

## **Town of Berwick Council Meeting**

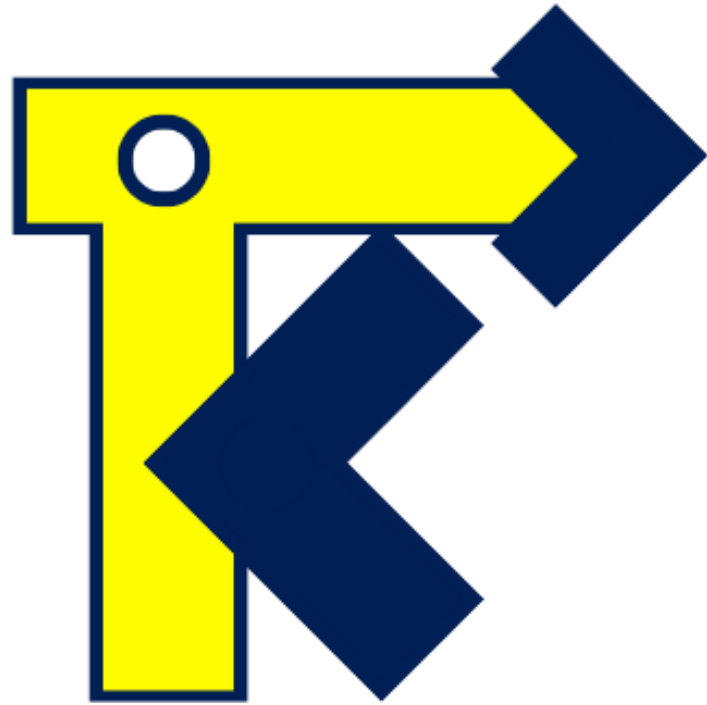
January 13, 2026

Town of Berwick Council Chambers

6:30 pm

### **AGENDA**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of the Agenda**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**
  - a. Council Minutes, December 9, 2025
- 4. Presentation**
  - a. Meg Hodges, General Manager, Tidal Transit
- 5. Review of Action Items**
- 6. Councillor Announcements**
- 7. New Business**
  - a. Winter Maintenance Update
  - b. Valley Jets Sponsorship
  - c. Relief Fund Launch
  - d. Strategic Planning Update
  - e. Budget Workshop
- 8. Mayor's Report**
- 9. In-Camera**
  - a. Personnel
- 10. Adjournment**



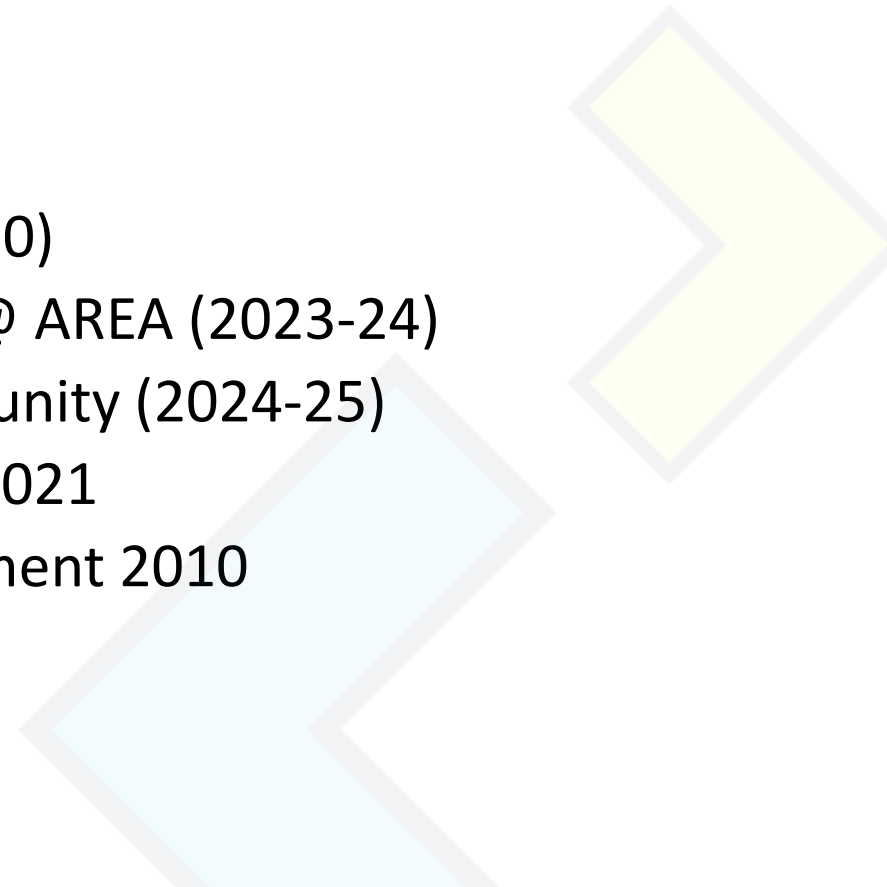
**Kings  
Transit**

# Who am I?

## Meg Hodges, General Manager

Experience:

- Kings County Municipal Councillor (2016 – 2020)
- Kings Transit Board Member and Chair (2016 – 2020)
- Manager of Partnerships and Public Engagement @ AREA (2023-24)
- Executive Director of the Kentville Business Community (2024-25)
- Acadia University Grad – BA Politics and Business 2021
- University of Guelph – BA Environmental Management 2010

