

# Municipality of East Hants



EAST HANTS

## Annual Report 2023/2024









We respectfully acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki  
and the District of Sipekne'katik, the ancestral and  
unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw people.

East Hants further acknowledges the 50 African  
Nova Scotian communities whose 400-year history  
have contributed to the province's culture, history and  
legacies.

We are all treaty people.







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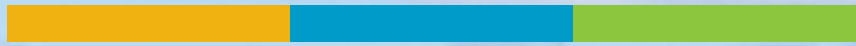
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# Our Municipality







# About East Hants

The Municipality of East Hants is a picturesque region, centrally located on mainland Nova Scotia. It is known for its growing urban center around Elmsdale, its vast rural areas dotted with small communities and a scenic shore. East Hants has three natural regions: the Corridor, Central and Fundy Shore and Uniacke and Rawdon.

As a community, East Hants is welcoming and provides a renowned quality of life where people can enjoy the perfect blend of rural and urban lifestyles. It is home to one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in Atlantic Canada and has all of the amenities needed for day-to-day life. As part of the District of Sipekne'katik, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, the population of East Hants and Sipekne'katik First Nation is over 25,000 with more than 18% growth in the last 20 years according to the 2021 Census.

In recent years, East Hants has experienced remarkable growth across various sectors. The business community has expanded, attracting new investments and fostering innovation. From small businesses to larger entities, East Hants continues to boast economic activity, creating jobs and bringing a diverse mix of industries. The close proximity to Halifax and Truro gives East Hants the advantage of a large workforce within a short commute and provides local businesses with access to highly skilled professionals.

The Municipality owns and operates the East Hants Waste Management Centre, the East Hants Water Utility, the East Hants Aquatic Centre, the East Hants Sportsplex, Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre, Burntcoat Head Park and multiple parks, playgrounds and trail systems.

East Hants offers natural beauty, close knit communities, economic opportunities and a friendly environment. Work, play, raise a family and build a business – do it all in East Hants!

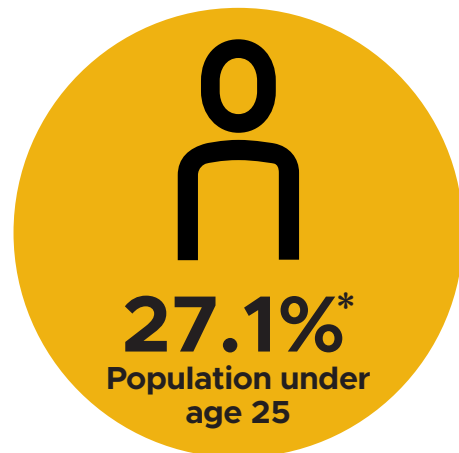
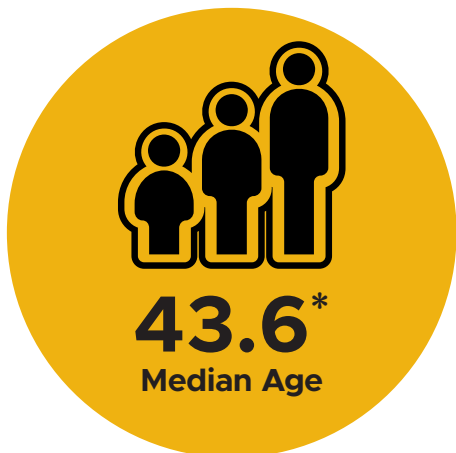






## Our Mission

East Hants cares about people and their quality of life. Through program and service excellence, we are building a strong, thriving community.

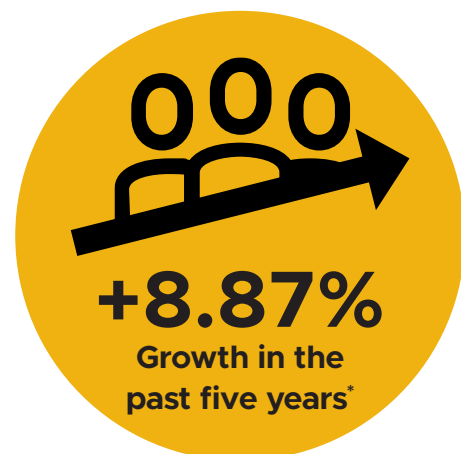






## Our Vision

East Hants is a vibrant, welcoming community that embraces rural and urban living – a place where everyone feels connected.



\*All data from the 2021 Census.



# Message from the Warden

On behalf of East Hants Council, I am proud to share with you the Municipality of East Hants' Annual Report, where we highlight key accomplishments and outline our progress for 2023/2024. We also take time to look back on the challenges we faced as a community in the past year. As Warden of East Hants, I am proud of the resilience shown by all as we work through the constant changes we face in today's world. I am also proud of the work our Council, residents, businesses, community organizations and municipal staff have done as we continue to move forward and shape the future of East Hants.

The 2023/2024 fiscal year (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024) was a year of significant milestones, including improvements to services such as policing, as well as continuing to provide for and manage our growth. Council continues to work towards the goals and objectives in our Strategic Plan as we approach an election year. In 2023, Councillor Wayne Greene became Deputy Warden for the final year of the Council term and I appreciate the support that he provides. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to former Deputy Warden Michael Perry for his leadership and support and to all of my Council colleagues for their hard work and dedication over the past year.

In terms of achievements, Council has made significant progress on a number of fronts. We approved the creation of the Municipal Housing Working Group to help develop a Housing Strategy for East Hants. We were pleased to receive over \$15 million dollars in funding from the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada that will be vital to meeting our needs and objectives moving forward. The provincial funding will support upgrades of two key lift stations and the construction of two sewer force mains in Lantz and Elmsdale to accommodate future growth in those areas. Funding from the Federal Government will help accelerate housing development by way of planning reviews and permitting system improvements across the municipality.



It is important to acknowledge that 2023/2024 was not without its challenges. In July of 2023 our collective sympathy went out to the families in our neighbouring Municipality of West Hants on the loss of four lives in an unprecedented storm and flood event. While we experienced no loss of life in East Hants, the floods significantly impacted many of our businesses, residents and municipal operations. The East Hants Aquatic Centre had major damage to the facility's main electrical and mechanical systems, leaving the facility and splash pad closed for the rest of 2023 and into 2024. Staff have been diligently working to restore the facility and bring services back to the community, including preventative measures to ensure this does not happen again in the future. I would like to commend everyone, including our volunteer fire departments, community members and our staff for their willingness to help neighbours and support those who needed assistance during the storm.

Last, but certainly not least, East Hants Council was pleased to be able to approve a budget for 2024/2025 which saw a one cent reduction to the residential tax rate. As we look back at the progress we have made, we recognize there is still work to be done and remain committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Through investing in essential services, promoting environmental sustainability and fostering good relationships with our residents and businesses, we are dedicated to making sure East Hants is a welcoming and affordable community for everyone!

