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1.0 Introduction

The Government of Canada has committed to transfer a portion of gas tax funds to municipalities. In 2005, the Province of Nova Scotia entered into a Gas Tax Agreement (GTA) with the Federal Government, under the New Deal for Cities and Communities. The Province then entered into Municipal Funding Agreements (MFA) with individual municipalities in order to deliver this federal funding to local governments and other appropriate recipients, for eligible environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure and capacity building projects. As a part of these funding agreements, Nova Scotia municipalities are required to develop Integrated Community Sustainability Plans by 2010.

Creating an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) is an important step in creating a more sustainable community. An ICSP is a long-term strategic plan developed by engaging community members in a discussion about the future of their community; it is a tool that identifies issues for improvement, goals for the future and actions that should be taken to achieve those goals. Although not a statutory document, the ICSP will help guide Municipal decision making in a way that supports the community's priorities for the future.

As part of the GTA, the Federal Government requires ICSPs to:

- a) Integrate economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability principles;
- b) Be prepared with public participation;
- c) Maximize the benefits of any infrastructure that will be produced under this Agreement; and
- d) Demonstrate, where appropriate, that there has been collaboration with other Municipalities to achieve sustainability objectives and may be adopted by two or more municipalities.

Additionally the Nova Scotia Government requires that ICSPs be reasonably consistent with Statements of Provincial Interest and meet the requirements of an ICSP as established by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. Service Nova Scotia has prepared several templates for Municipalities to use when creating an ICSP; the Municipality of the District of Digby ICSP is a Stand-Alone ICSP based on ICSP Report Template #3, as described in Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' document *ICSP Municipal Funding Agreement*.¹

1.1 Purpose

An ICSP provides a framework for the community to address the four pillars of sustainability: culture, economy, society and environment. Sustainability deals with complex issues; sustainability planning provides a means to better understand the linkages between those complex issues and balance the many dimensions that comprise a community's identity. Today, the needs of a community can no longer be considered as disconnected pieces; addressing issues in isolation will not result in a sustainable community. A balanced or sustainable approach to decision making attempts to account for all resources – economic, environmental, social and cultural.

Like many other rural communities, the Municipality of the District of Digby faces a number of challenges, such as a declining and aging population, transitioning to a more diverse economy and balancing the sometimes conflicting pressures of economic development and environmental conservation. In response to these types of concerns, sustainability has become a priority for communities around the world. In the broadest terms, sustainability has been defined as

¹ ICSP Municipal Funding Agreement. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. 2007.

“meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. There are three primary characteristics of a sustainable community:

1. A sustainable community recognizes the importance of long range planning and in doing so has a vision and goals that describe the future. This forward-looking perspective allows the community to determine what needs to be done today to reach tomorrow.
2. A sustainable community uses a whole systems approach to provide for balanced priorities because it is understood that environmental, economic, social and cultural needs are interrelated.
3. In a sustainable community, community groups, institutions, businesses, volunteer agencies, governments and individuals must work together to set goals, form plans and implement solutions.

Being sustainable is about more than protecting the environment – it also means increasing financial efficiency, building social and cultural capacity and using resources more effectively over the long term. As the level of government closest to the people, municipal governments play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainability. As the level of government closest to the people, the Municipality is in a strong position to respond to the area’s unique strengths and challenges.

1.2 Format

This report is divided into 11 sections. **Section 1.0 Introduction** presents a brief outline of the purpose and format of the ICSP. **Section 2.0 Background** provides background information on the Municipality including demographics, socio-economic information and a review of important background documents. **Section 3.0**

Consultation is a summary of consultation activities and results that were carried out as a part of developing the ICSP. **Section 4.0 Description of Issues and Topics** outlines the various sustainable planning issues that were identified through background research and public consultation. **Section 5.0 Priority Sustainable Planning Issues** identifies those issues that are considered a priority for the community. **Section 6.0 Sustainable Development Goals and Actions** outlines goals and corresponding actions for each planning issue identified in Section 4.0. **Section 7.0 Eligible Projects** lists those projects from Section 6.0 that are eligible for funding under the MFA and **Section 8.0 Community Benefits** outlines the potential community benefits of those projects. **Section 9.0 Partnerships & Collaborations** lists the potential partners for implementation that were identified through the ICSP process. **Section 10.0 Statements of Provincial Interest** examines the consistency of the ICSP with the Statements of Provincial Interest on drinking water supply, flood risk areas, agricultural land, housing and infrastructure. **Section 11.0 Implementation & Monitoring Plan** includes an implementation strategy, monitoring and reporting requirements and a decision making framework for the Municipality.

2.0 Background

The Municipality took the first steps towards creating an ICSP by participating in the 2008 *Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans* for municipalities within the Annapolis Valley Region.² This section of the ICSP builds on the findings and community consultation that were part of that study as well as additional information through a review of key existing documents.

² Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans: Annapolis Valley Municipalities. 2008. Jacques Whitford. Dartmouth, NS.

2.1 Overview

The beautiful and rugged rural Municipality of the District of Digby is located at the western end of the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, on the southern coast of the Bay of Fundy. Situated between the District of Clare and Annapolis County, the Municipality encompasses Digby Neck, Long Island, Brier Island and the eastern half of Digby County. Westport, Freeport, Bear River, Gilbert's Cove, Tiverton, Conway, Sissiboo and Weymouth are some of the other small communities found within the Municipality.

Historically, the economy of the region has been tied to resource sectors of fishing, forestry and agriculture. Fur farming, particularly mink farming, is the largest contributor to the Municipality's agricultural industry. A diversified fishing industry allowed the Municipality to avoid the worst effects of the collapse of ground fish stocks in the late 1980s and early 1990s; lobster and scallop are the backbone of the local industry, supported by mackerel and herring. In addition to the resource sector, tourism and service industries are an important contributor to the local economy. Eco-tourism, artisanal production and arts and culture are also playing an increasing role in the community's economy.

The area is rich in history and natural habitat, both of which draw visitors and new residents to the Municipality. Fishing and farming are supported by the area's wilderness and natural eco-systems, which also attract tourists who enjoy the area's beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. As part of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve – a large region of South-western Nova Scotia spanning several counties where sustainable use, protection and enjoyment of natural resources are encouraged and fostered – the Municipality understands the value of sustainability for the region.

2.2 Demographics

Similar to many rural communities across Canada, the Municipality has been experiencing a slow population decline for over a decade. As shown in Figure 1, the area's population has declined from 9,230 people in 1991 to 7,986 people for the 2006 Census, a decline of 13.5%. During the same period the population of Nova Scotia increased 1.5% to 913,462. The population decrease in the Municipality has been sharper than in neighbouring Annapolis County or The District of Clare.

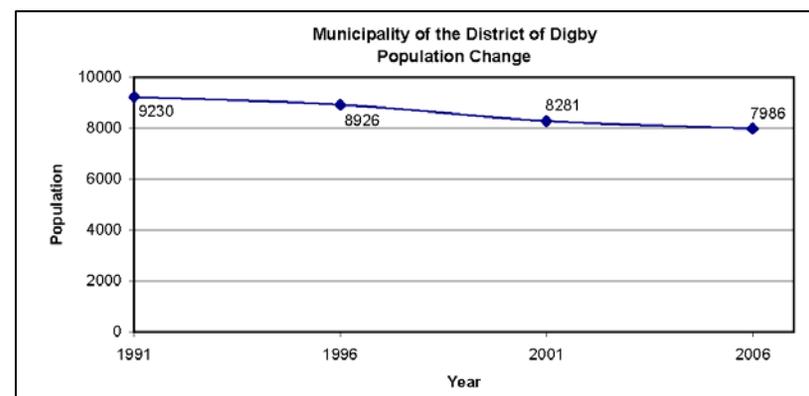


Figure 1. Population change in the District of Digby between 1991 and 2006. (Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles)

The majority of people who leave the community are young people aged 20 to 30 years, resulting in an older community with a higher proportion of middle-aged and retired residents. Subsequently, the median age in the Municipality was 44 years in 2006, higher than the provincial median age of 41.8 and the Canadian median age of 39.5.³ Figure 2 shows the number of residents in each age group and gender in 2006.

³ Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles.

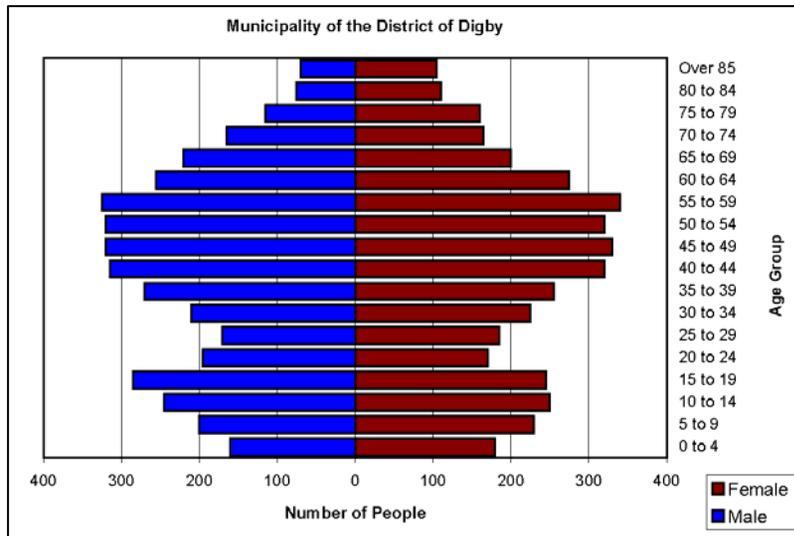


Figure 2. The District of Digby’s population in 2006, displayed by gender and age group .(Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles)

2.3 Income, Labour Force, Education

Income levels in both the Municipality and Digby County have increased sharply since the 1980s. Between 1986 and 2001, average annual individual incomes in the County increased from \$10,057 to \$20,076, an increase of almost 100%.⁴ The average income in the County increased more quickly than Canadian or Nova Scotian incomes during this time period. Income levels within the Municipality, however, are still below national and provincial levels; in 2006 the median annual family income in the Municipality was \$41,842, or 75% of the provincial median family income of \$55,412.

⁴ Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans: Annapolis Valley Municipalities. 2008. Jacques Whitford. Dartmouth, NS.

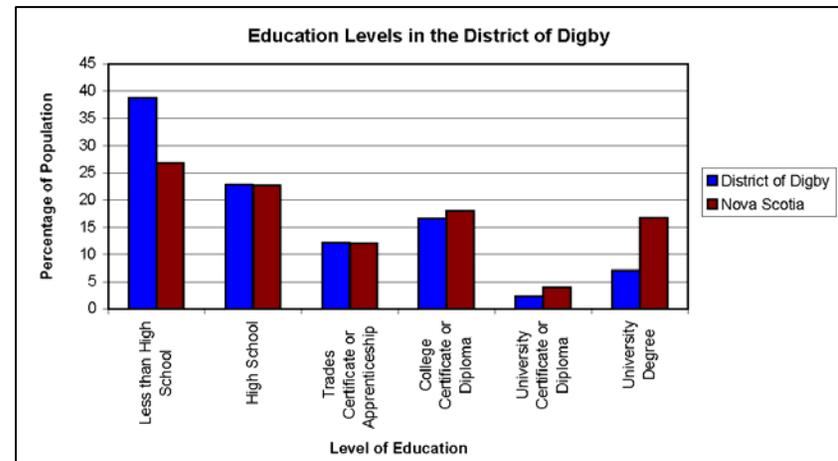


Figure 3. Education levels in the District of Digby compared to education levels for residents of Nova Scotia, from the 2006 Census, for residents 15 and older (Statistics Canada, Community Profiles).

Lower income levels within the Municipality correspond to higher unemployment rates, lower levels of educational attainment and a high reliance on seasonal work. The 2006 unemployment rate of 12.8% was significantly higher than the provincial level of 9.1%⁵; however, unemployment in the Municipality has decreased from approximately 18% in the mid 1990s.⁶ While education levels in the Municipality, (whether measured as the percentage of the population with a high-school education, post-secondary certificate or diploma, or a university degree) have increased over the last two decades, the increases have not been as significant as similar increases provincially or nationally.⁷ Educational levels in the community are generally

⁵ Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles.

⁶ Background Study for Integrated Community Sustainability Plans: Annapolis Valley Municipalities. 2008. Jacques Whitford. Dartmouth, NS.

⁷ *ibid.*

lower than in Nova Scotia, with a lower percentage of the Municipality's residents holding a high school degree or university level education (Figure 3).

2.4 Background Documents

In order to determine which areas of sustainability were being addressed by existing Municipal policy, a review of the following documents was undertaken:

- Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS): Concerning the Establishment of Residential Livestock Areas (Draft)
- Conway and Area Land-Use Bylaw
- Wellfield Protection Bylaw
- Wind Turbine MPS (Draft - Tabled by Council)
- Digby Municipal Airport MPS
- Digby County Open Space Project (2008) (Draft Recreation Inventory)
- Community Health Plan
- Municipality of Digby Strategic Priorities 2009-2012
- Heritage Program Report 2009-2011

The Municipality has a number of single issue Municipal Planning Strategies (MPS) and associated Land-Use Bylaws; however there is no comprehensive MPS controlling land use and development throughout the entire Municipality. Consequently, land use in most of the Municipality is primarily unregulated, with the exception of the Conway commercial area adjacent to the Town of Digby. This area, the most urban in the Municipality, is controlled by the Conway and Area Land-Use Bylaw, which designates a variety of commercial, residential and industrial zones, along with associated building and

lot standards. The Conway and Area Land-Use Bylaw is a conventional zoning bylaw, focused almost exclusively on regulating land use and construction standards; the bylaw contains no broad environmental, social or cultural provisions.

Single issue MPS within the Municipality include: the MPS for Residential Livestock Areas, which, along with the Residential Livestock Areas Land-Use Bylaw, regulates the size and location of commercial fur farms to limit nuisance and land use conflicts; the Draft Wind Turbine MPS, which was intended to regulate both domestic and utility scale wind turbines, but was recently tabled by Municipal Council; and the MPS for the Digby Municipal Airport, which is intended to guide the development of the Airport as a community economic driver.

These MPS all contain specific provisions linked to sustainability, such as sustainable development guidelines contained in the Digby Municipal Airport MPS or a consideration of the social, economic and environmental impacts of wind farms in the Wind Turbine MPS; however, these MPS deal with subjects on an issue by issue basis, making it difficult to connect issues and approach governance and development from a holistic, sustainable perspective.

Additionally, due to the limited number of bylaws and planning strategies, only a very limited scope of issues are dealt with by the Municipality's existing policies. An ICSP is not meant to replace these existing pieces of legislation, which address issues important to the community. The ICSP is instead required to provide a broad strategy to guide the Municipality towards sustainability.

3.0 Consultation

Carrying out a community based initiative such as the ICSP in a transparent manner is essential. Not only do residents have local knowledge and ideas about local issues, it is also important that citizens understand the goals and actions in the ICSP in order to support its implementation. The public consultation program for the Municipality's ICSP combined a number of different components to help ensure that interested residents had the opportunity to share their input and remain involved throughout the process.

3.1 Consultation Program

Project Steering Committee - A steering committee consisting of the Municipal Warden, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), two councillors, and six citizens, was established to provide direct input on public consultation events, stakeholder contact information and draft and final versions of the ICSP. The Committee met a total of four times throughout development of the ICSP.

