



# Colchester

## Strategic Priorities & Administrative Update August 2020

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## INTRODUCTION



Throughout the 2016-2020 term of Council, a number of key strategic priorities were identified, emerging initiatives and opportunities were pursued, and administrative/operational efficiencies were advanced, with a view of ensuring the Municipality of the County of Colchester continues to be a community of choice in Nova Scotia.

From an organizational and community perspective, it should be acknowledged that Council adapted its priorities and remained nimble so as to seize opportunities as partnerships and funding opportunities became available. By extension, initiatives which were not included in Council's initial strategic priorities inventory of January 2017 emerged during Council's term of office, which served to bring significant benefits to our community and region.

Whether one considers initiatives such as: Rural Highspeed Internet, the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark, Solar Colchester and Physician Recruitment (and other important endeavours), one would conclude that Council's ability to pivot and advance these opportunities will serve our community well; now and in the years to come.

From an administrative perspective, staff had hoped to provide an update to Council on its progress in advancing Council's priorities in April, however, COVID-19 and the tragic events of April 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> precluded that from happening. Additionally, it was staff's goal to provide Council with an overview of its business operations for the fiscal year of 2019/20 in May, however, due to the aforementioned events, it was unable to do so. Accordingly, staff has prepared the following update as a means of codifying Council's progress to date.

On a go-forward basis, it is staff's objective to provide updates to Council on a quarterly basis relative to its efforts to advance Council's priorities. In the interim, staff is hopeful that the following synopsis will be helpful to Council in gauging its progress and should assist the incoming Council in determining next steps in the planning process.

Thank you.

Robert (Rob) Simonds, M.A.  
Chief Administrative Officer

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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## Project:



**Objective:** To establish a high-quality tourism attraction in the region and site for local enjoyment.

**Staff Lead:** Paul Smith

## Status:

The Fundy Discovery Site was identified as a strategic priority for Council in 2015. Since the completion of a masterplan in 2017, Council has made significant investments in the Site and public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive with annual visits increasing steadily. Likewise, external stakeholder responses have been extremely supportive, attracting nearly \$500,000 in financial and in-kind contributions to the project. Project milestones to date are noted below:

### Pre-2019:

- Fundy Discovery Site Masterplan;
- Public washroom facility including service extensions;
- Branding including logo, site signage and website design;
- Installation of highway signage;
- Dyke trail;
- Outdoor amphitheater;
- Extensive landscaping, seating, picnic areas;
- Initial phase of a natural playground.



### 2019 - 2020

- Paving of Tidal Bore Road;
- Installation of interpretive signage;
- Completion of natural playground;
- Installation of security cameras and remote monitoring (Truro Police);
- Landscaping, site lighting, seating, bike repair station and water refill station;
- Improvements to Visitor Information Center (heat pump and insulation);
- Pedestrian bridge design and “tender ready” engineered drawings;
- Interpretive Plan and Feasibility Study.



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**Project:**



## Rural Broadband



**Objective:** To have high speed internet available throughout all of Colchester.

**Staff Lead:** Mark Austin



### Status:

Colchester and Cumberland Municipalities are collaborating to put in place a rural broadband network with capacity to serve all areas of the two counties. XplorNet Communications Inc. (XCI) was selected as the internet service provider partner through a procurement process overseen by the *Cumberland-Colchester Joint Internet Improvements Committee*. XCI's proposal to Develop Nova Scotia (DNS) to construct a network in Cumberland and Colchester was selected by the Province for funding from the NS Internet Funding Trust (NSIFT).

### Project highlights:

- Overall budget is \$62.1 million. Contributions: XCI - \$35 million; NSIFT - \$21.1 million; Cumberland - \$3,327,600; Colchester - \$2,672,400;
- XCI will own and operate the network, which is subject to DNS Open Access policies;
- Cumberland-Colchester will have a twenty-year indefeasible right of use for two pair of dark optic fibres on the 500+ km. of newly deployed fibre;
- Prior to the Cumberland-Colchester-XCI project, 24,400 civic addresses, which is 72% of all addresses in Cumberland-Colchester, did not have access to rural broadband at 25 Mbps or better. The project will create capacity for 3,500 civic addresses to have direct fibre service, 19,000 via fixed (to fibre) wireless, and 1,900 via improved satellite service;
- The completed network will have technical capacity to serve 100% of Cumberland and Colchester at service levels of 100 Mbps for fixed-wireless and fibre-to-the-home technology and 50 Mbps for satellite technology;
- \$99/monthly unlimited data packages will be available;
- XCI has partnered with DNS to accelerate the wireless components of our network and has begun to offer interim 25 Mbps in many areas of Cumberland-Colchester;
- The elements of this project that are covered by our recently signed contract with XCI will be put in place over the next two to three years, but our financial contributions could spread out over as many as five years, depending on XCI's delivery of key service capacity;
- Continuing municipal oversight will ensure that network development takes place throughout the two jurisdictions with equity;
- Access to high-speed rural internet that utilizes fixed-wireless, wireless, and/or satellite technology is dependent on line-of-sight signal reception. Terrain and trees will interfere with the ability of some civic addresses to take advantage of the new network. Some of these obstacles can be overcome by clearing or extension poles; others will require additional network construction by XCI or other internet service providers who can access the new infrastructure for purposes of 'last mile' extension;
- The work of the two Municipalities through their Joint Committee is structured through the Rural Broadband and Connected Communities Agreement signed by the Municipalities on 21 August 2020. The Agreement commits the parties to continue collaborating to oversee the initial project, but also to pursue best use of the new network and opportunities to expand it. This role could also be extended to working toward cell phone coverage improvements.