*Eleanor Roulston*

Eleanor Roulston  
Warden & District 11 Councillor





# Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

I am pleased to present the Municipality of East Hants' 2023/2024 Annual Report. This report outlines the work of the Municipality to deliver programs and services that make our community a great place to live, work and play. Last year, staff implemented new programs and infrastructure improvements to deliver on Council's 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, while continuing to provide high-quality services for our community. This report also includes a detailed report from our Treasurer, to ensure transparency of the Municipality's financial integrity and performance.

Without a doubt this past year has been focused on infrastructure renewal. The long-awaited construction of the Shubenacadie Wastewater Treatment plant is wrapping up, readying the community of Shubenacadie for new growth and development. We have increased our water treatment capacity through the expansion of the Enfield Water Treatment Plant. Work on restoring the East Hants Aquatic Centre after the severe flooding in July 2023 has consumed much of the past year. Subdivisions in Lantz, Elmsdale and Enfield were paved to remove gaps in the road network where gravel roads had been left unpaved over the years.

As our community grows, new infrastructure is also needed. Our Playground Development Strategy continued to see progress, with three new playgrounds installed in 2023/2024. Residents from the northern area of East Hants have two new playgrounds in Walton and Maitland and a new playground was installed on John Murray Drive in Enfield. Our Parks, Open Space and Active Transportation Master Plan continues to evolve. This year we constructed Active Transportation (AT) routes in Elmsdale, took over several AT trails and sidewalks in new developments and acquired land on Charles Drive in Lakelands for playground and sport infrastructure.

Council has given me a mandate to plan for our future. To this end, we have undertaken several planning exercises this year. A Mount Uniacke specific Recreation Study was completed and will inform the future Municipal Recreation Facilities Master Plan. We also finalized our Service Capacity Study for water and wastewater and began the Mount Uniacke and Lantz Secondary Planning Strategies. Another huge accomplishment in 2023/2024 was the updating of our Official Community Plan, which established zoning and land-use regulations in the northern areas of the Municipality. In May 2023, Council also approved the new East Hants Economic Development Plan for 2023-2027.



Council continues to invest in our staff, their development and their future. In 2023/2024, we added resources in development control, buildings, water, wastewater and engineering as well as transportation and sustainability. These investments are critical to ensuring we recruit and retain staff who provide important services to our community. Council has also invested in the safety of our community with a volunteer recruitment video for the East Hants Fire Service and an additional two RCMP officers.

We strive for excellence in all that we do, especially when serving our community. Our staff continue to work on ways to streamline our services, make them more accessible to the broader community and to ensure that every municipal experience is the best it can be. Our values of integrity, respect and fairness are integral in the way we carry out our business.

As I enter my twenty fifth year working for East Hants, I am proud to be leading the organization responsible for looking after one of the best communities in Nova Scotia. I am indebted to our Council, Staff and service partners for delivering on our mandate this past year and for making East Hants an amazing place to live, work, visit and do business.



Kim Ramsay, CPA, CMA,  
Chief Administrative Officer





# Municipal Council 2023/2024



**Warden Eleanor Roulston**  
District 11 - Rawdon-Gore



**Deputy Warden Wayne Greene**  
District 6 - Walton-Noel-Kennetcook



**Sandra Garden-Cole**  
District 1 - Enfield



**Norval Mitchell**  
District 2 - Elmsdale-Belnan



**Eldon Hebb**  
District 3 - Milford-Nine Mile River



**Carl MacPhee**  
District 4 - Shubenacadie



**Keith Rhyno**  
District 5 - Maitland-MacPhees  
Corner



**Walter Tingley**  
District 7 - Lantz-Milford



**Michael Perry**  
District 8 - Mount Uniacke



**Elie Moussa**  
District 9 - South-East Uniacke



**Tom Isenor**  
District 10 - Enfield-Grand Lake

# Municipal Governance

East Hants Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses through six municipal departments and relationships with partners at local, provincial and federal levels. Meetings of Council are open to the public every month and live streamed to the municipal YouTube channel. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Council governs through a policy-based structure, continuously updating and improving bylaws and policies. The 2021-2024 Strategic Plan is the roadmap that guides decision making and provides a balanced approach to achieving long-range goals and ongoing delivery of services to our communities.

This past year, Council welcomed presentations from the following community organizations about the services they provide to East Hants:

- East Hants & Districts Chamber of Commerce
- Clean Foundation - Community Climate Capacity
- Colchester-East Hants Public Library
- Fire Smart Presentation by Kara McCurdy, DNR
- East Hants Arena Association

The following bylaws and policies were amended in 2023/2024:

- Bylaw P-1300 – Blasting Bylaw
- Bylaw F-400 – Tax Exemption Bylaw
- Bylaw P-700 – Heritage Property Bylaw

Council Policy Updates 2023/2024:

- Municipal Grant Program Policy
- General Government Grants Policy
- Community Partnership Fund Policy
- Fire Service Funding Policy
- Municipal Tax Assistance Program Policy
- Council Remuneration & Travel Reimbursement Policy
- Budget Management Policy
- Street Lighting Council Policy
- Special Reserves Policy
- Solid Waste Tipping Fee Policy
- Heritage Incentive Program Policy
- Recreation Access Policy





# Municipal Staff

Municipal staff at East Hants make up six departments that deliver services in: Financial Management, Infrastructure & Operations, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Corporate Services, Planning & Development and the Chief Administrative Office. Staff use the Strategic Plan to implement and prioritize initiatives in the organization's business plan.

As of March 31, 2024, East Hants had 89 full-time equivalent positions. The average age of a municipal employee is 42 years old with 28.5% of the employees being 50 years or older (as of Dec. 31, 2023). The East Hants Aquatic Centre employs approximately 73 casual staff including Customer Service Representatives, Lifeguards, Trainers and Swim Instructors. The seasonal staffing complement for Summer 2023 was 23.5 workers.

The Municipality hosted 21 learning events for staff and partners in 2023/2024 and supported individual job-specific training for skills development. Building off the Customer Service Strategy created in 2022, staff have been working on customer service improvements throughout the organization, including quarterly sessions to discuss strategies for dealing with difficult situations.



# Senior Management Team



**Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer**

**Full Time Staff = 6.5**

**Core Services:** Organizational leadership, legislative support to committees of Council, Council support & special research, human resources, occupational health & safety, communications, policy/procedure development (Council & Administrative), FOIPOP & privacy, issues management.



**Adam Clarkson**

**Director of Corporate Services | Full Time Staff = 13.5**

**Core Services:** Administrative support to volunteer fire departments, procurement & risk management, economic & business development, technology, records & information management, policy & real estate.



**Wade Tattrie**

**Director of Finance | Full Time Staff = 13**

**Core Services:** Financial management, treasury, budget & business planning, tax & water billing/collection, municipal fire levies & bookkeeping service for volunteer fire departments.



**Jesse Hulsman**

**Director of Infrastructure & Operations | Full Time Staff = 26**

**Core Services:** Solid waste management & education, road, sidewalk & streetlight maintenance, engineering services, capital project planning & management, environmental compliance reporting & optimization, water & wastewater management.



