

Committee of the Whole Meeting

June 25, 2024

Berwick Town Hall Council Chambers

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of the Agenda**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. May 27, 2024
- 4. Presentation**
 - a. Alan Warner – Blomindon Naturalist Society
- 5. Department Reports**
 - a. BDVFD
 - b. Community Development
 - c. Public Works
 - d. Finance
 - e. CAO
- 6. Committee Reports**
 - a. AREA Board
 - b. Accessibility Committee
 - c. Community Development Committee
 - d. Intern IMSA Board
 - i. Kings Transit Authority
 - ii. Valley Waste
 - e. KMCC Governance Committee
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Communications Plan Presentation
 - b. 2024/25 Council Priorities
 - c. MPS/LUB Second Reading Date
- 8. Mayor's Report**
- 9. In-camera**
 - a. Personnel
- 10. Adjournment**

A Protected Area for Kings County:

Proposal for the Chain Lakes Wilderness Area

Blomidon Naturalists Society



Blomidon Naturalists Society

- Established 1974
- Over 225 members in area
- Almost 1600 Facebook followers
- Public talks, field trips, field courses, publications, scholarships, conservation efforts



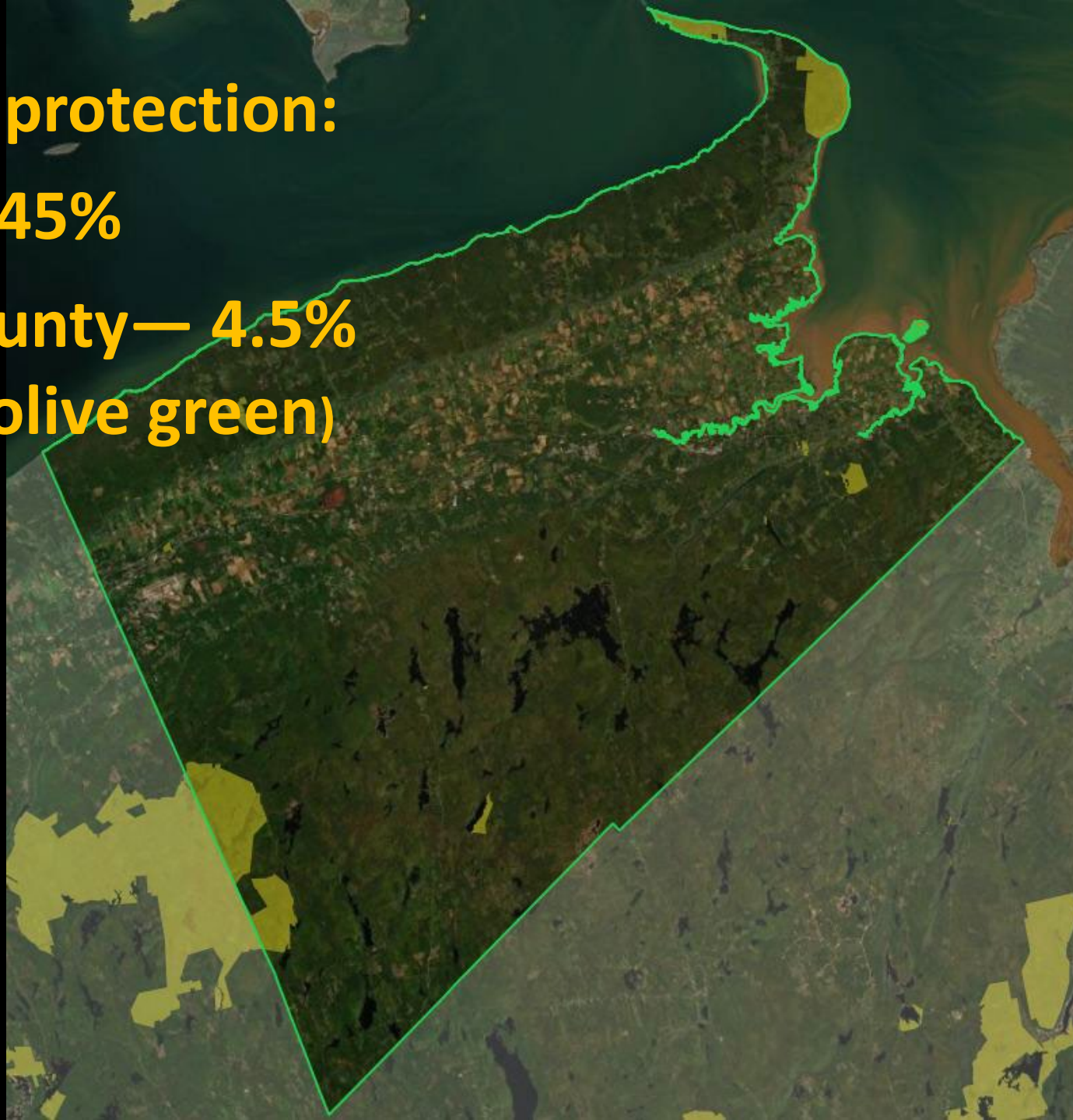


NS Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act

- To protect 20% of Provincial Lands by 2030, 15% by 2026
- Strategy released to achieve this, Dec. 2023

Current land protection:

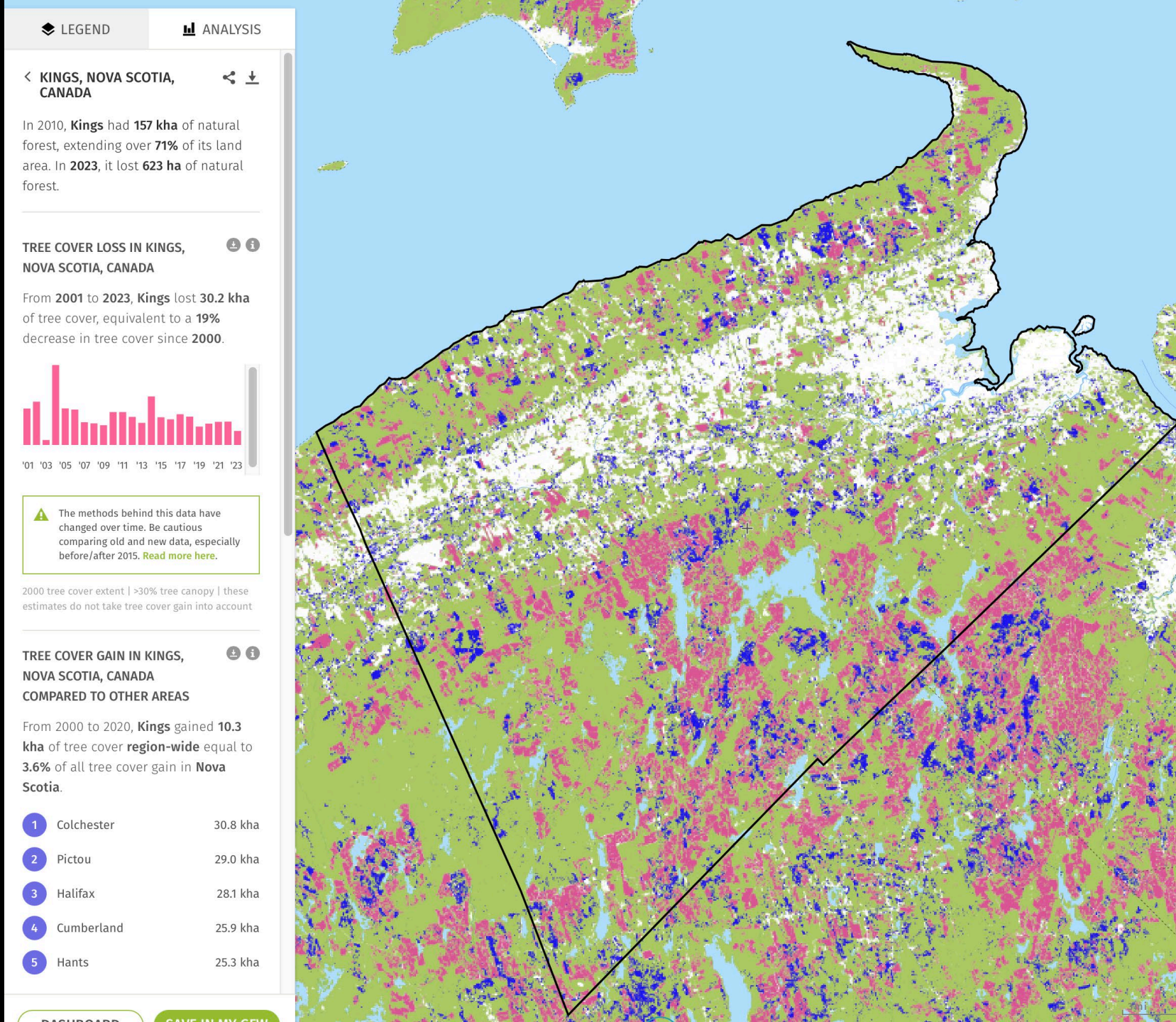
- In NS— 13.45%
- In Kings County— 4.5%
(shaded in olive green)



Kings County has lost 19% of its tree cover since 2000.

- Pink represents places cut.
- Blue represents tree cover gained.

From globalforestwatch.org



Why Protect Public Lands in Kings County?

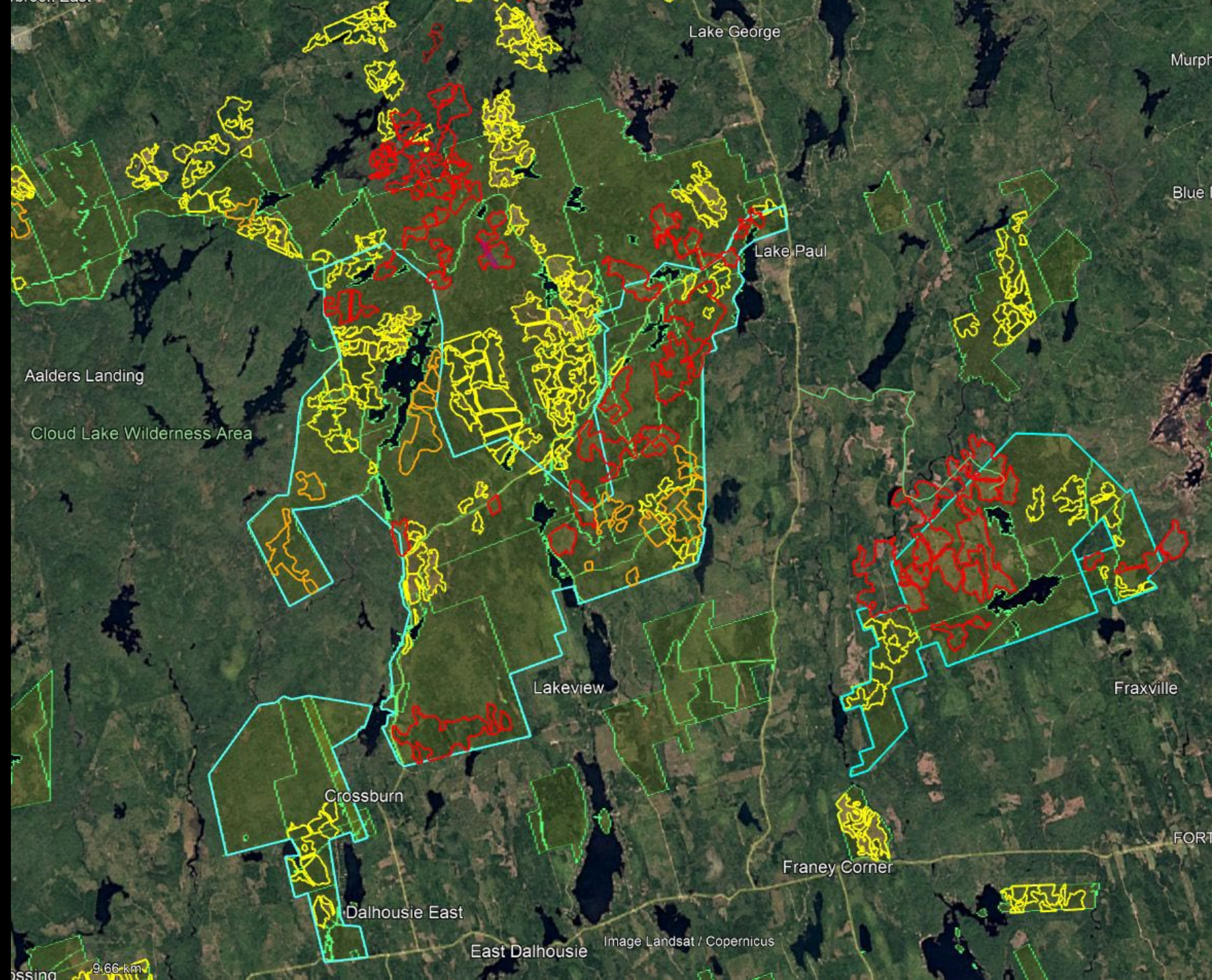
For

- biodiversity
- recreation, tourism & economic benefits
- protection of endangered species
- health and wellness, now & in future
- reduction in human impact on climate



Cutting in Area Since 2004

- **Green Outline - Proposed Protected Area**
- **Yellow Outlines – Cut after 2016**
- **Red Outlines – Cut before 2016**
- **Orange Outlines - Partial Cut Areas before 2016.**



At-Risk Species Identified in the Wilderness Protected Area

Yellow highlighted species are on the endangered list.

