

Unlocking housing through
infrastructure investment

Stronger relationships,
more resilient communities

Town halls – a look at rural
Newfoundland and Labrador

Atlantic

MUNICIPAL MAGAZINE



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Climate adaptation must be funded for the long term. Atlantic Canada is facing accelerated wildfires, sea-level rise, erosion, and storm surge. Smaller municipalities need support for planning, monitoring, maintenance, and nature-based solutions.



Immigration policy must respond to regional labour needs. Federal reductions and caps are disproportionately affecting Atlantic Canada, where key sectors—including construction, fish processing, health-care, and hospitality—depend on immigration to remain viable.



Infrastructure funding must be sustainable and right-sized. Aging roads, water, and wastewater systems are increasingly unaffordable for small municipalities, while climate-related damage and application-heavy funding programs add further strain.

Now is the time to partner with Atlantic municipalities—because resilient communities build a stronger Canada.

What's Inside

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Trevorne Lewis
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THANK YOU

More than 3,000 attendees, including mayors, councillors and representatives joined us in Edmonton for our annual conference. Under the theme ***Building the future together***, delegates explored how municipalities are driving housing, infrastructure and resilient communities, and how strong partnerships turn local action into national results.

Thank you for being part of it. We hope you're heading home with fresh ideas, renewed inspiration and moments that will stay with you. We can't wait to see what you build next.



Relive the highlights with Municipal World's exclusive conference recap.

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Join us in Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 10-13, 2027, for the largest pan Canadian gathering of elected officials. We can't wait to welcome you to the East Coast.



Presidential Addresses



Bruce MacDougall
President, Federation of PEI
Municipalities (FPEIM)

This fall, residents of P.E.I. municipalities will head to the polls to elect their new councils. I encourage all residents to get involved – by running for office, helping with a campaign, learning more about local government, and exercising their democratic right to vote. As we say at the federation, municipalities build communities. By becoming involved, you can make a meaningful contribution to the place you call home.

In this magazine, we explore two topics that are top of mind for municipalities across Atlantic Canada. One story looks at the growing challenge of funding and maintaining the infrastructure that supports our communities. The other examines the vital partnership between councils and chief administrative officers, and how effective working relationships can help municipalities achieve their goals.

On behalf of FPEIM, thank you to our Atlantic municipal association colleagues for continuing to showcase the important work happening in municipalities across our region. Enjoy this latest *Atlantic Municipal Magazine*.



Amy Coady
President, Municipalities
Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL)

Municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador are facing challenges in several areas, including infrastructure, housing, public safety, and more. Thankfully, we have dedicated, committed community leaders working toward solutions.

By working together, collaborating with other municipalities in their regions, and by thinking about not only today, but also the future, municipal leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador are planning for and working toward vibrant, sustainable communities.

What this looks like varies widely across the province, as town sizes range from less than 100 people to well over 100,000 residents. As you'll read in this issue, thinking sustainably and planning for the future can be accomplished by a town of any size, including the smaller communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.



Brittany Merrifield
President/Présidente, Union of
Municipalities of New Brunswick
(UMNB)

I want to begin by, congratulating all the newly elected and re-elected municipal leaders across New Brunswick. Our communities are made better by your service. As councils begin a new four-year term, we are pleased to partner once again on this edition of *Atlantic Municipal Magazine*. Collaboration across Atlantic Canada has never been more important as municipalities work together to address shared challenges, including infrastructure, climate resilience, housing, and the harassment and intimidation of elected officials. UMNB looks forward to working alongside municipal leaders and our Atlantic partners to build stronger, more resilient communities.

Je tiens tout d'abord à féliciter tous les élus municipaux nouvellement élus ou réélus à travers le Nouveau-Brunswick. Vos actions contribuent à améliorer la vie dans nos collectivités. Alors que les conseils municipaux entament un nouveau mandat de quatre ans, nous sommes ravis de nous associer une nouvelle fois à cette édition de *Atlantic Municipal Magazine*. La collaboration à l'échelle du Canada atlantique n'a jamais été aussi importante, alors que les municipalités travaillent ensemble pour relever des défis communs, notamment en matière d'infrastructures, de résilience climatique, de logement, ainsi que de harcèlement et d'intimidation à l'encontre des élus. L'UMNB se réjouit de travailler aux côtés des élus municipaux et de nos partenaires de la région de l'Atlantique pour bâtir des collectivités plus fortes et plus résilientes.



David Mitchell
President, Nova Scotia
Federation of Municipalities
(NSFM)

This issue arrives at a time when municipalities are being called on to think differently about how communities grow, connect, and support one another.

In this edition, you'll read how collaboration beyond municipal boundaries can create new opportunities for communities, strengthen local economies, and help address shared challenges with creativity and purpose. You'll also see why housing cannot be separated from the infrastructure that supports it. Water, wastewater, roads, transit, stormwater, and community services are the foundation that allow growth to happen responsibly and sustainably. As municipalities work to unlock more housing, they need predictable, long-term investment and strong partnerships with other orders of government, community organizations, and the private sector.

NSFM will continue to advocate for the tools, resources, and relationships municipalities need to build complete, resilient, and affordable communities. By working beyond borders and investing in the foundations of growth, we can create lasting local opportunities for Nova Scotians today and for generations to come.

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Unlocking housing through infrastructure investment

Building the systems that make growth possible



Charlene Fekeshazy (cfekeshazy@nsfm.ca) is the communications advisor for the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

When municipalities talk about housing, the conversation often turns quickly to zoning, planning approvals, land supply, and affordability.

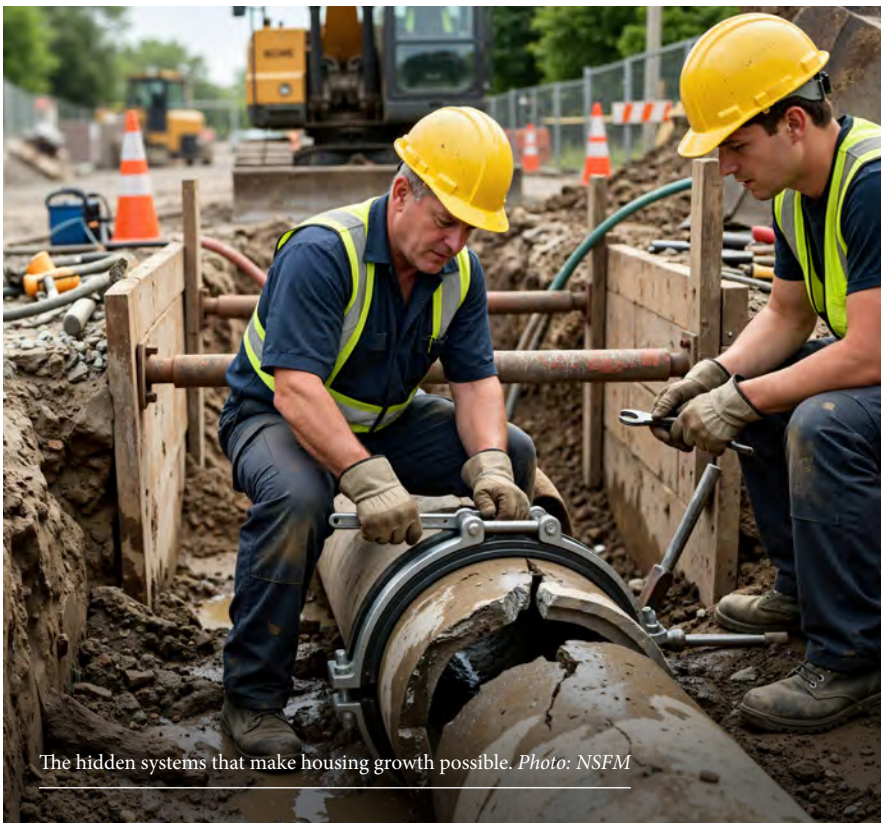
“Housing doesn’t happen in isolation – it depends on the infrastructure that supports it. Investments in water, wastewater, stormwater, and other core municipal systems are what create the conditions for more housing to be built,” said Halifax Regional Municipality Mayor Andy Fillmore. “When we strengthen those foundations, we give communities the capacity to grow in a way that is sustainable, reliable, and ready for the future.”

All those issues matter. But underneath every new subdivision, infill project, apartment building, and affordable housing development is a less visible reality: homes cannot be built at scale without the infrastructure that supports them. Water, wastewater, stormwater, and related municipal systems are the foundation that makes

growth possible. Without sufficient capacity, housing can be delayed, downsized, or stopped altogether.