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**Project:**



**Objective:** To increase development in the Debert Business Park.

**Staff Lead:** Mark Austin/Crawford Macpherson

**Status:**

Over the past four years, the Debert Business Park (DBP) has been at the centre of Colchester's economic development activities. The Municipality formed a working Committee consisting of members of Council and staff to oversee rebranding of the former Debert Air Industrial Park. This resulted in renaming the Park to its current name. The brand was deployed to develop a stand-alone website to profile and market the DBP. New signage was deployed to reflect the rebranding at several locations in the Park as well as on Highway 104 signs. For sale signs have also been put up on specific lots. The DBP is marketed primarily as a site for new business attraction and existing business expansion.

In 2018, the Mayor, CAO, and staff met with the Premier of Nova Scotia to discuss the Debert Business Park's importance and growth potential, as well as a specific economic opportunity which is still in play. Staff now regularly receive inquiries and referrals from senior executives at Nova Scotia Business Inc. and several site-locating companies about prospective business relocations.

In Spring 2020, Council formed a new standing committee: the *Debert Business Park Advisory Committee*. The initial Committee will consist of the Mayor, Councillors Pash and Taggart, another Council member yet to be determined, two yet-to-be appointed representatives of the DBP business community, and a yet-to-be-appointed Debert resident. The *Debert Business Park Advisory Committee* will advise Council on the following objectives:

- Economic development of the DBP;
- Optimal processes for the attraction of businesses and sale/leasing of properties;
- Preparation of a Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law, acting as the Municipality's Planning Advisory Committee in relation to the DBP;
- Infrastructure planning to facilitate phased development aligned with the land-use and economic development strategies;
- Business and housing development opportunities;
- Other matters that may arise concerning the DBP as directed by Council.



Some Debert Business Park highlights:

- Major business expansions took place in the past two years, the largest being the Tim Horton's Regional Distribution Centre and Kohltech Windows and Doors;
- Three small businesses were welcomed to the Park in the past two years. Another six businesses expanded their operations with additional employees or buildings;
- There is increased interest in residential development in and around the DBP, including plans for multiplex seniors housing;
- Staff presented Council with a description of the land transaction process for the sale of land within the Park;
- Renovations took place in three municipally-owned buildings to facilitate Municipal use and external leasing (15 Ventura Drive; the former DNR building on Lancaster Crescent; and, Administrative building on MacElmon Road);
- Archaeology, demolition of derelict buildings, and land-clearing continued over the past four years to make lots ready for marketing and use;
- In the past two years, approximately eighteen acres of land has been sold or currently subject of a purchase-sale agreement in the DBP;
- All but two units of the Incubator Mall are currently occupied. Staff is following a directive from Council to investigate using at least some of the building for actual business incubation;
- Staff is collaborating with Nova Scotia Business Inc. and Invest Canada on developing a marketing package and business plan to attract large investors to the DBP and Airport.



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**Project:**

**Debert Airport**



**Objective:** To enhance facilities and increase business development at the Debert Airport.

**Staff Lead:** Mark Austin/Crawford Macpherson

**Status:**

- Council identified the need to determine a strategic direction for the Debert Airport;
- Staff assessed infrastructure needs and economic opportunities and reported to Council;
- Council affirmed its commitment to invest in Airport development;
- In 2017, municipal staff became aware that NAVCanada would no longer provide certification to the approaches to the main runway at the Airport. JetPro was contracted to provide the technical support for Debert to maintain its GPS rating. After further investigation, Council agreed to upgrade the technical approach to the runways to WAAS which offers heightened instrument support to a lower elevation which is important for night and poor weather flights. This improvement was provided at very little additional cost as it operates through satellites rather than ground based infrastructure.
- In 2017, Council also agreed to purchase a refurbished AWOS (Automated Weather Observation System). The refurbished system cost \$65,000 versus \$100,000 new and supports the WAAS system by broadcasting weather conditions to pilots.
- The Airport currently operates at close to break-even revenue-expense ratio, but requires capital investment in infrastructure;
- Staff are developing a business plan and marketing materials to boost economic activity at the Airport;
- A funding application to the Federal Government to assist with infrastructure investment is tied to the Airport as regional economic asset;
- The Airport grounds have hosted two Mud Hero events, bringing in modest revenues;
- Snowbirds Over Debert was a highly successful air show that lead to Debert being considered as the permanent home for the Atlantic International Airshow. The 2020 Show was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but Debert is scheduled to host in 2021;
- Staff is collaborating with Stanfield International on complementary development, as well as with a former Stanfield business development executive in an on-going advisory capacity;
- NSBI and Invest Canada initiated an Airport marketing and business plan development project with Colchester which remains in proposal stage;
- Staff works closely with the Truro Flying Club/Debert Flight Centre on matters such as Airport maintenance, hangar development, fuel sales, and day-to-day operations;
- Council approved the purchase of the former Orenda property and hangar in July 2020. Staff is overseeing renovations now and into the Fall. The vision is for the Debert Aviation Centre to house a cluster of aviation businesses that will be a catalyst for economic activity;
- A company from outside Nova Scotia will be the first occupant and anchor tenant of the upgraded facility. This company is expected to bring as many as 90 full-time positions to Debert in its incremental move to the Debert Aviation Centre.