Project Email Address - A project email address was created and posted on the Municipal website to allow residents to ask questions about the project and obtain more information.

Stakeholder Contact Lists - Based on input from steering committee members an initial stakeholder contact list was created to inform stakeholders about development of the ICSP and advertise upcoming public consultation events. Additionally, a second stakeholder list was created to keep residents who attended the community visioning sessions informed throughout the ICSP process.

Online Survey - An online survey was available during the month of July 2009 on the Municipality's website. 10 responses to the survey were received, seven of which were valid.

Community Visioning Sessions - An important step in developing the ICSP was creating a long term vision for the community based on input from its citizens. To that end, a series of community visioning sessions were held during the week of June 15th, 2009. The first session, held on June 16th at the Tiverton Community Hall, was attended by 22 residents. The second session, held on June 17th at the Digby Municipal Office, was attended by 53 residents. The third session, held on June 18th at Weymouth Consolidated School, was attended by 12 residents, bringing the overall number of session participants to nearly 90 in total. Various Steering Committee members attended some or all of these sessions. Steering Committee members were welcome to participate in one of the sessions but were asked to merely observe any additional sessions that they chose to attend.

Each community visioning session followed the same format. Tables and chairs in each session were organized into small groups for 3 – 6 people and participants sat where they wished upon entering the room. Each table was set up with a pad of paper and pen, along with brown paper covering the table and crayons or markers that could be used for drawing, doodling or keeping track of ideas throughout the evening. Each session began with a brief background presentation outlining the definition of sustainability, the definition of an ICSP and the goals for the project.

Following the background presentation, attendees participated in a community café discussion. During these small group discussions, each participant had an opportunity to share their answers to a series of five questions. Participants were asked to change groups several times throughout the process to promote greater interaction and sharing of ideas. The exception was the 'anchor' for each table who was asked to remain seated throughout the discussion to record the main themes and ideas that emerged in response to each question.

Once participants had discussed each question in small groups, the anchor for each table reported to the larger group some of the key themes and ideas that had emerged at their table over the course of the evening.

The third and final part of each session consisted of a brief summary of the key ideas, themes and issues that emerged from the anchor reports, followed by an outline of next steps in the ICSP development process and additional opportunities for citizens to remain involved in the project.

Digby Regional High School Focus Group - To help understand the needs of youth in the Municipality, a focus group was held at Digby Regional High School with seven students from the Town and Municipality of Digby. The discussion focused on two primary questions: what do you like most about Digby and what would you change about Digby? Although much of the feedback received from the group was similar to information gathered during the community visioning sessions, several unique points were made, including the need for more recreation opportunities and better maintenance of existing facilities, the feeling that youth are not properly informed of public meetings or other important consultation events and a desire for more things to do, such as a movie theatre or different restaurants.

Additionally, the group discussed the concept of forming a youth advisory committee that would provide a voice for youth on municipal issues; their feedback on this initiative was very positive and enthusiastic. The group indicated they felt an advisory group would work best if composed of a core group that would hold open meetings that any youth would be welcome to attend. It was suggested that the core group be composed of representatives from

a variety of grades, who would each be involved for a number of years to provide continuity.

Some of the key ideas expressed by the youth focus group were:

- They enjoy the small town and rural lifestyle, especially knowing people throughout the community;
- They love the natural setting and the ocean;
- There is a need for more jobs, including part-time jobs, summer jobs and full-time work after graduation;
- There is a need for more activities and recreation opportunities for youth, as well as a need for more places to “hang-out”, such as restaurants, coffee-shops or a movie theatre;
- They wish to be better informed about Municipal government, community issues and community meetings;
- The desire to have more young people and youth activities in both the Town and Municipality; and
- There is a significant concern about the presence of drug dealers in the community and in schools. There is a perception the police are unable or unwilling to deal with this problem.

Open House - An Open House was held on September 22nd, 2009 at the Digby Municipal Office in Seabrook to allow the public to review the Draft ICSP. Roughly 20 people attended the Open House to view the detailed action plan, review hard copies of the Draft, speak with staff and leave written comments. Copies of the Draft ICSP were mailed, emailed and faxed to almost 30 people from the stakeholder contact list who expressed interest in reviewing the Draft prior to the Open House.

3.2 The Results

Key themes – such as the importance of maintaining a peaceful, rural character and traditional way of life and the need for a more diverse, year-round economy that provides meaningful employment

and helps to mitigate population decline – emerged from the review of public and stakeholder input. These themes are summarized in the tables on the following pages and have been used to develop a Vision for the Municipality, which is presented in Section 3.3.

What do you like most about your community?

Theme	Examples
Society	
Rural character, peaceful, traditional way of life	Beautiful, quiet rural setting; traditional, rural lifestyle; country living; slower pace of life; peaceful; laid back
People, connections, sense of community	People – relaxed, friendly, easy to talk to; feeling of being part of something; we are all friends; people know/care for each other; caring neighbours
Amenities and services	Good school system; library; access to amenities; great fire department; Welcome Centre
Safe	Safe; don't have to lock doors; live without fear, good deal of trust; low crime rate
Culture	
Recreation	Unlimited activities in all seasons; excellent recreational facilities; activity friendly – back country, hiking, fishing, canoeing, etc.
Cultural events	Clubs; historical teas; Firemen's Day; July 1st Parade
Sense of place	Strong sense of history/tradition; each community is distinct; culture: uniqueness
Environment	
Natural beauty, pristine natural environment	Natural beauty; untouched environment, landscape pristine; healthy environment; water views; fresh air; wind, water, wildlife; open spaces, woods and waters, natural beauty
Resource availability/self-sufficiency	Can eat local – fish, vegetables, lobster, beef; can live off the land; self-sufficient; hunting; love the produce; seafood; free access to spring water
Climate	Cool summer, warm winter; great growing climate; not too hot or cold; mild climate
Economy	
Strategic geographic location	Close to larger centres; access to universities; strategic location
Opportunities for growth	Good place for business; good educational base; opportunities for expansion

What would you like to change about your community?

Theme	Examples
Society	
Amenities/Services	Nursing home on island; under policed; entertainment; more affordable housing; more activities for youth
Governance	More cooperation between villages and islands; more local control and decision-making; more positive attitude from local government; better communication; planning
Health Care	Better access to health care; satisfactory health care facility and staff; curb abuse of hospital emergency room; more ER hours
Population Growth	More population, bring people home; less people leaving; population triple like 100 years ago
Community Involvement	More people involved in volunteer work; more people step up
Community Pride	Positive attitudes; every citizen to be an ambassador; more local pride, willingness to stay and contribute
Culture	
Recreation	Kids activities (dancing, swimming, etc); enclosed pool for year-round use; places to walk inside
Arts/Culture Events	More community events; more happenings in arts and culture
Environment	
Public Infrastructure	Road conditions; signage; public water system; basic infrastructure
Transportation	Affordable transportation; active transportation; public transit
Sustainable Energy	More tidal power; proper research and assessment before putting up renewable energy installations; small scale wind and power operations
More Sustainable	More education on sustainability; better control of deforestation; community greenhouses, sustainable fishing
Economy	
Job Creation	More jobs, more access to jobs; sufficient employment, proper wages and conditions; job creation for youth; more jobs without hurting ecology; more full-time employment
Diversified Economy	More jobs other than fishing; varied employment, not just lobster, more farming; open to development; invite industry

What are your hopes and dreams for the community in 30 years?