That is why Nova Scotia’s 10-year agreement with the Government of Canada under the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund is so significant. Announced in May 2025, the agreement will provide \$170.9 million in federal support for foundational infrastructure needed to unlock long-term housing supply.

The funding is targeted to the systems municipalities rely on every day: drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure. The province has also committed to contributing at least one-third of eligible project costs for municipal and regional projects, and at least 20 per cent of the funding is earmarked for rural or Indigenous communities. In practical terms, this means local governments have a stronger opportunity to move critical infrastructure projects from wish list to reality



The hidden systems that make housing growth possible. Photo: NSFM

– and to connect those investments directly to housing outcomes.

Why Infrastructure Matters for Growth

This matters because infrastructure capacity is one of the most persistent and expensive barriers to housing growth. In many communities, municipal systems were designed decades ago for smaller populations, different settlement patterns, and lower service demands.

Today, municipalities are being asked to support population growth, enable densification, respond to affordability pressures, and build resilience to climate-related events – all while maintaining aging infrastructure and managing limited local tax bases. A community may have land available for development and a clear policy desire to add homes, but if the wastewater system is at capacity, if stormwater management is insufficient, or if water servicing cannot be extended, the project simply cannot proceed in the way the community needs.

Housing-enabling infrastructure investment helps municipalities address that gap in several ways.

First, it increases capacity, allowing more units to be served in areas where demand already exists. Second, it improves reliability and sustainability, reducing the risk of failures, overflows,

and service disruptions that can undermine both public confidence and future growth. Third, it gives municipalities a stronger basis for long-term planning. When infrastructure investment is coordinated with land-use planning, transportation decisions, and housing objectives, communities are better positioned to grow in a deliberate, efficient, and financially responsible way.

Housing-Enabled Infrastructure

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) offers a strong example of why this approach matters.

“These are the kinds of investments that turn housing plans into housing outcomes,” said CBRM Mayor Cecil Clarke. “By strengthening the infrastructure that supports our communities, we create opportunities for new housing, support sustainable growth, and ensure residents have access to reliable municipal services for years to come.”

In 2025, Canada, Nova Scotia, and CBRM announced a combined investment of up to \$2.9 million through the fund to improve water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure in the Church Street area of Sydney Mines and the Brookland Street area of Glace Bay. The project will benefit 52 existing homes while also unlocking additional

residential development potential. On the surface, that may sound like a modest local upgrade. In reality, it reflects a much larger municipal challenge: growth does not happen because housing need exists alone. It happens when core systems are strong enough to support that need.

CBRM’s case is instructive for several reasons. Like many municipalities, it is balancing the need to maintain aging infrastructure with the desire to support future development.

Targeted upgrades in established neighbourhoods can do more than fix service issues; they can make it possible to add homes where infrastructure limitations previously constrained options. That supports gentle density, infill, and neighbourhood renewal without requiring municipalities to shoulder the full burden on their own. It also shows how housing and infrastructure policy are becoming more tightly connected. Rather than treating pipes, pumps, and drainage as separate technical matters, governments are increasingly recognizing them as essential housing enablers.

Looking Below Supports Growth Above

For municipalities across Nova Scotia, that shift is important. It broadens the conversation about housing from “How many units can we approve?” to “What conditions do we need in place to support more homes over time?”

In many cases, the answer includes investments that are not immediately visible to the public but are indispensable to growth. Residents may see a new apartment building rise, but they are less likely to see the oversized pipe, upgraded pump station, drainage improvements, or wastewater work that made that building possible. Municipal leaders, however, know that those underground systems shape what can be built, where it can be built, and how quickly it can proceed.

There is also a strong affordability dimension to this work. When enabling infrastructure is absent or delayed, the cost of development rises. Projects can become more complex, approval timelines stretch, private investment may stall, and the resulting homes are less likely to meet affordability objectives.

For NSFM members, the lesson is clear. Unlocking housing is not only about approving growth; it is about enabling it.

By contrast, when municipalities can invest strategically in housing-supportive infrastructure, they can reduce bottlenecks, improve readiness, and create conditions that allow a broader mix of housing to move forward – including rental, attainable ownership, and affordable housing. This does not solve affordability on its own, but it removes one of the key structural barriers standing in the way.

Challenges and Opportunities

The challenges, of course, remain significant. Municipal infrastructure projects are complex, capital-intensive and time-consuming.

Communities must complete assessments, secure cost sharing, manage procurement, sequence projects, and align construction timelines with housing opportunities. Smaller municipalities may face additional capacity pressures in developing applications, advancing design work, and meeting reporting requirements. There is also the reality that infrastructure needs often exceed available funding. A new agreement and targeted project announcements are important, but they do not erase decades of underinvestment or the growing pressure municipalities face from population change, inflation and climate impacts.

Even so, there are encouraging signs of progress. The Canada–Nova Scotia agreement recognizes a reality that municipalities have long understood – housing targets are only credible if communities have the infrastructure capacity to support them. It also affirms that local governments are not peripheral to the housing conversation – they are central to it. Municipalities operate and maintain the systems that shape development potential, and they are the level of government where planning, infrastructure delivery, and community impact meet most directly.

Strong Foundation for the Future

For NSFM members, the lesson is clear. Unlocking housing is not only about approving growth; it is about enabling it. That requires sustained investment in the municipal systems that serve both current residents and future communities. It requires alignment between infrastructure funding, land-use planning, and housing policy. And it requires recognition that the path to more homes often starts below ground, in the practical but essential networks that keep communities functioning.

As municipalities plan for the years ahead, infrastructure investment will remain one of the most powerful tools available to shape inclusive, sustainable growth. The communities that succeed will be those able to connect technical upgrades to broader public outcomes: more homes, more resilient services, healthier environments, and stronger local economies.

In that sense, unlocking housing through infrastructure investment is not simply a funding story. It is a story about municipal leadership, long-term planning, and building the conditions for communities to thrive. [AMM](#)



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Infrastructure

The growing cost of building communities

Cornwall Mayor Minerva McCourt knows full well the pressures that growing infrastructure needs are putting on communities like hers.



Lori Mayne (lmayne@fpeim.ca) is the communications and engagement officer with the Federation of PEI Municipalities.

When Mayor Minerva McCourt talks about infrastructure, she recalls the words of another councillor. “Nobody thinks about infrastructure until they turn on the tap and there’s no water,” she said.

But McCourt knows the importance of those pipes in the ground and all the other municipal infrastructure needed to build a growing community like the Town of Cornwall, P.E.I.

Having more people means more homes – and the water and sewer systems that make the homes liveable. It means children filling the outdoor Terry Fox Sports Complex and families enjoying local parks and trails. It means more

neighbours squeezing into the civic centre to dig into a pancake breakfast or charge their phones during a power outage.

“It’s a continuous plan to keep up with the growth,” McCourt said. “We try not only to keep up, but to be proactive in looking ahead as to how we’re going to meet all of the needs.”

Cornwall’s story is shared by municipalities across the region: as communities grow, so do the costs of infrastructure.

The challenge is especially visible in the Town of Cornwall, located just a 10- to 15-minute drive west of the provincial capital. The town was the fastest-growing



The Town of Cornwall's recent infrastructure projects have included a new water tower. *Photo courtesy Town of Cornwall*

community of more than 5,000 people in Atlantic Canada in the 2021 census. Its population reached 6,574 – an increase of nearly 23 per cent from 2016.

The High Cost of Keeping Up

To support its growing population, the town has invested in infrastructure projects like a new water tower, extension of water and sewer services for housing and businesses, improvements at the Terry Fox complex, trail connections, and parks for new subdivisions.

While growth creates more property tax revenue, municipalities like the Town of Cornwall still struggle to fund the infrastructure they need.

"The cost of everything is just humongous," McCourt said.

"A water tower for us is a \$4.5-million project," explained Geoff Baker, the town's manager of engineering and capital projects. "Something as simple as putting asphalt on the trails in the Terry Fox centre is almost \$300,000," he added.

"So, it's a real challenge to generate the resources that we need to be able to continuously extend and improve our existing infrastructure."

McCourt and Baker emphasized that the town has strong working relationships with the provincial and federal governments – and has benefited from the funding programs that are available.

"It's just not enough," Baker said. "The needs are so great. We have projects coming down the pipe in Cornwall that are going to be significant investments."

Work on the horizon includes a replacement for the town's wastewater treatment system in the next decade, which could mean an investment of \$15 million to \$25 million.