Gully Lake Area surveyed by James Churchill

Conservation Status Rank	Scientific Name	Common Name
S3B	Cardellina canadensis	Canada Warbler
S3	Perisoreus canadensis	Canada Jay
S3S4	Loxia curvirostra	Red Crossbill
S3S4	Arctoparmelia incurva	Finger Ring Lichen
S3B	Contopus cooperi	Olive-sided Flycatcher
S2S3	Pannaria lurida	Wrinkled Shingle Lichen
S3S4	Anaptychia palmulata	Shaggy Fringed Lichen
S2S3B, S1M	Chaetura pelagica	Chimney Swift
S3	Collema nigrescens	Blistered Tarpaper Lichen
S3S4	Leptogium acadiense	Acadian Jellyskin Lichen
S3S4	Heterodermia speciosa	Powdered Fringe Lichen
S2S3	Collema leptaleum	Crumpled Bat's Wing Lichen
S3B	Charadrius vociferus	Killdeer

Gully Lake Area surveyed by Alain Beliveau

Conservation status	Scientific Name	Common Name
S3	Neottia bifolia	Southern Twayblade
S3	Perisoreus canadensis	Canada Jay
S3B	Chordeiles minor	Common Nighthawk
S3B	Cardellina canadensis	Canada Warbler
S3B	Contopus cooperi	Olive-sided Flycatcher
S3S4	Leptogium corticola	Blistered Jellyskin Lichen
S3S4	Heterodermia speciosa	Powdered Fringe Lichen
S1S2	Fraxinus nigra	Black Ash
S2S3B, S1M	Chaetura pelagica	Chimney Swift
S3	Spinus pinus	Pine Siskin
S3	Fuscopannaria ahlneri	Corrugated Shingles Lichen
S3	Leptogium milligranum	Stretched Jellyskin Lichen
S3S4	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
S3S4	Amelanchier spicata	Running Serviceberry
S3S4	Anaptychia palmulata	Shaggy Fringed Lichen
S3S4	Heterodermia neglecta	Fringe Lichen
S3S4	Evernia prunastri	Valley Oakmoss Lichen
S3S4	Coccocarpia palmicola	Salted Shell Lichen

Chain Lake Area surveyed by James Churchill

Conservation Status Rank	Scientific Name	Common Name
S3B	Contopus cooperi	Olive-sided Flycatcher
S3B	Cardellina canadensis	Canada Warbler
S3	Chelydra serpentina	Snapping Turtle
S2S3	Collema leptaleum	Crumpled Bat's Wing Lichen
S3S4B	Contopus virens	Eastern Wood-Pewee
S3	Spinus pinus	Pine Siskin
S1S2	Fraxinus nigra	Black Ash
S3S4	Leptogium acadiense	Acadian Jellyskin Lichen
S3S4	Anaptychia palmulata	Shaggy Fringed Lichen
S3S4	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
S3S4	Loxia curvirostra	Red Crossbill
S3B	Chordeiles minor	Common Nighthawk
S3S4	Heterodermia speciosa	Powdered Fringe Lichen
S3S4	Sclerophora peronella (Atlantic pop.)	Frosted Glass-whiskers (Atlantic population)
S3	Collema nigrescens	Blistered Tarpaper Lichen
S3	Perisoreus canadensis	Canada Jay
S2B	Euphagus carolinus	Rusty Blackbird
S2S3	Parmelia fertilis	Fertile Shield Lichen
S3S4	Leptogium corticola	Blistered Jellyskin Lichen

What Does Protection Mean?

- Commercial resource development is prohibited, except existing commitments.
- Recreation activities are permitted.
- Existing snowmobile and ATV trails and usage are guaranteed at the outset. New trails or usage areas for motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- Access to private lands across area assured. Existing land leases honoured.



Education and Support Efforts to Date

- Letters of Support received from Kings County, Port Williams, Kentville, the Kings and Mid-Valley ATV Clubs, and the Valley Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club.
- Public Petition campaign to be presented in the NS Legislature is in progress (approximately 500 signatures to date)
- Meetings held with NS DOE & DNRR, MLAs— Chris Palmer & Keith Irving
- Facebook and Instagram social media campaign in progress





What is Needed Now?

- Assessment through NS Environment Protected Areas consultation and designation process
- Public, organizational and municipal support for the proposal.
- Pause/Moratorium on development/resource extraction in forests and wetlands in area until boundaries are defined.

We are asking for the Town of Berwick to provide a letter of support for the proposed Chain Lakes Wilderness Area.

Committee of the Whole Monthly Report



Department: Community Development
Date: June 25th, 2024

Council Priorities

- **Climate Action Plan:** Deferred. The grant for assistance was not approved. Will reassess in the fall.
- **Rainforth Park Playground Consultation:** Staff attended Berwick Playgroup and the Berwick and District School Spring Fling to gather community feedback on the Rainforth Park playground. Further community consultation will be held over the summer, targeting satisfaction/dissatisfaction and presenting more information about the current playground, as well as other community playground updates.
- **Centennial Park Implementation:** Although we have not received word from the province regarding the Rec Facility Development Grant, we have decided to publish a tender for the building's construction in the coming month. To accept any granted funds, we must wait to "break ground" until confirmation is received.
- **Attracting Small Businesses:** The Valley REN hosts monthly office hours in the Town Hall. The first session was a success, meeting with several local business owners. Valley REN has launched a new online resource that highlights local commercial businesses for sale or space for rent which can be viewed online at any time from any location around the world.
- **Increased Programming/Programming for all ages:** With the addition of summer staff, we have expanded programming offerings beyond existing day camp opportunities and community celebrations to include shuffleboard, summer concert series, outdoor volleyball nights, pop up plays in the park, humans vs zombies, drop-in soccer games, leader in training program as well as TGIFridays. This is in addition to ongoing programming offered by the Town including table tennis, adult basketball, weekly walks, tai chi and pickleball etc.

Key highlights

- The Fitness Centre has shared information with the public regarding rate increases effective July 3rd. Comments have been supportive.
- The Fitness Centre will pilot an "open early" opportunity in September and October after receiving feedback from the community regarding workouts before school starts. This will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.
- Splash Pad is open, minor repairs were required of the buckets due to damage sustained over the winter. Public Works were able to complete repairs in-house.
- Rough draft of a handout for welcome packages has been created. An email was sent out to community businesses and organizations asking for info to contribute.

- Kings County Seniors 55+ Games washer toss tournament was hosted in Centennial Park in June with the support of the County of Kings.
- All summer staff will have started as of June 28th. A second round of interviews was held for the park's maintenance assistant role, and the role was successfully filled. The department supports the admin process for all students (grant applications, creating and sharing call for resumes, reviewing resumes and creating job descriptions, designing interview questions, setting up meeting times and bookings, administering interviews, calling references, hiring and creating offer letters, finalizing grant paperwork).
- The basketball backboard has been ordered. The shipping date was June 16.
- An application for the Provincial Community Rec Capital grant was approved. Carols Place floor will be replaced during the week of June 24th.
- The Heritage Station Park opening took place on June 1st in the morning. The opening included a tour of the amenities and unveiled the sign with its new name. Weekly Walk leaders led a trail walk for attendees.
- An Active Kids Healthy Kids grant was secured to begin a new TGIFridays program directed at youth. Set to begin later this summer, the program will provide space to come together to socialize and be active!
- We continue to advertise for After School Program staff. We will continue this search until we have either confirmed the YMCA will be hosting their program, or until we hire a successful candidate.
- The department continues to staff the front desk two days per week and are creating strategies to support the onboarding of the new staff regarding facility bookings, communications and more.
- The 26th Berwick Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place on Saturday, June 8th. The event was well attended. Mike Franics, Ardie Hopkins, Jackie Allen, 2008-2011 CK Girls Soccer Teams, 1958 CK Cross Country Team and Harley Moody were inducted into the Hall of Fame. This event, and committee, were supported by two department staff.
- The Summer Concert Series will begin July 4th and be each Thursday, at 7 PM in Centennial Park. The full schedule of performers is on our website, social media and posters around town. On August 8th, there will be a family fun evening in the park. Berwick Scouts have expressed interest in attending each week to sell refreshments and snacks as a fundraiser.
- Staff are working with community partners to offer a drop-in program in the fall, for community members and their families to build connections. This will be targeted at newcomers but open to everyone, on Saturday mornings beginning in October.
- Our CD Intern has been working diligently to prepare for staff onboarding and planning of summer events. Final copies of the staff training, parent, and daily activity manual have been created. In addition to in-house training, staff have

virtually participated in High Five Certification training and will attend a summer staff training day in Greenwood.

- Weltons Construction has been hired to grade the Apple Capital Heritage trail twice this summer (or as needed). The contractor also completes trail grading for Kings County Trails Society. Mowing and trimming for this season is still to be confirmed. The Trails Coalition Committee meeting scheduled for June 19th will lay out options and pricing for maintenance work for 2025.
- Camp Kindness (Supported by D. Conrad and team) hosted free after-school programming in the park two days a week through June. This program was sports based. Camp Kindness is offering eight weeks of varied programming through the summer months in the Town of Berwick, with access to Town facilities. These programs complement our current programming offerings by targeting different age ranges and offering more specialized programming.
- Staff assisted with the Berwick and District School Field Day on June 24th
- Family fun afternoon will be held June 28th for the last day of school before summer vacation. This will launch a "Chalk Your Walk" event, where residents are encouraged to use sidewalk chalk to decorate their driveways and sidewalks.
- CCTH Beautification Grant has been submitted. If successful, an order will be submitted to secure downtown decor for the upcoming holiday season.
- Arrangements have been made with both Parks and the Community Garden group to ensure greenspaces throughout Town are identified and maintained.
- On June 12th members of the community came together in front of Town Hall to raise the progress pride flag. There was representation from 14 Wing Greenwood, PFLAG Annapolis Valley, Kingston United Pastoral Charge, Annapolis Valley Regional Library and more.
- Design, printing, and hanging of downtown beautification banners has been completed with a focus on brand standards and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment!
- Working on sign design and installation for Heritage Station Park and Public Works to be ordered and installed as soon as possible.
- We have partnered with United for Literacy who will offer their summer reading program in Centennial Park for eight weeks this summer, as well as for the eight weeks of day camp.

