.</li> <li>Work with local businesses to extend the tourist season.</li> </ul>		

LIVING HERE		Medium Priority
LH/04	Support Energy Independence	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>This coastal island community is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and energy efficiency + generation ("energy independence") improvements can help residents mitigate these impacts, reduce their carbon footprint, and improve housing affordability.</p> <p>Energy retrofits can be encouraged by highlighting programs available to assist homeowners.</p> <p>The current Development Bylaw does not explicitly allow solar panels. While they could be integrated flat on a roof, they would not be permitted as a stand-alone use or if they exceeded the maximum building height.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> 		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Efficiency PEI.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly allow solar panels as both a primary and secondary land use.</li> <li>Provide details about provincial energy retrofit grants through the development permitting process.</li> </ul>		

LIVING HERE		Low Priority
LH/05	Encourage Winter Recreation	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Residents report feeling a disconnect with the land, while at the same time visitors are increasingly interested in eco-tourism and outdoor activities.</p> <p>The community has expressed an interest in improved winter recreation as well as an expanded shoulder season.</p> <p>Many small municipalities, such as Kentville and St. Mary's, NS have found great success increasing winter recreation by lending snow shoes and cross-country skis at low or no cost.</p> <p>In the winter season, the Municipality's network of trails can be expanded by partnering with golf courses.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p>		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Parks Canada; golf courses.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with Parks Canada to offer winter programming.</li> <li>Promote all-season trail use and active transportation.</li> <li>Offer equipment rentals such as snowshoes and cross-country skis through the Municipal Office.</li> </ul>		

## Additional Recommendations

### Consider Forming a Heritage Society

The Resort Municipality is rich in history. It includes three designated heritage properties, strong cultural and economic ties to its stories, and a variety of cherished historic landscapes. However, there is currently no single body charged with researching, interpreting, and promoting the community's heritage assets. Developing a Heritage Society would help establish a clear voice for the preservation and enhancement of these valuable assets. Visitors and residents are often drawn to genealogical research, and this society could also be tasked with managing the municipal archive currently held by the local office.



# Coastal

Recommendations in this section are focused on coastal issues which pertain to both the small municipal coastline as well as property within Parks Canada ownership. Intensifying effects of climate change require the community to mitigate the risks of flooding and erosion while also considering the local industry and recreation dependent on the ocean.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

## C-01 Review Waterways and Aquaculture Regulations

## C-02 Protect Municipal Land from Flooding and Erosion

## C-03 Protect and Enhance Shoreline Access



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation



Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency

C/01

Review Waterways and Aquaculture Regulations

DESCRIPTION

Jurisdictional boundaries prevent the Municipality from regulating activities beyond the ordinary high water mark, and aquaculture licenses are obtained from and administered by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. However, the Municipality should ensure the ability to conduct on-land aquaculture activities, such as processing and tank-based aquaculture.

To protect other waterways such as rivers, streams, and lakes, the Municipality should actively enforce and encourage development activities to occur away from these natural features. Current regulations should be reviewed to reflect legislation and best practices for management.

OBJECTIVES



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans; PEI Department of Environment; Water and Climate Change; Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group; Trout River Environmental Committee; property owners.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Enable land-based components of aquaculture within the Development Bylaw.
- Review the Development Bylaw with the intention of limiting hazardous development along watercourses.



C/02

Protect Municipal Land from Flooding and Erosion

DESCRIPTION

While the majority of the municipality's coastline is managed and protected by Parks Canada, there are still local opportunities to ensure municipal lands are protected from coastal flooding and erosion. While the Resort Municipality's cliffs protect much of the coastline from sea level rise, Prince Edward Island is particularly susceptible to coastal erosion, and the Municipality should work to ensure adequate steps are taken to protect current and future assets.

Parks Canada employs a management strategy that prioritizes restoration and retreat from the coastline, with structural armoring only used in specific scenarios. The Resort Municipality should adopt these same management principles for all other coastal lands within the boundary of the municipality. Where applicable, naturalized shorelines, which generally cost less in initial construction and maintenance compared to structural infrastructure, should be prioritized. Structural infrastructure can significantly alter natural ecosystems by impacting sedimentation, preventing coastal retreat, and harming local flora and fauna, among others.

The protection of coastal lands from erosion and flooding will require continuous environmental monitoring. The Municipality should work with Parks Canada and other coastal stakeholders to ensure erosion and flooding projections - especially from sea level rise - are kept up to date. Assets within Parks Canada land such as the wastewater treatment facility and those on lands contiguous to Parks Canada land should also be analyzed for their ability to withstand the impacts of flooding and erosion.