Theme	Examples
Society	
Population Growth	More population; more younger people; more young families; 3+ generations staying
Health Care	Nursing home; more doctors and nurses; 24/7 health care; access to medical/health care services
Educational Opportunities	Educational institutions intact; all citizens with at least a high school education; attractive teaching positions; better funded schools
Culture	
Diversity	Strong recognition of cultural diversity; multicultural diversity; multicultural facility
Recreation	Walking trails on the Neck; access to open spaces
Support for the Arts	Funding for arts; arts and cultural centre; all students have access to and encouraged to partake in cultural activities; art school promoting arts
Environment	
Conservation/Resource Management	Renew natural resources; less pollution, stay natural; protect coastlines; better management of natural resources
Sustainable Energy	Have our power come from different sources; clean manufacturing of energy production; renewable, local energy; more green power
Transportation	Adequate, affordable public transit; great transportation access
Public Infrastructure	Improve infrastructure, road, ferries; safe water
Economy	
Job Creation/Diversified Economy	More jobs; more year-round jobs; buy local; vertical integration of goods and services; diverse; commercial area gets bigger and better
Tourism	More tourism; better marketing of the area

What could you or others do to help make these hopes and dreams become a reality?

Theme	Examples
Society	
Governance	More working together; provide leadership at all levels of government; address issues collectively; Town and Municipality strengthened by working together
Community Involvement	Volunteer more often; more kitchen table discussions; participate; encourage others to get involved; welcome wagons, diners, etc.
Planning	Comprehensive planning that allows for public and private consultation; plan with milepost checks; hire a planner; create a municipal plan
Sense of Community/Pride	Decrease apathy; support groups, not being critical; promote area; re-establish community pride
Environment	
Transportation	Active transportation; better public transit; carpooling website, park + ride; maintain transportation systems
Sustainable Resource Management/Conservation	CPAWS; more environmentally friendly attitude; forestry management; limit gill-nets, draggers
Sustainable Energy	Renewable energy, smaller, local; explore all types; be proactive on wind farms
Increase Local Food Production	Introduce organic farming in schools; farming cooperatives; encourage local food production
Economy	
Diverse Economy/Jobs	Technology sector growth; summer employment opportunities
Education/Post Secondary	Expand NSCC programs; apprenticeship program for high school students; promote trades; mentoring for tourism workers
Taxes	Growing own tax break; small business rate tax competitive; tax breaks for sustainable choices

What key points should be included in the Community Vision statement?

Theme	Examples
Society	
Sense of Community/Inclusive	Promote pride; support each other; all inclusive community that nurtures youth, sustains industry, supports elderly; welcoming community; equity
Amenities/Services	Keep what we have; good education; access to primary services
Health Care	Accessibility (universal) to health care; emphasis on health living to reduce stress on health care system; good health
Culture	
Culture	Culture – who we are
Preserve Heritage	Recognize our past into the future; preserve what we have
Environment	
Sustainable Energy	Energy independence, renewable energy, tidal, geothermal; explore wind, water, energy, solar, wood pellets; affordable green energy produced in our region, marketed internationally
Public Infrastructure	Maintain and improve infrastructure; basic infrastructure; proper water and sewage within all communities
Environmental Awareness/Be More Sustainable	Enviro-friendly; grow things sustainable within our means; environmental footprint low; conserve, reuse, recycle, using our resources effectively
Conservation/Resource Management	Emphasis on use of our resources; vision should include sustainable natural resources; access and sustainable natural resources
Economy	
Job Creation/Economic Diversity	Job creation; develop new business, embrace change; maximize resources we have, diverse year-round employment
Buy Local	Purchase locally; buy local; vertical integration
Self-Sufficiency	Self-sufficiency; young people in particular

3.3 Our Vision for the Future

Note: The Community Vision is a broad, all encompassing statement of what the Municipality is all about. It is meant to reflect the common values of the Municipality of Digby, as articulated by its citizens and to be inspiring, challenging and seen as worthwhile.

We are secure. We know that we have a healthy, diverse and year-round economy that offers exciting, satisfying and rewarding employment opportunities.

We are growing. With increased attraction and retention of new residents and repatriation of former residents our community is growing and consists of a broader mix of demographics and cultures. Although growth is a reality, we have maintained our rural community character and quality of life but have improved provision of and access to services, amenities and infrastructure. We develop and renew buildings, neighbourhoods and facilities in a way that contributes to making our community unique, liveable and sustainable.

We are inclusive and proud. We are a strong, welcoming and nurturing community where people want to – and can – start a family or age in place and where all residents and visitors feel safe and welcome. We are proud of our diverse community and take every opportunity to share that pride with others.

We collaborate. Community, government and industry work together to achieve solutions that are a ‘best fit’ for our community. Communication and transparency are the foundation of these collaborative relationships.

We value our roots. We recognize and appreciate that our strengths are grounded in our history. We embrace change; we build on our strengths by leveraging them to adapt to today’s opportunities with ingenuity and resourcefulness.

We can be self-reliant. We encourage economic self-sufficiency through local ownership and sustainable use of resources. When possible, we promote and buy local to encourage and support this community self-reliance.

We live within our limits. We value the importance of our pristine natural environment; we are strategic, sustainable and efficient in our use of natural resources. We understand that there are limits to the natural, social and built systems on which we depend and we respect those limits. We take responsibility – both as individuals and as a community – for the role we play in ensuring that future generations are handed down man-made and natural wealth.

3.4 Sustainability Principles

In addition to the Community Vision developed through public input, a set of Sustainability Principles were developed to describe how the Municipality will operate as a sustainable community. The Municipality of the District of Digby's Sustainability Principles were adapted from the Melbourne Principles,⁸ which were developed as a simple set of high level statements that describe how sustainable communities should function; these Principles provide guidance to ensure that as the community strives to meet its vision, it does so in a sustainable manner. The Sustainability Principles for the Municipality are:

1. Incorporate valued and distinctive characteristics of the Municipality - including its social, cultural, historical and natural attributes - in our vision and planning for a sustainable community.

There is a strong and unique sense of place in the Municipality, based on rural character, caring communities, beautiful and untouched wilderness, and respect and enjoyment of peaceful, traditional lifestyles. Just as the community must balance economic and social development with environmental protection, the Municipality must also balance new development and new technologies with the existing settlements and lifestyles that residents enjoy and value.

2. Engage the entire community in the planning and implementation of sustainable solutions.

The journey towards sustainability requires strong support from within the community. It is critical to have active participation from the

⁸ ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability - www.iclei.org/fileadmin/user-upload/documents/ANZ/WhatWeDo/TBL/Melbourne_Principles.pdf

community in all stages of the process, from long-term planning to implementation of solutions. People have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them. Attention needs to be given to empowering those whose voices are not always heard. Everyone in the community should have the capacity to participate in their local government processes.

3. Strive to minimize the Municipality's ecological footprint.

One way of describing the ecological impact of a community is to measure its ecological footprint. The ecological footprint measures the 'load' on nature imposed by meeting the needs of a community's population. It represents the land, water and air necessary to sustain current levels of resource consumption and deal with waste discharged by that population. Reducing the ecological footprint involves solving problems locally, rather than shifting them to other geographic locations or to future generations; it is a fundamental contribution towards sustainability.

4. Respect the Municipality's biodiversity and ecosystems.

The natural environment is a strong component of the Municipality's identity, prosperity and future. Through the area's natural beauty and resource sectors, residents are closely connected to nature. It is through these connections that they understand the value of nature and gain a better appreciation of the importance of healthy habitats and ecosystems. This connection provides them with an appreciation of the need to manage our interactions with nature respectfully. Just as humans have the capacity to alter the habitat and even to extinguish other species, we can also protect and restore biodiversity. We have a responsibility to act as custodians of nature, to protect both the health of our communities and the health of natural ecosystems.

5. Achieve long-term economic stability and social security in the Municipality.

Long-term economic and social stability are prerequisites for beneficial change. Sustainable economic development in the Municipality is based upon environmentally sound strategies, satisfying employment and increased educational opportunities that together create a strong, diverse year-round economy. Economic strategies should seek to meet human needs in a just and equitable manner through the fair allocation of resources and the protection of natural systems and social capital.