Next Month Priorities:

- Prepare Centennial Park Concept Plan for presentation to Council and explore options for Towns' Gateway
- Publish tender for Centennial Parks Building
- Host a community meeting regarding Rainforth Park Playground
- Installation of gaga ball pit and community bulletin board in Rainforth Park
- Work with Customs broker re: clearance of Centennial Clock
- Look into tennis programming options
- Installation of Plaques (Centennial Garden, Kays Garden, Donation)
- Town Wide Yardsale promotion, event taking place July 20th

Department: Public Works
Date: June 2024

Council Priorities

Finalize Asset Management: Ongoing.

- 5 June - CAO, Director of Finance, Director of Public Works met with Matt Delorme, AIM Network to discuss Asset Management tools and budgeting.
- 20 June - CAO and Directors visited West Hants Municipal EPW Management and Staff to review their asset management software, Cartegraph.
- Next Step – Director of Public Works to receive training on GIS mapping Software from AIM Network.

Storm Water Management: Ongoing.

- (week of) 10 June - Director of Public Works reviewed the 2004 TOB Storm Water Management Plan.
- 11 June - Council approved the Town's application to the Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP) to update the Town's Stormwater Management Plan.
- 13 June - CAO and Director of Public Works applied for Provincial Capital Assistance, seeking \$53,214.00 for the provision of a Town of Berwick Storm Water Management Plan.
- Next Step – Begin drafting the scope of work for the Stormwater Management Plan Engineering RFP.

WWTP Upgrades – Aeration & Blowers: On Hold.

- Work to continue once the tender period for WWTP Filter Upgrades has been closed, and work has been awarded.

WWTP Filter Upgrades: Ongoing.

- 10 June - Tender released.
- 20 June - Addendum #1 released.
- Next Steps - Tender closes 12 July. Anticipated Invitation to Pilot 2 August. Anticipated Award Date 20 September.

Sidewalk Upgrades – Maple Avenue: Ongoing.

- 13 June - Director of Public Works met with Engineer to review design options and considerations.

Key Highlights

Operations:

- Mowing, grounds keeping
- Installed flowers, banners, flags, chairs (seasonal beautification)
 - Line Painting Commercial, Orchard (centre lines); crosswalks, stop lines ongoing

- Fixing of holes along roads (Cottage, Commercial, Brown, Foster)
- WW Treatment:
 - UV Light Equipment repairs required due to faulty circuit board; pricing and lead time to be determined.
 - Upgrades to facility computer system for improved connectivity to Office365.
- WW Collection:
 - New Laterals (2) installed on ~204 Main Street
 - Pump failure at the Morse Pond pump station; pricing and lead time to repair or replace to be determined.

Capital (e.g. not already mentioned):

- Ordered new vehicle (Ford F150 XLT Hybrid).
- In the process of obtaining quotes for Fleet Management devices (GPS).
- WW Treatment: berm reinstatement work completed.
- Town Hall: Accessibility improvements for Customer Service Area design review ongoing.

Next Month Priorities:

- Mowing, grounds keeping
- Line Painting
- Paving repairs (late June)
- Vactor flushing, linear asset inspection (late July)
 - Pump stations, gravity sewer linear
 - Storm linear and basins along Commercial
- Review of WWTP Filter Upgrades tender responses
- Release of WWTP Blower / Aeration Upgrades tender in July, subject to Engineering Consulting availability

Department: Finance
Date: June 2024

Council Priorities

- **Finalize Asset Management:**
 - **Asset Management Meeting-** Reviewed program Riverport Electric and Town of Mahone Bay Electric utilize.
 - **Asset Management Meeting with Atlantic Infrastructure Management Network-** Management met with Matt Delorme and reviewed concerns with condition assessments and missing data. Berwick will be piloting the enhanced asset management tool which now includes debt servicing forecast and reserve levels.
 - **Asset Management Meeting with West Hants-** Attended an excellent session with the members of the Public Works team in West Hants to review their asset management software and work order system.

Key Highlights

Berwick Electric Commission (BEC)

- **Insurance Claim-Factorydale Generator:** The insurance adjuster has confirmed the forensic auditor has all requested information and will be producing their report within the next week.
- **Insurance Claim-Factorydale Turbine:** The four responses to the Owner's Engineer Request for Proposal (RFP) have reviewed and the BEC management team met with a short-listed vendor to review their proposal in more detail. The recommendation for award will be presented to the BEC on July 9th.
- **Insurance Claim-Bezanson Substation:** The small replacement transformers have been received to replace the damaged ones. The ground has been remediated and soil samples have confirmed there are no concerns. The large transformer has been ordered and hoped to arrive within this fiscal year.
- **Request for Proposal-Dam Safety Review:** The RFP for a Dam Safety review at Factorydale closes on June 28, 2024.
- **Vehicle Capital Purchase:** The new SUV has arrived and will be decal shortly.
- **Contracted Meter Reading Service:** The RFP for meter reading services has been posted, with a close date of July 29, 2024.
- **Recruitment for Powerline Technician:** Recruitment continues to back-fill the leave of a team member, with interviews being held this month.

- **Municipal Innovation Program (MIP):** Berwick attended the project planning meeting with Town of Mahone Bay and AREA staff. The Director of Shared Utilities drafted an Inter-municipal Service Agreement (IMSA) and management met to review and provide feedback. This agreement will be provided to the Commission for approval.
- **Cash Flow Constraints:** We have seen a slight improvement in our cash flow because of the rate increase and excellent collection efforts on accounts in arrears by our Finance Admin. Coordinator. We continue to struggle with timely meter reads as the team gets pulled away to competing priorities. The settlement of the Factorydale Generator claim of \$420,000 will have a significant positive impact.
- **CRA Payroll Audit for 20/21 Appeal:** A CRA representative will be on-site to conduct a more in-depth review related to the BEC's appeal of the CRA's decision related to the 20/21 audit.
- **Utility and Review Board Meeting:** We met with the UARB board members and key staff to initiate an open working relationship with the Board as we work collectively through streamlining our General Rate Application and Flow Through formulas and processes.

Town of Berwick

- **2023/24 Audit:** Audit preparation is underway. The auditor will be onsite the week of August 19th; the Audit Committee meeting will be scheduled prior to September 10th Council where the draft audited financial statements will be presented for approval. **Please note**, while the Town and BEC are on track to meet the legislated deadline of September 30th for audited financial statements and the financial information return, AREA will be required to have their statements completed and approved as they are consolidated with the Town.
- **Purchase Orders:** Staff are waiting for a resolution from Central Square, the financial system support, and plan to roll out testing shortly thereafter. Staff will bring forward a recommendation for the Signing Authority/Purchasing Policy at a future date for Council's consideration.
- **Solar Garden Project Finance:** We continue to have outstanding requests pending with AREA regarding outstanding ICIP claim funds, expenses and holdbacks. The delay in information being provided in a timely manner and lack of accuracy when received, is straining resources, as a thorough review is required once received, resulting in additional communication of requests for corrections and again the delayed response time from AREA. The project continues to incur interest expenses due to these two issues. We have received no communication regarding our inquiries into this over the past six weeks.

- **Financial Consultant:** Our financial consultant has been heavily involved with the reconciliation of the solar garden project finances for the past five months. This was an unexpected resourcing burden to the Town as a result of limited AREA resources allocated to the project and financial management of the solar garden. While the expenses related to this resource are being expensed to the solar project, it has delayed our projected timeline to complete the Town's audit preparation. We believe we will still be successful in meeting the regulated deadline of September 30th, for producing our audited financial statements and financial information return.
- **Solar Garden Operations & Maintenance:** Several meetings have occurred to discuss options for O&M for the solar garden and a complete list of requirements is needed to properly define this plan. We continue to work with stakeholders to ensure the most efficient, cost-effective plan for our site.
- **AREA Special Board Meeting:** Attended a special board meeting to review potential power purchase agreement with particular focus on the Town's inability to provide operating guarantees. Discussion ensued on alternate options to negotiate.
- **Police Services Recipient Meeting:** Attended the presentation by the Department of Justice regarding Provincial Police Service Agreement, including policing cost recovery mechanisms.
- **Recruitment Office Administrative Coordinator:** An offer has been accepted and we are excited to have them join on July 2!
- **Request for Proposal-Multi-Use Printer:** Submissions are under review and the recommendation will be brought to the Council meeting for approval at the upcoming Council meeting.
- **Phone System:** We will be streamlining our phone service, moving to Microsoft Teams as our main phone service. As this is fully integrated with Microsoft 365 this solution will provide more functionality over our current provider, better service for our customers and a small savings in costs will be recognized.
- **Video Security System:** Management is pleased with the pilot of the cameras.
- **Computer Replacements:** 2024/25 computer replacements have arrived, and the IT consultant has begun the deployment.

Next Month Priorities:

- **23/24 Audit Preparation**
- **Berwick Electric Commission meeting**
- **Meeting with Insurance Equipment Breakdown Specialist** – Factorydale Powerhouse
- **Powerline Technician Recruitment:** Interview three candidates.
- **Onboarding of Office Administrative Coordinator**
- **MEU Regulatory Tasks Meeting**
- **AREA Board Meeting**-Regularly scheduled board meeting June 26th and July 17th.

Department: CAO and Administration
Date: June 2024

Council Priorities

- **2024 Municipal Election:**
 - Krista Longmire has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the Town of Berwick and is participating in returning officer information sessions with other municipal units.
 - CD staff are arranging a social engagement for potential candidates to provide information and answer questions. Date TBD.
- **BEC Succession Plan:**
 - The Municipal Innovation Program project between Berwick Electric, Town of Mahone Bay Electric Utility and the Riverport Electric and Light Commission continues. A draft Intermunicipal Services Agreement between the Municipal Electric Utilities have been prepared for discussion at the staff level before coming to the Commission for consideration.
 - The new Director of Electric Utilities has been working with Berwick Electric and Town staff to progress a number of priorities such as, Factorydale Turbine – Owner’s Engineer, Dam Safety Review, Meter Reading contract, hybrid vehicle replacement and hiring of a Power Line Technician.
- **Committees of Council Review:** A list of Committees and members has been compiled and vacancies have been identified and filled where possible. Staff is proceeding to develop terms of reference for committees.
- **Communications Plan:** A draft Communications Plan has been developed and will be presented to Council June 25 for approval at the July Council meeting.
- **Policing Review:**
 - Members of staff and Council attended a presentation from the Department of Justice regarding policing.
 - Staff have been seeking a copy of the Provincial Policing Services Agreement for Berwick and working on local policing priorities for Berwick.
 - RCMP will be scheduling bike patrols in Berwick this summer.
- **Renewable Energy Projects:** AREA and the owner Towns and their Municipal Electric Utilities and considering Power Purchase Agreements for additional wind in an effort to become 100% renewable.