**Project:**



**Objective:** To establish, promote and maintain the first UNESCO Global Geopark in Nova Scotia

**Staff Lead:** Devin Trefry

**Status:**

- In 2017 the Municipality of Colchester was invited to participate in an initiative to establish a UNESCO Global Geopark along the Fundy Shore of Cumberland and Colchester from Apple River to Economy;
- In 2018, the boundaries of the Geopark were expanded further into Colchester, first to Bass River, then to Debert to include the Mi'kmaway Debert project;
- Following an evaluation and endorsement by the Canadian Geoparks Network and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO Cliffs of Fundy Geopark submitted its application to UNESCO in the Fall of 2018;
- In January 2019, the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark Society was officially formed in partnership with the Municipalities of Cumberland and Colchester. Mayor Christine Blair and Councillor Tom Taggart were appointed to represent the Municipality of Colchester on the Board.
- UNESCO evaluators were hosted in the Summer of 2019;
- Following a successful evaluation, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council, at their meeting in Indonesia, approved and forwarded the nomination of Cliffs of Fundy to the UNESCO Executive Council for their final endorsement anticipated in the Spring of 2020;
- Although the announcement was delayed due to COVID-19, on July 10, 2020, Cliffs of Fundy was officially named a UNESCO Global Geopark.



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**Project:**

## **Waste to Energy**

**Objective:** Identified as a Council priority in January 2017, Council directed staff to determine whether a business case existed to support a Waste to Energy initiative for the Municipality, which included evaluating numerous factors associated with successfully and economically transferring solid waste into energy as a potential waste management solution.

**Staff Lead:** Scott Fraser

- **Status:**  
Working with Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) a complete baseline assessment of the current solid waste business operations was undertaken along with an in-depth analysis of the financial, operational, technological, and environmental considerations of pursuing Waste to Energy. Having undertaken its due diligence and closely evaluating the feasibility of the project, Council determined that it was not a financially viable option at the present time.



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**Project:**

## Policing Review

**Objective:** To ensure the Municipality is receiving good value and service from its current policing contract with a view of exploring opportunities to optimize Council's investment in policing services.



**Staff Lead:** Rob Simonds



### Status:

As Council evaluates options to optimize its investment in policing services, it has tasked the Department of Justice (DOJ) with undertaking a comprehensive review of the demands for service as well as the scope and nature of crime within the Municipality. Further, Council has explored other concepts of operations for its policing services to ensure the model of choice is responsive to the current and future policing needs of the Municipality.

DOJ is expected to share its analysis with Council in September of 2020 so that Council can determine the next steps in its review process.

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**Project:**

## **Economic Development Strategy**

### **Regional Enterprise Network**

Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity - TCPEP

**Objective:** To establish an organization in partnership with local businesses (through the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce), the Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, Millbrook First Nation, and Government of Nova Scotia, to drive business growth and development in the Colchester region.



**Staff Lead:** Rob Simonds

**Status:**

- Established Board and Oversight Liaison Committee;
- Development of a Regional Economic Development Plan;
- Developed brand and marketing – including website, social media, relocation guide, tradeshow banners, promotional items, etc.;
- Physician recruitment;
- Support programs and educational opportunities for local businesses;
- Business attraction and retention.

### **Colchester Economic Development Activity**

Economic Development Officer(s)

**Objective:** Staff specialist(s) dedicated to the economic development within the Municipality of Colchester, working with Council, staff, community and businesses, and other governments and agencies.

**Staff Lead:** Mark Austin

**Status:**

- The Economic Development Officer works on initiatives to increase prosperity in Colchester. This varies from broad condition-improvement initiatives such as improved broadband and asset development (e.g. the Airport) to specific business attraction and land sales in the Debert Business Park;
- Following direction from Council, a second EDO recruitment process was mid-stream when the COVID-19 measures were put in place. The process will be restarted in early September;
- The EDO works closely with the Director of Community Development on development of the Debert Business Park and Airport;
- Important ongoing collaboration takes place with TCPEP, the Town of Truro, Downtown Truro Partnership, Truro-Colchester Chamber of Commerce, several community-based development organizations, the Municipality of Cumberland, ACOA, NSBI, and CBDC;
- An economic development strategy for Colchester was developed to integrate and complement the plan developed by the TCPEP (Image One below is an overview of the TCPEP Plan, Image Two is an overview of the Colchester Economic Development Plan):

## Promote the Colchester Region as an excellent place to work, live, and do business

- collective identity
- promote our assets
- highlight success
- leverage highways
- promotional presence
- events

## Increase business start-ups. Support business growth and innovation

- co-working & collaboration spaces
- access to capital
- investment fund with youth stream
- businessNOW (BRE)
- mentorship network
- site-selection streamlining
- sector cluster support
- customer feedback service
- entrepreneurship education
- collaborations with Dal & NSCC

Truro & Colchester **Partnership**  
for Economic Prosperity

**Mandate:** *Increase economic prosperity throughout the Colchester region by supporting and encouraging business development.*

## Develop, attract, and retain our workforce

- navigation of immigration programs
- newcomer welcoming services
- connect to events
- international student employment
- pay equity initiative
- asset mapping
- youth focus groups

***Economic development is the improvement of people's ability to create and share in prosperity.***

### Economic Development Strategies for Colchester:

#### 1) Secure and build on our strengths:

- Debert Business Park and existing businesses
- Greater Truro business, service, and institutional area
- Social and resource wealth of small communities in beautiful settings
- Diverse economy with key sectors such as agri-food, manufacturing, distribution
- Location and highway intersections
- Excellent amenities, services, culture and events
- Collaborations: neighbours, PEP, governments, businesses, and organizations

#### 2) Improve on our weaknesses and vulnerabilities:

- Improved internet, cell phone, and transportation where needed
- Healthy citizens and communities with ways out of poverty
- Environmental protection
- Policy advocacy

#### 3) Attraction and Placemaking:

- Creating great places and supporting each other
- Smart marketing with confidence and service
- Tourism with intent
- Welcoming and inclusive places, organizations, events

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**Project:**

## Service Capacity Review

**Objective:** To review the service capacity/capabilities of the Municipality with a view of ensuring adequate resources exist relative to achieving Council's strategic priorities and organizational operational and administrative objectives. Moreover, the review served to identify the current service inventory and ensure proper alignment exists between and amongst departments and divisions.