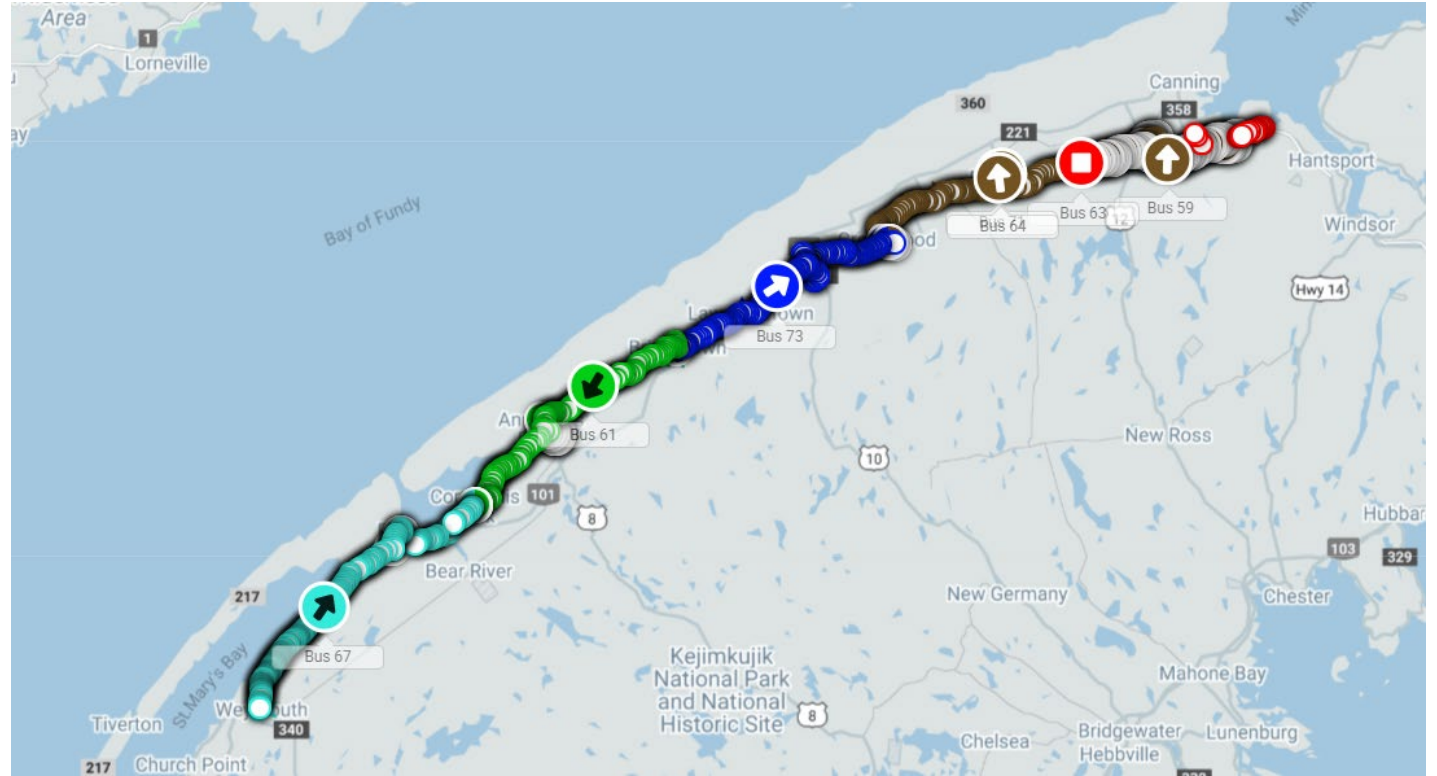


# Who are we?

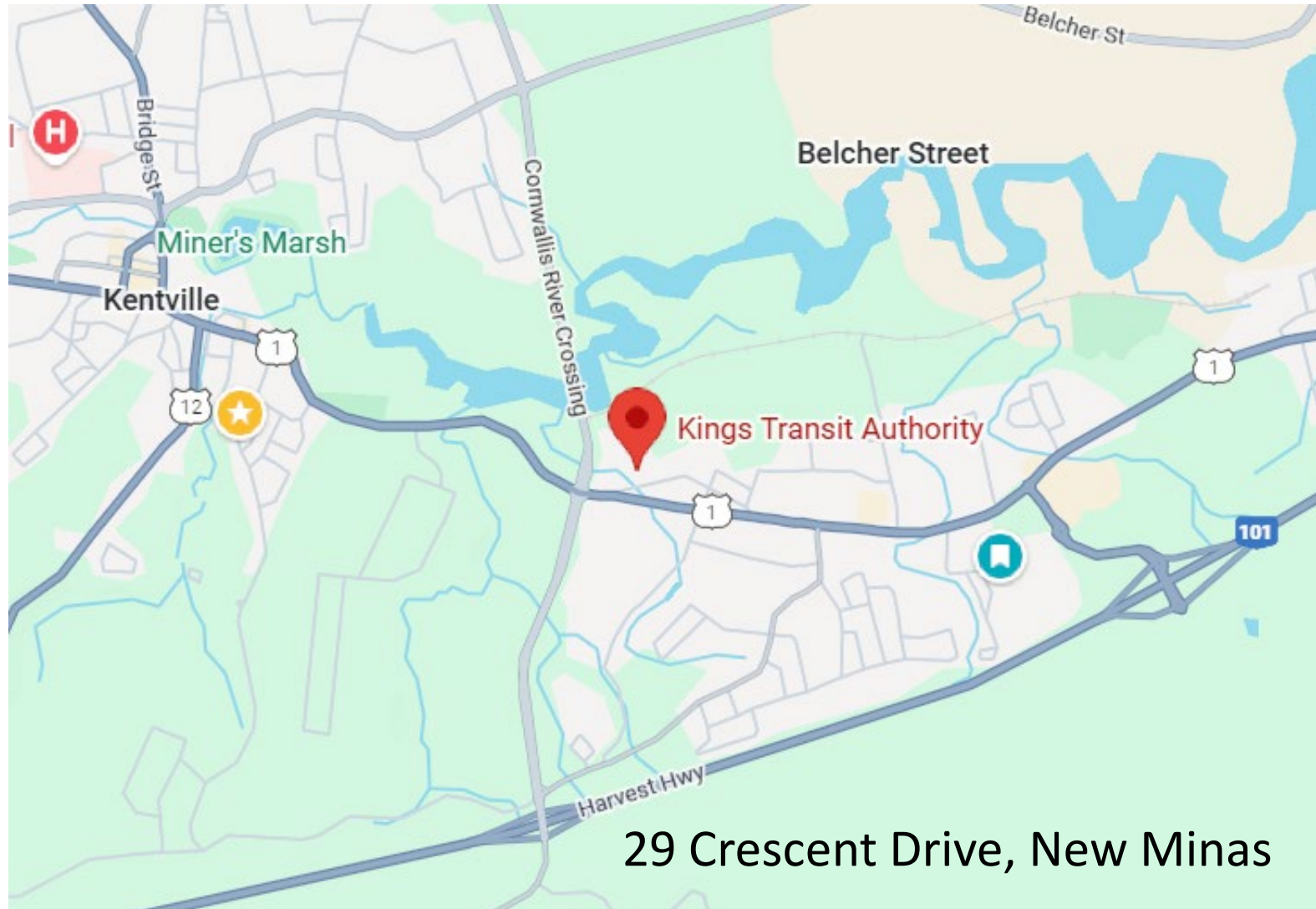
- Started in 1978 as a community pilot project between the towns of Wolfville and Kentville.
- Became a municipal corporation in 1981
- Grown in a piecemeal fashion over almost 50-year history, but times are changing!
- New governance structure adopted June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 – now owned by the Counties of Kings, Annapolis, Digby, and Towns of Berwick, Kentville, Middelton, and Wolfville.

# Where do we serve?

- 5 fixed route services from Grand Pre to Weymouth
- 7 buses operated daily
- 4 full time mechanics
- 8 administrative staff
- 30+ bus drivers



# Where are we?



29 Crescent Drive, New Minas

# What are we working on?

- New Name And Logo
- Purchasing New Buses
- New Bus Stop Signage and Shelters
- Accessibility and Communications
- Improved Bus Tracking App
- Redesigned Schedule



# New Name and Logo

- In the spring of 2025, the Kings Transit brand received an overall facelift.
  - New logo design, new standardized brand colours, clear and defined brand voice
- In September 2025, the Kings Transit Board of Directors approved changing the organizations name to Tidal Transit Authority
  - Many names were identified during public engagement sessions between 2022-2023, but Tidal Transit was most representative of all the communities we serve
- Focus on better online communication– image ID’s, plain language, low barrier visuals
- New logo under development

## Primary



## Secondary



# Brand Voice

Our brand voice is the personality behind every message we share—from schedule updates to promotional campaigns. It reflects our values, our community, and the vibrant energy of our visual identity.