Key Highlights

- Met with the Utility and Review Board on June 14. The first of future meetings to discuss challenges and identify opportunities to streamline processes such as General Rate and Flow Through Applications. The Board did indicate they are awaiting future communication on the Solar Garden ownership request. Staff will be preparing correspondence indicating that the Town of Berwick will own the asset and sell power to the Berwick Electric Commission as soon as possible.
- Participated in discuss with AREA and owner Town's staff regarding guarantees for energy versus debt to report back to the AREA Board on June 6.
- Attended AREA Board meeting on June 13.
- Continue to work on an operating and maintenance plan for the solar garden with staff and Mahone Bay. Goldbeck was responsible for cutting the grass at the solar garden one last time before passing responsibility to the Town. This was completed on Thursday, June 20.
- We have had on-going data communication issues at the solar garden that our IT consultant is now involved with. We have had to replace an inverter and are having issues with two other inverters that are tripping off because too much energy is being produced. These issues impact the data we receive for reporting on actual vs. projected energy production. When an inverter is not communicating it is still producing energy and registering on the revenue meter. However, when an inverter is tripped off due to the amount of energy being procedure this means that solar panel is not producing. Once the inverter issue is fixed, we will work on integrating the revenue meter reading with the online portal to provide more accurate production data.
- Continue to work on unsightly property complaints. Of the four, one had been directed to the Development Officer and is in the process of meeting compliance. The other three are still on-going. The complainants are frustrated with the slow process and deadlines not being met as we struggle with trying to work with the property owners to address the issues while juggling other priorities.
- The Interim Intermunicipal Service Agreement (IMSA) Board held a special Interim IMSA on May 28 to discuss the WSP – Kings Transit Strategic Plan report. Another special meeting took place on June 12 to receive recommended options from the Interim IMSA Pilot Project. The Board has requested a joint Council meeting to receive an update and approve an extension of the Interim IMSA to work on the recommended options.
- The Executive Assistant attended a Rules of Order and Meeting Procedure workshop provided by the Association of Municipal Administrators on June 14. The valuable information will be used to assist with Council Orientation in the fall.
- Participated in a number of Asset Management meetings to identify

programs/software that can help management use the data compiled in 2023.

- Virtually attended the Office of Regulatory Affairs & Service Effectiveness- Physician Administrative Burden update organized by NSFM for Mayors, Wardens and CAOs. There were some recommendations for municipal units to help reduce the administrative burden regarding referrals and doctors notes.
- Attended the KMCC Governance Committee meeting on June 19.
- Attended the Valley REN Audit Committee meeting as the CAO representative to review the 2023/24 financial statements for approval at the AGM. Great discussion at the committee that will be implemented through the CEO to improve financial reporting to the Board and stakeholders. Per the new IMSA, the Audit Committee Terms of Reference will be updated to reflect the requirement of FRAM.
- Work with Planning and Engineer consultants and staff on the Bentley Development Agreement and Joint Subdivision application with the County of Kings.

Next Month Priorities:

- Tender Review and Award
- AREA Board meetings
- Solar Garden Operating and Maintenance
- Solar Garden Ownership Correspondence
- Berwick Electric Commission meeting
- MEU Regulatory Task Meeting
- MPS Public Hearing Notices

Report to the Interim Intermunicipal Services Agreement Board of Directors

Agenda Item No. 4.1

Subject: IMSA Pilot Project – Progress Report

From: Dwight Whynot

Date: June 19, 2024

Transit Studies and Project Management - KTA

- WSP assisting with the development of the RFP for the purchase of electric buses and associated infrastructure,
 - WSP continues to develop guidelines regarding buses and chargers.
- WSP finalized their report and planning follow up with interested parties,
 - WSP delivered final report for discussion.
- WSP working with internal team to clarify route details.
- Phase 2 ICIP Funding has been approved and in place for utilization upon finalization of Phase 1
 - meeting with Berwick Electric and Town of Berwick to understand synergies,
 - Possible synergies with on demand systems and other public transit systems.
 - Working with Province and JRTA.
 - Preparing RFD for the purchase of electric buses,
 - Mechanical specifications to be finalized
 - Preparing RFD for Project Management,
 - Waiting on further instructions from both levels of government regarding specifics
 - Discussions with Metro Transit to understand next steps and options.

Long Term Service Contracts - Valley Waste

- Compost - ongoing discussions regarding service options.
- Landfill Contract - Liaison Committee is being renewed and further discussions are ongoing with Chester.
 - Internal group reviewing options with Chester,
 - Received draft from Chester, working with legal to incorporate necessary changes for Valley Waste.
 - Present draft at next Board meeting.

Collaboration with General Managers and Reporting Aspects to the Interim IMSA Board

- working with the General Manger at Valley Waste and acting as the General Manager at KTA in developing new reporting templates for financial reporting and operational updates.
- developing team objectives and strategic direction for the organizations.

Drafting of the new IMSA's

- Dan McDougall has joined the project team to manage specific aspects of the deliverables.
- gathering information from other jurisdictions, Pictou County, Lunenburg County and others, to understand their structures and operating guidelines and bring best practices to Valley Waste and KTA.
 - Dan McDougall researching governance options with a presentation provided to the Board during a Special Meeting on June 12, 2024.

Mentorship of KTA General Manager

- developing job description and responsibilities for a new GM based on new governance and possible structure changes.

Analysis of Service Partner Options

- Funding formulas and options are being present to the IMSA Board.

Governance and Organizational Structure

MNP and Dan McDougall will be completing financial policy review with staff,

- o Staff will be reviewing non-financial policies and present them to the Board for approval,
- Governance and organizational structure options were discussed with the Board at June 12 meeting.

Preparation of Strategic Plans

- Completion of a strategic plan for Valley Waste will happen once Extended Producer Responsibility is better understood, and we understand the impacts to Valley Waste operations and mandates.
- KTA strategic plan will be a subset of the Phase 1 Mass Transit Study.

Development of Capital Investment Plan

- Director of Finance has developed Capital Investment Plans for both organizations and they are implemented in the costing models being presented to the Board.

Cost Accounting of Valley Waste and Diversion Streams

- the model has been completed and ready for presentation by MNP.

Analysis of the Net Municipal Cost Sharing Formulas

- WSP and MNP have both provided recommendations for funding formulas. Director of Finance and General Manager have developed a model to illustrate the impacts for the Municipal partners.
- Supporting information was provided to the Board during a Special Meeting on June 12, 2024.

Development/Refresh of Budgeting, Period Ending Variance and Year End Financial Statement Reporting

- Year-end audits are underway and will be holding an Audit Committee meeting in early July.
- New statistical data is being collected to better understand the businesses and make informed decisions.
 - o Ridership numbers by time of day and route.

Development of Five-Year Business Plan

- Valley Waste will be expanding its current strategic plan to cover a five-year period once the impacts of Extended Producer Responsibility are better understood. We have identified key strengths and weaknesses through a SWOT analysis and discussions about additional long-term challenges and opportunities.
- KTA will create a five-year view once the Phase 1 Study is completed and the path forward is approved and supported by the Board.
- the five-year business plan will be one of the last deliverables presented.

Financial Policies

- MNP are currently reviewing the financial policies that exist at Valley Waste. Once the review and recommendations are completed, these policies will be presented to the Board for approval.
 - Dan McDougall will assist in the policy development and recommendation process.

Mentor Finance Personnel

- Dan L'Abbe has worked with accounting staff to install new accounting software, work order software, enhancements to monthly reporting and completed a successful year-end external audit.



**Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority
Report to the Interim Intermunicipal Services Agreement Board of Directors**

Agenda Item No. 5.1

Subject: Valley Waste-Resource Management – General Managers Report

From: Andrew Garrett

Date: June 19, 2024

Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging & Printed Paper

Circular Materials Atlantic briefed municipalities on their DRAFT readiness report during two online sessions in early June. A couple of key points:

- They will not prohibit materials from the business sector if it doesn't have a negative impact on their ability to meet requirements for residential material. They will not be held financially or operationally responsible for business materials.
- Due to high target rates for the recycling of materials, curbside services for difficult to manage materials will likely continue to be provided (glass, film, foam).

Links to the report and presentation:

Readiness Report: [Nova Scotia Readiness Report Cover-V1 \(constantcontact.com\)](https://constantcontact.com/nova-scotia-readiness-report-cover-v1)

Presentation: [a482e709-f818-4292-90cb-b5ab097ac10a.pdf \(constantcontact.com\)](https://constantcontact.com/a482e709-f818-4292-90cb-b5ab097ac10a.pdf)

Capital Infrastructure Reserve

Peter Miller, Senior Wealth Advisor for Scotia McLeod, has assumed management of our investments as David Deacon and Shari Prime have left the firm. A meeting of the Investment Committee will be organized to introduce and provide direction to Mr. Miller.

Sale of Equipment

The two roll-off trucks and ten roll-off containers were sold at auction on May 27th generating approximately \$122,000 in revenue.

Groundwater Monitoring

The NSECC hydrogeologist has reviewed our draft proposed plan for a ground water monitoring and has suggested increased coverage to monitor other areas such as metal storage, and household hazardous waste. They are also considering the sampling and analysis of groundwater for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a condition of the approval. We have requested a meeting with NSECC and our consultant, Stantec, to discuss the recommendations prior to submitting the final plan. Sampling for PFAS is very difficult and potentially costly.

Request For Proposals

- The Request for Proposals for a forklift closed on May 16th with a total of six proposals received. After a review of the proposals, Brandt Tractor was the successful proponent with a cost of \$45,210 which includes our portion of the HST. We included \$55,000 in the capital budget for this equipment.
- The Request for Proposals for a 1-ton crew cab pick-up also closed on May 16th with just one proposal received. Bruce Leasing was the successful proponent with a cost of \$81,973 which includes our portion of the HST. We included \$95,000 in the capital budget for this equipment.
- A Request for proposal for the provision of two cardboard balers closed on June 6th with two proposals received. Staff are currently reviewing the proposals.

Operations

- Repairs to the facilities are underway. Ditching is being conducted at the WMC (Meisner Excavating) and at the EMC (Ken Lutz Excavating).
- Patching of the pavement at the EMC will be completed soon by Howard Little Excavating.
- All construction and demolition debris are being processed by Halifax C&D and will be diverted from landfill. Wood is being ground and taken to Emera for generating electricity, drywall is being used for cow bedding and asphalt shingles will be used to construct a road at a C&D facility.

Education & Enforcement

- This spring marks the 25th Anniversary of Valley Waste and the launch of the organics collection program. Green carts were delivered door-to-door in 1999 and have diverted hundreds of thousands of tonnes of organics from the landfill. Approximately 65% of the original green carts are still in circulation and we have seen an exponential increase in unrepairable carts. Retired carts are being sent to Sustane Technologies to be converted into liquid fuels.
- We have a Clean intern, Charlotte Peng, working on designing an on-site educational program for middle school students that aligns with Nova Scotia curriculum. With the inspiration of Planet Protectors (our on-site grade three program) we are graduating them to Planet Professors. It is in the draft stages now, but we have set the theme to 'mad scientist' with an escape room twist!
- Educators have been making presentations to Real Estate companies. Since COVID, new residents moving to Nova Scotia from other areas have increased. To date, they have presented to nine Real Estate offices and the feedback has been very positive.
- The Recycle Coach app is used by 11,752 residents in the region for notifications, collection reminders and sorting questions. The contract was recently renewed for 3 years. The app has also been updated with the latest Electronics Program updates.
- The Bylaw-Enforcement Officer has been busy with 52 cases of illegal dumping, illegal burning and cases related to curbside set-out or waste storage infractions in April and May.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Garrett, Interim General Manager
Valley Region Solid Waste-Resource Management Authority

Report to the Interim Intermunicipal Services Agreement Board of Directors

Agenda Item No. 6.1

Subject: General Manager’s Report

From: Dwight Whynot

Date: June 19, 2024



Garage and Fuel Prices

Buses:

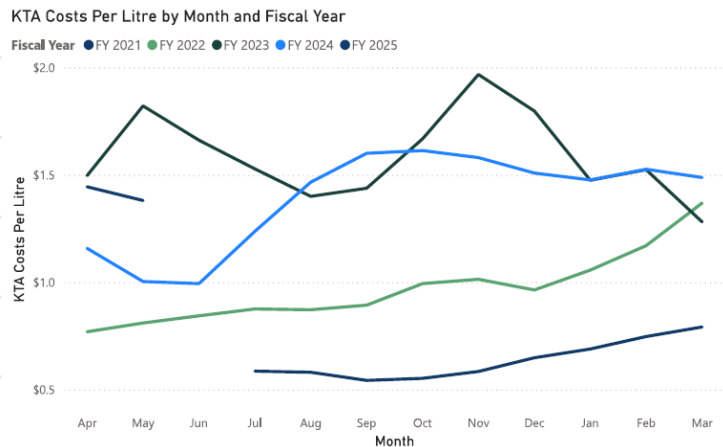
The bus availability continues to be an issue given the age and mileage of the units.