In addition to coastal flooding and erosion, the rivers and streams in the municipality represent potential threats, especially from overland flooding. Hard, impermeable surfaces such as roads and driveways prevent water from saturating into the water table and can create localized flooding hazards and increases erosion potential with increased storm-water runoff. Reducing hardscaping and establishing adequate lot sizes should be prioritized to ensure these impacts are reduced. Any regulations must comply with provincial legislation including the watercourse and wetland setback.

OBJECTIVES

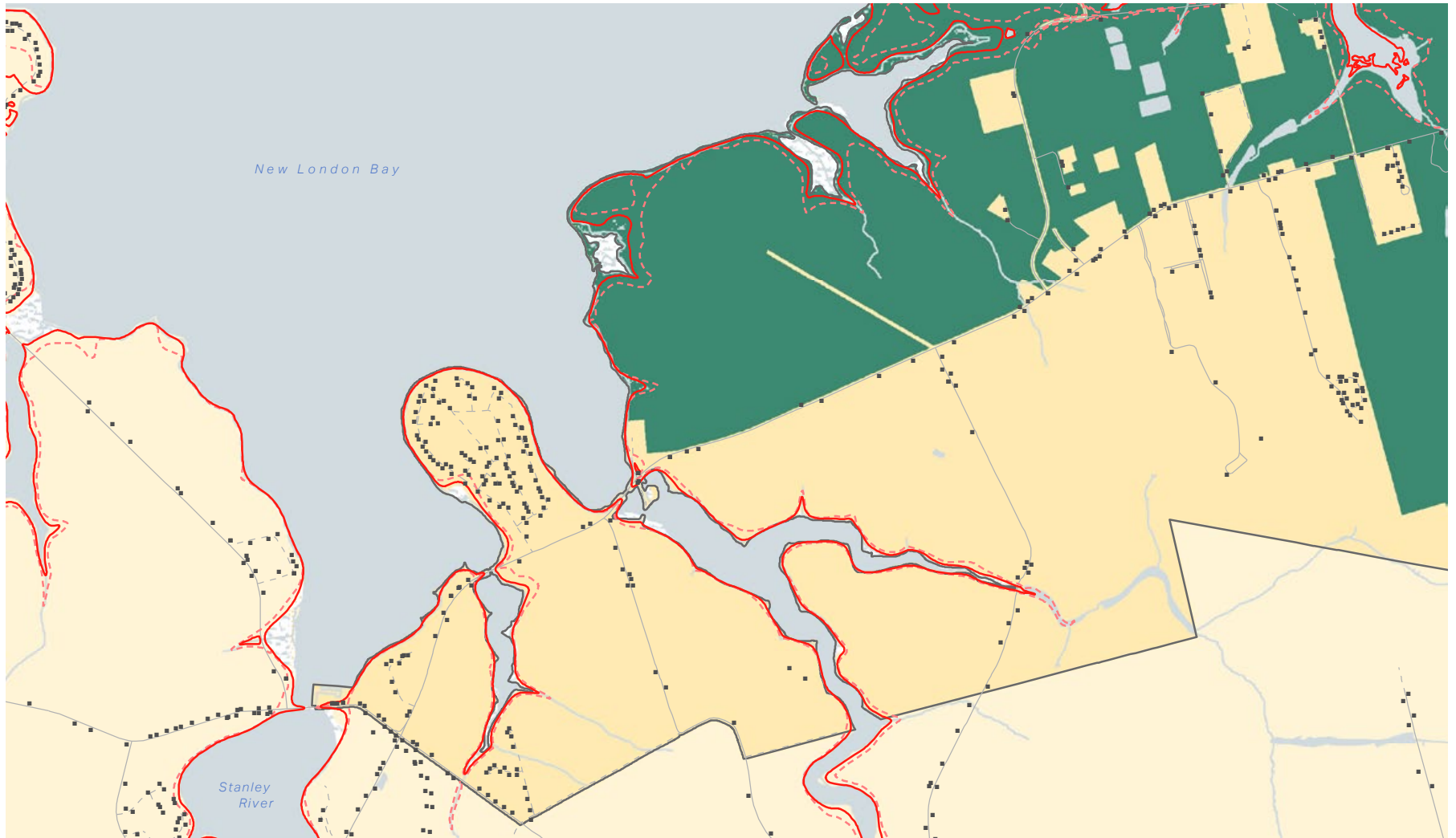


POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Parks Canada; PEI Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change; Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group; Trout River Environmental Committee; coastal property owners.