We speak in a tone that is:

- **Clear and Direct**
- **Friendly and Inclusive**
- **Confident and Energetic**
- **Community-Minded**



Be Seen in the Dark



Bikes on the Bus



Service Notice



Flag the Bus



Mobility Devices on the Bus




📍 Bus Stop Relocation



NEW STOP

OLD STOP

Kentville



Follow the Bus on Bluesky



How Are We Doing?



# Iconography



# Typography

## Headings: League Spartan

Where to use: Bus stop signs, hero text, social media headers.

**Aa Bb Cc Dd**  
**1 2 3 4 5**

## Subheadings: Work Sans (Bold)

Where to use: Subheadings, route labels, interface elements.

Aa Bb Cc Dd  
1 2 3 4 5

## Body text: Inter

Where to use: Descriptions, captions, fine print, UI copy.

Aa Bb Cc Dd  
1 2 3 4 5



# New Buses

- \$11.6 M in federal, provincial, and municipal funding to purchase electric buses
  - The technology is still too under-developed for our rural needs
  - Scope change approved to pivot to hybrid electric buses instead of battery electric.
  - Will take at least two years for new buses to arrive.
- Hybrid buses are so cool!
  - No plugging in, they charge themselves through regenerative braking!
  - Geofencing allows for electric only buffers in densely populated areas (ie. Downtowns)
- Current fleet is very old
  - Some buses from Halifax transit are over 20 years old with more than 2 million kms
  - Typically have 13 buses in the fleet for spare capacity and repairs, right now there are only 9
    - We had to stop running half of a route in September to stabilize the service and reduce constant breakdown scrambles
  - Recently purchased 5 used buses from Ontario to replace retiring buses ahead of new fleet