Reviewing options to purchase used diesel buses as insurance for operations while new Battery Electric Buses are ordered and delivered.

Entered into a one-year agreement for bus storage in Weymouth.

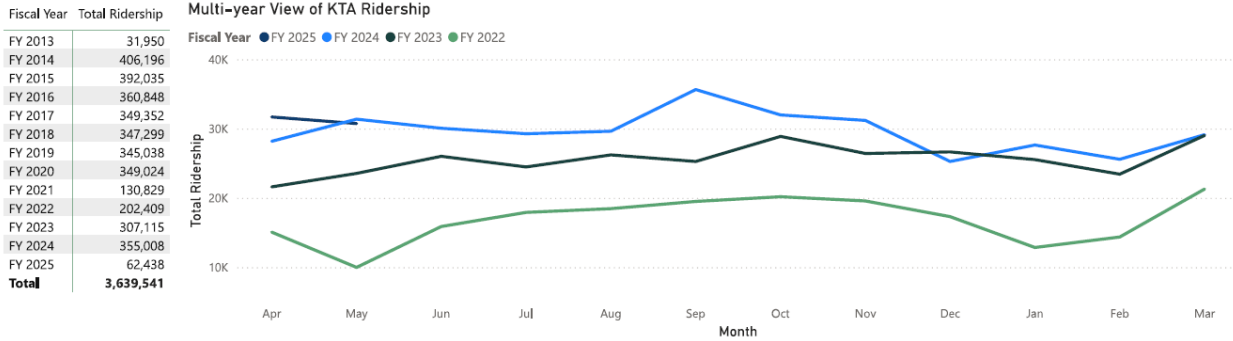
Fuel:

Diesel Average Cost <small>Includes Taxes Expensed (not posted price)</small>	Total Diesel Cost <small>Includes Taxes Expensed</small>
FY 2025 \$1.41	FY 2025 \$99,596
FY 2024 \$1.37	FY 2024 \$524,270
FY 2023 \$1.58	FY 2023 \$686,262
FY 2022 \$0.97	FY 2022 \$421,129
FY 2021 \$0.64	FY 2021 \$181,179



Ridership

Year-to-date ridership numbers up to May 2024 continue to increase across the entirety of the KTA system compared to prior year. May 2023 shows ridership of 31,363 versus May 2024 at 30,737 riders. This represents a decrease of 2% over the month period. We have adjusted the methodology of collecting ridership data to ensure more accurate data by stop and municipal unit.



Notes:
 KTA stopped providing service to West Hantz in 2015
 COVID had a significant impact on ridership for a couple of years including and after 2021
 As of May 21, 2024, transfers are no longer counted as riders

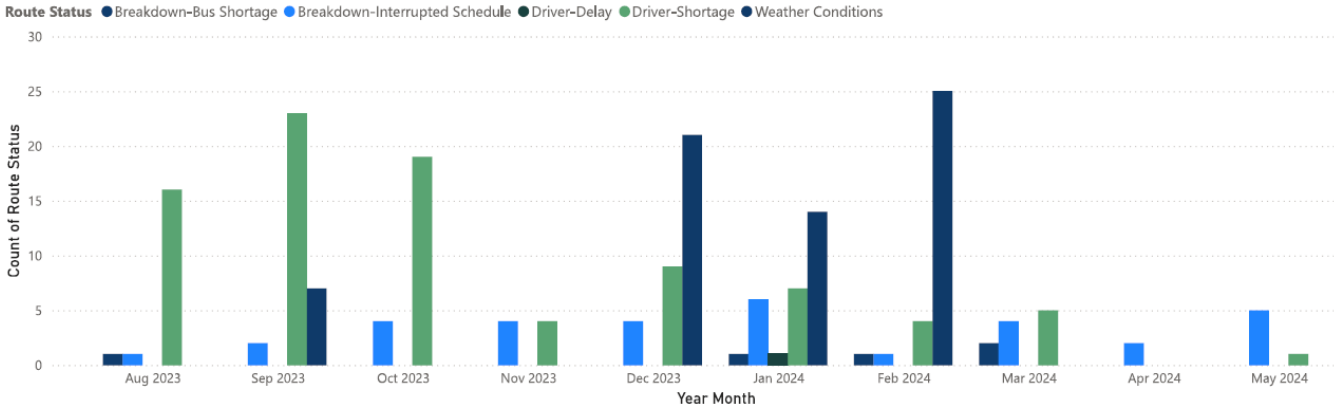
Operations

MaintainX, the work order system, is up and running and is resulting in improved efficiencies for the mechanic staff, purchasing staff and the accounting staff.

Annual external financial audit well underway.

Additional reporting practices are being implemented to track on-time service, route operational statistics and causes for route interruptions. These measures will continue to help us attain key operating goals and help us focus on the areas needing improvements.

Number of Unsuccessful Routes (Scheduled Shifts)



Route Status	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024
Successful	318	290	299	321	267	307	291	320	334	344	84
Driver-Shortage	16	23	19	4	9	7	4	5		1	
Holiday	14	7	14	7	28	14					
Weather Conditions		7			21	14	25				
Breakdown-Interrupted Schedule	1	2	4	4	4	6	1	4	2	5	
Breakdown-Bus Shortage	1					1	1	2			
Driver-Delay						1					
Total	350	329	336	336	329	350	322	331	336	350	84

ICIP Project Update

The ICIP Phase 1 Study Final Report was presented by WSP to the Board May 28th, 2024. In keeping with the Report's recommendations, WSP is assisting in the development of an RFP for the purchase of electric buses and the associated equipment. Staff are also working on the development of a Request for Proposals for Project Management Services related to Phase 2 of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) funding.

Human Resources

Kings Transit continues to actively recruit additional drivers. Attraction and retention of drivers still presents a challenge.

Monthly Activities

The following is the list of actions and activities from the previous meeting up until the current one:

1. The Phase 1 ICIP study is complete and work associated with the recommendations has begun.
2. Work on Phase 2 equipment and service selection.
3. Working with Director of Finance.
4. Preparing Request for Proposal documents for bus purchase and project management.
5. Day-to-day operations of the business.
6. Working with Dan McDougall on policies, communication, governance and structure.



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

March 2024



As prepared by Taylor Boylan
Communications Coordinator

DRAFT

Communications Goal

“It is our goal for all residents to feel as though they are informed, engaged, and appreciated in all actions undertaken by the Town.”

Berwick Vision

"Berwick envisions itself as a vibrant and inclusive community where residents of all ages thrive. We aspire to be a place where innovation, sustainability, and a strong sense of belonging come together to create a high quality of life for everyone. Our vision is to foster a safe, welcoming, and prosperous town that honors its heritage while embracing the opportunities of the future."

Introduction

The Town of Berwick was incorporated as a municipality in 1923 and is known as Nova Scotia's Apple Capital because of its significant history in the apple industry. The Town operates its own electric utility and wastewater systems, and boasts a full complement of recreation facilities, restaurants, retail outlets and commercial businesses. The Town encompasses a population of 2455 residents, with diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

The Town of Berwick strives to be the primary source of information for its residents, providing timely and proactive communications that are clear and easy to understand. The Town of Berwick has several tools that can be used to provide communications to internal and external audiences, and while specific tools may change over time, the goal is to ensure that all audiences continuously receive information through the most appropriate means. An effective communications strategy, internally and externally, will engage residents and allow for increased community growth.

It is important that this strategy is reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that it reflects the needs of the community and remains a living document used daily by staff and Council.

The Town of Berwick's communication strategy is rooted in its commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and community engagement. By providing, and receiving information through various effective channels, the Town of Berwick will foster a strong sense of community that will encourage residents to participate in further growth and development.

It is the goal of the Town of Berwick's communication strategy for all residents to feel as though they are informed, engaged, and appreciated in all actions undertaken by the municipality.

Branding Information

The Town of Berwick logo was designed by Town of Berwick staff in 2015. As it was developed internally, brand standard information was not provided and over time, the logo has been used with different variations of the colour palette. In 2018, colours were identified by hexacode to standardize the use across all mediums.

The Town of Berwick logo is currently used for almost all official Town purposes, across all departments and including the Berwick Electric Commission. It is displayed on Town owned vehicles, on the Town Hall facility and included on all official Town correspondence.

Prior to the adoption of the new logo, the Town of Berwick's armorials (coat of arms) was used exclusively as the Town's logo. The shield has been phased out of Town communications but remains on the official Town of Berwick flag, and historical documents.

The Town of Berwick logo should appear on all external communications published by the Town, including on all social media posts. This branding allows residents to recognize official source communication and increases trust in the organization.

Suggested action(s):

- Public engagement on the current Town of Berwick flag to determine if a revision is necessary
- Review and/or develop standardized templates to ensure correct colour codes are being used.
- Save templates to the appropriate location in SharePoint for ease of use

Coloured logo

The coloured logo is the official Town of Berwick logo. The coloured logo is used in all general use; town documents, correspondence, email signatures.

White logo

The white logo is always used when using a coloured background that includes one or more of the logo colours, and on high contrast images or graphics.

“B” logo

The “B” logo is a casual version of the official Town of Berwick logo. The “B” is used for casual use, such as social media and on branded items, and is often used with slogans.

Colours

The hex codes noted on page six have been adopted as the official colours of the Town of Berwick.

Font

Verenda will be used for all official documents for the Town of Berwick.

Centennial logo

The Town of Berwick widely used a “celebrating 100 years” logo for the entirety of the year 2023. This logo will be phased out in 2024 but is recognized as an official Town logo.

Official logos and branding



Goals & Objectives

Goal 1

Improve staff and Council communication skills and tools

Objective 1.0

All information is communicated internally prior to being communicated to the public.

Objective 1.1

Use of strong internal communication tools that allow for streamlined external communications.

Objective 1.2

Staff feel as though they are informed, engaged, and appreciated within all aspects of the Town of Berwick.

Goal 2

Create strong communication tools for sending and receiving information externally

Objective 2.0

Information is provided to residents in a clear, timely manner across several means.

Objective 2.1

Information received is directed to the appropriate party, acknowledged and followed up on.

Objective 2.2

Residents know how, and where, to find the information that they are seeking.

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Goal 3

Town of Berwick external communications are inherently accessible

Objective 3.0

Communication provided to residents is in clear, plain language.

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Internal Communications

Background

The Town of Berwick Municipal Council consists of a Mayor, and six Councillors, who are elected “at-large” and represent all residents of the Town of Berwick. Town Council sets the strategy and direction for the Town of Berwick, and have one employee, the CAO, who oversees all Town staff and ensures the direction of Council is being followed.

The Town of Berwick employs a small but diverse workforce, across several locations. Town Administrative, Finance, Community Development and Planning staff work from the Town of Berwick Town Hall, constructed in 2017. Public Works staff work from a Public Works building on Main Street, alongside Berwick Electric Commission staff. Staff from Community Development extend to the Berwick Fitness Centre on Veteran’s Drive and programming space at Carol’s Place on Cottage Street.

In 2023, the Town of Berwick shifted to using Microsoft 365 programs internally in an effort to modernize and streamline processes for all staff, particularly for records management purposes. By early 2024, all staff and Council will be “online” on Microsoft 365.

Internal Communications Goals & Objective

Goal 1

Improve staff and Council communication skills and tools.

Good communication between staff and Council is key to the success of the municipality and the Town's strategic priorities. When information is clearly communicated, all parties will feel engaged and understand their role in the success of the municipality.

Objective 1.0

All information is communicated internally prior to being communicated to the public.

Prior to any information being shared with the public, it is shared with staff and Council of the Town of Berwick. This process will ensure that shared information is accurate and complete, and will identify potential issues and challenges early in the process. This will also help to build trust between the Town and its residents, and ultimately lead to more effective and efficient decision-making.