6. Foster communication between community groups, organizations, institutions and other municipalities to emphasize sustainability as a common goal.

The citizens of the Municipality are the key to sustainability. It is critical that residents are well-informed and can easily access and share knowledge. The energy and talents of people are maximized by working together through strong networks. Developing and strengthening new and existing networks will facilitate knowledge transfer, build capacity and support continual environmental, economic and social improvement. There is also value in the Municipality pooling resources to develop sustainability tools, collaborating in regional networks, taking part in collective efforts and sharing its experiences with its neighbours – Annapolis County, The Town of Digby and the District of Clare.

4.0 Description of Issues & Topics

A description of the sustainability issues and topics that were consistently identified in community consultation sessions are presented in this section. In addition to community consultation sessions, issues were identified through discussions with Steering Committee members and by reviewing the Municipality's existing studies and plans.

4.1 Social

S-1 Civic Engagement – Informed and engaged citizens are critical to the development of a sustainable community. Engaged citizens are more likely to communicate concerns and ideas to elected officials, become involved in community and government initiatives, participate in committees or consultation programs and hold community leaders accountable. A lack of engagement reduces the ability of governments and the community to move towards sustainability by identifying and meeting challenges.

S-2 Volunteerism – Volunteers provide countless programs and services that improve the community's social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions; there are not enough government or private sector resources to replace the work done by volunteers. Reduced volunteerism results in fewer community programs and events and negatively impacts the ability of the community to implement positive changes.

S-3 Comprehensive Long-Term Land Use Planning – Development patterns and development standards are important determinants of community sustainability. Appropriate land use planning can help to ensure that development protects the environment and natural ecosystems, contributes positively to the local economy and preserves

the unique sense of place enjoyed by the Municipality's rural communities and small villages.

S-4 Health Care – In a healthy community, residents have social, mental and physical well-being and appropriate access to services that treat and prevent disease. Good health care is one of the primary components of a community's quality of life, wellbeing and productivity. Quality health services are needed to attract new residents, retain existing residents and help care for an increasingly aged population. A community's social, cultural and economic well-being is grounded in good health – healthy communities are more sustainable communities.

S-5 Housing – Access to appropriate, affordable housing is an important component of quality of life. Providing appropriate, affordable housing to allow seniors to age-in-place, or for low income families to have access to transit and other services, is particularly important in rural areas. In addition to providing adequate housing for these more vulnerable segments of the population, it is also important to provide a variety of housing types that will appeal to a broad demographic, including empty-nesters, young families and singles.

S-6 Collaboration/Communication Between Various Levels of Government – Sustainability is everyone's responsibility. Ecosystems, economies and cultures are not contained by community boundaries or under the jurisdiction of any one government, community group or institution. Most issues related to sustainability are complex and require integrated solutions. Sustainability therefore requires cooperation and knowledge-sharing between different levels of government, neighbouring municipalities, business and industry, community groups and institutions.

4.2 Cultural

C-1 Access to Recreation, Open Space and Coastal Areas – Quality, accessible open space has many functions within a community. It provides public spaces to connect people and host celebrations and cultural events, it provides recreation opportunities and contributes to good health and it allows residents to explore and appreciate the pristine natural landscapes found throughout the Municipality. Open space contributes to sustainability by promoting healthy lifestyles, connecting communities, supporting culture and increasing knowledge of and appreciation for the natural environment.

C-2 Population Decline – A stable, productive population is necessary to create demand for goods, services and amenities, generate a tax base to support services and provide a workforce to local employers. As population declines, residents take their skills, knowledge and capacity elsewhere, reducing the community's ability to work towards a sustainable future.

C-3 Diversity Awareness – The ability of the community to work together towards reaching the Community Vision can be enhanced by improved awareness of the many cultures that exist in the Municipality.

C-4 Protecting Heritage – Heritage conservation involves identifying, protecting and promoting the elements that society values. Heritage helps communities understand their roots and take pride in what has been accomplished. It is a source of strength that puts the change of society into perspective and helps build a better future.

4.3 Environmental

En-1 Water and Wastewater – A fundamental need for the health and wellness of any community is a sustainable source of clean drinking water. The protection and secure distribution of this resource requires collaboration between neighbouring municipalities, different levels of government and strategic investment in environmentally sound infrastructure. Ensuring communities have suitable sewage treatment options is critical to ensure human and ecosystem health. Providing improved sewage treatment is directly related to the goal of cleaner water.

En-2 Sustainable Energy – A sustainable, clean energy supply supports many elements of sustainability, including economic development, quality employment and reduction of greenhouse gases.

En-3 Protection of Marine/Coastal Areas – The rugged coastline and the tides of the Bay of Fundy define many communities in the Municipality. The coast and Bay of Fundy are tremendous resources for fishing, tourism, transportation and recreation – protecting this resource for future generations is necessary to sustain the many communities that rely on the ocean for a living and an identity.

En-4 Alternative Modes of Transportation – Providing alternatives to single occupancy vehicles will further community sustainability by improving mobility for residents and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

En-5 Climate Change Adaptation – Identifying and preparing for climate change and sea level rise is a critical issue for the Municipality's many coastal communities.

En-6 Municipal Energy Expenditures – The Municipality can take a leadership role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy use. Additionally, reduced energy use will improve the fiscal position of the Municipality, allowing it to focus resources on other issues.

En-7 Solid Waste – Reducing the amount of solid waste generated within the Municipality, through recycling, composting and improved hazardous waste disposal, is an important sustainability goal that will result in a cleaner environment and more efficient resource use.

4.4 Economic

Ec-1 Strengthen Fishing Industry – The fishery is a strong contributor to the local economy and a traditional livelihood that is central to the local culture. Ensuring that the fishery uses environmentally friendly techniques will help ensure the sustainability of this time-honoured industry.

Ec-2 Strengthen Agricultural Industry – Strengthening the local farming industry will provide a closer connection between the land and residents, more jobs, increased economic development and further local goods and services.

Ec-3 Strengthen Forestry Industry – Creating an environmentally friendly forestry industry will permit proper stewardship of the Municipality's forest resource while maintaining the sectors important economic contribution to the community.

Ec-4 Strengthen Tourism Industry – The beauty and hospitality of the area attracts many visitors who support the local tourism industry, creating jobs and wealth in the community. Supporting this industry is crucial to the economic sustainability of the area.

Ec-5 Workforce Expansion – Having a strong and diverse workforce is an essential component to a healthy, sustainable economy.

Ec-6 Cooperation Between Business, Industry and the Community. A lack of collaboration between the private sector and the community negatively affects the Municipality’s capacity to create effective economic development initiatives and lowers the private sector’s potential to easily respond to community needs. Sustainability requires strong partnerships between all groups within a community.

Ec-7 Industrial Development – Increasing industrial development in the region has the potential to result in significant economic growth. Industrial growth must take place in a strategic way that captures the positive potential, but does not pose significant risks to the environmental, cultural or social elements of the community.

Ec-8 General Economic Development – A strong, diverse economy plays an important role in quality of life as well as in the attraction and retention of people. The Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency (ADEDA) plays an important role in leading economic development in the region.

5.0 Priority Sustainable Planning Issues

As described in Section 4.0, several sustainable planning issues and topics were identified for the ICSP. Although the ICSP has a 25 year timeframe, goals and actions for implementation over the short term (5 years) have been identified and are outlined in Section 6.0. With the mindset that “if everything is a priority then nothing is a priority”, five of the sustainable planning issues listed in Section 4.0 have been identified as priorities. Identification of these priority issues and their associated goals and actions will assist the Municipality with budgetary planning and decision-making over the next 5-years until

such time as the ICSP undergoes a comprehensive review (see Section 11.2 for details on the review requirements).

The process used to identify priority issues and a description of each are outlined in Subsections 5.1 and 5.2 respectively.