# Bus Stop Signage and Shelters

- Received \$1 million in 2022/23 to install shelters and bus signs
- Creating a heated transfer station in Cornwallis Park
  - Right now, two buses meet on the side of the highway.
    - No washrooms for drivers
    - No shelter for passengers
- Redesigning logo before printing 1000+ new signs
  - Less than 50% of bus stops have signage in the western half of the system



# Accessibility and Communications

- Automatic voice announcement (AVA) System
- Better online communication– image ID's, plain language, low barrier visuals
- Free period products for passengers (in our public washrooms – soon all the buses)
- Free wifi on vehicles
- Hired a “Shift Supervisor – Accessibility and Engagement” in October
- Digital tickets and passes available to purchase on HotSpot Parking App (also available on Apple and Google Stores)

# Bus Tracking App and Digital Fares

- Currently using Transloc App
  - Live tracks where buses are in the system
  - Provides ETA information for bus stops
  - Lacks sophistication to
    - Subscribe to notifications
    - Live detour mapping
    - GTFS feed to power Google Maps
- Digital Fares through the HotSpot Parking App
  - In use since 2019
  - Challenging in low cell connectivity areas
- Federal and provincial funds available to upgrade to better technology

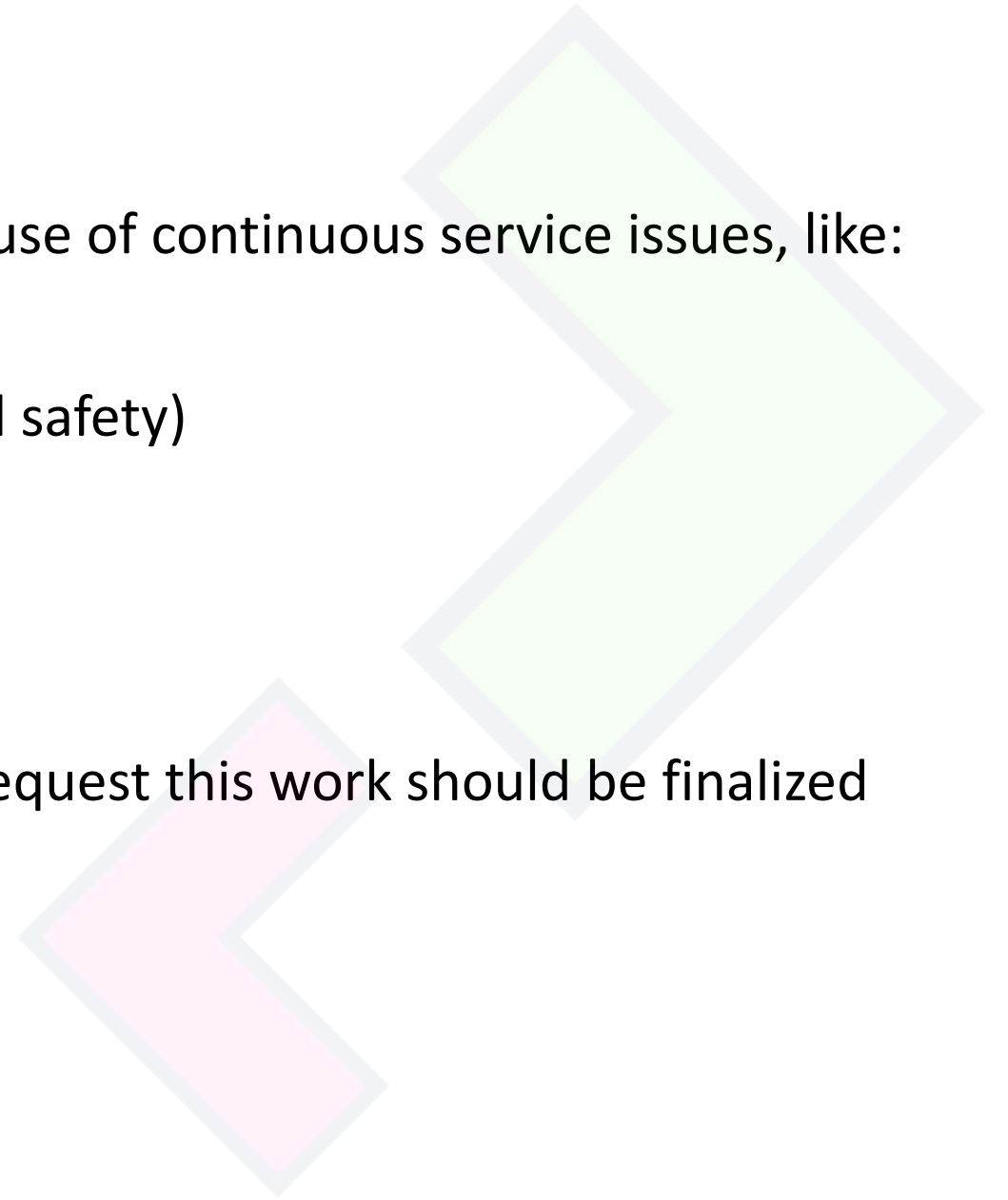


# Redesigning the Schedule

We need to redesign the current schedule because of continuous service issues, like:

- Chronic on-time performance problems
- No breaks for drivers (occupational health and safety)
- Frustrated passengers
- Low reliability
- Construction delays

With board approval of our December budget request this work should be finalized and launched by summer 2026!