Suggested action(s):

- Staff share important information, and upcoming dates, to Council via department reports to the Committee of the Whole.
- Important dates should be shared with the Executive Assistant to put in Council's calendars.
- All important information and event information should be shared on the Teams Communication Channel to ensure staff can easily access the information, view common FAQ's and/or updated information.
- Town staff meet bi-weekly, following Council and Committee of the Whole meetings. Meetings are led by the CAO and include brief updates from all departments.
- Urgent and emergency updates are shared with the CAO to share with Council via email and/or phone.

Objective 1.1

Use of strong internal communication tools that allow for streamlined external communications.

Recognizing that different departments within the Town of Berwick organization require information shared in different ways, tools used for communications internally must be used effectively for the audience who will be receiving the message. It is also important to recognize that not all staff of the municipality will require receiving the same information, however all staff should be given enough information to interact with the public appropriately.

Suggested action(s):

- An all-staff Microsoft Teams channel is created, and staff share updates as they arise.
 - No conversation takes place on this channel other than updates
- Staff have internal conversations via Microsoft Teams chat
 - Email is not used internally, unless it includes an external party or member(s) of Council
 - Files are shared within Teams and/or Sharepoint rather than by email
- Monthly, an internal bulletin is distributed to staff via the Teams channel and also printed for display at Town Hall, Public Works and the Berwick Fitness Centre. This newsletter highlights important dates and information for staff.
- A chart is provided that identifies the preferred way to share important information in emergency situations vs. day to day situations.

Objective 1.2

Staff feel as though they are informed, engaged and appreciated within all aspects of the Town of Berwick.

When staff feel informed, engaged, and appreciated it will foster a sense of pride in their work within the municipality. Investing time in communications internally will create a positive work environment that will not only benefit employees, but also the broader community that they serve.

Suggested action(s):

- Staff are recognized regularly, via the all-staff Teams Channel monthly bulletin, for recent accomplishments or with good news stories. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure for recognition.
- Annual recognition at the Town of Berwick holiday party of long-term service awards, presented by the Mayor.
- As noted in the communications survey results, residents would like to know more about Town staff. To do this, short staff profiles will be shared on social media regularly, along with information about the work of the various departments of the Town of Berwick.
- Staff and Council wear Town of Berwick identification when working in public spaces, or during events. This will allow staff to foster a sense of pride in the "Town of Berwick" brand and also allow for easier identification for the public.

External Communications

Background

Social Media: The Town of Berwick was one of the first municipalities in Canada to launch social media channels and was an early adopter of using these means to communicate with residents. The Town joined Twitter in 2009, Facebook in 2011 and Instagram in 2014. These methods are often used as the primary source of communication with residents, especially Facebook. Each social media channel that the Town maintains has a significant number of followers relative to the Town's population, and followers tend to be active participants on the social media channels. When reviewing insights, most followers are local and have local interests.

Website: The Town of Berwick has a website, Berwick.ca, operated through the AMANS Municipal Website Venture. The website was launched in 2019. The website contains information on municipal matters.

Electronic Sign: In 2019, the Town purchased an electronic sign that was placed at the corner of Cottage Street and Commercial Street. Information is shared to the electronic sign weekly, on Mondays, and the sign transitions through several slides of Town of Berwick events, and some community requests.

Printed Communications:

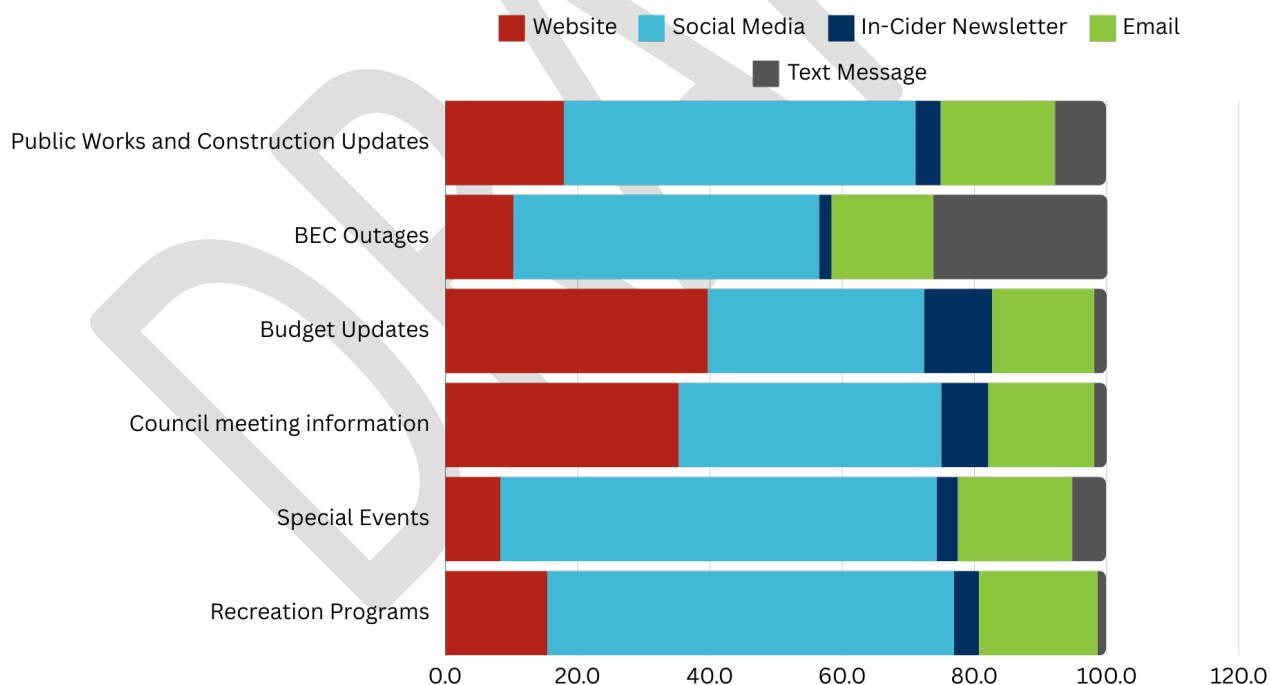
The Town of Berwick regularly communicates with residents through print communications, such as posters that are distributed through the community by a municipal employee. The Town mails bills to residents (utility and tax) and can include inserts on municipal updates within these bills. The Town has also created a quarterly newsletter, the In-Cider, that is distributed to residents via mail.

External Communications: Survey

Background

In late 2023, a Communications survey was presented to Town of Berwick residents asking for feedback about municipal communications. The survey results can be found in *Appendix B*. The results of the survey were used to shape the external communications piece of this strategy.

Most relevant, residents were asked how, given five options, they would most like to receive municipal communications on specific topics. Only one option was able to be selected, as the intention was to find the most preferred option for each type of update. When the survey was taken, there was no option for text message communications from the municipality.



External Communications: Goals & Objectives

Goal 2

Create strong communication tools for sending and receiving information externally.

Communication with residents plays a vital role in the daily operations of local government. To achieve effective communication, it is important to utilize multiple channels so that residents can access information in diverse ways, accommodating preferences and accessibility needs.

Building strong communication between government and residents fosters transparency, trust and collaboration, ultimately leading to a more vibrant and engaged community.

Objective 2.0

Information is provided to residents in a clear, timely manner across several means.

When information is shared with the public, it is shared with advance notice and through several means to reach as many residents as possible. Information is prepared in an eye-catching, but standardized form to continue recognition and trust in the Town of Berwick brand.

Suggested action(s):

- Recreation and Community Development dates for events and programming are chosen one calendar year in advance and shared with Council and partner organizations.
- Information is shared with residents across multiple mediums for all messaging, always including one “offline” medium.
- Information is shared with as much advance notice as possible, with four weeks’ notice being the standard outside of emergency and urgent needs (see *Appendix A* for definitions)

Suggested action(s) continued:

- A text message and email notification system are implemented and utilized regularly for interested residents.
- Develop an Standard Operating Procedure to identify when text notifications should be used and the approval process.
- Mail, or hand delivered notices, are used for all events that will have a direct impact on residents, such as rate changes, planned power outages or traffic interruptions.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedure for use of the electronic sign

Objective 2.1

Information received is directed to the appropriate party, acknowledged, and followed up on.

It is important that residents feel engaged and appreciated, and that their concerns are acknowledged and taken into consideration by staff and Council of the Town of Berwick. Fostering open dialogue, and actively listening to residents' feedback ensures decisions are made with the input and support of the people they impact the most.

Communication is most effective when all parties are sending and receiving information, and ensuring that information is directed appropriately allows for follow-up and residents to feel empowered.

Suggested action(s):

- A feedback form on the Town of Berwick website is advertised, and utilized, and responses are re-directed to the appropriate department within one business day of receipt.
- The Town of Berwick main switchboard is updated to include an option to stay on the line and be re-directed to an administrative staff.

- An internal form is created for feedback and resident concerns, similar to the feedback form on the website, that is used to track concerns that come from phone calls and to the front desk.

Suggested action(s) continued:

- Staff update voicemail messages and email automatic replies when out of the office for one business day or longer.
- Staff include business hours in their email signatures if they are different from regular business hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
- Resident concerns are acknowledged upon receipt, and followed-up on within three business days, regardless of resolution.
- A front-desk reception role is implemented in the organizational structure of the Town of Berwick that handles inquiries, complaints and resident concerns.
- Draft a Standard Operating Procedure for complaints and feedback with suggested target timelines for responding and follow-up.

Objective 2.2

Residents know how, and where, to find the information that they are seeking.

The Town of Berwick strives to be the first and best source of information about the municipality. It is the overall goal of the external communications strategy that residents can receive information, if they desire to do so, in the manner that is most suitable for their needs.

Suggested action(s):

- A Town of Berwick website plan is created and implemented, to ensure information on the website is clear and easy to find.
- Social media is updated regularly, primarily focusing on Town of Berwick specific information.

- The quarterly newsletter continues to be sent via mail to all residents and includes a section to “Contact Us”.
- A front-desk reception role is implemented in the organizational structure of the Town of Berwick that handles inquiries, complaints and resident concerns.

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Accessibility in Communications

Background

The Town of Berwick adopted an Accessibility Plan in 2022, and a major piece of this plan was the importance of accessibility in communications.

The Accessibility Plan has been used to guide the work of Town of Berwick staff and was used as a reference when creating the communications plan. The majority of priorities and suggested action items are not duplicated within this plan, but actions that have not been considered are highlighted in the accessibility in communications objective.

Objective 3.0

Communication provided to residents is in clear, plain language.

The Town of Berwick has a diverse population, who speak a variety of languages and have varying levels of literacy. Ensuring that all written communications, including reports and other materials, are in plain language allows residents to better understand important information and actively engage with the Town. By using clear and simple language, we can bridge communication gaps and promote inclusivity as an organization.

Suggested action(s)

- All staff receive plain language training for communications.
- Review all reoccurring documents to ensure plain language.
- Descriptive text is used on all images posted electronically, on the website and social media.
- The Town adopt "Verdana" font for all communications distributed internally and externally.

Social Media: Guidelines

The Town of Berwick's social media channels are active and engaging, and allow residents and visitors to participate in conversations and broader community engagement. It is important to use social media channels regularly, but also responsibly. Guidelines have been set to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of their role in Town of Berwick social media, as well as promoting municipal transparency and accountability to the public.