**Staff Lead:** Rob Simonds

**Status:**

In 2017, Dr. Gordon McIntosh of the LGL Institute was retained to conduct an extensive service capacity review exercise with staff and members of Council. The exercise involved a thorough review of each department's activities; identified opportunities to operate more efficiently; prioritized future organizational goals; and, determined capacity to achieve goals with current staffing levels.



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**Project:**

## Long Term Financing Plan

**Objective:** To develop a long term (10-year) financial plan to assist with future forecasting and budgeting.

**Staff Lead:** Scott Fraser

**Status:**

- Staff have developed annual models for forecasting future reserve, area rate, and capital financing requirements for the next five years.
- This fall staff will incorporate these models into a Fiscal Sustainability Plan to be presented to Council. The plan will project revenue and expenditure needs for the Municipality so as to support and inform Council's decision-making process in relation to the competing demands brought to Council.

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**Project:**

## **Biosolids**

**Objective:**

To reduce disposal cost and optimize beneficial uses for our biosolid product.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:**

Staff are continuing to optimize operations at the plant to make a dryer product and reduce costs for disposal. Since 2017, staff have increased % solids content from 16% to over 18%, helping to reduce shipping and disposal costs by 22% (or \$85,000).



Staff are also working with Nova Scotia Environment, Acadia University and Oberland Agriscience to do a feasibility study on the conversion of biosolids to protein using fly larvae. Samples have already been shipped to Acadia for preliminary work, and staff have applied for funding via Divert NS for a larger on-site pilot project.

## EMERGING INITIATIVES

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**Project:**

### Community Engagement Strategy

**Objective:** To enhance community engagement within the Municipality.

**Staff Lead:** Devin Trefry

**Status:**

- **Community Engagement Strategy** – Council adopted its community engagement strategy as presented on April 25, 2019. The strategy expressed the importance of communication to engage and involve the community and outlined key initiatives including rebranding, social media and, Everbridge emergency notification software partnership with the Town of Truro “Alert Truro Colchester”.
- **Rebranding** – In April 2018, Council budgeted \$25,000 to undertake a rebranding exercise for the Municipality. A committee of staff and Council representatives was formed, and 3<sup>rd</sup> party professionals were engaged to lead the process. With extensive research and community engagement informing the process the committee presented a new contemporary brand for approval on September 2019.



- **Social Media** – Corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts for the Municipality went live on June 24, 2019. The number of Twitter followers is currently 91 and is slowly growing, however the Municipality’s posts on this platform remain impactful with over 5,000 impressions in a recent 28-day period in July/August of 2020. On Facebook, we have 883 followers as of August 19, 2020, however it is not uncommon for a single post to reach thousands of people through post-sharing and other post-engagement. For example, a recent post regarding the Tatamagouche Water Utility reached over 2,500 people. The most popular post of 2020 reached over 80,000 people – making Facebook a very useful communication tool for Colchester.



- Alert Truro Colchester** – January 2018, Council approved a subscription partnership with the Town of Truro for the Everbridge emergency mass notification system. The system allows the Municipality to send geo-targeted messages to residents by voice, text, or email. Citizens can choose how they receive the messages and what type of information they want to receive: emergencies only, important advisories (e.g. road closures, water utility messages, etc.), and general community information (e.g. recreation programming, etc.). The system was branded for the public as “Alert Truro Colchester” (or Alert TC for short). Staff has continued to work with the Town to establish protocols for shared use of the system. Sign-up to the program has been encouraged by promotion via website, newsletters, social media, and water bills. The system was used to send out messages during Hurricane Dorian and was most recently used to inform water utility customers of concerns related to low water levels. Residents of East Court Road and College Road in Bible Hill, who were subscribed, also received messages regarding recent sewer flushing.

As of August 2020, there are 1,578 subscribers to the system.

Although plans for in-person promotional efforts have been stifled by COVID-19, staff will continue to find new ways to promote the service to increase subscriptions.



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**Project:**

## Physician Recruitment

**Objective:** To encourage physicians to relocate and work within the Colchester region.

**Staff Lead:** Rob Simonds

**Status:**

Through the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity (TCPEP), the Municipality has become very active in physician recruitment. Mayor Christine Blair, Councillor Bill Masters, and CAO Rob Simonds represent the Municipality of Colchester on the local Physician Recruitment Committee co-chaired by TCPEP CEO Brennan Gillis and Dr. Ryan Sommers of the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

2019-2020 had 18 physician site visits and 12 physician tours. Community members were sought to assist where areas of interest or family situations aligned with those visiting and information on prospective physicians was obtained.

The TCPEP secured funding of \$25,000 from Communities Culture and Heritage to train community volunteers to support physician recruitment efforts. The contract will allow the TCPEP some administrative support, information sessions, and marketing.

The Tatamagouche Business Group reached out asking for support with their physician recruitment efforts. TCPEP met with business representatives to provide guidance on their Healthy Communities application however, they were unsuccessful as their project scope fell outside of the funding guidelines.

In April 2019, the TCPEP attended the Rural and Remote Conference in Halifax where interaction with hundreds of doctors took place and Truro Colchester was promoted.