**Questions?**



Meeting Date	Action Item	Status	Comments
2025-01-14	Number of fines written by RCMP and how does it get directed to Town of Berwick revenue.	In-Progress	Initial information was provided to the Police Advisory Board. Still more information to gather
2025-01-14	Planning Fee review and determine whether changes to the MPS will change our planning service fees, whether a staff person makes sense and look at similar size MU for comparison on changes to MPS vs. costs.	In-Progress	Will be reviewed and recommended during the 2026/27 budget.
	Fix decorative lights that are out.	In-Progress	The lights are out due to an electrical issue. BEC staff are accessing the issue to correct it. Once this is complete, then we can assess the number of outages.
2025-12-09	Update on 109 Marsters Avenue Dangerous or Unsightly Property	In-Progress	Mayor and CAO will visit property and review permitted uses and structures. Mayor/CAO will provide a verbal update on Jan. 13, 2026
2024-12-10	Reach out to other municipalities to understand how they are assessing the Code of Conduct criteria for establishing the sanctions	Not Started	
2024-12-10	Electricity Regulations, educational materials to provide to Council on the Council SharePoint site.	Not Started	
2025-02-11	Review Snow Removal Policy prior to next winter plowing season with input from Accessibility and Active Transportation	Not Started	
2025-06-10	Set budget for charity event participation policy	Not Started	Include in 2026/27 budget.
	Add crosswalk using packing spaces at KMCC from the crosswalk at Veteran's to front door	Other	Deferred to Accessibility Advisory Committee for discussion and request to KMCC
2025-04-08	Can staff look at an efficiency audit for the entire organization?	Other	Discuss during strategic planning.
	Breaking Soils Policy and Permits	Other	Deferred to Strategic Plan

# INFORMATION REPORT

## 001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance



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**To:** Council  
**From:** Director of Public Works  
**Date:** 13 January 2026  
**Subject:** Winter Maintenance Update

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### **References/Attachments**

- Approved Capital Improvement Plan 2025/26
- Approved Operating Budget 2025/26
- RFD 025-2025 Winter Maintenance Services on Streets, Sidewalks, and Parking Lots.
- RFP BER2025-003A Winter Maintenance Services: Roads and Parking Lots
- RFP BER2025-003B Winter Maintenance Services: Sidewalks, Pathways, Trails
- RFP Bid Responses (4)
- RFD 029-2025 Winter Maintenance of Streets, Sidewalks, Parking Lots, Trails.

### **Executive Summary**

- Contracted Winter Maintenance Services has commenced since the first snowfall of the season on 24 November 2025.
- Feedback from residents, property owners, and people who frequent the town is tracked and used to inform overall Contractor Management, and the level of service being provided.
- Much of the feedback received from residents pertains to the timeliness of the plowing of side streets in comparison to past years. This is in part due to the change of winter maintenance priorities, where sidewalks are now a higher priority than their respective street.
- At approximately 37% through the winter maintenance season, we stand at approximately 76% of the spend assumed in the Tender Evaluation. Snowfall during this period is 195% that of the previous 5-year average snowfall.
- While contracting winter maintenance services is and was not anticipated to have net operational savings, it reduced the capital burden required over the next 6 years.
- Financial modelling can be re-evaluated after a winter season of contracted winter maintenance.

# INFORMATION REPORT

## 001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance



### **Background**

Council should consult the background information provided in the reference documents mentioned above.

During the Council Meeting in September 2025, council awarded the Winter Maintenance work for Streets, Sidewalks, and Parking Lots to Rick Balsor Welding.

### **Approved Work Scope**

The contracted work scope outlined the priorities for winter maintenance as follows:

- Priority 1 Connector Streets
- Priority 2A Sidewalks
- Priority 2B Parking Lots
- Priority 3 Side Streets
- Priority 4 Pathways & Trails

Compared to the previous Snow and Ice Control Policy (February 8, 2022), streets are now organised into two categories instead of three. The most important streets are still classified as Priority 1, while Class II and Class III streets have now been grouped together as Priority 3. Previously, sidewalks had the same priority as the streets they ran alongside. Now, every sidewalk is ranked higher than "side streets" (Priority 2).

### **Operations Update**

Winter Maintenance started with the first snowfall on 24 November 2025. Since then, and up to 9 January 2026, the following is a summary of Winter Maintenance to date.

Date	Snowfall (cm)	5-yr Avg Snowfall (cm)
November	17.2	5.1
December	75.4	30.5
January	20.6*	22.5*

# INFORMATION REPORT

## 001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance



Date	CONNECTOR STREETS		SIDEWALKS	
	Ice Treatments (no plowing)	Number of times Plowed	Ice Treatments (no plowing)	Number of times Plowed
November	2	0	2	0
December	10	25	6	23
January	3	10	3	8

Date	PARKING LOTS		OTHER STREETS	
	Ice Treatments (no plowing)	Number of times Plowed	Ice Treatments (no plowing)	Number of times Plowed
November	2	0	0	0
December	10	19	15	19
January	4	8	5	9

Date	Salt Used (yards)	Sand Used (yards)
November	4.5	1.5
December	73.3	24.4
January	10.5	11.5

### **Management of Change**

As expected, feedback from residents, property owners, and people who frequent the Town of Berwick has been higher than normal this winter season. An email address and phone number were set up specifically to gather feedback.