"To do the study to find out what's required is \$100,000," Baker said, noting the town was grateful to obtain funding of 50 per cent for the strategy under the Municipal Strategic Component of the Build Communities Strong Fund – Communities Stream. He expects other

projects will include investments in the water system, water and sewer extensions, and recreation.

Understanding the Infrastructure Deficit

Cornwall's experience isn't unique. Across Canada, municipalities face growing infrastructure demands that far outpace their ability to fund them.

Current data on P.E.I. is not available for the infrastructure deficit, which is the shortfall in investment needed to maintain and expand required infrastructure in municipalities across the province.

A Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB) report in 2024 by Dr. Craig Brett, professor of economics at Mount Allison University, found an infrastructure deficit in New Brunswick that would require at least \$120 million of yearly spending to address.

"Stuff breaks," he told Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM) members during a panel discussion earlier this



Murray Harbour Coun. Pam Oickle said small municipalities face barriers both in applying for infrastructure funding and then maintaining the infrastructure once it's built.

year. "If you don't keep up with your infrastructure, stuff doesn't work or doesn't work as well."

He said addressing the infrastructure deficit in that province would mean New Brunswick municipalities investing about 10 per cent of their annual budgets – or the first 10 cents of every dollar. "You're starting with the first 10 cents literally going in the ground."

Brett argued that it's time to think of infrastructure as a public service.

Serving More Than Municipal Residents

Cornwall's infrastructure serves more than the people who live in the town. It also creates jobs, attracts businesses, strengthens the provincial economy, and provides services for residents from nearby communities.

"We're not just doing it for our own residents," McCourt said.

Municipalities like Cornwall face unique financial challenges that cause additional strain on their ability to provide funding for infrastructure and services.

P.E.I. has never undergone a modern municipal restructuring process. Approximately 65 per cent of the province remains unincorporated – even

though the Island is the most densely populated province in the country.

Island residents who don't live in municipalities often use municipal parks, recreation facilities, roads, and other nearby infrastructure. Municipalities, however, have no means to collect taxes from those users to help fund it.

With a total of 57 municipalities, P.E.I. also has a significant number with populations of just a few hundred people. That means many municipalities have tiny tax bases to try to support infrastructure, services, and staff.

Small Communities, Big Challenges

While Cornwall illustrates the pressures of rapid growth, the Rural Municipality of Murray Harbour illustrates that small communities face funding challenges for other reasons.

Murray Harbour, in southeastern P.E.I., had a population of just under 300 as of the 2021 census. Even with a small tax base, the municipality offers a community centre (that also serves as a warming centre), a park, a playground, a fire department, sewage services, an outdoor rink, basketball courts, and other recreation equipment.

Coun. Pam Oickle said small municipalities face barriers both in applying for infrastructure funding and then maintaining the infrastructure once it's built. While the municipality has worked hard to attract funding, success can bring difficulties as well.

"We are so challenged every time we receive funding to say, OK, when this breaks, how are we going to fix it?" Oickle said. "We can access funding to build things, but we don't necessarily have the capacity to maintain them."

She added that Murray Harbour is literally surrounded by unincorporated areas – with residents who often use the centre and recreation infrastructure.

"Because we don't actually get funding to serve these people, it's coming out of our own coffers," she said.

Looking for Long-Term Solutions

In recent years, significant infrastructure investments have been announced for P.E.I. municipalities. As recently as this summer, provincial and federal governments made a series of Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund announcements to support water, sewer, wastewater, and subdivision projects to help create more housing.

Still, the Federation of PEI Municipalities agrees that more work remains.

"We need funding models that recognize the realities facing Prince Edward Island's municipalities – from rapidly growing communities like Cornwall to smaller municipalities such as Murray Harbour, where limited tax bases make major infrastructure investments especially challenging," said FPEIM President Bruce MacDougall.

MacDougall added that FPEIM continues to work with its Atlantic association partners and all orders of government to develop solutions. FPEIM advocates for research into P.E.I.'s infrastructure needs, stable and predictable funding models, stronger municipal capacity, and more emphasis on non-competitive funding models.

"Infrastructure literally builds communities," MacDougall said. "Investments will help improve quality of life, create economic opportunities, and ensure our communities continue to grow and thrive." [AMM](#)

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Participants attend a Two-Eyed Seeing training session delivered by JEDI at the Maqiyahimok Centre in Sitsansik First Nation, March 2026. Photo: JEDI



Stronger relationships, more resilient communities

UMNB's project is helping municipalities build climate engagement with Indigenous neighbours



Margaret Mizzi (margaret.mizzi@umnbc.ca) is the Indigenous Relations Coordinator at the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB).

Municipal climate adaptation often begins with the visible things: roads, culverts, drainage systems, shorelines, emergency plans, and public assets that must withstand more frequent and severe weather. But lasting resilience also depends on something less visible and equally important: relationships.

Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA) initiative, the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB) is supporting six members across the province through the project Municipalities Advancing Climate Adaptation through Respectful Engagement with Indigenous Neighbours. The project is helping municipal leaders strengthen climate adaptation planning while building the knowledge, confidence and relationships needed to engage more respectfully with Indigenous communities.

Foundation for Respectful Engagement

A key early step was UMNB's collaboration with the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), an Indigenous non-profit organization in New Brunswick. JEDI works with

partners to foster Indigenous economic and workforce development, including support for Indigenous entrepreneurship, community economic development, workforce development, and partnerships with the public and private sectors.

UMNB partnered with JEDI because their mandate and training aligned with the project's focus on respectful engagement, learning, and climate adaptation work involving Indigenous neighbours. The collaboration reinforced a central message of the project: Indigenous engagement cannot be treated as a one-time activity or a final step after decisions have already been shaped. It requires preparation, continuity, and respect.

Learning Through a Wabanaki Lens

That partnership has supported a broad learning process. Wabanaki, often understood as "People of the Dawnland,"



Michael Willett, councillor in the City of Bathurst.

refers to the Indigenous Peoples of this eastern region, including the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Nations in New Brunswick. The training was not limited to Two-Eyed Seeing; participants also explored Wabanaki cultural awareness, governance, anti-racism, relationship-building, regional history, municipal governance knowledge-sharing, and practical questions about how climate adaptation intersects with Indigenous engagement.

For Bathurst Coun. Michael Willett, the training was a “rude awakening.” A lifelong student of history, Willett said he believed he had a strong understanding of Indigenous history in the region. The JEDI training challenged that assumption and helped connect history, culture, and municipal responsibility in a more direct way.

“Every municipal councillor should receive this training,” Willett said. “It brings real meaning to respect, and to the role elected officials have in engaging with our Indigenous neighbours.”

From Training to Action

The work has also moved beyond formal training. Municipal participants are examining how they currently approach engagement, where capacity gaps exist, and how Indigenous engagement can be considered earlier in climate adaptation and asset management planning.

Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all model, the project is helping municipalities build practical approaches that reflect their local context. The lessons gathered through this work will help inform future adaptation planning and support more consistent, respectful engagement across New Brunswick.

This matters as communities respond to flooding, erosion, heat, infrastructure stress, and emergency planning challenges. A culvert replacement, shoreline project, asset management update, or land-use discussion may all benefit from earlier and more meaningful engagement. For UMN, the project reinforces a simple point: climate adaptation is not only technical work. It is governance work, relationship work, and learning work.

Resilient communities are built not only through stronger infrastructure, but through trust, shared understanding, and the willingness to plan together. [AMM](#)



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Description: Participants à une séance de formation Two-Eyed Seeing offerte par JEDI au Centre Maqiyahitimok, dans la Première Nation de Sitansisk, en mars 2026. Photo: JEDI



Des relations plus solides, des collectivités plus résilientes

Le projet de l'UMNB aide les municipalités à renforcer leurs démarches d'engagement auprès des communautés autochtones voisines en matière d'adaptation climatique



Margaret Mizzi (margaret.mizzi@umnbc.ca) est coordinatrice des relations avec les autochtones à l'Union des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (UMNB).

L'adaptation municipale au changements climatiques commence souvent par les éléments visibles: routes, ponts, réseaux d'évacuation des eaux, berges, plans d'urgence et biens publics qui doivent résister à des conditions météorologiques de plus en plus

fréquentes et extrêmes. Mais une résilience durable dépend également d'un élément moins visible, mais tout aussi important: les relations. Dans le cadre de l'initiative « Leadership local pour l'adaptation aux changements climatiques » (LLAC) de la Fédération canadienne des municipalités, l'Union des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (UMNB) soutient six municipalités membres à travers la province grâce au projet « Les municipalités font progresser l'adaptation au changement climatique par un engagement respectueux auprès de leurs voisins autochtones ». Ce projet aide les dirigeants municipaux à renforcer la planification de l'adaptation aux changements climatiques tout en développant les connaissances, la confiance et les relations nécessaires pour dialoguer de

manière plus respectueuse avec les communautés autochtones.