**Alana Tapper**

**Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture | Full Time Staff = 16.35**

**Core Services:** Policy development for aquatics, recreation, tourism, culture, parks & trails, recreation & aquatics programs & service delivery, community development & grants administration, tourism & events management, properties & facilities management, custodial services.



**John Woodford**

**Director of Planning & Development | Full Time Staff = 13.65**

**Core Services:** Planning & land use policy, regulation & applications, development control, permitting, fire & building inspection, bylaw enforcement, Geographic Information System services, animal control, emergency measures preparedness planning & response.







# 2021-2024 Strategic Plan Progress





# Key Strategies

The Municipality of East Hants launched the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan during the 2021/2022 fiscal year. It has four key areas of strategic focus each supported by goals and objectives.



## **Sustainable Infrastructure**

Infrastructure represents the foundation of any community. It includes roads, facilities, and systems that keep the community functional and people moving. Our goal is to provide infrastructure that addresses the needs of our growing community.



## **Corporate Excellence**

Success of the Municipality depends on public trust. This relationship with the public is achieved through open, transparent and fair decision-making, effective public policy, responsible financial management, exceptional service delivery and effective communication. Our goal is to provide greater value to the community by improving the way we do business.



### **Strong Community**

A strong community is where people feel a sense of pride, are safe, connected and active. This is achieved through long-range community planning and by supporting those who live, work and visit in East Hants. Our goal is to provide services, programs and facilities through direct service delivery and collaboration with others that allow people and businesses to thrive.



### **Economic Prosperity**

A strong, competitive economy encourages entrepreneurship, stimulates opportunity, creates jobs and enhances the community's attractiveness. Through investment attraction, land inventory management and business support services, East Hants continuously improves the community's business environment and commercial tax base. Our goal is to have vibrant commercial districts that support the current and future needs of our community.



# Sustainable Infrastructure



**Strategic Goal:** Provide infrastructure that addresses the needs of our growing community.

## Objectives:

### **Identify future water sources and related master planning.**

- ▶ The Servicing Capacity Study continued throughout 2022/2023. This study will help the Municipality review the capacity of water and wastewater infrastructure and also identify a list of upgrades and replacements required over the next 25 years

### **Plan for the future use of key municipal land holdings throughout the Municipality.**

- ▶ Purchased 50 acres to support expansion of the Elmsdale Business Park
- ▶ Purchased 90 acres along Grand Lake to support public water infrastructure
- ▶ Council acquired 14 acres of parkland in the Lakelands area for future playground, trail and sport infrastructure
- ▶ Three properties surplus to municipal needs were transferred to local non-profit groups for their use:
  - At the expiry of their lease, the E. H. Horne heritage building in Enfield was transferred to the E. H. Horne Preservation Society for their continued enjoyment of the facility
  - Following a public call for expressions of interest, the Shubenacadie Hall & Grounds building was transferred to the Lighthouse Ministry who had been long-term tenants
  - A small piece of land, once home to the Burntcoat Head Community Hall, was transferred to the Burntcoat Head Community Enhancement Society in July of 2023

### **Establish an Asset Management Program that effectively manages municipal assets and plans for the long-term funding of the infrastructure needs of the community.**

- ▶ Hired an Asset Coordinator to serve as the main Asset Management support staff
- ▶ Held asset management workshops on Lifecycle Management, Levels of Service, Risk Management and Financial Analysis
- ▶ Formed a staff-level Asset Management Committee, with Terms of Reference that outlines roles and responsibilities for asset management across the organization
- ▶ Mapped the inventory of municipally-owned properties and improved attribute information
- ▶ Introduced mobile GIS mapping tools to streamline asset data collection
- ▶ Completed a condition assessment on the East Hants Sportsplex to determine both short and long-term capital needs of the facility

### **Invest in energy initiatives that support the sustainability of our organization and the community we serve.**

- ▶ Continued to work with the Clean Foundation offering the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing program for homeowners to support efficient and/or renewable energy upgrades

**Plan for and create transportation infrastructure that improves the connectivity and accessibility of roads, tourism routes, multi-use trails and active transportation networks.**

- ▶ Paving of municipal gap roads connecting subdivisions in Elmsdale, Enfield and Lantz was completed to improve connectivity between communities
- ▶ Council acquired Lot 09-1 Lacy Anne Avenue, Enfield, to enable potential road and/or trail connectivity in the future
- ▶ Council approved extending the streetlighting on roads (routes and trunks) and subdivision streets in the East Uniacke Growth Management Area. This is a multi-year project, adding 200+ lights to the community at a cost of over \$400,000
- ▶ Began a Traffic Calming pilot project and installed speed tables on Boyd Avenue and White Estates in Enfield to assess for future use
- ▶ By approving a Development Agreement for a dental office and coffee shop drive-thru in Elmsdale, Council also secured the end-point connection for an Active Transportation trail that will connect the new developments in Lantz to the sidewalk network in Elmsdale
- ▶ Construction of the Active Transportation project began with three sections of multi-purpose pathways installed on Highway 214 in Elmsdale

**Build infrastructure that meets new regulatory requirements and positions the Municipality to provide accessible and sustainable services while accommodating growth.**

- ▶ Progress was made on the Lantz Water Tower Rehabilitation Project to extend the lifespan of this key piece of infrastructure
- ▶ Construction continued on the Shubenacadie Wastewater Treatment Plant with an opening planned for summer 2024
- ▶ A third tank was added to the Enfield Water Treatment Plant to increase servicing capacity for the growing community. This additional tank has been planned for since the plant was upgraded in 2007





# Corporate Excellence



**Strategic Goal:** Provide greater value to the community by improving the way we do business.

## Objectives:

**Enhance the financial framework that continues to support the long-term sustainability of the Municipality.**

- ▶ Council approved changes to the Budget Management Policy, which included direction on setting the annual budget for the Deed Transfer Tax and established a transfer of 1.5% of revenue to a Municipal Buildings and Property Reserve
- ▶ Council established Growth Management Grants for 2024/2025 for areas experiencing significant growth and related increases in infrastructure costs
- ▶ Council reduced the rural fire department levies by 1¢ for 2024/2025, replacing the funds with Growth Management Grants to those departments
- ▶ Solid Waste staff focused on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to ensure Council is prepared to participate in the provincial program and related cost savings when established

**Prepare for succession of retiring employees while maintaining a high level of uninterrupted service for internal and external customers.**

- ▶ Information Services continued meeting with employees who are eligible to retire to document processes and procedures to ensure business continuity and smooth transitions

**Proactively manage organizational risk through tools and education of employees and Council.**

- ▶ Staff completed R130 Risk Financing, as part of the Insurance Institute of Canada Risk Management Certificate program
- ▶ "Contract 101" and "Understanding Construction Liens" seminars were offered to staff, in partnership with the municipality's legal counsel
- ▶ Continued to provide a procurement overview to new employees with purchasing or contract responsibilities
- ▶ Continued to review contract terms, conditions and insurance programs to validate coverage and identify possible risks
- ▶ Participated in the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities committee working on the Municipal Insurance Program