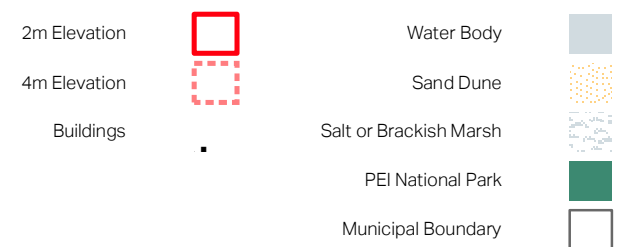
STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Partner with Parks Canada and the PEI Department of Environment, Water, and Climate Change to develop coastal flooding and erosion projections past 2100.
- Develop an asset management plan, specifically regarding infrastructure in flood-prone and erosion-prone areas.
- Implement "living shorelines"--natural habitat restoration--along municipal coastal properties
- Establish lot coverage, hardscaping, and watercourse setback regulations in the Development Bylaw.



**Map 8: Sea level rise along the municipally-controlled shoreline**

Sea level rise projections for nearby Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island indicate that, based on the current levels of carbon dioxide emissions, sea levels could rise between 1 and 1.2 m by 2100, in addition to swells caused by storm surge. This map shows 2 and 4 metre elevations along the western portion of the coastline that falls outside of the National Park boundaries (i.e. the area over which the Municipality has control).



C/03

Protect and Enhance Shoreline Access

**DESCRIPTION**

Although Cavendish Beach is located within the Resort Municipality, there are limited opportunities for free outdoor recreational activities within the municipality, including access to the shore. To access Cavendish Beach residents must show a Parks Canada pass or pay the required fee. The Municipality should explore opportunities to provide discounted Parks Canada passes or discounted entry to Cavendish Beach for residents within the municipality as a way to enhance free outdoor recreation opportunities.

Currently, Swimming Rock Municipal Park, a property purchased by the Municipality that overlooks New London Bay, provides free access to the shoreline for residents and visitors of the Resort Municipality. It should be a priority of the Municipality to ensure this property remains a municipal asset to retain free shoreline access.

The Municipality should also look to purchase additional properties along the shoreline—either contiguous to, or in a different location from Swimming Rock Municipal Park—to enhance the public’s access to the shoreline. Designing these spaces so they are openly accessible to every person in the community should be a priority.

The Municipality should also work to protect coastal properties from harmful activities that could threaten water quality and coastal ecosystems. Industrial activities and any other potentially harmful activities should be limited along the shoreline.

Finally, the Municipality can enhance shoreline access through its subdivision regulations. If properties along the shoreline are subdivided, the Municipality may require that public access to the shoreline is maintained or created.

**OBJECTIVES**



**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Parks Canada; property owners; residents; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI.; Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group; Trout River Environmental Committee.

**STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Discuss with Parks Canada about the potential of a discounted Park Pass or reduced entry fee for residents of the Resort Municipality.
- Reinforce Swimming Rock Municipal Park as a public open space that provides access to the shore with additional amenities.
- Require provision of public access to the shore when coastal subdivisions are developed.
- Prohibit industrial or harmful activities along the shoreline within Development Bylaw.



# | Land Use

Recommendations in this section explore the use of land within the Resort Municipality and identify opportunities to address local issues and trends, such as heritage protections and street trees.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

- LU-01 Encourage the Creation of a Community Hub**
- LU-02 Re-examine Recreational Vehicle Regulations**
- LU-03 Encourage the Protection of Agricultural Land**
- LU-04 Expand Use of Cavendish Beach Music Festival Grounds**
- LU-05 Protect View Planes**



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation



Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency

LU/01

Encourage the Creation of a Community Hub

**DESCRIPTION**

The development that has occurred within the Resort Municipality has largely been oriented towards the visitors who come to experience the history and nature of the region; however, little development has occurred that supports and enhances a sense of community for the municipality's residents. To foster a greater sense of place and community, the Municipality should encourage the creation of a community hub along Route 6.

At the heart of any community is a place where people are able to go to access services and socialize with other residents and visitors. This depends on a mix of private services (coffee shops, patios, health clinics, etc.), a higher density of residential uses, public infrastructure investments (beautification, etc.), and civic amenities.