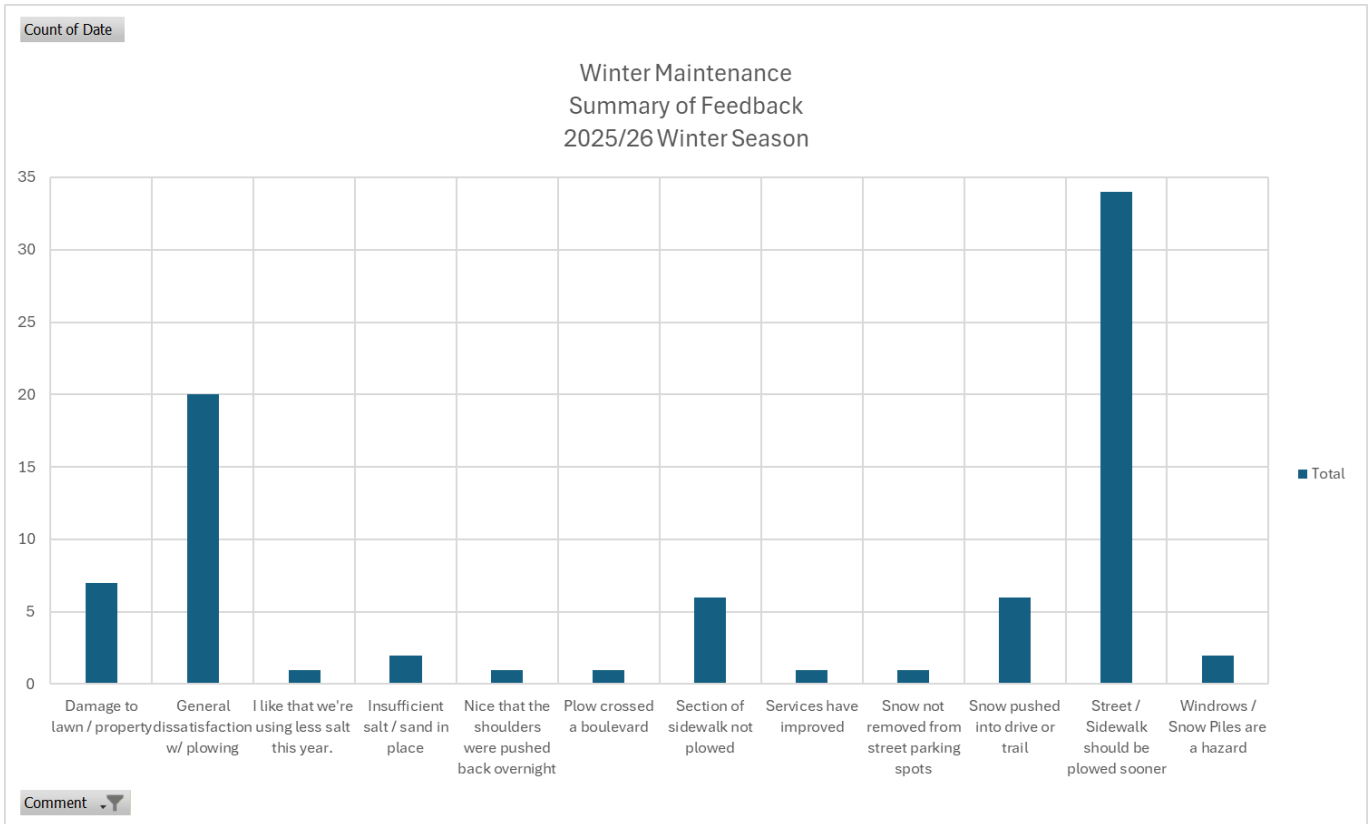
Common feedback with the first few snowfalls was that folks expected their street to be plowed sooner than it has been this winter season. As the contractor has learned their routes and optimized their operations, this feedback has decreased.

Common feedback of late is a general dissatisfaction with plowing this season, particularly as it pertains to sidewalks and side streets. This is being addressed with the contractor.

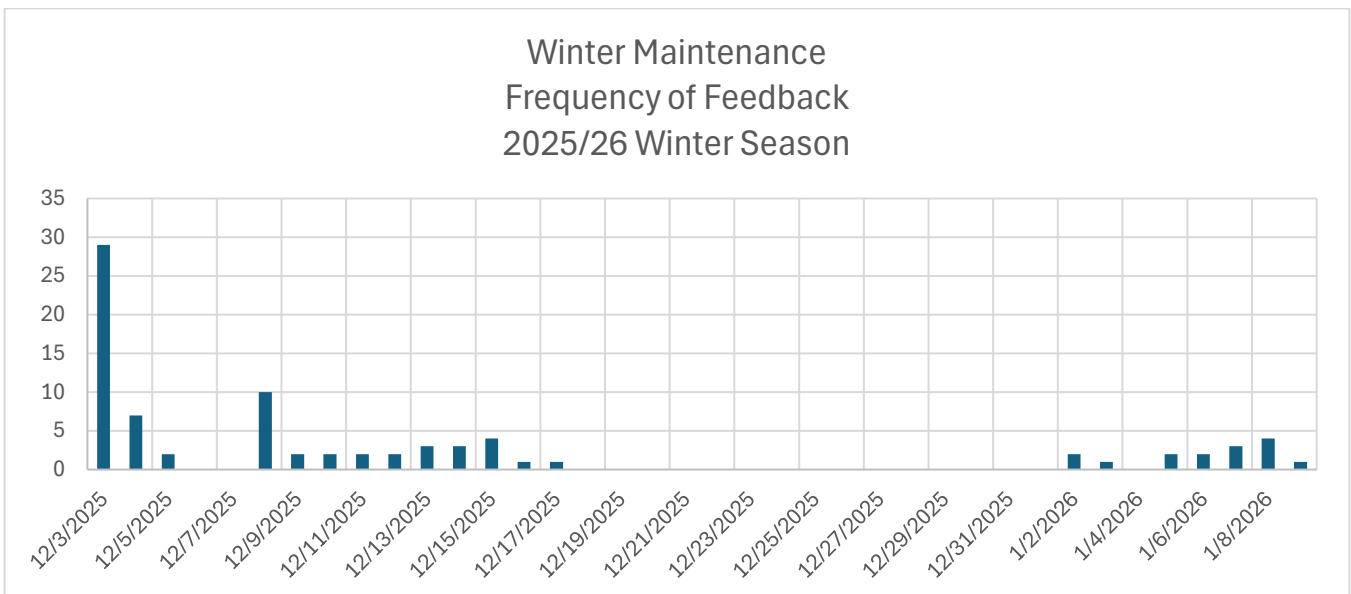
A summary of the feedback received to the Winter Maintenance email, the Winter Maintenance phone line, and to the Director of Public Works is as follows:

# INFORMATION REPORT

## 001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance



A summary of the amount of feedback (calls, texts, emails, social media, front desk, patrols) is as follows.



**INFORMATION REPORT**  
**001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance**



**Financial Implications**

The contracted work scope for winter maintenance is based on a per-treatment charge, meaning the more the streets, sidewalks, and parking lots are plowed or treated for ice, the higher the overall cost to the town.

While this work scope was not budgeted to be performed by a contractor, a work scope size that was deemed reasonable was used to evaluate the tender responses in September. This work scope assumed 45 dedicated ice treatments per winter season, with 25 plow runs per winter season on connector streets, for a total of 70 treatments per winter season. Parking lots and side streets were assumed to receive 80% of this amount of treatments; sidewalks were assumed to received 120% of this amount of treatments. This amount of treatments was informed by time sheets for Public Works Staff for the former winter season.

A comparison of the amount of treatments used for the tender evaluation relative to our season-to-date actual is as follows:

	Amounts used for Tender Evaluation	Amounts Winter Season to date (9 Jan 2026)
Connector Streets <b>Ice Treatment</b>	45	15
Parking Lots	36	16
Other Streets	36	20
Sidewalks	54	11
Connector Streets <b>Plowed + Ice Treatment</b>	25	35
Parking Lots	25	27
Other Streets	20	28
Sidewalks	25	31
Trails snow-cleared	5	0

Assuming an end of the fiscal winter season by 31 March, we are approximately 37% through the winter maintenance season as of 9 January 2026.

With higher than typical snow fall amounts this winter season to date in comparison to the previous 5 winters, there is a likelihood that we may exceed our anticipated spend.

A comparison of the amount of spend used for the tender evaluation (\$257.2K) relative to our season-to-date spend (\$196.5K) shows we’re at 76% of our “forecasted” spend.

Should snowfall amounts continue as they have winter-to-date, Council should expect

# INFORMATION REPORT

## 001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance



higher than anticipated costs. This would also have been the case if winter maintenance were conducted in house as past years, as the overall cost is directly related to snowfall and precipitation amounts.

### Lessons Learned

Learnings in this first year of contracted services for winter maintenance include:

1. Several small sections of sidewalk were missed during the first few runs of the season.
2. Plow runs on streets were narrower than we would have liked during the first few runs, however this was in part because the contractor was trying to prevent damage to lawns while the ground was not yet frozen.
3. The Winter Maintenance with the Municipality of the County of Kings for the sidewalk near Commercial Street and HWY 1 should have been included in the contracted work scope.
4. It is difficult to match the service of last year on regular business days where it snows continually. During days like this, the Public Works Staff would plow continually throughout the regular business day. Residents would see many plow runs during days like this on their streets and sidewalks.
5. The dedicated email address and phone line for winter maintenance feedback has helped to keep this feedback in a concise location where it can be assessed, triaged, responded to when needed, and analyzed.

### Priority Alignment

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

# **INFORMATION REPORT**

## **001-2026: Winter Streets & Sidewalks Maintenance**



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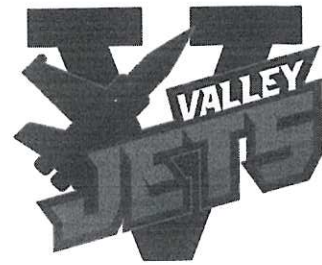
### **Community Engagement/Communication**

Staff will continue to receive, track, and analyze feedback from residents, property owners, and people who frequent the town, and use it to inform overall Contract Management.

Staff will continue to work with the Public Works field staff to complement the work performed by the contractor, to right-size the levels of service and to optimize workflows.

CAO Initials:     JB

Town of Berwick



Mayor Trinacty and Councillors,

The Valley Jets U13AAA team is the flagship team for Minor Hockey in the Annapolis Valley. They participate in the competitive provincial Central Minor Hockey Association AAA league, which is made up of 15 teams from as far as Yarmouth to Glace Bay. The Valley team can include players from Digby to West Hants and Western Valley Minor Hockey Association is the host association for this team. The Valley Jets are the identity of elite hockey at the U13 level in the Valley area!