Guidelines: Interactions

1. The Town of Berwick operates an official Town of Berwick Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X account. The X account has been dormant since 2022.
2. Only persons authorized by the CAO will post on behalf of the Municipality on any social media platform. A maximum of four staff members will have administrative permissions on social media accounts, with the Mayor having editor status (if desired)
3. Comments will remain enabled on all social media posts, unless staff are unavailable to monitor a feed or when a post is shared for purely informational purposes. Comments will be monitored and filtered if they are not relevant to the topic of discussion, or use inappropriate, inflammatory, or objectionable language. Filters will be enabled on Facebook and Instagram (Meta) to automatically hide comments containing inappropriate language.
4. The Town of Berwick will respond to comments and messages, when possible, that are requesting information. Social media descriptions and automatic messaging will include that social media is not monitored regularly, and that phone or email is a preferred method of contact.
5. As comments and messages can be deleted at any time, they are considered transitory records and will not be kept as a permanent record by the Town of Berwick.

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Guidelines: Content

1. Town of Berwick content will have priority on all Town of Berwick channels.
2. Unless an emergency, or urgent event, no more than three posts will be posted to the Town of Berwick social media channels in one day.
3. All posts will use a standardized, or recognizable, format apart from posters advertising events or solely for community engagement (i.e a call for committee members). Currently, the format is a 1080x1080px image using a red or green background, with text aligned left and a circle aligned right with a white graphic relating to the topic within the circle. The topic is included with bold font, with the byline in regular font. The white logo is aligned in the bottom right corner. This format is subject to change at any time at the discretion of staff.
4. The body of a post on social media will include all details required for the public's information and will duplicate any information given in the included image. ALT text will be included for accessibility purposes, and links will only be included on Facebook feed posts.
5. Community posts will be shared at the discretion of staff, and when scheduling permits on social media feeds.

Path to integration

Q2: Adapt

All staff and Council members have received the communications strategy and it begins to be implemented into daily workplans.

Q3: Launch

A dedicated staff takes the helm on external communications. All staff are proactive with information sharing, and responsive to resident's inquiries.

Q4: Evaluate

With Council changes, the strategy is re-evaluated and changes are made to align with the current Council's strategic priorities.

Q1: Monitor

A communications survey is done within the community to gauge feedback and compare results to the survey done prior to the implementation of the communications strategy.

Q2: Iterate

Council and staff follow the communications strategy to guide their daily work.

Appendix A

Definitions of types of messaging:

EMERGENCY EVENT

What is an emergency event?

- Time Sensitive
- Affects residents **now**
- Out of usual scope

Examples of emergency events

- Large scale weather event
- Evacuation order
- Emergency defined by EMO

How do we communicate this?

- Social media
- Website
- Voicemail
- Alert/Text Message

Emergency event occurs or is occurring in the Town of Berwick

Notification is given to CAO, Mayor and Council and regional authorities

Notification given to comms for distribution through TOB channels

Updates given to comms on regular basis for updates on TOB channels

Follow-up given when event concludes, all updates in document

URGENT EVENT

What is an urgent event?

- Time Sensitive
- Affects residents now, or in immediate future
- Unexpected/unplanned

Examples of urgent events

- Unplanned power outage
- Unplanned road closure
- Weather event defined by REMO

How do we communicate this?

- Social media
- Website
- Signage
- Alert/Text Message

Urgent event occurs or is occurring in the Town of Berwick

Notification given to comms for distribution through TOB channels

Updates given to comms on regular basis for updates on TOB channels

When event concludes, posts are marked with dates or removed

TOWN OF
berwick

ROUTINE EVENT

What is a routine event?

- Has time and date determined in advance
- Affects residents in the future

Examples of routine events

- Planned power outage
- Planned road closure
- Office closure, holiday information

How do we communicate this?

- Social media
- Website
- Mailout/phone calls
- Signage
- Alert/Text Message

Routine event will be occurring in the Town of Berwick

Notification is given to comms for distribution through TOB channels

Information distributed on TOB channels in advance, with dates and times

Information scheduled for distribution day-of if appropriate

When event concludes, posts are marked with dates or removed

COMMUNITY EVENT

What is a community event?

- A gathering intended for the general public/residents
- Has a set time and date

Examples of Community Event

- Council and committee meetings
- Registration night for programming
- Community concerts

How do we communicate this?

- Social media
- Website
- Mailout
- Posters
- Electronic sign

Community event will be occurring in the Town of Berwick

Notification given to comms for distribution through TOB channels

Information distributed on TOB channels in advance, with dates and times

When event concludes, posts are marked with dates or removed

TOWN OF
berwick

External Communications

GENERAL INFO

What is general info?

- Information for residents
- May be time sensitive or have a date attached

Examples of General

- Budget information
- Council minutes
- Information post re: services

How do we communicate this?

- Social media
- Website
- Posters
- Electronic sign
- Mailouts

General information needs to be communicated to Berwick residents

Information given to comms for distribution through TOB channels

Information and related files are put into a shareable format to be approved

Information distributed on TOB channels

Information and related files are compiled and saved in common locations for future access

Timing

Emergency: Immediate

Urgent: Immediate

Routine: As much notice as possible

Community: 4 weeks (4 months for community organizations)

General Info: As much notice as possible, 4 weeks ideal

Appendix B

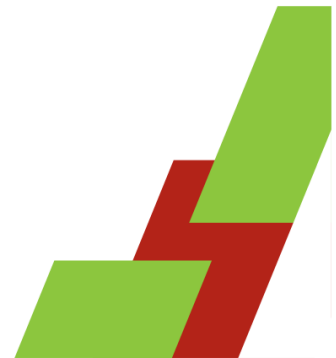
DRAFT



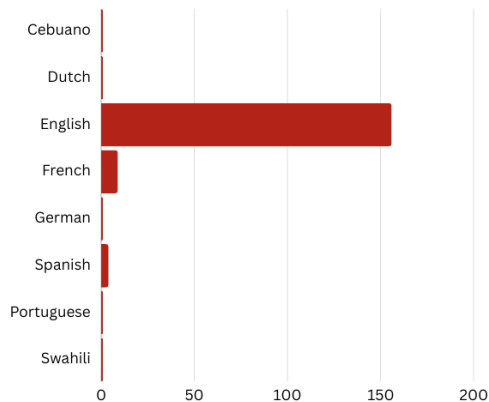
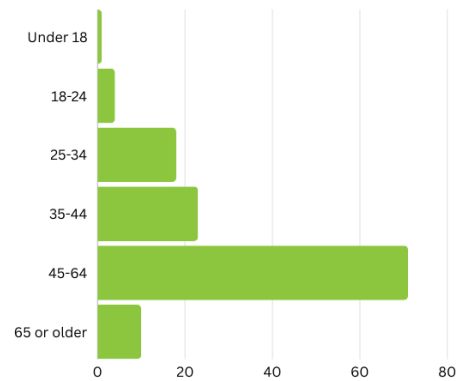
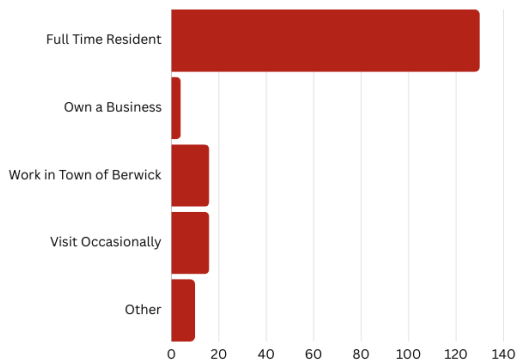
Survey Information

The survey was distributed electronically on the Town of Berwick website and Town of Berwick social media channels. Paper copies, and information on the survey, were provided to several community organizations including the Berwick and District Library and SchoolsPlus.

Over 200 responses were recorded, with the majority taking the survey electronically.



Who responded?



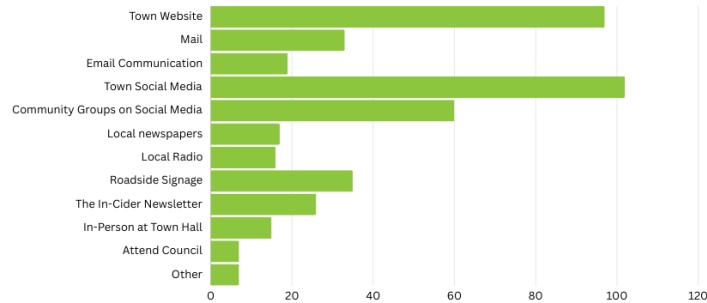
The majority of respondents self-identified as **full-time residents** of the Town of Berwick, between the ages of **45 and 64**, who speak **English** as a primary language. This aligns with 2016 Census data of population medians.

92% of respondents have a home computer, while 90% have a smartphone.

Only 4% of respondents answered that they do not use social media.

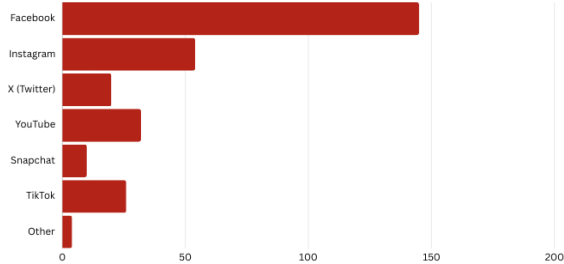
This data was anticipated, as the majority of respondents filled the survey out electronically. Had a larger number of respondents used a paper copy of the survey, it is likely the data would have shown that a larger percentage of the Town's population do not have a home computer or smartphone.

How do residents currently get information about the Town of Berwick?



83% of respondents follow the Town of Berwick on their social media accounts.

The majority of respondents use Facebook regularly.



83% of respondents rated the Town of Berwick’s current social media presence between a 3 and a 5, on a scale of 1 to 5. The average rating given was a 3.44.

The Town of Berwick Facebook page currently has 6.8 thousand followers, and the Instagram has 1.7 thousand followers. The Town is not currently active on any other social media channels, but does maintain YouTube and X accounts.

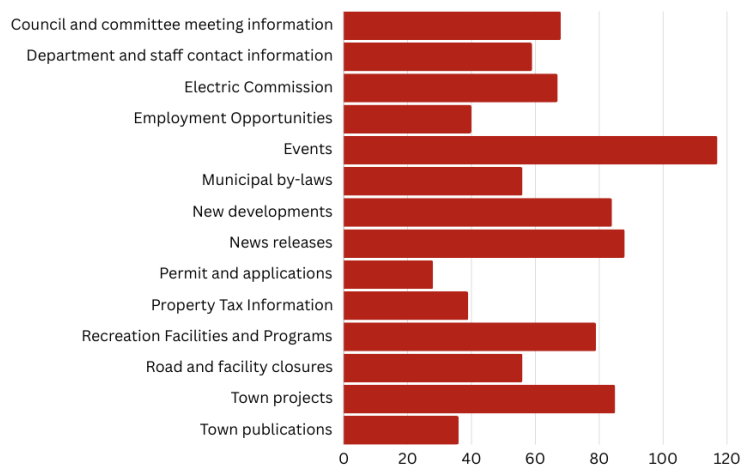
What are residents looking for?

Residents were asked to identify what they were looking for when visiting our social media or website, and what information they would like to see more of. The most common answers are listed below:

Power outages
 Town decisions
 Council meeting information
 Links
 Important dates
 Service interruptions
 Renewable energy projects
 Events
 Diversity

Website

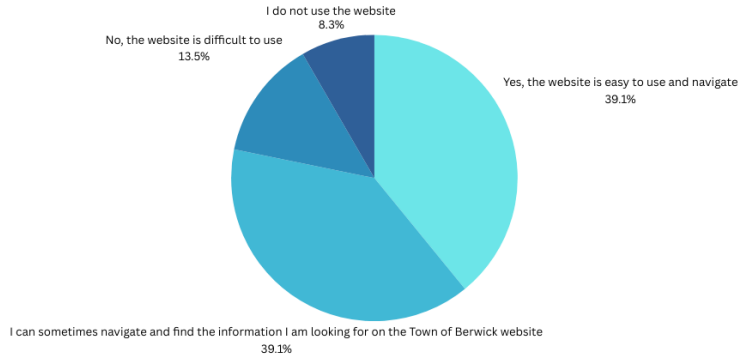
What information would you generally look for on the Town of Berwick website?