While the Municipality cannot actively create the private services and residential uses, it can implement zoning to enable and even require any commercial or residential development in the community hub to contribute to a "sense of place". Development regulations in these areas should require

new buildings to be located near to Route 6 and a minimum of two or three storeys tall, to create a sense of enclosure and define the space. Design guidelines should guide the architectural quality of building to reinforce a consistent character to the hub.

In terms of civic amenities, residents report a lack of opportunities to play tennis and pickleball, play at a playground, and ice skate. One or more of these facilities could provide a civic drawn for the community hub.

The ideal location for a community hub in the Resort Municipality would be located along Route 6. The intersection with Route 13 in Cavendish is a natural location, with the VIC/Municipal Office already acting as a civic anchor, and opportunities to intensify the area with civic use of the grassy northwest corner, and perhaps the eventual redevelopment of the Petro Canada site. There are other opportunities for secondary centres, such as North Rustico, where a large portion of the population is located and the Home Hardware forms a commercial centre, and at the entrance to the municipality in Stanley Bridge.

**OBJECTIVES**



**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Parks Canada; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; PEI Connectors.

**STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Conduct engagement with the community to determine what is most desirable in a community core area and where it should be located within the community.
- Conduct review of Official Plan and Development Bylaw to reflect any required changes.
- Leverage funding from other levels of government for physical infrastructure implementations.

LU / 02

Re-examine Recreational Vehicle Regulations

**DESCRIPTION**

Recreational vehicles (RVs) are a popular option for travel, but also as a semi-permanent alternative to cottages or cabins on private land. At the same time, there can also be concerns about noise, overcrowding, or the neighbourhood impacts of semi-permanent habitation of RVs outside of campground areas.

RVs can be difficult for municipalities to regulate because they are mobile. However, a municipality is well within its powers to regulate the location, size, and design of campgrounds through the Development Bylaw, and require that RVs only be used for habitation (temporary or otherwise) if they are located within a campground.

The private parking of RVs can also be regulated to some degree by regulating sewage connections and accessory structures (roofs, decks, storage, etc.).

The Municipality has conducted a review of how other jurisdictions—from Banff to Lunenburg to Tignish and more—regulate RVs. These regulations range from none at all, to limits on time periods for occupying an RV, to outright prohibitions on sleeping in an RV. This jurisdictional review will help inform discussions during the Official Plan and Development Bylaw review.

**OBJECTIVES**



**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Local residents.

**STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

- Conduct engagement as part of the upcoming Official Plan review.
- Update policy and regulations related to RVs in the Official Plan and Development Bylaw review.

LU/03

Encourage the Protection of Agricultural Land

DESCRIPTION

Agriculture is integral to the identity and character of the Resort Municipality. It makes up the dominant land use within the municipality. Ensuring it remains as such is key to this Strategic Plan. With much of the farmland in the municipality being leased as Crown land by Parks Canada, the Municipality and its residents hold limited control.

The Municipality should continue to work with Parks Canada to ensure local farmers have access to land and are able to continue farming practices in the area. Farming practices could be bolstered if smaller plots of land became more readily available for local farmers. The current allocation of Parks Canada land is oriented towards large land holdings, which are not feasible for small-scale producers.

For land outside of the jurisdiction of Parks Canada, the Municipality should work to develop strong policies and regulations to retain and protect prime agricultural land, including the potential for prohibiting most forms of development on these lands. These lands contribute to the rural nature of the Resort Municipality and are integral in establishing the character of the community.

As an extension of the protection of agricultural land, the Municipality should work with local farmers, producers, and artists to support the development of a fish and farmers’ market, potentially as an anchor in one of the community core areas. These markets can help stimulate local economies and support farming activities, all the while developing a sense of community.