Fondation pour un engagement respectueux

L'une des premières étapes clés du projet a été la collaboration de l'UMNB avec la « Joint Economic Development Initiative » (JEDI), un organisme autochtone sans but lucratif du Nouveau-Brunswick. JEDI travaille avec des partenaires afin de favoriser le développement économique et le développement de la main-d'œuvre autochtone, notamment en soutenant l'entrepreneuriat autochtone, le développement économique communautaire et les partenariats avec les secteurs public et privé. L'UMNB s'est associée à JEDI parce que son mandat et ses formations cadreraient avec l'orientation du projet: l'engagement



Description: Michael Willett, conseiller municipal de Bathurst.

établir un lien plus direct entre l'histoire, la culture et la responsabilité municipale.

« Chaque conseiller municipal devrait suivre cette formation », a déclaré M. Willett. « Elle donne tout son sens au respect et au rôle que les élus ont à jouer dans l'engagement auprès de nos voisins autochtones. »

De la formation à l'action

Ce travail va également au-delà de la formation formelle. Les participants municipaux examinent leur approche actuelle en matière d'engagement, identifient les lacunes en termes de capacités et étudient comment l'engagement des Autochtones peut être pris en compte plus en amont dans la planification de l'adaptation aux changements climatiques et de la gestion des actifs. Plutôt que de proposer un modèle unique, le projet aide les municipalités à élaborer des approches pratiques qui reflètent leur contexte local. Les enseignements tirés de ce travail contribueront à orienter la future planification de l'adaptation et à favoriser un engagement plus cohérent et respectueux dans tout le Nouveau-Brunswick.

Cela revêt une importance particulière alors que les collectivités font face aux inondations, à l'érosion, à la chaleur, aux contraintes pesant sur les infrastructures et aux défis liés à la planification des urgences. Qu'il s'agisse du remplacement d'un pont, d'un projet de protection

respectueux, l'apprentissage et le travail d'adaptation climatique avec les communautés autochtones voisines. Cette collaboration a renforcé un message

Nouveau-Brunswick. La formation ne s'est pas limitée à Two-Eyed Seeing: les participants ont également abordé la sensibilisation à la culture Wabanaki, la

« Chaque conseiller municipal devrait suivre cette formation », a déclaré M. Willett. « Elle donne tout son sens au respect et au rôle que les élus ont à jouer dans l'engagement auprès de nos voisins autochtones. »

central du projet: l'engagement auprès des communautés autochtones ne doit pas être traité comme une activité ponctuelle ni comme une étape finale, une fois les décisions déjà orientées. Il exige de la préparation, de la continuité et du respect.

Apprendre à travers le prisme Wabanaki

Le projet a également favorisé un vaste processus d'apprentissage. Le terme « Wabanaki », souvent traduit par « Peuple du Pays de l'Aube », désigne les peuples autochtones de cette région orientale, notamment les nations Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey et Peskotomuhkati du

gouvernance, la lutte contre le racisme, l'établissement de relations, l'histoire régionale, le partage des connaissances en matière de gouvernance municipale, ainsi que des questions pratiques sur les liens entre l'adaptation climatique et l'engagement auprès des communautés autochtones.

Pour Michael Willett, conseiller municipal de Bathurst, cette formation a été une « prise de conscience brutale ». Passionné d'histoire depuis toujours, M. Willett pensait avoir une bonne compréhension de l'histoire autochtone de la région. La formation JEDI a remis en question cette conviction et l'a aidé à

des berges, d'une mise à jour de la gestion des actifs ou d'une discussion sur l'aménagement du territoire, tous ces projets peuvent bénéficier d'une participation plus précoce et plus significative. Pour l'UMNB, ce projet renforce un principe simple: l'adaptation aux changements climatiques n'est pas seulement un travail technique. C'est un travail de gouvernance, de relations et d'apprentissage. La résilience des communautés ne repose pas uniquement sur des infrastructures plus solides, mais aussi sur la confiance, une compréhension commune et la volonté de planifier ensemble. [AMM](#)

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the collapse of the cod fishery may have been 30-plus years ago, but the effects are still being felt in many rural communities across the province. *Photo: Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador*

Thinking about sustainability

Planning today for the towns of tomorrow



Tobias Romaniuk (tromaniuk@municipalnl.ca) is the communications and marketing officer at Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador.

Imagine yourself on a road trip, headed for a charming small town you visited 20 years ago. But when you arrive, the town is a shell of its former self.

The businesses you remember are now closed. Many of the houses sit empty. Maybe a third of the former residents remain, mostly older people. The school has closed since there aren't enough students to keep it open. The clubs – Guides, Scouts, Lions, Kinsmen, and so on – no longer have chapters in the area.

The former grocery store is gone, after the owners retired and no one stepped in to keep it going. The hospital also closed, and the RCMP detachment hasn't had a full complement of staff in years.

As you check-in to your Airbnb, you start to wonder what happened to the town.

Lasting Impact of Economic Change

In Newfoundland and Labrador, this is a scenario that could happen in many towns across the province. The collapse of the cod fishery may have been 30-plus years ago, but the effects are still being felt in many rural communities across the province.

It was an economic collapse as well, and it devastated many small towns that relied heavily on the jobs the fishery provided. Populations cratered as people left to find work, either in larger urban centres or outside the province. That exodus had a cascading effect. As people left, so did the services, leaving those

who remained to travel further for daily essentials, healthcare, social events, and recreation opportunities.

For these towns, what do the next 20 or 30 years look like? Starting today, how can they ensure the long-term viability, or even survival, of their towns?

Defending Municipal Sustainability

It's a question that Burlington Mayor Rudy Norman has given much thought to. As the program co-ordinator for Tomorrow's Towns, a program of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL), Norman has given much thought to how other towns will navigate this uncertain future.

It's all about sustainability. But what is sustainability, in a municipal context?

"For me, sustainability in a municipal context means clear vision and planning," Norman said.

Ensuring a strong future, in other words, begins with a strong planning process, and ensuring the necessary

Putting sustainable practices into action can address today's challenges, while ensuring towns are set up for tomorrow's successes. Photo: Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador



pieces are in place for the future. A town-built trail is a perfect example, as Norman explains it.

A town will build a trail, often because it's a relatively simple project to plan and execute. But, Norman said, the problems start when the town doesn't account for the ongoing annual costs of trail maintenance, the human resources required to maintain the trail, who is responsible for the trail, and what it will look like 10 years from now.

"A lot of towns will do a project for today, but they don't factor in what tomorrow looks like. Sustainability in a municipal context, Norman said, "is about looking beyond today."

Looking Beyond the Initial Investment

Planning for the future is not only an exercise for a municipal planning session. It is something that needs to be thought of with every project a town undertakes.

"There is not one thing that a municipality does that they can't look at through a sustainability lens," Norman said, using the construction of a new

firehall as an example. "You've got enough money to build a fire hall. Great. Do you have enough money to maintain the fire hall? Do you have enough people to staff the fire hall? Do you have enough resources in town to utilize the fire hall?"

Tomorrow's Towns

Encouraging municipal leaders to think about sustainably was, partly, the motivation behind the creation of MNL's Tomorrow's Towns program. The two-year program, now in year-two, focuses on supporting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a practical education program centred on placemaking. SDGs are a framework for planning and implementing sustainable practices which is flexible enough to be applied across a range of scales and community sizes.

"In my eyes, it's relevant to every scale, every geography of community," says Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador CEO Rob Nolan.

While the Tomorrow's Towns program is relatively new, Nolan said he has been thinking about the concepts behind it – the SDGs – since at least 2018. At that

time, the federal government was working on how to raise awareness about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. A conference was organized, Nolan attended, and the takeaway from those sessions, he said, was finding an answer to the questions of how to empower communities to use this framework.

"So that's stuck with me ever since," Nolan said. "I think it is such a useful framework for getting people to think about sustainability in a tangible way as opposed to this esoteric concept that seems bigger than you could ever wrap your arms around."

Framework for Local Action

Broken into the 17 goals, it becomes much easier to think about sustainability, and how it can affect infrastructure, or food security, or the economy.