**Regional Promotion:**

- TCPEP's Connector Manager and CEO attended Dalhousie's Family Physician Retreat networking reception and job fair on Sept. 19-20 in St. Andrews, NB where they interacted with 70+ resident doctors. Dr. Karla Armsworthy, Dr. Kelly, and Dr. (Jan) Sommers attended as well. Truro Colchester promotional materials were well received, and accommodations were awarded to two residents and three other smaller prizes were also awarded;
- CEO attended Healthy Communities Conference in Lunenburg on May 31, 2019, to learn about recruitment strategies in other regions.

**Retention Efforts with New Residents:**

- Working with local physicians and partners, the TCPEP supported an orientation day on July 2, 2019. The six new North Nova Residents participated in a Scavenger Hunt in Truro, followed by an evening BBQ with the community at the Peg in Masstown;
- On November 22, 2019, TCPEP and Nova Scotia Health Authority hosted an evening dinner at Roadside Willie's and bowling with the six local resident physicians;
- A presentation relating to physician recruitment was made for a Chamber of Commerce hosted information session on December 6, 2019. It provided an overview of activity and processes in the region. After the event, several businesses offered to assist with future recruitment activity.

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**Project:**



**Objective:** To establish a program that allows eligible property owners in Colchester to install photovoltaic solar panels with financing assistance from the Municipality.

**Staff Lead:** Joanna Burris

**Status:**

- Launched in April 2019, however, closed applications in July 2019 due to high demand with 30 applications waitlisted;
- Experienced some delays, but all 18 Year-1 projects have now been installed;
- Year-1 Solar Colchester installations (18 homes) are projected to reduce 157.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e/year (metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year);
- Supernova Energy Solutions has been doing site evaluations all summer for applicants on the waitlist. Interest in solar is low right now because of COVID-19, so we will be doing another call for applications soon to fill remaining Year-2 spots;
- May 28, 2020, Council directed staff to expand the program to include more solar contractors, based on staff recommendation. More contractor participation will result in a faster rate of project installations, more options for participants, and growth in the local solar industry;
- Issued a Call for Expressions of Interest on August 17 to find qualified solar contractors to add to the Municipality's list of approved contractors for Solar Colchester;
- Recently submitted a funding application to the Green Municipal Fund's Community Efficiency Financing program to expand Solar Colchester and broaden the program to include PACE financing for home energy retrofits. The funding application, which combines a capital loan and a grant, will also be used to subsidize training for local contractors to help grow the clean energy industry in Colchester.



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**Project:**

## Community Energy Emissions Plan

**Objective:** To develop a Community Energy and Emissions Plan that lays out a realistic and achievable, yet ambitious, strategy for decreasing Colchester's dependence on fossil fuel and moving toward a more efficient, affordable, and renewable energy future.

**Staff Lead:** Joanna Burris

**Status:**

- The Municipality received a \$70,000 grant from the NS Department of Energy and Mines to complete a Community Energy & Emissions Plan. The Plan will achieve Milestones 2 and 3 of the Partners for Climate Protection Program;
- The project process will consider the social, environmental, health, and economic benefits of emissions reduction initiatives to create a holistic plan that will help Colchester and its residents and businesses to thrive in the years to come;
- The Plan will include corporate and community emissions reduction targets and actions. Implementing the CEEP will be the joint responsibility of the Municipality, local businesses, industries, institutions, and individuals;
- We issued an RFP in May 2020 and received 9 proposals. The Municipality contracted Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG) for the project, a national cooperative based in Tatamagouche. The project team and SSG are in the data collection phase and are preparing to begin community engagement in the next month.



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**Project:**

## Tatamagouche Protected Water Area Designation

**Objective:** To have the Tatamagouche watershed designated as a protected area under the Nova Scotia Environment Act to ensure its sustainable use as a safe water source for the area.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:**

On August 31, 2018, Council directed staff to initiate the process for designation of the French River Watershed as a protected water area under Section 106 of the Environment Act as requested by the Tatamagouche Source Water Protection Committee.

The Committee had been discussing protection of the watershed since early in 2016, when proposed mineral exploration activities caused concern for the Committee members and the community. Since that time, Committee members and staff followed a thorough process to consult with the public and collect all necessary information to make an application to the province for the watershed designation. The package was submitted in May of 2020 and is currently under review by the Province.



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**Project:**



**Objective:** To strategically attract and host major events that provide social and economic benefits to the region.

**Staff Lead:** Craig Burgess/Mark Austin/Devin Trefry

**Status:**

- Nova Scotia Music Week 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and returning 2021;
- 2017 World Jr A Hockey Challenge;
- 2018 World Down Syndrome Swimming Championship (Sport Tourism Canada Event Legacy of the Year Award);
- 2018 Grand Slam of Curling;
- 2020 Fight League Atlantic 1;
- Secured IIHF World Women's Ice Hockey Championship Spring 2021;
- Secured Jackalope Atlantic (Canada's largest adrenaline sport festival Spring 2021);
- Various Concerts: including.....Johnny Reid, Burton Cummings, Tanya Tucker, Walk Off The Earth, Vanilla Ice, Dallas Smith, The Washboard Union, The Beach Boys, Paw Patrol, Price is Right, Travis Tritt, Sammy Kershaw, Aaron Tippin, Colin Ray, Gerry Dee;
- 2018 Global Sport Index Ranking (Truro/Colchester) ranked 6th out of 62 Canadian communities in the category of event hosting populations under 50,000;
- Debert Air Shows;
- Mud Hero 2019.



Project:

## Regional Tourism Marketing



**Objective:** To market tourism in the region in partnership with the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce, Towns of Truro and Stewiacke, Millbrook First Nation, TCPEP, and Tourism Nova Scotia.