OBJECTIVES




POTENTIAL PARTNERS

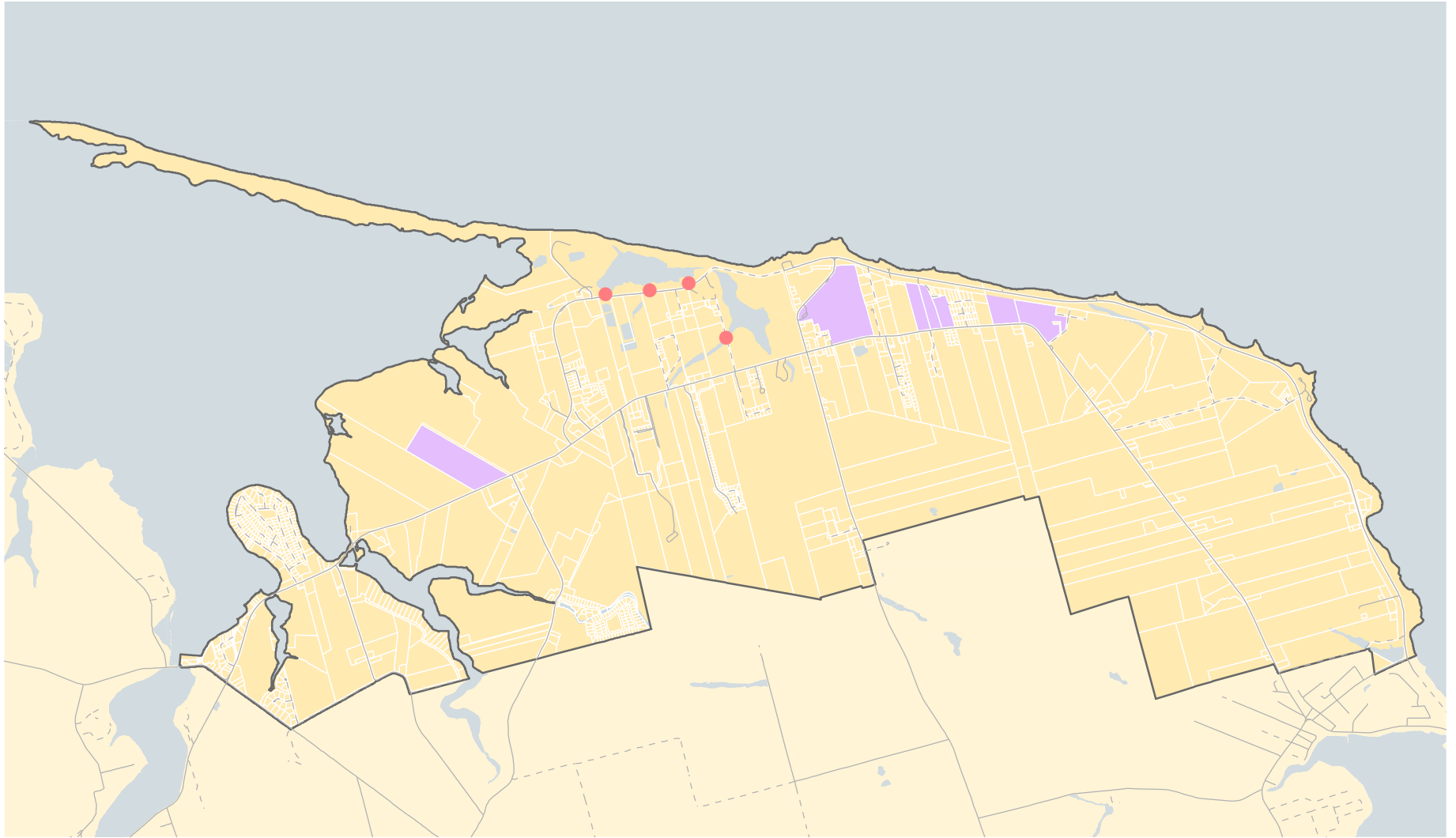
Parks Canada; agricultural producers.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

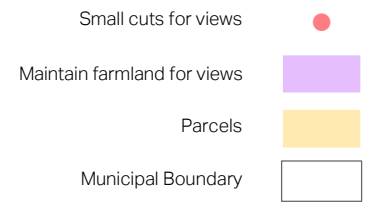
- Develop strong regulations to protect existing agricultural lands under municipal jurisdiction.
- Support development of a fish and farmers market during the summer months.
- Work with Parks Canada to establish small-scale property leases for local farmers.

LAND USE		Medium Priority
LU/04	Expand Use of Cavendish Beach Music Festival Grounds	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>The Cavendish Beach Music Festival is a large annual tourist draw for people from all over the world. However, the use of the festival grounds is limited to a very short time period during the year. The Municipality should look to work with festival organizers to increase the functionality of the space.</p> <p>The space has the potential to showcase and promote local talent and industry during and outside of the tourist season. Additionally, as a large outdoor greenspace, there is also potential to use the space for recreation and leisure activities.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p> 		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Cavendish Beach Music Festival; Local sport and recreation groups; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; Music PEI.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to use stage equipment and land for local performances or festivals during and outside of the main tourism season.</li> <li>Coordinate with tourism and music organizations to promote local musicians.</li> <li>Develop outdoor recreation programming for the area.</li> </ul>		