At the same time, there was a realization among the federal government that promoting sustainability needed to be a bottom-up approach. It needed to start at the local level.

"It really needed to be about how do we empower communities to use this framework like we're talking about?" said Nolan of the main outcome from that 2018 session.

Fast forward to today, and the Tomorrow's Towns program is actively promoting sustainable practices and encouraging municipalities to plan for the future through five streams: heritage and arts, healthy built environments, food security, environmental stewardship, and climate action.

A Vision for the Future

Thinking about sustainability and incorporating sustainable practices into the fabric of municipal planning, requires leadership, Norman said.

Putting sustainable practices into action can address today's challenges, while ensuring towns are set up for tomorrow's successes. It's about getting excited about the future.

"It's not just looking at the problems of right now and how do we overcome them," Nolan said, "but thinking about a vision for the future of our communities that is exciting to everyone, that makes you excited, and where you can imagine people moving to your communities and the communities growing and succeeding." [AMM](#)



Beyond borders

How municipal partnerships create local opportunities



Charlene Fekeshazy (cfekeshazy@nsfm.ca) is the communications advisor for the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

In Nova Scotia, municipal borders are more than lines on a map. They define local responsibility, identity, and accountability – but increasingly, they are also becoming starting points for collaboration. From climate adaptation in Annapolis County to recreation, infrastructure, economic development, broadband, and international recognition in Colchester and Cumberland, municipalities are proving that local priorities can be advanced more effectively when communities look beyond their own boundaries.

For many municipal leaders, partnership is not a “nice to have.” It is becoming a practical response to scale,

capacity, cost, and complexity. Smaller municipalities may not have the staff resources to pursue major funding applications or manage highly technical projects on their own. Larger rural municipalities may need regional agreements to deliver essential services across a broad geography. Communities of every size are navigating issues – climate change, workforce attraction, tourism development, emergency management, infrastructure renewal – that do not stop at municipal boundaries.

That reality is shaping a new municipal mindset in Nova Scotia: one that sees collaboration not as a loss of local control, but as a way to strengthen it. By working with neighbouring municipalities, provincial and federal partners, First Nations, community organizations, and international networks, local governments are finding new pathways to protect residents, attract visitors, deliver services, and build long-term resilience.

Collaboration as a Municipal Strategy

For Mayor Amery Boyer of the Town of Annapolis Royal, partnership is tied directly to the town's future. Annapolis Royal is a small community, with 591

residents and even fewer ratepayers, but it carries responsibilities that reach well beyond its population count. The downtown is a service centre for a larger region, supporting businesses, museums, a theatre, the farmers' and traders' market, the wharf, the boat haul-up, and nearby homes. It is also facing a serious climate risk.

A flood risk analysis, based on decades of data, identified the downtown as highly vulnerable to flooding associated with climate change. The need for action was widely understood, but the scale of the challenge was significant for a small municipality. The opportunity came through the Province of Nova Scotia and Clean Foundation's Community Climate Capacity Program, which supports communities by providing dedicated climate specialists and local capacity to move climate priorities forward.

Annapolis Royal joined with the Municipality of the County of Annapolis and the Town of Middleton to apply for support to develop a regional climate change plan. The application was successful, and a Climate Change Lead from Clean Foundation was assigned to the municipalities for a three-year period.

For Boyer, the partnership reflected a core principle in the town's strategic plan: integration of effort.

"The Town's survival as a town depends on collaboration," she said. "We knew we could not do this alone, and this partnership gave us the capacity to move from understanding the risk to actually doing something about it."

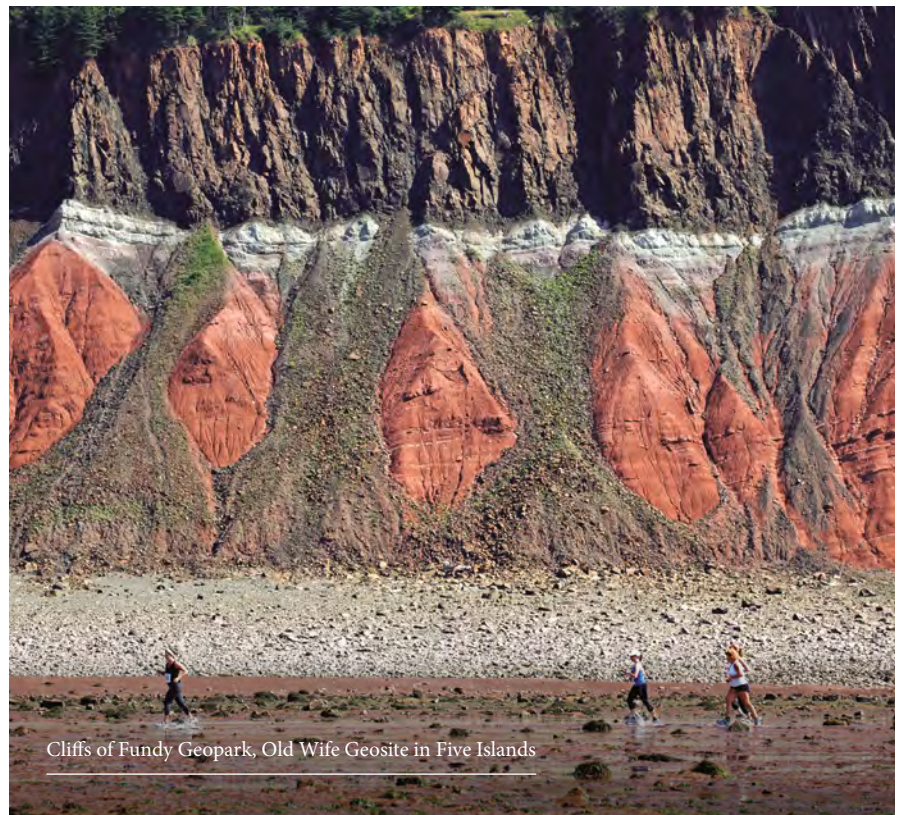
Climate Resilience Through Partnership

The impact has already been substantial. Clean Foundation staff helped facilitate public meetings across Annapolis County and supported the town in preparing highly technical funding applications – work that Boyer said would not have been possible without external assistance. Those applications helped secure more than \$1 million for climate change initiatives, including the Living Shoreline Project and tree canopy replacement. Overall, the town has assembled more than \$1.8 million in grants from multiple sources to move the work forward.

The Living Shoreline Project is more than an environmental initiative. It is a local protection strategy for a regional economic and community hub. Designed as living infrastructure, it will help absorb the impacts of more frequent and severe storms coinciding with high tides. In protecting the downtown core, it protects not only residents and businesses within the town, but also the wider population that depends on Annapolis Royal for services, culture, commerce, and gathering places.

There have been challenges, including pre-Confederation water rights, but Boyer points to the regional approach as one of the achievements she is most proud of. Town staff, council, and community members are aligned. Staff have grown into a large and complex project instead of being overwhelmed by it. And the work has earned recognition beyond Nova Scotia: the Town of Annapolis Royal received the Sustainable Communities Award from the Gulf of Maine Council, which includes Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

The lesson for other municipalities, Boyer said, is to stay grounded in strategy while remaining alert to opportunity. A strategic plan keeps staff



Cliffs of Fundy Geopark, Old Wife Geosite in Five Islands

and council on course. Persistence is essential, especially when major projects require multiple funding applications. And aligning municipal objectives with provincial and federal priorities can be critical to success.

"Never look away from a potential partnership opportunity with other levels of government," she said. "If the opportunity fits your strategic plan, pursue it – and keep pursuing it."

Regional Approach to Services and Growth

In Colchester, Mayor Christine Blair sees partnership through a wide regional lens. The Municipality of Colchester is a large rural municipality in the centre of the province, with two towns – Truro and Stewiacke – located geographically within the county but operating as separate municipalities. Colchester's location, two coastlines, and central position create advantages for business, tourism, and service delivery. They also create a need for strong working relationships.

One of the most visible examples is the Rath Eastlink Community Centre in Truro, co-owned by the Municipality of Colchester and the Town of Truro. Originally built as a major regional investment, the facility includes an arena, pool, fitness spaces, a climbing

wall, meeting areas, and event capacity. It supports health and wellness, community programming, graduations, concerts, and sport tourism – bringing people into the area to stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and participate in events.

For Blair, that regional benefit was central to the partnership from the beginning. The facility was not just about recreation; it was about positioning the community as a centre for events, sport, and wellness.