**Recruit, develop and retain a diverse, high performing workforce.**

- ▶ An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee was established to develop goals and objectives for the organization
- ▶ Incorporated new technology to make improvements in hourly staff scheduling, and tracking individual data such as skills and training
- ▶ Focused effort on succession planning and professional development in order to transition roles where staff may be retiring in the near term and within the next 10 years, and onboard new staff
- ▶ Focused on organizing staff events to provide opportunities for building internal relationships

## Improve the accessibility of municipal information, facilities, programs and services.

- ▶ Installed three playgrounds with accessible components and a fully accessible spinner at the Shubenacadie River Park playground
- ▶ Worked towards meeting the goals of the employment section of the Municipal Accessibility Plan. This included training sessions in accessibility and digital accessibility for staff, reviewing recruitment processes and establishing an accommodation fund
- ▶ Requirement for accessible parking, where it is not required under the Building Code, was added into the 2023 Land use Bylaw update
- ▶ Updated the municipal website to meet modern web accessibility standards, including colour contrast for readability, clear and consistent formatting for screen readers, alt-text image descriptions and improved navigation

## Leverage the Municipality's culture of efficiency, effectiveness and continuous improvement to identify opportunities to improve service delivery.

- ▶ A formal financial training program was developed for new municipal staff that have financial responsibilities in their role
- ▶ Procedures and policies were introduced to improve the Visa Purchasing Card Program, enabling staff to purchase items and services necessary for the organization in an effective way
- ▶ Solid Waste staff worked diligently to understand the financial and operational impact of forthcoming regulations for Construction & Demolition debris coming into our landfill
- ▶ Council added a new loader to the inventory of heavy equipment at the Waste Management Centre in order to keep up with growth at the facility

## Build stronger relationships between East Hants and Sipekne'katik.

- ▶ Council and staff collaborated with Indigenous artist, Quentin Syliboy and will receive four murals depicting Mi'kmaq stories for display in municipal facilities. This is funded through the Canada Council for the Arts





# Strong Community



**Strategic Goal:** Provide services, programs and facilities, through direct service delivery and collaboration with others, that allow people and businesses to thrive.

## Objectives:

**Support tourism, heritage, sport, social recreation and the arts, enriching the quality of life for residents and attracting visitors.**

- ▶ East Hants added pickleball, ball hockey and art-based programming to the recreational programs, promoting wellness to the entire community
- ▶ Burntcoat Head Park and Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre attracted 50,000 visitors and created seasonal employment for local residents
- ▶ Special tour offerings were added at Burntcoat Head Park to include sunset and fall themed guided tours
- ▶ Provided grants to non-profit groups to build and enhance recreation infrastructure (Page 84-92)
- ▶ Built new playgrounds in Enfield, Walton and Maitland

**Long-term strategic planning for parks, recreation and related facility needs of the community.**

- ▶ A Recreation Study specifically for Mount Uniacke was completed. It will inform the future Municipal Recreation Facilities Master Plan planned for 2024/2025

**Provide effective and efficient emergency management and support to the East Hants Fire Service.**

- ▶ A volunteer firefighter recruitment video was produced to highlight the importance of the volunteer fire service in our community and to encourage new members to join
- ▶ Council provided funding for a regional fire training facility in Noel
- ▶ The Municipality updated the Fire Service Funding policy to enable support for training and contracted risk management services to the fire service

**Facilitate and advocate for the creation of community infrastructure and opportunities/services that lead to a healthy, active and engaged community for all.**

- ▶ East Hants received a \$38,000 Provincial Recreation Facility Development grant and \$13,000 in ACCESS-Ability Grant Program funding for the Walton, Maitland and Enfield playgrounds

**Support and deliver programs that enhance the pride of place felt by members of our community.**

- ▶ The Municipality hosted free community events including the East Hants Volunteer Awards, Explore Your Own Backyard at Burntcoat Head Park, Free Holiday Skate at the East Hants Sportsplex and Winter Fun Day in Mount Uniacke to showcase community assets and bring residents together
- ▶ Held a public community photo contest for residents to feature their favourite views and places within East Hants, recognizing talent within our communities

**Ensure the East Hants official community plan is effective in managing changes in the community, reducing land use conflict and protecting both natural resources and community character.**

- ▶ Council approved amendments to the Heritage Incentive Program Policy to increase the amount of money available to heritage property owners and to include commercial properties



**Ensure policing model accommodates future growth and community needs.**

- ▶ Council approved an increase of 11.3% in RCMP services for 2023/2024. This included an annual per officer increase of 2.5% and the addition of two officers starting in April 2023
- ▶ Council's Police Advisory Committee met four times in 2023/2024



**Increase inclusion and access to the services provided to the community.**

- ▶ Installed a fully accessible spinner at the Shubenacadie River Park
- ▶ Grew the number of residents participating in the Municipal Tax Assistance Program by 18%

**Strengthen community connections between the Mi'kmaq and East Hants communities.**

- ▶ Council and staff recognized the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and supported the Freedom March held in Shubenacadie on National Indigenous People Day
- ▶ The Survivors' Flag was raised for the month of October in honour of Residential School survivors
- ▶ Offered Indigenous-led art classes through East Hants recreation programming
- ▶ Indigenous organization Obsidian Studios led art sessions as part of the free Explore Your Own Backyard community event at Burntcoat Head Park





# Economic Prosperity



**Strategic Goal:** Create a strong commercial and residential tax assessment base that supports the economic well-being of the community.

## Objectives:

### **Create a 2050 vision for East Hants.**

- ▶ Official Community Plans was updated in 2023/2024. This plan lays the framework for how the community will grow over the next 20 years
- ▶ Service Capacity study was completed, mapping out the short and long term capital projects for water and wastewater systems
- ▶ Work on two Secondary Planning Strategies began in 2023/2024, one for Mount Uniacke and one for Lantz. These Secondary Planning Strategies will help identify where and how the municipality could continue to accommodate new growth in the decades to come

### **Invest in transit that supports our community's workforce, accessibility and environmental stewardship.**

- ▶ Economic and Business Development (EBD) secured funding to complete the Transit Business Plan update for 2024/2025
- ▶ East Hants sat on the Municipal Advisory Group for the Joint Regional Transportation Agency as they set out to develop a regional transportation plan for delivery in Fall 2024

### **Plan for and develop future industrial and business park land.**

- ▶ East Hants acquired additional lands for the Elmsdale Business Park in 2023/2024. The Phase 7 design project is planned for the 2024/2025 fiscal year

### **Attract and retain business investment.**

- ▶ EBD worked with 38 companies interested in locating in East Hants and successfully attracted eight. This will contribute more than an estimated \$28 million of capital investment through the purchase of land and the construction or renovation of buildings
- ▶ Through the Business Help Desk, EBD received 77 requests for service from local businesses on a variety of issues and opportunities
- ▶ 12 online marketing campaigns contributed to over 13,000 visitors to the business development website
- ▶ In May 2023, Council approved a new East Hants Economic Development Plan for 2023-2027. This Plan outlines a four-year economic development plan that will serve as a foundation and guide for future economic planning for East Hants
- ▶ Developed and produced the East Hants Community Welcome Guide as a resource for newcomers to the community

### Attract and retain business investment (continued).

- ▶ EBD worked with Atlas Structural Systems to help them explore, evaluate and select a location for their new facility in East Hants. The Uniacke Business Park was selected for its prime location. The 90,000-square-foot facility on Alicia Scott Avenue has been under construction since January 2023 and is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2025.
- ▶ Hosted the East Hants Business Breakfast in partnership with East Hants Districts and Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Hosted three educational workshops for the business community with over 50 businesses participating. Topics included Employee Compensation, Canada Revenue Agency Small Business Taxes and Tourism Business Networking

### Ensure the East Hants Official Community Plan is effective in managing the commercial and residential growth of the community.