LAND USE		Medium Priority
LU/05	Protect View Planes	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Four official view planes have been established in a partnership between Parks Canada and the Municipality, where vegetation is not allowed to obstruct the cultural landscape.</p> <p>“Unofficial” view planes along Route 6 could also warrant protection in light of changing agricultural trends and the potential that some farmland may be transitioned out of use in the future should demand cease. Discussions will aim to balance the goals of restoring the Acadian forest with maintaining the community's historic quality.</p>		
<p><b>Objectives</b></p> 		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Parks Canada.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support existing protected view planes.</li> <li>Create a contingency plan in partnership with Parks Canada for the future use of existing farmland.</li> </ul>		



Map 9: Important view planes



# | Tourism & Economy

Recommendations in this section target tourism and other businesses. Tourism is the municipality's main economic driver but the industry must be regulated to maintain the destination as a sustainable and enjoyable community. New trends like home-based businesses and eco-tourism may warrant updates to the current approach.

The following recommendations will help to accomplish this goal, and they are described in more detail on the following pages:

## **TE-01 Encourage Home Businesses**

## **TE-02 Create a Regulatory Guide for Business**

## **TE-03 Develop a Wayfinding Program**

## **TE-04 Co-ordinate an Extended Tourism Season**

## **TE-05 Support Diversified Tourism Opportunities**

## **TE-06 Encourage Economic Diversity**



Foster a strong sense of place



Preserve the historic rural quality



Enable access to local amenities



Set strong infrastructure standards



Improve active transportation











Make it easy and intuitive to explore



Create clear and consistent regulations



Support community resiliency

TOURISM & ECONOMY		High Priority
TE / 01	Encourage Home Businesses	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Opportunities for home businesses lower the barriers to entry for new businesses by allowing business owners to take advantage of an asset they already own: their home. Home businesses can also provide convenient employment for residents who have challenges leaving the home.</p> <p>The current Development Bylaw permits domestic arts and home offices. This list could be expanded to encourage</p> <p>additional home businesses, such as pet grooming, household item repairs, catering, and even niche retail sales.</p> <p>At the same time, there is also the risk that commercial activities can impact residential neighbourhoods, and the risk that home businesses could draw away demand for commercial spaces in the core. Regulations must continue to limit the scale and appearance of home businesses.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b>        </p>		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>n/a</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of Official Plan review, engage with residents on appropriate types of home businesses.</li> <li>Update Development Bylaw to reflect new regulations.</li> </ul>		

TOURISM & ECONOMY		Low Priority
TE / 02	Create a Regulatory Guide for Businesses	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p>Establishing a new business can be an overwhelming task, with a long list of necessary federal, provincial, and municipal permits needed to operate various aspects of the business.</p> <p>The Federal Government has created the BizPal.ca website, which provides information on permitting by location and</p> <p>business type. The Resort Municipality does not currently participate in this program, so municipal permit information is not available on the platform.</p> <p>The Resort Municipality should explore becoming a BizPal partner and/or develop a local regulatory guide, with appropriate translations.</p>		
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b>        </p>		
<p><b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>BizPal; Province of PEI; PEI Connectors; PEI Association for Newcomers; Central PEI Community Navigator; local businesses; newcomers.</p>		
<p><b>STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate list of municipal permits (development permit, sewer permit, etc.) and related application forms.</li> <li>Issue an RFP for consultant services to develop a local regulatory guide.</li> <li>Reach out to the Province to express interest in BizPal.</li> <li>Post digital regulatory guide to municipal website and print copies for availability at municipal office.</li> </ul>		

TE /03

## Develop a Wayfinding Program

### DESCRIPTION

The Resort Municipality covers a relatively large area in relation to the number of businesses and services. While most points of interest are located along Route 6, the large distances involved mean visitors want to be confident they are heading in the correct direction for their intended destination. This is particularly true for active transportation users (e.g. bicycle tourists) who can be significantly inconvenienced if they take a wrong turn, or if they arrive at a destination that is closed or full.

The Resort Municipality is also a location that experiences significant international tourism, with many visitors who have limited English-language ability.

The Province of PEI has a formalized Tourism Directional Signage program. However, the Resort Municipality has opted out of the *Highway Signage Act Regulations* and implemented its own Signage Bylaw (last updated in 2018). This Bylaw focuses on regulation of signage within the municipality, but does not provide a cohesive structure for developing an overall municipal signage program.