"It brings people here," Blair said. "They stay in our hotels, they eat in our restaurants, and they see what our region has to offer."

Like many major assets, it also brings governance, maintenance, and capital challenges. Colchester and Truro have had to work through operational issues and are taking steps to assess the facility's long-term maintenance and upgrade needs. The partnership, Blair said, requires both municipalities to remain on the same page as owners.

But Blair is quick to point out that partnerships are not limited to high-profile facilities. Some of the most important agreements are the ones residents rarely see – until something goes wrong. Colchester and Truro have working arrangements related to wastewater, water utility service, and waste



Five Islands, Cliffs of Fundy Geopark

management. These agreements support the smooth operation of essential services across municipal boundaries. They may not generate headlines, but they are fundamental to daily life.

Shared Solutions, Shared Challenges

Regional collaboration is also central to climate adaptation in Colchester. The municipality has long supported homeowners through a flood advisory committee, and it participates in a joint flood advisory committee with the Town of Truro and Millbrook First Nation. The purpose is simple: flooding is a regional challenge, and solutions must be regional as well. As communities review municipal planning strategies, land-use bylaws, stormwater management, and climate adaptation measures, shared planning becomes increasingly important.

Colchester's partnerships also extend into economic development and international recognition. Through the Truro Colchester Partnership for Economic Prosperity, the municipality supports work in tourism, physician recruitment, business support, marketing, and development. With the Municipality of Cumberland, Colchester has entered into historic agreements, including collaboration on rural internet services – bringing fibre infrastructure to communities where geography has made connectivity difficult.

Local Collaboration to Global Recognition

Another major collaboration with Cumberland is the Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Global Geopark, an internationally recognized landscape stretching along the Bay of Fundy. The geopark highlights geology, Mi'kmaq heritage, culture, tourism, education, and economic development across communities in both counties. For Blair, the designation is significant not only because it recognizes the region on the global stage, but because it creates local opportunities – from kayaking and interpretation to business development and visitor attraction.

International relationships can sometimes sound distant from everyday municipal work, but the geopark shows how global recognition can translate into local benefit. UNESCO designation gives communities a shared platform to tell their story, attract visitors, celebrate heritage, and build pride of place. It also connects rural Nova Scotia communities to broader networks of knowledge, tourism, and sustainable development.

Blair also describes collaboration with Millbrook First Nation and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, including municipal infrastructure support connected to a new cultural and interpretive centre in Debert and letters of support for climate adaptation work. These relationships reflect an expanding

understanding of municipal partnership – one that includes neighbouring governments, Indigenous governments and organizations, economic development agencies, provincial partners, and community institutions.

Her advice to other municipalities is practical: do the homework. Partnerships can strengthen a municipality's voice and help achieve more than any one community could accomplish alone, but they require clarity. Agreements need to be well understood, responsibilities clearly defined, and lessons drawn from others who have tried similar approaches.

"When you work together, you have a stronger voice," Blair said. "But you need to know what you are entering into, understand the responsibilities, and make sure the partnership is built to last."

Together, the experiences of Annapolis Royal and Colchester show that municipal partnerships are not one-size-fits-all. They can take the form of a shared climate lead, a co-owned recreation centre, a joint flood committee, an infrastructure agreement, a regional economic development organization, a broadband project, a First Nation collaboration, or an international designation.

What they have in common is purpose: each partnership is tied to a local priority that becomes more achievable through shared effort.

For Nova Scotia municipalities, the opportunity is clear. Local governments remain closest to residents, businesses, and community needs. But the pressures they face – climate risk, infrastructure costs, service expectations, housing, workforce attraction, and economic competitiveness – are increasingly regional, national, and global in scope. Partnerships allow municipalities to bring local knowledge to larger tables and bring external capacity back home.

In that sense, looking beyond borders is not about leaving local priorities behind. It is about advancing them with more tools, more voices, and more reach. Whether protecting a historic downtown from rising waters or turning a globally significant coastline into a shared economic and cultural asset, Nova Scotia municipalities are demonstrating that collaboration can be one of the most effective forms of local leadership. **AMM**



Donna Waddell, centre, former CAO of the City of Charlottetown, received the 2026 Bruce H. Yeo Award for outstanding contributions to municipal government. She says councils and CAOs need a strong working relationship to move forward with the goals of a municipality.

A vital partnership

The CAO–council relationship



Lori Mayne (lmayne@fpeim.ca) is the communications and engagement officer with the Federation of PEI Municipalities.

Donna Waddell smiles whenever she sees a green and white bus rolling down the streets of Charlottetown. It reminds her of one of the many projects she worked on during her more than 30 years in the municipal world.

“One of the things I love about municipal government is you can get things done,” she said.

Waddell’s love of municipal work brought her to roles including executive director of the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM), administrator of the former Community of West Royalty, and then director of corporate services, CAO, and interim CAO of the City of Charlottetown.

Through her experience, she learned that getting things done depended on more than good ideas – it also depended on people working together.

Why the CAO–Council Relationship Matters

Waddell suggests the council and chief administrative officer partnership is key to success.

“Council is the one who sets the policy and the direction,” Waddell explained. “The CAO is the one who is in the middle to take that policy and then have it implemented by the staff.”

If councils and CAOs do not build a strong working relationship, she said they will struggle to move forward with the goals of a municipality.

“You’re going to have the councillors going in one direction and you’ll have the CAO going in another direction. It’s not going to work.”

In fact, she said if council or a CAO does not feel they can work well with one another, they will likely find a “workaround” instead.

Building Trust Through Communication

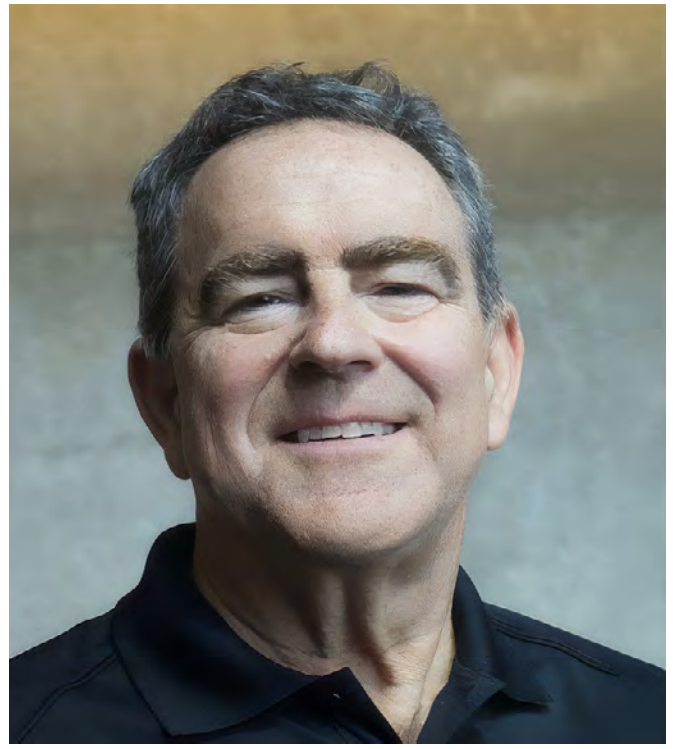
During her CAO roles, Waddell didn’t leave the relationship to chance. She worked to build rapport.

“I tried to develop individual relationships with each of the councillors and especially with the mayor,” she said.

To build a strong working relationship and effective communication, she held



Donna Waddell, former CAO of the City of Charlottetown, says a strong working relationship helps councils and CAOs succeed with the goals of a municipality.



Governance expert Gordon McIntosh says when councils and CAOs work well together, they can create effective communication, productive debate, positive public perception, and organizational excellence.

regularly scheduled meetings with the mayor, usually on Monday mornings.

“I insisted on a meeting, so that they knew what I was doing and I had some general idea of what they were doing.”

Those meetings became an important opportunity to discuss priorities, challenges, and next steps. “These are the issues that I think I’m facing this week and that you’re facing. This is the route I’m going. What do you think? Do you have any input?”

Respecting Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to having strong communication, Waddell emphasized the importance of councils and CAOs understanding their roles and having mutual respect.

Waddell said CAOs need to respect councillors who have knocked on hundreds or thousands of doors and been elected by residents; councillors need to respect CAOs and the knowledge and expertise they can offer.

“If a councillor or a mayor doesn’t have respect for the CAO, then they don’t have an advisor,” she said.

Preparing for New Councils

With municipal general elections scheduled in P.E.I. this November, newly

elected councils will take office across most of the province late this year.