Each year teams from the U13AAA Central Minor Hockey Association submit bids to host the year end provincial championships and this year the **Valley Jets were success in our bid and will be hosting the 2025/26 U13AAA Provincial Championships (April 2 -5, 2026) at the Apple Dome in Bewick!** It is a great honour to be chosen to host this prestigious event but, with any great event, there is a significant cost associated with hosting. **This tournament is not funded and all the costs associated with hosting fall on the hosting team. The tournament is estimated to cost \$25,000.**

We are hoping you may consider being a tournament sponsor. We appreciate anything you can do to help reduce our costs. Cheques can be made payable to Valley Jets (we can pick up) or electronic money transfer to: valleyjetsU13AAA2025@gmail.com.

Level	Contribution	Benefits
Title Sponsor	\$3,000+	Branding, signage, ads, VIP seating
Gold Sponsor	\$2,000	Logo on materials, event mentions
Silver Sponsor	\$1,000	Digital/print presence
Bronze Sponsor / Game Sponsor	\$500	Logo in program & arena banners / Puck Drop
In-kind / Auction	Variable	Logo, recognition (food/services)

The parents, coaches and players of the U13AAA Valley Jets thank you for your generous support.

With Gratitude,

U13AAA Valley Jets

902- 698-7551 valleyjetsU13AAA2025@gmail.com

# MAYOR'S REPORT

FROM Dec 17 TO Jan 13/26

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Dec 17	Valley Regional Services Board	Regular Valley Waste and Kings Tidal Transit meeting
Dec 18	Public safety Committee	Continue developing orientation package, business survey and workshops
Dec 19	Development Group	Informal group to explore development potential in Berwick
Jan 8	Public Safety Committee	Continue to refine plan to present to PSAC Jan 20
Jan 8	Ray Robinson AREA	Update for next meeting Jan 28
Jan 12	Hall of Fame	Regular meeting
Jan 12	Anna Sherwood CCHT	RFANS Facility Interview
Jan 12	Grand View Manor board	Discuss plans for old GVM
Jan 12	KMCC Governance Committee	
Jan 13	Berwick Electric Commission	
Jan 13	Town Council	
Jan 14	Hosting 'Giving' Organization in Berwick	

<b>Jan 15</b>	<b>Community Development Meeting</b>	
<b>Jan 19</b>	<b>Kings REMO meeting</b>	
<b>Jan 19</b>	<b>PAC meeting</b>	
<b>Jan 20</b>	<b>Kyla Pierik -ACOA</b>	
<b>Jan 20</b>	<b>Police Service Board</b>	
<b>Jan 21</b>	<b>Valley Regional Service Board</b>	
<b>Jan 21</b>	<b>Mayor Corkum – Kings County</b>	
<b>Jan 21</b>	<b>Valley Library and Municipal Units</b>	
<b>Jan 22</b>	<b>Jens Schlemmer -Michelin</b>	
<b>Jan 23</b>	<b>Development Group</b>	
<b>Jan 27</b>	<b>Hall of Fame</b>	
<b>Jan 27</b>	<b>COTW</b>	

**Request for Decision**  
**RFD001-2026: Finance Department**  
**Stabilization and Backlog Reduction**



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**To: Town Council**  
**From: Director of Finance**  
**Date: January 13, 2026**  
**Subject: Finance Department Stabilization and Backlog Reduction**

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**References/Attachments**

- NA

**Legislation**

- NA

**Recommendations**

That Council approve the 2025-26 expense of \$35,000, for an accounting consultant secondment, to be funded by safe restart funds.

**Background**

Since 2022, the Finance Department has been managing a sustained backlog of financial reconciliations, reviews, and compliance-related work. This backlog developed because of staffing disruptions, historical reporting inaccuracies, increased regulatory and audit requirements, and several significant unplanned workload items.

Despite internal efforts and role restructuring, the department has not been able to fully return to its current operating position while also meeting ongoing financial obligations. The required work cannot be absorbed within existing capacity without perpetuating current risks.

In February 2025, the Audit Committee expressed support for the addition of temporary resources to assist the department in returning to current and mitigating risk and Council supported the addition of this expense in the

The Finance Department has experienced four turnovers in a skilled finance role over four years. Each turnover of a finance clerk role costs approximately \$100,000, driven primarily by lost productivity during vacancy and ramp-up, recruiting and hiring effort, and increased error and compliance risk.

Through the external auditors, staff have identified a qualified resource from the audit firm to complete a secondment for the town to assist the Finance Department in addressing a long-standing financial backlog, strengthening core financial controls, and reducing operational, audit, and organizational risk.

The proposed consultant engagement would be time-limited and targeted, with a specific mandate to address backlog and stabilization activities rather than ongoing operational

**Request for Decision**  
**RFD001-2026: Finance Department**  
**Stabilization and Backlog Reduction**



work. This approach would accelerate completion of historical reconciliations and reviews, reduce reliance on permanent staff for backlog remediation, allow internal resources to focus on maintaining current operations, reduce audit and compliance exposure, improve sustainability of the Finance Department workforce.

To continue without targeted intervention of this backlog, increases the organization’s risks with the likelihood of additional staff turnover, continued delays in financial reporting, and heightened operational and compliance risk.

**Financial Implications**

The anticipated budget for additional support will be a net impact of \$35,000 which staff are proposing to fund from safe restart.

**Priority Alignment**

<b>Check Applicable</b>	<b>Strategic Area</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Comments</b>
X	Economic		
	Environmental		
	Social		
X	Cultural		

**Community Engagement/Communication**

NA

**CAO Comments**

I support staff’s recommendation.

CAO Initials: JB

Target Decision Date: January 13, 2025