A municipal wayfinding program should:

- Provide a cohesive approach to branding and a clear structure for organizing directional information. This may also include branded banners or planters to beautify the communities within the Resort Municipality.
- Provide signage tailored to automobile drivers and to active transportation users.
- Include information kiosks at each entry to the municipality, with a map and contact directory for local services.
- Include translations into other languages (Japanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and French are particularly in-demand) on primary signage.

Developing and implementing a wayfinding program should be eligible for funding under the Municipal Strategic Component of the Gas Tax program.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Parks Canada; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; tourism operators.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Issue a standing offer for translation services.
- Issue an RFP for development of a municipal wayfinding strategy.
- Apply for gas tax funding.
- Develop projects recommended by wayfinding strategy.

TE / 04

## Co-ordinate an Extended Tourism Season

### DESCRIPTION

The Resort Municipality's economy is highly dependent on seasonal tourism. The peak months are July and August, though many businesses and services have seasons that start after the May long weekend or in mid-June, and run until early September. Parks Canada sites have reduced services in the spring and fall, and shut down for the winter in late October.

This heavy seasonality creates challenges, including:

- Infrastructure that must accommodate large swings in demand (e.g. sewer)
- A short period for businesses to cover their fixed expenses
- A lack of services for residents in the off-season
- A need for non-student staff to find employment in the off-season

Extending the shoulder season would help reduce the challenges of seasonality without requiring additional infrastructure.

There are of course reasons for this seasonality, including the school year and climate. Other barriers to extending the season include the availability of staff (many of whom are university students) and a "chicken and egg" problem in which individual businesses are hesitant to remain open when the rest of the businesses and services a tourist requires are closed.

Addressing these barriers requires a strategic and co-ordinated approach. Early efforts should focus on establishing a core group of operators (covering accommodations, food service, and activities) who agree on a shared date for the extension of the season, and communicating a "we're open" message through the Visitor Information Centre and advertising efforts. With Parks Canada sites operating until late October, this provides a initial foundation to establish a fall season tourism product. Financial incentives developed with all levels of government could also provide support.

Importantly, extended tourism offerings must target visitor segments who are not constrained by the start of school.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Parks Canada; Tourism Industry Association of PEI; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; tourism operators.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Identify a core group of operators covering the range of essential services.
- Establish consensus date(s) for length of extended season.
- Develop a communications package identifying the open businesses and any promotions (e.g. package deals).
- Evaluate challenges and successes.

TE / 05

## Support Diversified Tourism Opportunities

### DESCRIPTION

The Resort Municipality has long been a destination for family-fun vacations—centred on Cavendish Beach and on the many amusement attractions—and “Anne”-based tourism. These core offerings will continue to be an important part of the Resort Municipality’s economy.

However, there are also shifting trends within the tourism industry. Visitors are increasingly seeking an “authentic experience” rooted in sense of place; experiential tourism and locally-focused culinary tourism are on the rise in Canada; and an interest in physical health, mindfulness, and “slow travel” are fueling activities such as yoga tourism and cycle tourism.

Importantly, many of these trends support, and can be accommodated by, an expanded tourism season. For example, restaurant menus that adapt to local seasons are currently in vogue.

Tourism Cavendish Beach’s three-year strategic plan identifies opportunities to diversify tourism offerings, including:

- nature-based experiences
- local and indigenous history products
- cultural experiences, such as an L.M. Montgomery literary tour
- “conferences-by-the-sea”
- full-service wedding experiences

Primary responsibility for this diversification falls outside of the municipal role. However, the Municipality can help support this project through investments in infrastructure (e.g. bicycle network, multi-purpose facility), through zoning for appropriate businesses, and as a general champion for the tourism industry.

### OBJECTIVES



### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Parks Canada; Tourism Industry Association of PEI; Tourism Cavendish Beach; Central Coastal Tourism Partnership; Tourism PEI; tourism operators.

### STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Support and encourage diversified tourism through a review of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw.
- Continue to support the local tourism sector and work with local business and tourism associations and operators.

TE/06

Encourage Economic Diversity

DESCRIPTION

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how major events can disrupt the foundations of any community. While the next challenge might not be public health related, it could be a natural disaster, a social movement, an economic crisis, or any number of events. Regardless of what the changing circumstances bring with them, the fundamental need is an ability to adapt.

Tourism is important to the local economy and a large part of the community's cultural identity, but this reliance can be precarious, as recent events have proven. Encouraging economic diversity and building resiliency will require commitment and collaboration from the Resort Municipality, the Province, and local businesses and residents.