To help councils and CAOs, FPEIM will host a workshop on the CAO-council relationship as part of its municipal orientation on Saturday, Nov. 21.

The workshop will feature Gordon McIntosh, a governance expert who has studied the CAO-council relationship in everything from his academic work to the thousands of conversations he’s had with municipal leaders and staff during his travels.

Learning to “Dance Together”

McIntosh described the process of building a CAO-council relationship by asking a simple question: “Have they figured out how to dance together?”

McIntosh said if a council and CAO can work well together, they can create effective communication, productive debate, positive public perception, and organizational excellence.

“They set the tone,” McIntosh said. He emphasized the importance of CAO-council alignment – both in terms of overall direction and in their expectations of one another.

McIntosh said CAO and council roles should be clear, but he stressed that their administrative and political

roles naturally overlap into what he calls the “grey” area. He explained that overlap must occur as municipalities face complex community issues related to climate change, housing, and mental illness – and as many municipalities also struggle to find the capacity to address such challenges.

“All of these things really require the CAO and the mayor to help all organizational members – not just council, but staff as well – to navigate the grey.”

Creating a Framework for Success

Like Waddell, McIntosh suggested that building a positive CAO-council relationship should not be left to chance.

Some of his strategies include encouraging councils to set a direction early, take part in ongoing education on municipal governance, establish regular check-ins, and develop clear expectations and even frameworks to clarify roles.

Those practices can help councils and CAOs navigate difficult issues together – and ultimately help municipalities serve residents to the best of their abilities.

“Our communities depend on it,” he said.

*To learn more about FPEIM’s municipal orientation sessions, visit fpeim.ca. **AMM***



Mayor's School

Investing in municipal leadership



Vanessa Pettersson is the communications and events coordinator at the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick.

Strong communities begin with strong leadership. As New Brunswick's municipalities continue to navigate diverse challenges and opportunities, the role of a mayor has never been more complex.

Whether newly elected or returning for another term, municipal leaders are expected to make informed decisions, build consensus, manage competing priorities, and guide their communities with confidence.

That is why the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB) partnered with the

Department of Environment and Local Government (ELG) to offer all New Brunswick mayors an option to attend Mayor's School. This professional development and networking opportunity is designed specifically to support mayors as they navigate the changing responsibilities of municipal leadership.

Strong Foundation for Leadership

Mayor's School provides participants with practical knowledge, valuable resources, and the opportunity to gain experience from municipal leaders and subject matter experts. The program

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By investing time in learning and professional development, mayors are investing in the future of their communities.

recognizes that no two municipalities are the same, but that every mayor benefits from a strong foundation in municipal governance, leadership, and decision making.

For newly elected mayors, the transition into office can be both exciting and overwhelming. They are often expected to quickly understand legislation, governance structures, financial responsibilities, council dynamics, and community expectations.

“Mayor’s School helps bridge that gap by providing the tools and knowledge mayors need to begin their term with greater confidence and a clearer understanding of their role. The opportunity to learn from one another and build connections with fellow mayors is invaluable, it reminds municipal leaders that they are not alone in facing the challenges of local government,” said Brittany Merrifield, mayor of Grand Bay-Westfield and president of UMN. “Whether you’re newly elected or returning to office, this 1.5-day program provides an important opportunity for continued learning, collaboration, and professional growth. It is an excellent way to start a new four-year term with the knowledge, resources, and network needed to lead effectively.”

Value of Peer Connections

One of the greatest strengths of Mayor’s School is the opportunity to connect with peers. Municipal leadership can sometimes feel isolating, but bringing mayors together creates an environment where experiences can be shared, challenges discussed, and solutions explored collaboratively.

These relationships often extend well beyond the program, creating a valuable network of support throughout a mayor’s term.

“The ultimate goal of Mayor’s School is to help municipal leaders succeed. Well-informed, confident leaders are better equipped to make thoughtful decisions, foster positive council relationships, engage effectively with residents, and advocate for their communities,” said Dan Murphy, UMN executive director. “Investing in leadership development ultimately strengthens local government and contributes to more resilient, responsive, and sustainable municipalities across New Brunswick.”

Support for Municipal Leaders

As municipal governments face changing responsibilities and rising expectations, ongoing education is no longer simply an asset, it is an essential part of effective leadership. By investing time in learning and professional development, mayors are investing in the future of their communities.

UMN remains committed to supporting municipal leaders throughout every stage of their journey. Mayor’s School is one of the many ways the association helps equip local leaders with the knowledge, confidence, and connections they need to serve their residents effectively. Together, we can foster informed leadership, stronger councils, and thriving communities throughout New Brunswick. [AMM](#)



Participants à l'École du maire, 20 et 21 août.

L'École des maires

Investir dans le leadership municipal



Vanessa Pettersson est coordonnatrice des communications et des événements à l'Union des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Des communautés fortes reposent sur un leadership fort. Alors que les municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick continuent de faire face à divers défis et opportunités, le rôle de maire n'a jamais été aussi complexe. Qu'ils soient nouvellement élus ou qu'ils entament un autre mandat, les dirigeants municipaux doivent prendre des décisions éclairées, parvenir à un consensus, gérer des priorités contradictoires et guider leurs collectivités avec confiance.

L'Union des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick (UMNB) s'est associée au ministère de l'Environnement et des Collectivités locales (ELG) pour offrir à tous les maires du Nouveau-Brunswick la possibilité de participer à l'École des maires, une initiative de développement professionnel et de réseautage spécialement conçue pour accompagner les maires dans la gestion de leurs responsabilités en constante évolution en matière de direction municipale.

Une fondation solide pour le leadership

L'École des maires équipe les participants avec des connaissances pratiques, des ressources précieuses et leur donne la chance d'apprendre auprès de dirigeants municipaux expérimentés et d'experts dans la matière. Le programme reconnaît

qu'il n'existe pas deux municipalités identiques, mais que tous les maires peuvent bénéficier d'une base solide en matière de gouvernance municipale, de leadership et de prise de décision.

Pour les maires nouvellement élus, la prise de fonction peut être à la fois emballante et intimidante. On s'attend souvent à ce qu'ils comprennent rapidement la législation, les structures de gouvernance, les responsabilités financières, la dynamique du conseil municipal et les attentes de la population.

« L'École des maires aide à combler ce déficit en fournissant aux maires les outils et les connaissances dont ils ont besoin pour entamer leur mandat avec davantage de confiance et une compréhension plus claire de leur rôle. La possibilité d'apprendre les uns des autres et de tisser des liens avec d'autres maires est inestimable ; elle rappelle aux dirigeants municipaux qu'ils ne sont pas seuls face aux défis de l'administration locale », explique Brittany Merrifield, maire de Grand Bay-Westfield et présidente de l'UMNB. « Que vous soyez nouvellement élu ou que vous soyez réélu, ce programme d'une journée et demie est une occasion primordiale pour l'apprentissage en continu, la collaboration et l'épanouissement professionnel. C'est un excellent moyen d'entamer un nouveau mandat de quatre ans avec les connaissances, les ressources et le réseau nécessaires pour diriger efficacement. »

La valeur des relations entre paires

L'un des principaux atouts de l'École des maires réside dans la possibilité de nouer des liens avec ses pairs. La fonction de dirigeant municipal peut parfois être source d'isolement, mais le fait de réunir les maires crée un environnement qui encourage le partage d'expériences, la discussion de défis et

la recherche collaborative de solutions. Ces relations s'étendent souvent bien au-delà du programme, créant ainsi un précieux réseau de soutien tout au long du mandat d'un maire.

« L'objectif ultime de l'École des maires est d'aider les dirigeants municipaux à réussir. Des dirigeants bien informés et sûrs d'eux sont mieux armés pour prendre des décisions réfléchies, favoriser des relations positives au sein du conseil municipal, dialoguer efficacement avec la communauté et défendre les intérêts de leurs collectivités », explique Dan Murphy, directeur général de l'UMNB. « Investir dans le développement du leadership renforce ultimement les gouvernements locaux et contribue à rendre les municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick plus résilientes, réactives et durables. »

Du support pour les dirigeants municipaux

Alors que les administrations municipales sont confrontées à des responsabilités en constante évolution et à des attentes croissantes, la formation continue n'est plus simplement un atout, c'est un élément essentiel du leadership efficace. En consacrant du temps à l'apprentissage et au développement professionnel, les maires investissent dans l'avenir de leurs collectivités.