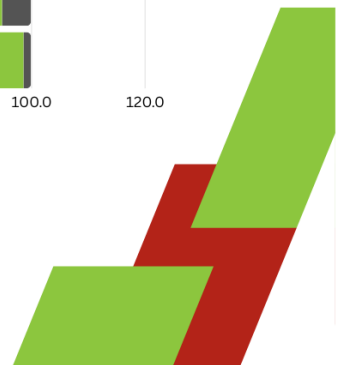
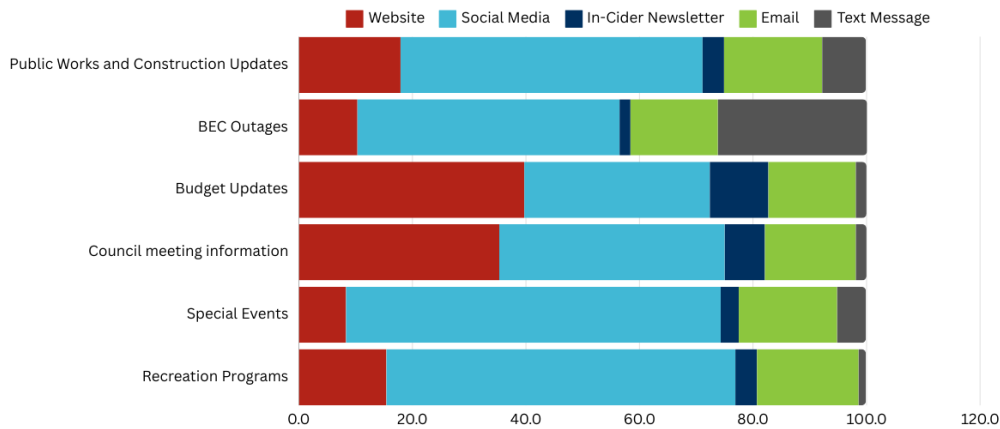
Website

In your opinion, are you able to easily navigate and find the information you are looking for when using the Town of Berwick website?



Receiving information

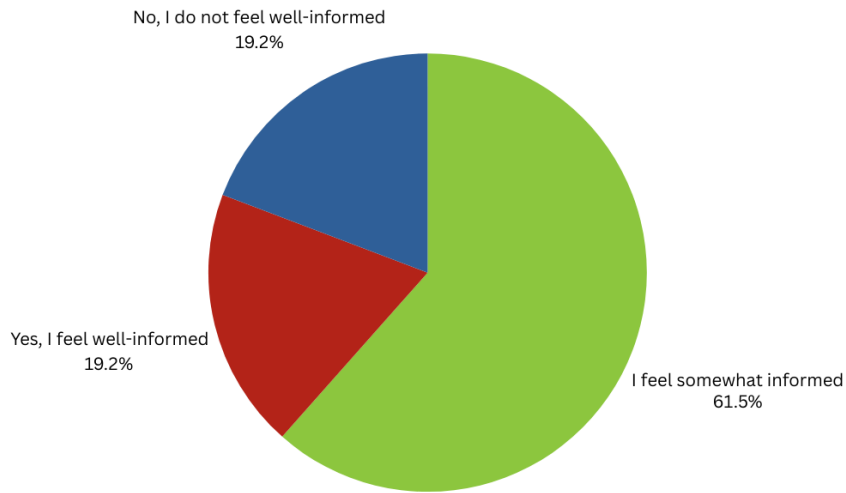
Respondents were asked to specify their preferred communication for several types of information updates. Unlike earlier questions in the survey, only one option was able to be selected for each type of information update. Many respondents noted in the survey that they would like to have had the option to choose multiple options; however the intention was for the most preferred option to be selected.



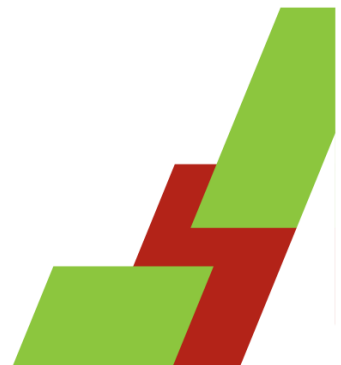
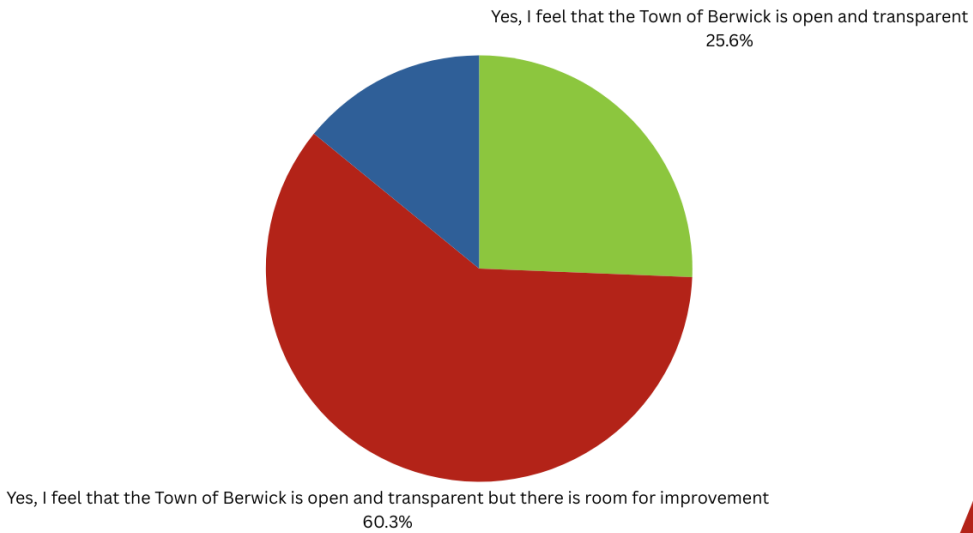


How residents feel

Do you feel well-informed about what's happening in the Town of Berwick?

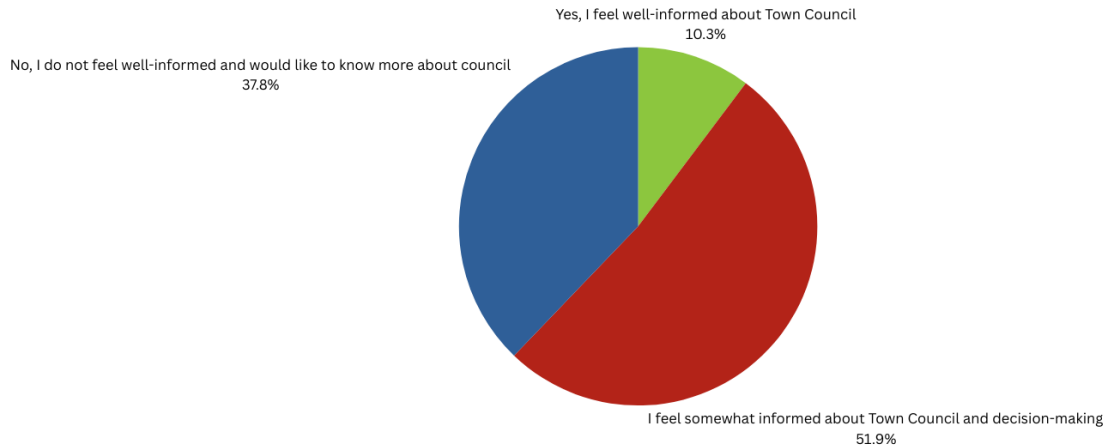


Do you feel the Town of Berwick is open and transparent in sharing news and information with the public?



How residents feel

Do you feel well-informed about Town Council meetings and the decisions of Council?



How can we improve?

Respondents were asked, "how do you think the Town could improve our efforts to communicate with the community?" and given a text box allowing up to 500 words.

The most frequent answers included "**more regular updates on Town projects and Council decisions**" and "**more information on scheduled/planned power outages**".

Many respondents noted that the Town does well with updating social media, but it can be difficult to find information in other forms; such as on the **website** or by **calling** Town Hall. There were multiple comments requesting **more advanced notice** for programming, events and Council and Committee meetings.

Respondents would like to see the option available for **email and text message notification** of upcoming power outages and newsletters to be distributed by mail and email.



Feedback

“You do really well and we love Berwick our friendly little town. Don't change that feel too much...it is treasured.”

“I think the town does a great job of keeping the community informed and up to date”

“I like the In-Cider newsletter”

“Thankful to live in a cute, forward thinking, safe town!”

“I admire this effort, with the questionnaire. It's a start!”

“Your town staff are wonderful. Overall you do a great job.”

“I love your social media presence but I do worry about the negativity directed at the town through it sometimes. I'm a firm believer that if someone has a real concern they should be contacting town in person not on social media behind a screen.”

“I feel some town hall meetings are not well advertised”

“I have been disappointed in the Town Website. It looks great but does not maintain current information on happenings and events”

“Website is very difficult to navigate and not often up to date”

“The town needs to work harder to get word out about power outages and other important things going on”

“I believe that even when information is provided it is not detailed enough. For example when we hear pickleball is a certain time. We do not know if it is drop in, or need to register, or if equipment is available etc.”





Feedback

"I feel like I have no idea what council members are doing or what council is doing. It would be nice to be able to watch the meetings live on Facebook without having to go through sending an email to the town to request access. Kentville is very transparent so I am not sure what the issue is."

"I do like being able to quickly go to Facebook and find info on what's happening."

"One way is when a person contacts the town about an issue, the town needs to be more forward and contact that person about what they are inquiring about and listen more to what that person has to say."

"I'm finding no one returns call inquiries"

"This is a lovely town but communication is poor"

"Lack of ability to become involved in community events as contact information is not available or messages or emails are not responded to."

"I think the general information for the community is great. When you need to contact someone directly for more information or to deal with a specific matter my experience is it takes a few days to get in contact with someone by phone or email. It would be helpful to be able to reach people at the town hall quicker."



DRAFT

DRAFT

2024/25 Council Priorities



To: Town Council
From: Jen Boyd, CAO
Date: June 25, 2024
Subject: 2024/25 Council Priorities

References/Attachments

- 2024/25 Council Priorities

Legislation

N/A

Background

In December 2023, Council participated in a priority setting session to identify their top priorities for 2024/25. Identified priorities were sorted into three categories:

1. **MUST DO/IN PROGRESS:** These are priorities that are required by legislation and/or are already in progress.
2. **IMPORTANT TO DO:** These are priorities that Council has identified as important to the organization but would not compete for priority with the MUST DO priorities.
3. **NICE TO HAVE:** These are items that would be completed if time permitted and don't compete with the other priorities.

As noted in the department reports, staff will be reporting on Council's Priorities monthly to improve communication back to Council. To ensure staff are properly resourcing and reporting on the priorities, staff are seeking clarification on four priorities noted in the session.

1. **Attracting Small Business:** The chart indicates marketing plan – Valley REN.
2. **Human Resources Review/Staffing**
3. **Policing Review**
4. **Recreation:** The chart indicated Increased Programming and Programming for All Ages.

Council may decide that additional information is required for clarification on the items. Council may also want to provide clarification on the other priorities if the description does not properly summarize the priority.

2024/25 Council Priorities



Financial Implications

Council's Priorities have been budgeted for in the 2024/25 Operating and Capital budgets. Depending on Council's clarification regarding the above mentioned priorities, staff may need to adjust operating priorities.

Priority Alignment

Check Applicable	Strategic Priority Area	Comments
x	Economic	
x	Environmental	
x	Social	
x	Cultural	

Community Engagement/Communication

The department monthly reports will highlight Council's priorities to ensure Council is up to date on their progress, and any potential issues/delays.

CAO Initials: JB