Creating flexible zoning can enable the development of a wider range of businesses, including those that may not fit the mold of conventional land use practices, such as small craft breweries, which tend to fall between the lines of industrial and commercial zones. Reevaluating zoning and the accompanying land use regulations can make room for a diversity of businesses that

fall outside the tourism umbrella.

The need for economic diversity is seen throughout the Island communities, and working with the Province may present an opportunity for financial incentives. Providing grants and low-interest loans, as well as business advice to local tourist operators looking to pivot could have great benefits for both entrepreneurs and the wider community.

Industries the Municipality may wish to attract could include service providers, technology, education, alternative energy, and certain forms of light industrial operations. Regardless of the industry, the focus should be on attracting a diversity of employment opportunities which support and attract permanent residents and offer living wages, job security, and flexibility for workers.

OBJECTIVES



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

PEI Department of Economic Growth, Tourism, and Culture; local business operators.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Create flexible zoning for diversified and unique business opportunities.
- Work with the Province to establish financial incentives for existing tourism operators to shift their business to an alternate sector.
- Prioritize opportunities for the creation of quality employment with living wages, job security, and flexibility.

# Additional Recommendations

## Explore Regulatory Options for Short-Term Rentals

Short-term rentals (Airbnb, VBRO, etc.) have long been a part of the accommodation ecosystem in PEI. However, the development of digital rental platforms has increased their popularity and visibility. They come with a number of potential benefits (income for homeowners, supply of tourism accommodations, etc.) and also potential challenges (effect on rental housing supply, competition with traditional accommodation providers, impacts to neighbourhood, etc.). Unlike many other jurisdictions, the municipality has not, to date, experienced the challenges of short-term rentals in any major way.

The Municipality should consider exploring a basic regulatory framework to help monitor the evolution of this industry and, if necessary, respond with limits or controls to minimize impacts on other areas of the community.

## Encourage Extended Hospitality Business Hours

A common comment among resident participants in engagement activities was the early closing times of restaurants and drinking establishments in the Resort Municipality, which affects the “liveliness” of the community. It does not appear as if there are any regulatory barriers to extended hours, and this is likely a business decision. However, the Municipality should engage with hospitality owners and determine if there are any barriers that can be removed, or other approaches that would encourage such businesses to extend their hours. Such extended hours may not be possible for all businesses, but the possibility should be explored.





UNEVEN  
SURFACE

Section 5

# Inspiration + Conclusion

# Inspiration

While the Resort Municipality is unique within PEI, similar resort municipalities exist elsewhere Canada in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

In British Columbia there are 14 communities considered to be resort municipalities in function, though only Whistler is a resort municipality in governance. The Province of BC has implemented a Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) to fund the creation of tourism sectors that are diversified, sustainable, healthy and green through improvements to infrastructure, services and programs. There is a focus on increasing the number of visitors as well as their length of stay and extending the shoulder season.

Golden, BC utilized RMI funds to develop Spirit Square, a community plaza at the heart of downtown. Working with the community and consultants, the municipal government developed a vision and defined development program for the site. The resulting public space has been an anchor for redevelopment and place-making adjacent to the Kicking Horse River.

Saskatchewan's largest Resort Village, Candle Lake, is typically known for its sandy beaches and watersport activities. However, it has built up a year-round tourism industry by focusing on fall and winter outdoor activities, including snowmobile trails, ice fishing, snowshoeing, and curling. Many of these activities are conducted in partnership with Saskatchewan Provincial Parks through Candle Lake Provincial Park, and advertising efforts highlight both the park itself and opportunities outside the park.

In Alberta, a number of municipalities are categorized as "summer villages". These are communities with typically fewer than 300 permanent residents, but high seasonal populations. The Summer Village of Birchcliff recognized the need for ongoing and effective public engagement in all aspects of municipal governance, and developed a Public Engagement Policy to formalize those efforts.

Their policy can be found here:

<http://www.sylvansummervillages.ca/bylaws--policies2.html>

## Conclusion

The Resort Municipality has seen significant change and growth since the adoption of the original Official Plan in 1989, and this Strategic Plan is intended as a visioning process to determine the community's direction for years to come. This process has provided overall direction for the Municipality, matched resources to opportunities, and addressed challenges and barriers the community is facing.

Over the next 20 years, the Resort Municipality will be able to tackle these holistic recommendations for the future and work towards the community vision. A review and overhaul of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw are a key next step, and this project will advance objectives related to land use and infrastructure.

All of these strategic directions aim to further improve and enhance the local quality of life for all residents, businesses, and visitors in this exceptional community.



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