L'UMNB reste déterminée à soutenir les dirigeants municipaux à chaque étape de leur parcours. L'École des maires est l'un des nombreux moyens par lesquels l'association aide les dirigeants locaux à acquérir les connaissances, la confiance et le réseau dont ils ont besoin pour servir efficacement leurs habitants. Ensemble, nous pouvons favoriser un leadership éclairé, des conseils municipaux plus solides et des collectivités prospères dans tout le Nouveau-Brunswick. [AMM](#)

Soutenir la réussite des municipalités au Canada

Du service cellulaire fiable à la résilience face au changement climatique, en passant par la flexibilité en matière d'immigration et les infrastructures durables, les municipalités ont besoin de solutions fédérales concrètes et pratiques qui reflètent les réalités régionales.



Le service cellulaire est un essentiel, et non un luxe. Les lacunes critiques dans la couverture mobile continuent d'affecter les communautés rurales, éloignées, autochtones et côtières, ce qui limite la sécurité publique, le développement économique et l'accès équitable aux réseaux essentiels.



L'adaptation au changement climatique doit être financée à long terme. Le Canada atlantique fait face à l'accélération des feux de forêt, à l'élévation du niveau de la mer, à l'érosion et aux ondes de tempête. Les petites municipalités ont besoin de soutien pour la planification, la surveillance et l'entretien de solutions fondées sur la nature.



La politique d'immigration doit répondre aux besoins régionaux en main-d'œuvre. Les réductions et les plafonds imposés par le gouvernement fédéral affectent de manière disproportionnée le Canada atlantique, où des secteurs clés — notamment la construction, la transformation du poisson, les soins de santé et l'hôtellerie — dépendent de l'immigration pour rester viables.



Le financement des infrastructures doit être durable et adapté aux besoins municipaux. Le vieillissement des routes et des réseaux d'eau potable et d'assainissement est de plus en plus dispendieux pour les petites municipalités, tandis que les dommages liés au climat et les programmes de financement nécessitant de lourdes démarches administratives leur ajoutent une pression supplémentaire.

Le moment est venu de s'associer aux municipalités de l'Atlantique — car des communautés résilientes contribuent à bâtir un Canada plus fort.



Town halls – a look at rural Newfoundland and Labrador



Tobias Romaniuk (tromaniuk@municipalnl.ca) is the communications and marketing officer at Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador.

What does your town hall look like? If the sign weren't on the building, would you know what it is? And looking at that building, what can you tell about a town? What can you tell about a province?

Unlike nearly every other province in the country, Newfoundland and Labrador has no regional system of local government. The result? A province of slightly more than half a million people has 269 municipalities, five Inuit Community Governments, and a few hundred additional communities

classified as local service districts and unincorporated areas.

About half the province's population is concentrated in the 23 largest municipalities, leaving a quarter million people across 250 communities. Of course, these towns are not all the same size. Many of them are quite small, with fewer than 500 people.

Municipal Operations on a Small Scale

So, what does a town office of fewer than 500 people look like? On the outside, they tend to be practical, utilitarian



Town Office & Fire Hall, Harbour Main-Chapel's Cove-Lakeview, Newfoundland & Labrador

buildings, often paired with the fire hall. They don't need to be large, since in many towns of this size there are only one or two staff inside.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the municipal legislation states that a municipality must have a town clerk or town manager but does not stipulate any other staffing requirements. So, in many of these small towns, they only have a single staff person, since that's all the budget allows for. The town council members tend to be volunteers, although they are paid a small stipend that, according to several small-town council members, it is about enough to cover municipal property taxes, but not much else.

Collaboration Builds Stronger Communities

Through initiatives like the Regional Prosperity Partnership, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL)'s latest program focused on regional economic development, municipal leaders are gaining the skills and tools required to work with their regional neighbours to improve the entire region.

The program's two facilitators have a mandate to connect communities with their regional neighbours looking to build projects to benefit not only their community, but the entire region as well.

Regional approaches – working with neighbouring municipalities to solve shared challenges – is an approach MNL has long advocated for. By working together, we can create and future-proof vibrant communities for future success no matter their size. [AMM](#)



right photo (insert): Town Office, Colliers, Newfoundland & Labrador

Town Hall Profiles

Avondale

Population

2016 census: 640

2021 census: 590

Colliers

Population

2016 census: 655

2021 census: 590

Harbour Main-Chapel's Cove-Lakeview

Population

2016 census: 1,105

2021 census: 855

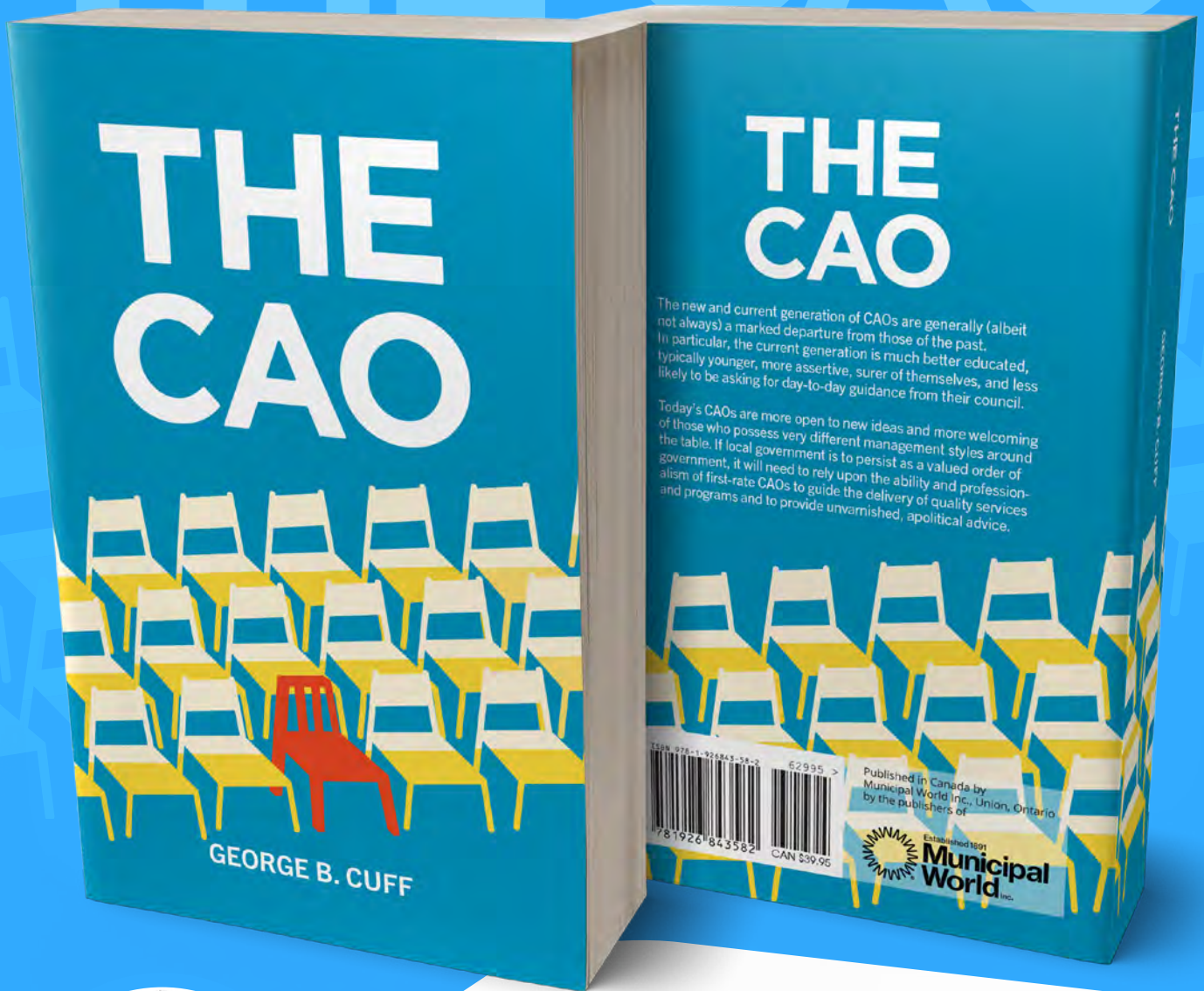
Conception Harbour

Population

2016 census: 685

2021 census: 650

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If local government is to persist as a valued order of government, it will need to rely upon the ability and professionalism of first-rate CAOs to guide the delivery of quality services and programs and to provide unvarnished, apolitical advice.

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