5.1 Process

Three criteria were used to identify priority issues: (1) the prevalence of each issue in the public consultation results, (2) whether an issue, if addressed, would build capacity to address other issues or produce tangible change in the community and (3) the extent of the Municipality’s legislative authority and ability to address the issue. The resulting priority issues and the rationale behind their selection are listed in Subsection 5.2.

It should be noted that although priority issues are identified, that is not to say that the remaining issues – and corresponding goals and actions – are unimportant to the Municipality or the community. It simply means that those issues have not been identified as a priority at this time; however, they may become priority issues in the future as other issues are addressed and successes are achieved.

5.2 Priority Issues

Civic Engagement - The need for improved citizen engagement and citizen involvement was a common theme at all community consultation events. Citizen engagement is also directly related to other social themes that the community identified as important, including volunteerism and the quality of governance and decision making. Stronger relationships within the community and stronger relationships between residents and the Municipality will result if citizens are more active and engaged. Reduced conflict and more cooperation will lead to improved capacity to generate change. The Municipality has

the authority and resources to implement new programs and approaches to engage citizens and build capacity within the community. Addressing this issue is critical to successfully implementing other sustainability initiatives.

Health Care - The availability of health care services within the community was identified as a prime concern at all consultation events. Improving health services will be a visible and fundamental improvement for residents, leading to healthier, happier citizens who are more productive and better able to support community development and prosperity; a healthy community is well positioned to move towards long term sustainability. The Municipality is not responsible for the delivery of health services; however, the Municipality works closely with the district health authority and the Province to attract and retain health care workers.

Population Growth - Population growth, and its associated social, cultural and economic benefits, was a common theme brought up at community consultation events. Growth is closely related to other important themes within the community, including economic growth and the availability of jobs and services. A growing population has more talent, energy and capacity to implement the necessary changes that lead to a sustainable community. The Municipality can support or lead many of the actions that would help attract new residents and repatriate residents that have left the community.

Industrial Development - The need for a diverse economy that produces desirable jobs was the most important concern at public consultation events. A strong, diverse economy is directly related to population growth and the provision of services within the community. Industrial development will provide fiscal and economic capacity the community needs to work towards a sustainable future. The Municipality will be an important partner in implementing actions to

encourage industrial development. Appendix A identifies a number of tangible steps the Municipality can take to support industrial development.

Economic Development - Pursuing broad economic development goals will help address one of the community's most important needs - a year-round economy that supports desirable jobs. Economic development is closely tied to industrial development; actions taken to address both issues will together begin to increase the economic sustainability of the region. The Municipality has the power and ability to partner with a variety of local agencies to support a stronger local economy.

6.0 Sustainable Development Goals & Actions

Goals and corresponding actions have been identified for each of the sustainability issues described in Section 4 of the report. The relationship between sustainability issues, goals and actions are summarized in tables below. **Priority issues** are in bold. Detailed action plans – which provide additional descriptive information, potential lead and support organizations, resources and indicators – have been included in Appendix A.

6.1 Social

Sustainability Issue	Goal	Action
S-1 Civic Engagement (Priority Issue)	S-1.1 Improve communication between the Municipality and citizens and amongst citizens.	A Identify and implement alternative methods of sharing municipal and community event information. B Make online information more accessible. C Make additional municipal information available online. D Host additional consultation events and continue community meetings held throughout the Municipality. E Develop a Municipal Communication Plan.
	S-1.2 Engage youth in municipal governance and decision-making processes.	A Develop middle/high school course materials on municipal processes. B Form a Youth Advisory Committee
	S-1.3 Establish regular reporting mechanisms for the community.	A Regularly report to the community
S-2 Volunteerism	S-2.1 Engage additional seniors in volunteering.	A Develop a seniors volunteer program.
	S-2.2 Engage the business community in volunteering.	A Develop a volunteer program that connects the business community with local youth
	S-2.3 Engage additional youth and students in volunteering	A Develop a youth volunteer program.
S-3 Comprehensive Long-Term Land Use Planning	S-3.1 Ensure up-to-date land use planning policy documents and by-laws are in place to address community needs.	A Develop a business case to determine the feasibility of hiring a full time planner. B Develop a comprehensive municipal planning strategy. C Carry out annual resident survey.
S-4 Health Care (Priority Issue)	S-4.1 Provide improved access to health care.	A Leverage the success of the Long & Brier Island Community Paramedicine & Nurse Practitioner Project B Promote awareness of the new Healthlink 8-1-1 C Continue the doctor recruitment program D Develop a new health clinic focusing on the collaborative practice model E Support the existing community health plan
		S-5.1 Encourage the provision of a variety of housing types that are affordable and appropriate for a diverse population.
S-5 Housing	S-5.1	
S-6 Collaboration/Communication Between Various Levels of Government	S-6.1 Strengthen regular communication between municipalities in the region and other levels of government.	A Continue the annual progress meeting/roundtable event for municipalities in the region and include provincial and federal representation. B Establish regular roundtable sessions between Village Commissions and the Municipality.

6.2 Cultural

Sustainability Issue		Goal	Action		
C-1	Access to Recreation, Open Space and Coastal Areas	C-1.1	Maintain and enhance a variety of recreation facilities, open spaces and trails for future generations	A	Carry out a Recreation Master Plan
		C-1.2	Enhance and protect public access to shorelines and coastal areas	B	Where possible acquire and develop coastal properties to ensure public access.
C-2	Population Decline (Priority Issue)	C-2.1	Provide additional welcome and support programs for immigrants/new residents that will help increase retention rates.	A	Develop a Welcome (Back) Program
				B	Educate the community on the value of seasonal residents
		C-2.2	Increase the number of recreation opportunities and arts and culture events in the community.	A	Explore the feasibility of organizing an annual 'Old Home Week'
				B	Carry out a recreation needs analysis/ recreation master plan
				C	Create an online community calendar and database of recreation and cultural events.
C-2.3	Increase networking and social opportunities for young professionals/workers	A	Create a Fusion Organization for the Region		
B	Continue holding Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency Tech Socials				
C-3	Diversity Appreciation	C-3.1	Build awareness and understanding of the distinct cultures found in the Municipality.	A	Develop a multi-cultural strategy for the region.
C-4	Protecting Heritage	C-4.1	Recognize and protect the Municipality's heritage	A	Support the projects identified in the Municipality's Heritage Program Report 2009-2011.

6.3 Environmental

Sustainability Issue		Goal	Action	
En-1	Water and Wastewater	En-1.1	Encourage well and septic system maintenance by individual homeowners.	A Develop an educational brochure/program for well and septic system safety and maintenance targeted at individual well and septic owners.
		En-1.2	Ensure that all residents have access to safe, clean drinking water and appropriate wastewater treatment facilities that protect human health and the environment.	A Establish a Municipal, Provincial and Federal working group to explore policy to ensure safe, clean drinking water and appropriate wastewater treatment. B Undertake the construction, upgrade and expansion of necessary Municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.
En-2	Sustainable Energy	En-2.1	Sustainable energy projects happen in a way that maximizes benefits and minimizes negative impacts to industry, residents and the environment	A Investigate opportunities for community energy projects. . B Finalize and enact a Wind Turbine By-law.
		En-2.2	Reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources.	A Create an Incentive Program
En-3	Protection and Enhancement of Marine/ Coastal Areas	En-3.1	Promote sustainable methods in marine/coastal areas.	A Fully explore the option of supporting the Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's campaign to designate part of the region as a National Marine Conservation Area. B Encourage and support the Province to develop a Coastal Development Plan
En-4	Alternative Modes of Transportation	En-4.1	Reduce the number of single-vehicle trips being taken in the region.	A Purchase an additional full size bus and potentially a small, accessible, fuel-efficient bus. B Increase support for transit. C Develop a ride-sharing website. D Conduct a commuter pattern survey
En-5	Climate Change Adaptation	En-5.1	Identify potential impacts of climate change.	A Conduct a storm surge/sea level rise assessment and coastal zone mapping/modeling in partnership with COGS. B Conduct an assessment to understand the effects of climate change on agriculture, forestry and the fisheries.
En-6	Municipal Energy Expenditures	En-6.1	Encourage energy conservation.	A Upgrade or replace the existing municipal administration building. B Develop a Municipal Energy Reduction Strategy.
En-7	Solid Waste	En-7.1	Meet the Provincial goal to reduce solid waste to 300 kg/person/year.	A Create a public garbage drop-off. B Explore the feasibility of a household hazardous waste disposal plant.