- ▶ In 2023, Council approved new land use policies and regulations for the rural north of the Municipality. This area previously had limited zoning regulations. The new land use zoning will help to reduce future potential land use conflicts, for example, by setting minimum setback requirements for dwellings from existing intensive livestock operations and by considering potentially obnoxious commercial developments by Development Agreement only
- ▶ A number of developments aligned with the Community Plan goals were approved in 2023/2024, including:
  - A mixed-use Walkable Comprehensive Development District in Milford
  - A new dental office with a drive-thru coffee shop in Elmsdale to expand an existing dental clinic
  - Land rezoning approval to enable an existing Automotive shop to expand in Mount Uniacke









# Municipal Operations





# Infrastructure & Operations

## Water & Wastewater

The East Hants Water Utility services customers in the Regional System (Lantz, Elmsdale and Enfield) and Shubenacadie. The Municipality also operates three wastewater treatment plants, serving the communities of Shubenacadie, Milford, Lantz, Elmsdale and Enfield.

2023/2024 was another successful year for the Regional & Shubenacadie Lead & Copper Sampling Program. 20 homes were sampled from the Regional Water System and 10 from Shubenacadie. Homeowners were given a water sample testing kit and instructions. All 30 samples were below the maximum acceptable concentration amounts for lead and copper, as outlined by Health Canada for drinking water.



1.3 billion litres of drinking water produced



2.7 billion litres of wastewater treated

## Waste Management Centre

The Waste Management Centre (WMC) is open six days a week and welcomed over 12,800 residential vehicles in 2023/2024 (up from 11,000 in 2022/2023) to dispose of garbage, recycling and organics.

The WMC managed 1,975 tonnes of organics this year. The majority of the material comes from our curbside green cart program. The material was then transported from the WMC to the GFL Guysborough composting facility.

Recycling is collected curbside and transferred from the WMC by 53' transport trailers to the Municipality of Colchester's processing facility in Kemptown. This year over 1,035 tonnes were managed alongside 371 tonnes of recycled metal, which is sold to help offset operational costs.

Similar to recycling, our waste is collected curbside and taken to the WMC where it is transported to the West Hants 2nd generation landfill owned/operated by GFL. Only construction and demolition debris is permitted to be disposed of at the WMC, of which we managed 3,839 tonnes in 2023/24.



1,900+ thousand tonnes of organics



1,000+ thousand tonnes of recycling



3,800+ thousand tonnes of construction debris

# Solid Waste Program

East Hants continues to be a leader in waste diversion. Each year, the Solid Waste team sends out educational material on sorting waste and curbside collection. When communities come together to recycle and compost materials, everyone benefits.

East Hants solid waste held several community events this year, including our popular Household Hazardous Waste and Paper Shred Events and our annual compost giveaway.

East Hants once again partnered with Community Offering Assistance Together (C.O.A.T) to do a Winter Warmer coat and snow suit donation campaign, which saw hundreds of items donated and helped over a thousand individuals.

The municipality cleaned up 30 illegal dumpsites found on provincial, residential and commercial properties throughout East Hants, clearing primarily household garbage and construction debris.



## Exit Ramp Clean-Ups

East Hants partnered with local community groups to clean up nearly two tonnes (1,700 kilograms) of waste from around six highway interchanges in East Hants. This initiative served to keep our highways clean and resulted in \$6,000 flowing to these local groups.

## Touch-a-Truck with HERH

In March 2024, East Hants staff and collection contractors held a Touch-a-Truck education event with over 20 learning centre students at Hants East Rural High. Students learned about the curbside collection process and got to see up-close demonstrations of the trucks in action.





# Planning & Development

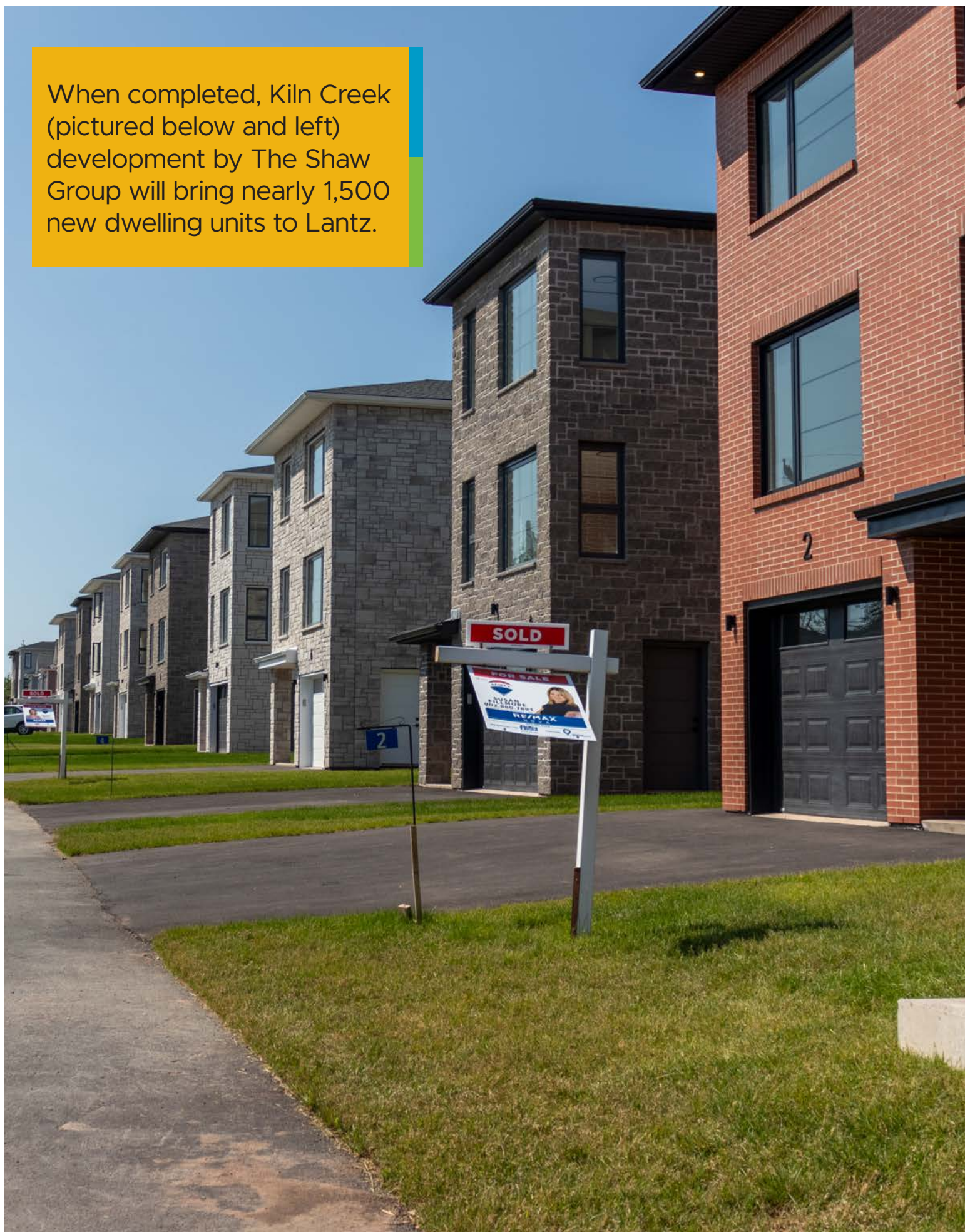
East Hants has an Official Community Plan that directs how the community grows and develops over time. In July 2023, we completed an update to our Community Plan which resulted in the entire municipality having comprehensive zoning and land use planning.