**Staff Lead:** Devin Trefry/Mark Austin

**Status:**

- July 2020 - a \$75,000 grant was secured in partnership with the Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism in the region for the 2020-2021 season;
- An “Explore Central” campaign was initiated including brand, website, and social media development, along with a digital, print, and radio advertising strategy that will be implemented from now through to the fall of 2021;
- Additional funding was also secured through Tourism Nova Scotia to host social media influencers in the region who will not only promote Colchester but will also produce photos and video for use in future promotion.



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**Project:**

## Energy Efficiency Review

**Objective:** To identify ways to increase energy efficiency within Municipal buildings and facilities.

**Staff Lead:** Joanna Burris

**Status:**

- New LED lighting installed throughout the Courthouse, including new decorative LED pendant lights in the foyer. Rebate from Efficiency NS amounted to \$16,722.88;
- The new fixtures are significantly more efficient than the former fluorescent tubes. The payback period for the project is 3-4 years and the lights will last 20+ years;
- Windows are next on the list for replacement in the Courthouse;
- New LED lighting has also been installed in the main Balefill building and the Public Works garage;
- A staff survey was conducted to identify new and creative ways to become more energy efficient throughout the organization. The ideas resulting from the survey will continue to be explored;
- Solar installations at Brookfield Sportsplex and Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC).



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**Project:**

## **Animal Control Service Review, Commercial Kennel By-law, and Dog By-law Review**

**Objective:** To review Colchester's Animal Control Service and provide regulation of Commercial Dog Kennels.

**Staff Lead:** Pam Macintosh/Paul Smith/Crawford Macpherson

**Status:**

In 2018, with the sudden passing of our Animal Control Officer, Elsie Debay, Council reviewed the Municipality's Animal Control Service.

- Council reviewed the existing service, a comparison with other municipal programs, and several options for moving forward;
- Council identified two options which staff explored in detail and priced. Having operated for a number of months with a reduced municipal involvement in the program, it became clear that the SPCA kennel and after hour support, along with the online support of "Lost Dog Network" could be just as effective at re-uniting dogs with owners as having staff working on a 24 hrs basis;
- The new service model is in place and provides a satisfactory level of service at a more reasonable cost, with very few complaints.

In 2019, Council received complaints about the noise from commercial dog kennels. The issue was forwarded to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), who along with staff, conducted a detailed public consultation and drafting of a by-law to create performance/siting standards for a kennels. Extensive input was received from the public who had concerns along with long established kennel owners, who have never had a complaint to ensure the new by-law was balanced in its approach.

The final step of the review was to update the wording of the Municipal Dog By-law to bring it in keeping with current language and tolerances.



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**Project:**

## **COVID-19 Property Tax Financing Program & Low Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program**

**Objective:** To provide support to those most financially impacted by COVID-19.

**Staff Lead:** Scott Fraser

**Status:**

- To assist residents and businesses cope with the financial impacts of COVID-19, a program was developed to help those in need finance their property tax payments. On August 13, 2020, Council Committee recommended to Council that the **COVID-19 Tax Financing Program** be approved as presented. The program will allow qualifying property owners to finance their tax payments over an extended period.
- Eligibility requirements for the **Low-Income Municipal Tax Assistance Program** were also amended by Council on May 28, 2020, to allow more residents in need to qualify for the program.

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**Project:**

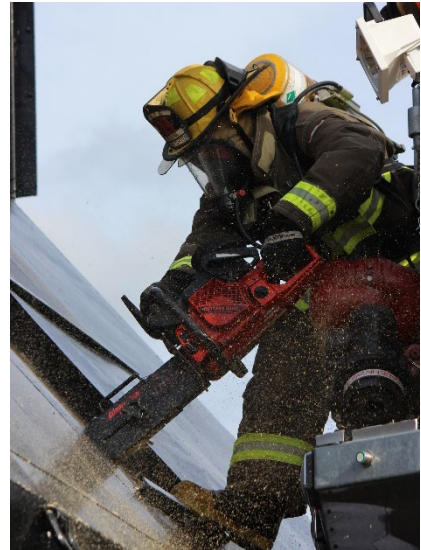
## Volunteer Firefighter and Ground Search and Rescue Insurance

**Objective:** To provide Volunteer Firefighters and Ground Search and Rescue Volunteers with insurance benefits.

**Staff Lead:** David Westlake

**Status:**

- Firefighters and Ground Search and Rescue Volunteers provide a critical service to the community. To protect those who help protect their community and to offer an incentive to aid in future volunteer recruitment, Council approved insurance coverage for fire fighters January 2020 (effective April 1<sup>st</sup>) and later approved benefits for Colchester Ground Search and Rescue as well on June 2020.
- Details of the coverage include:
  - \$200,000 Death Benefit/\$750 Week Disability On Duty Coverage. (If WCB coverage, the weekly disability allocation tops up the WCB coverage)
  - Off Duty Coverage (24Hr) coverage to the same benefits as On Duty Coverages (program does have some exclusions)
  - Long term Disability Benefit (up to age 70)
  - Member and Family Assistance Program (has programs for emergency service providers in trauma care)



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

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**Project:**

### Debert Water Tower

**Objective:** To build a new water tower that will provide Debert residents with a safe, clean water supply.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:**

Most work is completed with the exception of the demolition of the old tower, which is being delayed due to archaeology.



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**Project:**

### Road Repaving, Hub Centre Drive and Tidal Bore Road

**Objective:** To improve travelled surface of two County owned roads.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:**

In September of 2019, Council approved the paving of Hub Centre Drive in accordance with the successful paving petition, with costs to be recovered from the adjacent properties as outlined in the Local Improvement By-law. Council also approved the repaving of Tidal Bore Road into the Fundy Discovery Site. Both projects are complete.