6.4 Economic

Economic Sustainability Issue		Goal	Action
Ec-1	Strengthen Fishing Industry	Ec-1.1	Implement practices that will improve fish and other stocks.
		Ec-1.2	Increase local processing of fish products.
Ec-2	Strengthen Agricultural Industry	Ec-2.1	Involve more people in the production of local agricultural products.
		Ec-2.2	Encourage residents to buy local agricultural products.
Ec-3	Strengthen Forestry Industry	Ec-3.1	Increase active forest management by small woodlot owners.
Ec-4	Strengthen Tourism Industry	Ec-4.1	Increase the number of experiential tourism opportunities
		Ec-4.2	Increase tourism marketing initiatives for the Digby area.
Ec-5	Workforce Expansion	Ec-5.1	To increase the size and variety of the workforce.
Ec-6	Cooperation Between Business/Industry and the Community	Ec-6.1	Strengthen the relationship between business/industry and the community.
Ec-7	Industrial Development (Priority Issue)	Ec-7.1	Upgrade Municipal industrial parks
		Ec-7.2	Develop the airport employment area
		Ec-7.3	Ensure continued operation of the Digby ferry
Ec-8	General Economic Development (Priority Issue)	Ec-8.1	Continue to pursue economic development in the region.

7.0 Eligible Projects

A variety of projects are eligible for funding under the MFA. These projects have been divided into two primary categories: environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure projects and capacity building projects. Based on the criteria outlined in the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' document, *ICSP Municipal Funding Agreement*, a number of eligible projects have been identified in the action plans listed in Section 6.0. A listing and brief description of these projects is provided below.

7.1 Environmentally Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure

En-1.2(B) New, upgraded or expanded municipal water systems and wastewater treatment systems.

En-2.1(A) Community energy projects that may be identified as a result of a feasibility study carried out in potential partnership with COGS.

En-4.1(A) Purchase of additional transit bus(es).

En-6.1(A) Upgrades to the municipal administration building.

En-7.1(A) Development of a public garbage drop-off

En-7.1(B) Development of a household hazardous waste depot.

7.2 Capacity Building

S-1.1(E) Develop a Municipal Communications Plan to increase civic engagement in municipal processes and improve communication between the Municipality and its citizens.

S-5.1(A) Housing needs assessment to understand the amount, types and locations of housing required now and in the future.

C-1.1(A) Open space and trails master plan to prioritize investments in the Municipality's trail and park system.

C-2.2(B) Recreation needs analysis to understand gaps in the Municipality's recreation programs and create strategies to improve the fitness and health of residents.

En-2.1(A) Community renewable energy projects analysis to determine where in the Municipality energy projects can be located to minimize negative impacts to residents, communities and the environment.

En-5.1(A) Storm surge/sea level rise assessment to identify and prepare for potential impacts of climate change.

En-5.1(B) Assessment to understand the effects of climate change on agriculture, forestry and the fisheries.

En-6.1(B) Municipal Energy Reduction Strategy to reduce municipal energy demand.

Ec-3.1(A) A regional forestry resource centre, which would help small woodlots manage their forests in a sustainable manner.

8.0 Community Benefits

MFA criteria state that eligible infrastructure projects must provide a range of benefits to the municipality. In addition, they should also be linked to broader sustainable outcomes (cleaner air, cleaner water, reduced greenhouse gas emissions).

This section will explain how each project listed in Section 7.0 will contribute to the sustainable outcomes outlined in the MFA and provide additional benefits to the community.

8.1 Environmentally Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure

En-1.2(B) New, upgraded and expanded municipal water systems and wastewater treatment systems. Benefit: Cleaner Water.

En-2.1(A) Community energy projects that may be identified as a result of a feasibility study carried out in potential partnership with COGS. Benefit: Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

En-4.1(A) Purchase of additional transit bus(es). Benefits: Cleaner Air; Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

En-6.1(A) Upgrades to the municipal administration building. Benefits: Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

En-7.1(A) Development of a public garbage drop-off. Benefits: Cleaner Water.

En-7.1(B) Development of a household hazardous waste depot. Benefits: Cleaner Water.

8.2 Capacity Building

S-1.1(E) Develop a Municipal Communications Plan. Benefits: Improved Communication, Increased Public Participation in Planning and Decision-Making Processes.

S-5.1(A) Housing needs assessment. Benefits: Provision of adequate housing.

C-1.1(A) Open space and trails master plan. Benefits: More Recreation Opportunities; More Accessible Natural Areas; Improved Community Health; New Tourism Destinations.

C-2.2(B) Recreation needs analysis. Benefits: More Recreation Opportunities; Improved Community Health.

En-2.1(A) Community renewable energy projects analysis. Benefits: Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Improved Approval Process.

En-5.1(A) Storm surge/sea level rise assessment. Benefits: Climate Change Mitigation Strategies.

En-5.1(B) Assessment to understand the effects of climate change on agriculture, forestry and the fisheries. Benefits: Climate Change Mitigation Strategies.

En-6.1(B) Municipal Energy Reduction Strategy. Benefits: Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Ec-3.1(A) A regional forestry resource centre. Benefits: Sustainable Forestry Practices; Increased Woodlot Production.

9.0 Partnerships & Collaborations

Establishing ICSP partnerships will be essential for the successful implementation of this plan. The Municipality has a lead role to play in coordinating the delivery of a sustainable community; however, the broad nature of the ICSP and its projects will require commitments from many community organizations, business groups, institutions, individuals, neighbouring municipalities and other levels of government in order for the ICSP to be implemented. Where necessary, the Municipality will pursue partnerships to help meet the social, cultural, environmental and economic goals of the community.

Potential partnerships that have been identified during the Action Planning process include:

- Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency (ADEDA)
- Centre of Geographic Sciences (COGS)
- Conserve Nova Scotia
- Digby Area Learning Association
- Digby Area Recreation Commission
- Digby Area Tourism Association
- Digby County Senior Citizen's Council
- Digby Library Branch
- Eastlink
- Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs
- Kings Transit
- Municipality of Annapolis
- Municipality of Clare
- Nova Scotia Community Access Program (CAP)
- Nova Scotia Department of Education
- Nova Scotia Department of Health
- Nova Scotia Department of Seniors
- Nova Scotia Environment
- South West Health
- Town of Digby
- Tri-County School Board and Individual Local Schools

10.0 Statements of Provincial Interest

Statements of Provincial Interest represent the Province's land use policy, which is intended to protect the Province's interest in community development and land and water resources. They were established under the Municipal Government Act and came into effect on April 1, 1999. Five Statements have been adopted, concerning:

- Drinking Water Supply;
- Flood Risk Areas;
- Agricultural Land;
- Housing; and
- Infrastructure.

The Statements of Provincial Interest are designed to promote sustainable development. Therefore, the overall goals of the Municipality's ICSP are closely aligned with provincial policy. Specifically, several ICSP actions support provincial land-use policy by:

- Promoting the establishment of a regional or municipal working group on water to identify necessary changes to Municipal regulations. This working group has a strong potential to work with the Provincial Environment Department, which is developing a Water Resources Management Strategy.
- Supporting the development of appropriate drinking water infrastructure.
- Encouraging a wider variety of housing, specifically housing for seniors.