- ▶ 9 planning applications were reviewed by Council this year and 8 were approved, including:
  - A development by FH Development Group for 1,500 dwelling units in Lantz
  - Commercial land and open space in Milford
  - A proposal for a new dental office and drive-thru coffee shop in Elmsdale
- ▶ 9 planning projects were completed for Council including a new Blasting Bylaw, a review of the Heritage Property Bylaw and the creation of a Socio-Demographic Study
- ▶ 110 final plans of subdivisions were approved, creating 115 new lots
- ▶ 171 civic addresses were issued as part of the building permit process for new development, vacant or existing lots with secondary units
- ▶ 13 new road listings (1 new municipal, 3 new municipal extensions, 2 new private roads, 3 extensions of private roads and 4 private named driveways)





When completed, Kiln Creek (pictured below and left) development by The Shaw Group will bring nearly 1,500 new dwelling units to Lantz.





# Parks, Recreation & Culture

## Open Space

As subdivisions are created, developers have a responsibility to support and create local open spaces. The following transfers were made to the Municipality in 2023/2024:

- ▶ 2.9 acres of Open Space lands in the Kiln Creek Development in Lantz that will be used for a future park development
- ▶ 14.3 acres of Open Space lands in Lakelands, Mount Uniacke, that will be used to build playground and sport related infrastructure
- ▶ A walkway was constructed between Glenn Drive and Maple Ridge School property in Lantz as part of the Kiln Creek development's open space contribution
- ▶ Other developments, where land or amenities are not required, contributed \$120,000 to the Municipality. These funds will be used in the local area for recreation infrastructure

## Parks

The Municipality maintains an inventory of parks each year that includes 10 playground parks, 2 skate parks, 5 water access points, 40 acres of park land and 5,000 meters of walkways and trails. Over 500 meters of additional walkways were turned over to or developed by the Municipality in 2023/2024.



### Flood Impact

Following the July 2023 rain storms there was significant damage requiring retrieval and repair of the river park docks, gravel walkways and park driveways throughout the Municipality.

Pictured left: the E-Z Launch Dock typically located in Wickwire Park floats down the Shubenacadie River following the record-high rainfall.







# Recreation

During the 2023/2024 season, East Hants Recreation aimed to improve community life with a range of programs promoting active living. The season was a success with innovative activities that residents loved.

Summer Day Camps had an increase of participation from the previous year with over 400 registrants. A highlight was the two week Summer Swim Lesson Day Camp, where kids had 30-minute swim lessons alongside other regular camp activities. March Break had popular art and drama camps, babysitting courses and free skating at the East Hants Sportsplex.

Playboxes were added at Shubenacadie River Park and Logan Drive playground in Lantz, giving local kids more outdoor play options.

Arts and Craft Programs for youth and adults like Crochet, Intro to Drama and Indigenous-led Art were popular, encouraging creativity and cultural appreciation. The brand-new Seniors Dance For Health program taught gentle dances to improve mobility and well-being.

We also held a number of successful and well-attended community events. Skating Into Winter at the East Hants Sportsplex was a hit, bringing everyone together for skating and fun as winter began. Winter Fun Day in Mount Uniacke brought that community together for a day of outdoor fun. The Cultural Canvas paint night led by Obsidan Studios for Truth & Reconciliation Day promoted understanding and unity through art and discussions.



## Aquatic Centre Flood Impact & Closure

During an unprecedented rain event in July 2023, the East Hants Aquatic Centre was overwhelmed by flood waters. This caused major damage to the facility's main electrical and mechanical systems, including HVAC equipment, fire suppression systems, specialized pool equipment and millwork. The focus of staff and Council has been on reinstating the facility, as well as making the necessary adjustments to ensure this does not happen again. This has been a monumental task that has taken the better part of a year to complete. The anticipated re-open date is mid-July 2024. Many thanks go out to our contractors and staff who have worked so diligently through long lead times and unexpected challenges to bring our beloved Aquatic Centre back on-line.





# Community Development

Our work with community groups continues to grow as East Hants is committed to helping local volunteer groups reach their fullest potential. We help groups with finding volunteers, promoting volunteer opportunities and retaining volunteers. Some highlights of the ways we supported groups in their development in 2023/2024 include the following:

- ▶ Council started a new grant program for nonprofit insurance, helping 22 organizations with up to \$1,500 each in their first year to cover insurance costs
- ▶ Every quarter, we sent out community development e-newsletters to volunteers and local organizations. These newsletters were packed with information, resources, and opportunities to support their initiatives
- ▶ We hosted two food safety courses for volunteers from various community organizations, with a total of 45 participants across both events
- ▶ We provided assistance to more than 25 community groups by helping them with funding applications, making valuable community connections and offering guidance on bylaws and governance



## Volunteer Networking Events

Two Volunteer Networking Events for nonprofit groups were held in different locations across East Hants to serve volunteers from different communities - the first in May in Milford, with more than 40 participants and several special guests and the second in November in Rawdon, with 15 volunteers in attendance.

## Hands-on Help

Our Community Development Coordinator is always happy to connect with groups to help them reach their goals. From one-on-one phone calls to attending a board meeting, community groups can count East Hants to meet them where they are to help get them to where they want to be!





## Volunteer Awards

The East Hants Volunteer Awards Dinner took place on April 25, 2023, at the Uniacke Legion. Eleven volunteers were recognized, seven Volunteer Fire Fighters received long service medals for 30+ years of service and the 2023 Model Volunteer of the Year was announced.

2023 Volunteer Awards Recipients (pictured back row to front row, left to right): Dallas Urquhart (Long Service Fire Fighter), Micahel Norris, Darrell Hiltz (Long Service Fire Fighter), Ferry Patterson, Cassandra McCormick, Melissa Boutette, Troy MacArthur, Kyle Andrews, Doug Taylor, Andy George and Josie Thompson. Unpictured recipient: Art Burton. Long Service Fire Fighters listed on Page 46.