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**Projects:**

### Sidewalks: Hwy 311 and Harmony Road

**Objective:** To build sidewalks for the safety of residents along sections of Highway 311, as well as Harmony Road,

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:** Both sidewalk projects are complete.



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**Project:**

## Rath Eastlink Community Centre

**Objective:** To support, maintain and promote the Rath Eastlink Community Centre (RECC) as a high-quality sport, recreation, and entertainment facility in the region.

**Staff Lead:** Rob Simonds

**Status:**

- Reserve Formula has been established in support of life cycle maintenance;
- Sky box development project has been completed;
- Energy efficiency initiatives underway;
- The RECC continues to maintain excellent membership stats and serves a broad range of demographics within the community;
- A program for reduced-rate memberships has also been implemented to ensure equitable access;
- The RECC has quickly become a venue of choice for performers and major sporting events.



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**Project:**

## Energy Efficiency Project

(Central Colchester Wastewater Treatment Facility)

**Objective:** To add variable speed capabilities to blower equipment to reduce energy costs at the facility.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:** Project is ongoing and should be complete by October 2020. The project will reduce blower energy consumption by 30% and save \$58,000 per year.



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**Projects:**

## Sidewalk Improvements - Various

**Objective:** To replace the existing asphalt sidewalks with concrete and to install a marked crossing.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:** Staff coordinated the replacement of the existing asphalt sidewalks on Teviot Place and Truro Road (Hilden) with concrete sidewalks. Work is complete. The marked trail crossing at Highway 236 and Robie Street is underway, with signals remaining to be installed by the Province.



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**Projects:**

## Various Wastewater Collection Projects

**Objective:** To replace two pumping stations (#6 and #15) and to decommission and old sewage plant in Debert.

**Staff Lead:** Michelle Newell

**Status:** This project is funded via the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program and are all currently underway. Two existing and aged sewage pumping stations (in Valley and Salmon River) will be completed replaced, while the old sewage plant near the Debert Airport will be decommissioned. Work is expected to be complete in Fall of 2021.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVES

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## Grants to Non-Profit Organizations

**Objective:** To provide support to not for profit community groups that offer valued services within the Municipality.

**Staff Lead:** Craig Burgess

### Community Parks Program

#### **2019/2020**

1. North River Elementary School \$5,393.00
2. Harmony Heights Elementary \$32,668.00
3. Le Jardin D'enfants \$12,017.00

**Total: \$50,078.00**

#### **2020/2021**

1. West Colchester Minor Baseball \$9,324.00

**Total: \$9,324.00**

### Community Trails Program

#### **2019/2020**

1. North Shore Snowmobile Club \$1,577.00
2. Tatamagouche Area Trails Association \$52,568.00
3. Cumberland Snowmobile Club \$3,850.00
4. Big Brothers Big Sisters Colchester \$9,504.00

**Total: \$67,499.00**

#### **2020/2021**

1. Tatamagouche Area Trails Association \$5,062.00

**Total: \$5,062.00**

### Non-Profit Grants (Policy reviewed and updated May 2020)

#### **2019/2020**

1. Alton Recreation Centre \$1,500.00
2. Brule Community Centre Association \$1,000.00
3. Canadian Mental Health Association \$3,000.00
4. CARMA-Colchester Chapter \$4,000.00
5. Grace Jollymore Joyce Arts Centre \$15,000.00
6. Haven House Society \$7,500.00
7. MADD Cobequid \$2,000.00
8. Northumberland Arts Council \$5,000.00
9. Truro Homeless Outreach Society \$15,000.00
10. Truro Tennis Club \$4,350.00
11. Sunrise Film Festival Society \$2,500.00
12. Stewiacke Valley Historical Society \$4,596.50

**Total \$65,446.50**

## **2020/2021**

1. Alton Recreation Centre \$1,500.00
  2. Brule Community Centre Association \$1,000.00
  3. Canadian Mental Health Association \$3,000.00
  4. CARMA-Colchester Chapter \$3,000.00
  5. Creamery Square Association (The Grace) \$5,000.00
  6. MADD Cobequid \$3,000.00
  7. Northumberland Arts Council \$5,000.00
  8. Truro Tennis Club \$3,000.00
  9. Sunrise Film Festival Society \$2,500.00
  10. Springside Community Centre Association \$10,000.00
  11. Central Community Centre \$5,000.00
  12. Colchester Historical Society \$5,000.00
  13. Debert & Area Community Association \$5,000.00
  14. Kinsmen Club of Bible Hill \$2,000.00
  15. North Shore Senior Citizens Association \$4,800.00
  16. Earltown Community Centre Society \$1,000.00
  17. Central Nova Civic Centre \$334.00
  18. Colchester Community Support Society \$5,000.00
- Total \$65,134.00**

## **Non-Profit Insurance Grants** (Policy reviewed and updated August 2018)

### **2018-2020**

1. Alton Recreation Association \$150.00
2. Barrachois Community Hall \$256.50
3. Bible Hill Village Preschool Society \$418.00
4. Brule Community Centre Association \$487.50
5. Kenomee Trail Society \$330.00
6. North River Recreation Softball \$225.00
7. Creamery Square Heritage Society \$448.38
8. Crossroads Cemetary Cooperation \$500.00
9. Debert Military History Society \$113.50
10. Fundy Trail Snowmobile Club \$225.00
11. Christmas Council of NS \$625.00
12. Londonderry Station Community Church \$304.00
13. Lower Onslow Community Centre Society \$638.50
14. Bayhead Community Hall \$161.00
15. Balfron Community Association \$250.00
16. Brookfield Men's Club \$250.00
17. Burnside Pembroke Community & Park Association \$400.00
18. Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre \$291.50
19. Sunny Brae Cemetery \$262.50
20. Colchester Five Island ATV Club \$175.00
21. Colchester Highland Games & Gathering Society \$650.00
22. Truro Run Tribe \$225.00
23. Colchester Stroke Club \$237.50
24. Archway Counseling Association \$1000.00
25. First Baptist Girls' Choir \$632.50
26. Brookfield Athletic Association \$725.00
27. Central Horse and Pony Association \$425.00
28. Central Nova Women's Resource Centre \$1000.00
29. Cobequid Interpretive Centre \$538.00
30. Cobequid Spartans Gymnastics Centre \$625.00