Additionally, the ICSP addresses the requirements of cleaner air, cleaner water and reduced greenhouse gases, as outlined in Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' *ICSP Municipal Funding Agreement*, through many projects and initiatives, including:

- Endorsing protection and conservation of marine and coastal areas;
- Recommending policy to encourage sustainable energy development in an environmentally responsible manner;
- Ensure drinking water quality meets Provincial standards;
- Promoting increased transit and alternative transportation modes;
- Supporting environmentally friendly resource harvesting in the fishing, agriculture and forestry sectors.
- Endorsing the improvement and expansion of municipal sewage systems and waste water treatment plants.

11.0 Implementation & Monitoring Plan

11.1 Implementation Strategy

The Municipality recognizes the importance of leadership in ensuring sustainability. Although everyone is responsible for implementing the Community Vision, the Municipality will play a leadership role by guiding its residents and communities towards a sustainable future. The ICSP – its vision, sustainability principles, goals and actions – will direct Municipal decision making and policy development. It is crucial that an appropriate implementation strategy exists to ensure that strong, clear actions are taken to move towards the Community Vision.

Recommendations for Implementation

The following recommendations are made to ensure the successful implementation of the Municipality's ICSP:

- Council shall commit to implementing the Municipality's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and provide support for the Community Vision, Sustainability Principles, Sustainable Development Goals and Action Plans;
- Council and senior Municipal staff shall communicate the Community Vision to residents;
- The Municipality shall adopt a decision making framework to ensure that Municipal actions promote the Community Vision and respect the Sustainability Principles;
- An annual report card shall be prepared to provide details about the implementation of the ICSP and progress towards indicators; and
- The Municipality shall take a leadership role in promoting partnerships between other levels of government, community

groups, institutions, businesses, volunteer agencies, and individuals in order to implement the ICSP.

ICSP Review & Public Consultation Requirements

The Community Vision will guide the Municipality's decision making for several decades; however the actions, partnerships and projects that are required to reach that vision will change as the community changes. For this reason this ICSP should be updated, including community consultation, every five years. One important finding of community consultation was the desire for more communication between citizens and Municipal government – an ICSP review provides an ideal opportunity for Municipal politicians and staff to update residents on progress made towards implementation of the ICSP. Community consultation will also help to ensure that the ICSP is regularly updated to meet the priority needs and desires of residents.

The 5-year ICSP review should consist of the following:

- Review of indicators to determine the Municipality's progress towards achieving goals;
- Update of Issues, Goals and Indicators;
- Update of Action Plans and development of new Action Plans; and
- Update of the Eligible Projects list.

Community consultation for the 5-year ICSP review should be structured as a number of small community meetings which are publicly advertised in the Digby Courier, the Coastline and through community groups and a citizen contact list. These consultation events should be attended by the Warden, Councillors and if necessary Municipal staff.

11.2 Monitoring and Reporting

Sustainability indicators are a tool which can be used to provide a picture of community sustainability. An indicator is something the community can observe to know that progress is being made towards sustainability goals and the Community Vision. For example, an increasing number of youth taking part in public meetings and events would be an excellent indicator that the community is reaching its goal of engaging youth in decision making. Indicators can also show where more work is required to achieve sustainability. They are an important tool in monitoring because they can: determine areas of weakness or imbalance; explain why trends are occurring; and assist in understanding the progress towards meeting specific goals.

Appropriate indicators that accomplish these objectives are an important part of the implementation process. Best practices dictate that appropriate indicators are⁹:

1. Reliable – make sense in changing circumstances;
2. Realistic – can actually be achieved;
3. Sensitive – engage various components of society and respond to their motivations;
4. Focused on the long term – can help to measure progress;
5. Understandable – anyone can see what is expected to be accomplished;
6. Regionally relevant – can be applied in various contexts large or small; and
7. Representative – reflect and respect the diversity of the community.

⁹ Sustainable Measures - <http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/Indicators/index.html>

Indicators have been selected to monitor how the Municipality is progressing toward each of its sustainability goals. These indicators are listed within the Detailed Action Plan found in Appendix A, and in Appendix B, which provides further information on indicators. The indicators were selected by working with the Steering Committee to explore some of the broad goals of the ICSP, such as: improved access to health care; healthy lifestyles; population growth; strengthened relationships; sustainable infrastructure; strong, sustainable primary industries; and a diverse, year round economy. Small groups of 4-5 steering committee members brainstormed potential indicators for these goals. The indicators were then matched to specific actions within the ICSP.

To promote simplicity a smaller number of key indicators have also been selected that demonstrate how the Municipality is moving towards the Community Vision. These are broad indicators, which taken together help measure overall community economic, environmental, cultural and social health. These key indicators are:

Population – one of the most pressing issues facing the Municipality is slow population decline. An increasing population would indicate that there are desirable jobs, a diversifying economy, adequate services and an appealing quality of life.

Unemployment Rate – the unemployment rate is a good indicator of the availability of desirable jobs within the community.

High School Graduation Rates – education levels within the Municipality are lower than provincial or national levels. Increasing high school graduation rates will indicate improving education levels, which are needed to support a diversified, creative economy and a healthy, secure community.

Number of Health Care Professionals Per Capita – quality health care services is a prerequisite for a healthy, happy, sustainable

community. The number of primary health care providers, especially doctors, working in the region is an important indicator of the accessibility of health care in the Municipality.

Number of Businesses Open Year Round – an increase in the number of businesses staying open year round would be an indication of a strong, diversifying economy.

Annual Amount of Solid Waste Per Capita – the amount of solid waste that is sent to landfills is an important environmental issue for Nova Scotia Municipalities. A decrease in the amount of solid waste sent to landfills will indicate a number of important environmental outcomes are occurring, such as increased environmental awareness among residents, better waste diversion opportunities and more sustainable use of resources.

These key indicators, together with indicators in Appendix B and the Detailed Action Plans, combine to give an overall indication of the progress (or lack thereof) being made towards implementing the ICSP, achieving the vision and improving sustainability for the Municipality. Information on indicators should be gathered by the Municipality on a regular basis. Appendix B includes a list of the indicators and an outline for potential information sources for each indicator. Indicator progress information can be included in the annual report card and used as a tool during the comprehensive review process to update the ICSP every five years.

11.3 Decision Making Framework

The Municipality's ICSP is a long term document, meant to guide the community's journey towards sustainability. It is based on a holistic vision that integrates the community's economic, cultural, social and environmental dimensions. As with any long term planning process,

there is a risk that decision makers will make choices based primarily on short term needs or only one sustainability pillar, instead of the integrated approach required to build sustainable communities. A decision making framework has been developed for Council and staff to mitigate that risk by ensuring that decisions support the Community Vision and are consistent with sustainability principles. The framework will assist staff in reviewing proposals and preparing reports for Council. It is also a tool that will help Council to review staff recommendations and assess their impacts according to a number of criteria linked to objectives for social, economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability. It will assist Council in making decisions in a holistic and integrated fashion. In deciding on each proposal, Councillors will be directed to think about the social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of their decision, no matter what the issue.

While it is impossible to anticipate every proposal or report that will be considered by Council, the decision making framework will be a useful and practical tool for Councillors. It is structured as a series of questions that will generate "yes", "no" or "not applicable" answers. The questions are designed so all "yes" responses positively support the Municipality's Community Vision. "No" responses will require some elaboration to determine whether the impact of the proposal is neutral or negative (i.e. harmful). A number of "no" responses for a particular proposal may be balanced by a series of "yes" responses. A proposal, however, which consistently generates a series of negative "no" responses throughout one of the sustainability theme areas should not be approved. Where a proposed policy or project negatively affects all of the criteria for the environment, or the economy, for example, Council should reject it. The decision making framework is shown on the following page.