### Model Volunteer of the Year

The Model Volunteer Award is presented to an individual who exemplifies extraordinary caring and commitment through volunteering their time and expertise to help make their community a better place in which to live.

The 2023 recipient was Doug Taylor, for his 30+ years of involvement with many sports organizations including East Hants Minor Hockey, East Hants Tennis Club and the growing Pickleball community. From coaching to bookkeeping, Doug's skills and dedication have helped keep his community active and thriving!



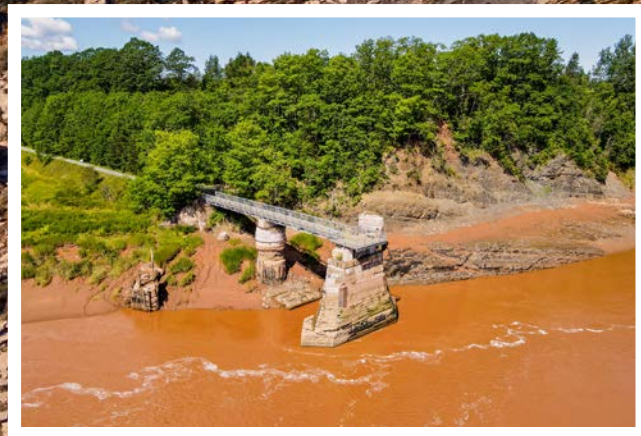
# Tourism

East Hants remains committed to supporting the tourism industry by funding operators of municipally-owned assets and non-profit tourism operators. Tourism helps create jobs for our residents, attracts significant spending from outside the Municipality and promotes pride of place.

Grant funding directly assists in the operation of sites such as the Walton Lighthouse, Gallery 215, Beyond the Wharf Artisans, the Lower Selma Museum, the Shubenacadie Tinsmith Museum and others.

Burntcoat Head Park and Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre are both owned and operated by the Municipality. These sites combined welcomed nearly 50,000 visitors in the 2023 season (49,339 visitors mid-May to mid-October).

East Hants continues to see success at our municipally-owned tourism sites with increased cruise ship excursion traffic and bus tours. This stream of revenue generates income to help offset the operation of our tourism sites and exposes both Burntcoat Head Park and the Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre to international markets of travelers.



Background: Walton Lighthouse  
Above: Dawson Dowell Park  
Right: Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre











### **Growing our tourism industry through partnerships and funding**

In 2023, the Municipality of East Hants benefitted from partnerships with the Provincial and Federal governments to boost tourism in the area, including:

- ▶ East Hants took part in the Compelling Tourism Communities Initiative, where the Province provided advertising for the Noel Shore area to audiences across the Maritimes. These digital advertisements for East Hants were viewed over 6-million times across platforms including Google, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram
- ▶ Nova Scotia Tourism provided opportunities for travel media to visit sites such as Burntcoat Head Park throughout the season. These tours result in exposure to international travel agencies and influential online travel content creators
- ▶ Funding from the Habitat Stewardship Program through the Department of Fisheries & Oceans resulted in over \$19,000 to help protect Burntcoat Head habitat of the Species-At-Risk, the Atlantic Mud-Piddock, with a focus on eco-tourism and visitor education
- ▶ Nova Scotia Tourism's Voice of the Visitor research program allowed East Hants to participate in surveys with past visitors to Nova Scotia to learn about travel patterns, preferences and knowledge about East Hants/the Bay of Fundy. This data will guide future marketing and visitor attractions efforts
- ▶ The Municipality receives annual funding from the Province to operate a Community Visitor Information Centre at the Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre. This funding allows East Hants to promote travel throughout the area and keeps visitors in East Hants for longer periods of time



# Public Safety





# Emergency Management Operations

Emergency Management Operations (EMO) is overseen by the EMO Planning Committee. The committee is made up of representatives from the Municipality, Red Cross, East Hants Fire Service, RCMP, Community Services, Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education (CCRCE), Nova Scotia Public Works, East Hants Ground Search & Rescue (GSAR), Natural Resources & Renewables and EMO Nova Scotia.

Training municipal staff to use the Incident Command System (ICS) continues to remain vital in East Hants' ability to respond to an emergency when needed. This includes the use of Alert Ready, a mass notification system, which can now be utilized by municipalities during an emergency.

In 2023/2024, East Hants experienced a flooding event that caused severe damage to many roads and properties in the municipality. After events such as this, after action reports are completed that address lessons learned (what worked well, what can be improved) and new processes are developed that will help prepare for future events.

## Animal Control

- ▶ 455 dog tags issued (down from 615 previous year, 208 tags sold by third party vendors)
- ▶ 2 kennel licenses issued
- ▶ 11% of East Hants dogs are registered

The SPCA held the 2023/2024 contract for Dog Control Services:

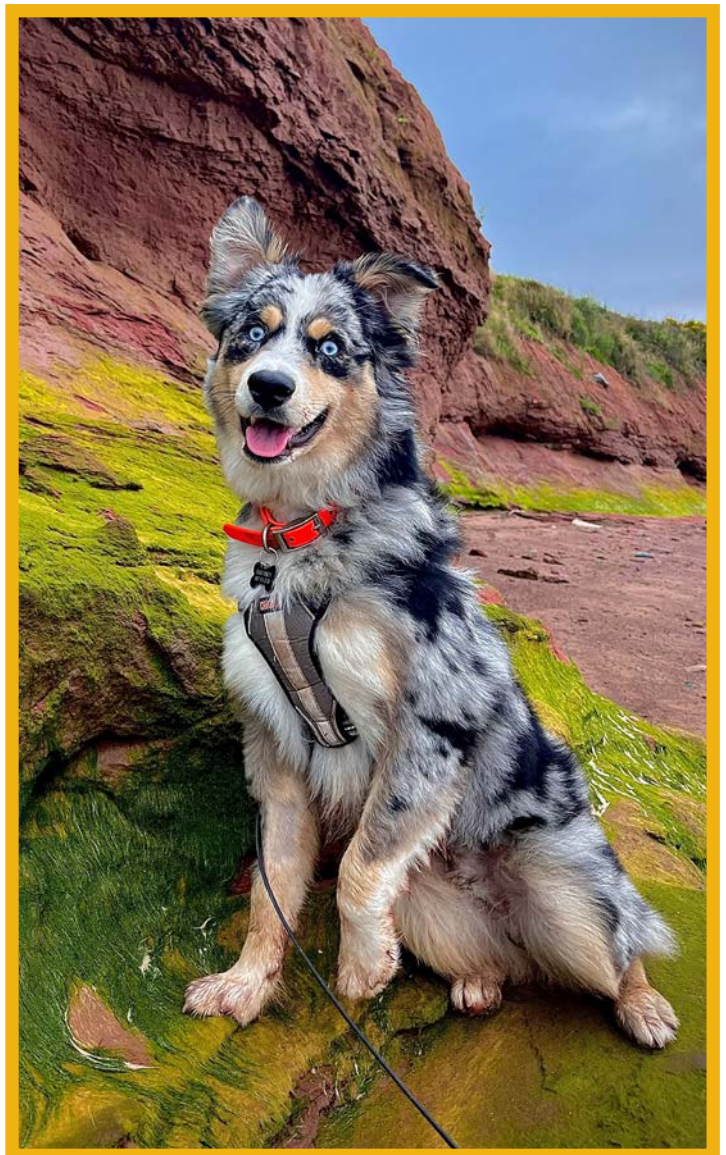
- ▶ 34 complaints investigated by the SPCA
- ▶ 26 online complaints received