31. Colchester Community Support Society \$473.50
  32. Cumberland Snowmobile Club \$233.50
  33. Debert & Area Community Association \$577.50
  34. Debert Family Day Association \$109.50
  35. Earltown Community Centre \$376.00
  36. Economy Recreation Centre \$363.00
  37. Hills of Annand Seniors & North Shore Seniors \$295.75
  38. Five Island Senior Citizen Association \$200.00
  39. Lockerby Memorial Cemetery \$250.00
  40. Hilden Recreation Association \$412.50
  41. Middleton Community Hall Association \$160.00
  42. Masstown Community Association \$225.00
  43. Neighbours Helping Neighbours \$654.00
  44. Scotia Pool Society \$1000.00
  45. Truro Curling Club \$1000.00
  46. Northumberland Arts Council \$515.00
  47. Truro Rugby Club \$185.00
  48. Upper Stewiacke Community Association \$280.00
  49. Not Since Moses Run \$800.00
  50. Nova Scotia Young Farmers \$462.50
  51. St. James Church Great Village Preservation Society \$743.50
  52. Tatamagouche Area Trails Association \$541.73
  53. Tatamagouche Road Trail Society \$1000.00
  54. The Cobequid Veterans Memorial \$629.00
  55. The Mercury Club \$900.00
  56. Wild Blueberry Harvest Ltd \$451.50
  57. Winding River Art Gallery & Gift Shop \$273.50
- Total \$25,681.36**

2020/2021 - October 2020 Application Date

**Annual Grants**

**2019/2020**

1. Colchester Historical Society \$10,000.00
  2. North Colchester River Restoration \$5,000.00
  3. VON Colchester East Hants \$10,000.00
  4. Special Olympics Cobequid \$6,000.00
  5. Debert Military Museum \$100.00
  6. Maggie's Place \$5,000.00
  7. Cobequid Arts Council \$25,000.00
  8. Colchester Transportation Cooperative Ltd \$10,000.00
  9. Colchester County 4H \$10,000.00
- Total \$71,100.00**

## **2020/2021**

1. Colchester Historical Society \$10,000.00
2. North Colchester River Restoration \$5,000.00
3. VON Colchester East Hants \$10,000.00
4. Special Olympics Cobequid \$6,000.00
5. Debert Military Museum \$100.00
6. Maggie's Place \$5,000.00
7. Cobequid Arts Council \$25,000.00
8. Colchester Transportation Cooperative Ltd \$10,000.00
9. Colchester County 4H \$10,000.00 **Total \$71,100.00**

## **Community Event Grants** (Policy reviewed and updated November 2017)

### **2019/2020**

1. Not Since Moses Run \$5,000.00
  2. NS Women That Hunt Association \$5,000.00
  3. Colchester Highland Games & Gathering Society \$7,000.00
  4. Colchester Legion Pipes & Drums Society \$15,000.00
  5. Cobequid Fire Brigade 2019 \$5,000.00
  6. People First Nova Scotia-Truro Chapter \$1,000.00
  7. Truro North River 4H Club \$2,500.00
  8. 4H Nova Scotia \$10,000.00
  9. Truro Flying Club \$15,000.00
  10. Central Nova Scotia Civic Centre (RECC) \$2,000.00
- Total \$67,500.00**

### **2020/2021**

All events cancelled due to COVID-19 \$0.00

## **Special Grants**

### **2019/2020**

1. Colchester County 4H Council \$35,000.00
  2. Colchester Historical Society \$15,000.00
  3. Stewiacke Visitor Information Centre \$2,580.00
  4. Northumberland VIC \$700.00
  5. Colchester County 4H \$10,000.00
- Total \$63,280.00**

### **2020/2021**

1. Stewiacke Visitor Information Centre \$2,580.00
  2. Northumberland Visitor Information Centre \$700.00
  3. Canadian Mental Health Association \$10,000.00
  4. Colchester Community Support Society \$20,000.00
- Total \$33,280.00**

**Arena Funding Program**

**2019/2020**

1. West Colchester Recreation Centre
  - a. Insurance \$10,750.00
  - b. Capital \$48,000.00

2. North Shore Recreation Center
  - a. Insurance \$14,966.00
  - b. Capital \$74,950.00

3. Don Henderson Memorial Arena
  - a. Insurance \$14,412.00
  - b. Capital \$76,050.00

**Total \$239,128.00**

**2020/2021**

1. West Colchester Recreation Centre
  - a. Insurance \$11,947.00
  - b. Capital \$56,950.00

2. North Shore Recreation Center
  - a. Insurance \$14,087.00
  - b. Capital \$69,154.00

3. Don Henderson Memorial Arena
  - a. Insurance \$15,140.00
  - b. Capital \$90,235.00

**Total \$257,513.00**

**Pool Funding**

**2019/2020**

1. Scotia Pool Society **\$75,000.00**

**2020/2021**

1. Scotia Pool Society **\$75,000.00**