## Building & Fire Inspection

- ▶ 338 Building Permits issued, totaling \$116 million in estimated construction value
- ▶ 1,569 Building Inspections completed
- ▶ 318 new dwelling units created
- ▶ 296 Fire Inspections

## Bylaw Enforcement

- ▶ 107 complaints investigated
- ▶ 91 cases closed
- ▶ 16 cases remain active





# East Hants Fire Service

Residents of East Hants receive fire and emergency response service from 13 mutual aid volunteer fire departments and one volunteer department in Brooklyn. These departments responded to approximately 2,200 calls in 2023/2024. Council supports the 13 departments with risk management through a dedicated advisor.



The East Hants Fire Service is an independently registered association that works in collaboration with the Municipality; the fire departments are not directly part of Municipal operations. The Municipality provides independent bookkeeping services to 11 of the 13 departments.

In addition to the operating guidelines, all volunteer fire departments are required to meet annual registration requirements with East Hants and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. They must adhere to the Municipal Financial Guidelines for Volunteer Fire Departments.

Council allocated \$15,000 to produce a Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment video in 2023/2024 in partnership with the East Hants Fire Service, consisting of a 90-second video and three concise 30-second promotional clips. These videos were shared by departments on social media to engage potential volunteers. Council also allocated \$225,000 to the East Hants Fire Service for establishing a regional fire training facility in Noel. Updates were also made to the Fire Service funding policy, broadening the scope of dedicated training funds available to enhance fire service operations.

## Fire Fighter Long Service Awards

Volunteer fire departments may nominate a fire services member for a Canadian Volunteer Fire Service Association Municipal Long Service Award medal for 30 years of service and additional long-service bars for 35, 40 and 45 years of service. Thank you to all recipients for your service and all you do for our communities!

### 2023 Recipients:

#### 30 Years

Dan Gavel, Walton Shore Volunteer Fire Department  
Angus Orman, Enfield Volunteer Fire Department  
Dwayne Spencer, Shubenacadie Fire & Emergency Services  
Dallas Urquhart, Enfield & Milford Volunteer Fire Department

#### 35 Years

Glen Paul, Lantz Volunteer Fire Department

#### 40 Years

Darrell Hiltz, Uniacke & District Volunteer Fire Department

#### 45 Years

Raymond Ross, Walton Shore Volunteer Fire Department



Dallas Urquhart (above) and Darrell Hiltz (below) receive their Long Service Awards from then-Deputy Warden Perry at the Volunteer Awards ceremony in Mount Uniacke





## Fire Services Grants

Each year, the Municipality provides financial support to the 13 fire departments who provide service within our boundaries. The primary source of funding is operating levies charged through the property tax bill. For more urban departments, these range from \$0.14 (0.134 Uniacke) to \$0.17 per \$100 of assessment. For rural departments that have significantly less assessment to draw from, the rates are \$0.22 per \$100 of assessment, with the exception of Rawdon Fire with the rate of \$0.23/\$100 to fund much-needed infrastructure and equipment. Through the Fire Department Funding Policy, Council pays operating grants to the rural departments. In 2023/2024, a total of \$66,894 in annual operating grants were awarded to the six rural fire departments of Maitland, Noel, Walton, Gore, Kennetcook and Rawdon. Funding for fiscal 2023/2024 is summarized below:

Fire Department	Fire Levy Collected & Disbursed	Annual Operating Grant/Support	Total
Enfield	\$746,114	\$-	\$ 746,114
Elmsdale	515,263	-	515,263
Lantz	328,247	-	328,247
Milford	179,658	-	179,658
Shubenacadie	261,244	-	261,244
Maitland	128,132	11,149	139,281
Noel	141,955	11,149	153,104
Walton	44,976	11,149	56,125
Gore	99,809	11,149	110,958
Kennetcook	116,164	11,149	127,313
Nine Mile River	213,117	-	213,117
Rawdon	170,074	11,149	181,223
Mount Uniacke	675,622	-	675,622
Brooklyn	73,853	-	73,853
Fire Service Risk Management	-	15,643	15,643
Training & Education	-	4,944	4,944
Training Facility in Noel	-	177,218	177,218
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,694,228</b>	<b>\$264,699</b>	<b>\$3,958,927</b>



# Message from the East Hants District RCMP

As we reflect upon the past year, we want to take a moment to acknowledge the continued collective efforts made in ensuring the safety and well-being of our Municipality. This year, the East Hants District RCMP calls for service were up 16% over the previous year for the same time span, logging 6,001 calls for service. This is inclusive of proactive policing activities, statutory investigations, school and community presentations, traffic duties, collision investigation, preservation of peace and protection of property. This increase is to be expected of an area that is increasing in population density and is of close proximity to an urban centre, Halifax. The East Hants District RCMP remains committed to promoting public safety while fostering trust and working cooperatively with the municipal government, partners in public safety, community groups, businesses and of course, our residents.



Over the past year, our policing efforts in East Hants have been guided by the principles of public safety and shaped through engagement, transparency and collaboration. We firmly believe that building strong relationships with our community is fundamental to effective policing. The East Hants members are committed to this and strive to be more accessible and visible in the community, not only for calls for service, but when there isn't a crisis needed to be attended to such as community events and youth sporting events. We have a number of police officers who volunteer their time outside of policing to various community groups and youth sporting teams.



There are also some more formalized community engagement activities such as municipal governance meetings, East Hants community meetings and partnerships with local organizations. Through interactions with you, we have worked diligently to ensure that our residents' voices are heard. We understand the importance of listening and responding to your concerns and we remain committed to implementing strategies that address the specific needs of our community. This is known as grass roots policing and something I want to utilize more from our policing tool box.

With regard to the RCMP provincially, in 2023, the Nova Scotia RCMP welcomed the results of the Mass Casualty Commission's extensive inquiry into the April 2020 mass casualty, hired a record number of experienced police officers, greeted new cadets, and began talking in earnest with African Nova Scotians and people of African descent about addressing the harm caused by our historic use of street checks.

Much of what we do involves working with others, whether they're survivors, victims, witnesses, police partners, community members or provincial agencies. It's this emphasis on partnership that allows us to do our best work.

Annual Policing Costs	Amount
RCMP Officer Costs	\$5,037,509
RCMP DNA Case Expenses	19,787
RCMP Prosecution Expenses	8,700
RCMP Shared Services	290,007
RCMP Station (net of rent) Rawdon/Mt Uniacke	33,790
Total	\$5,389,794

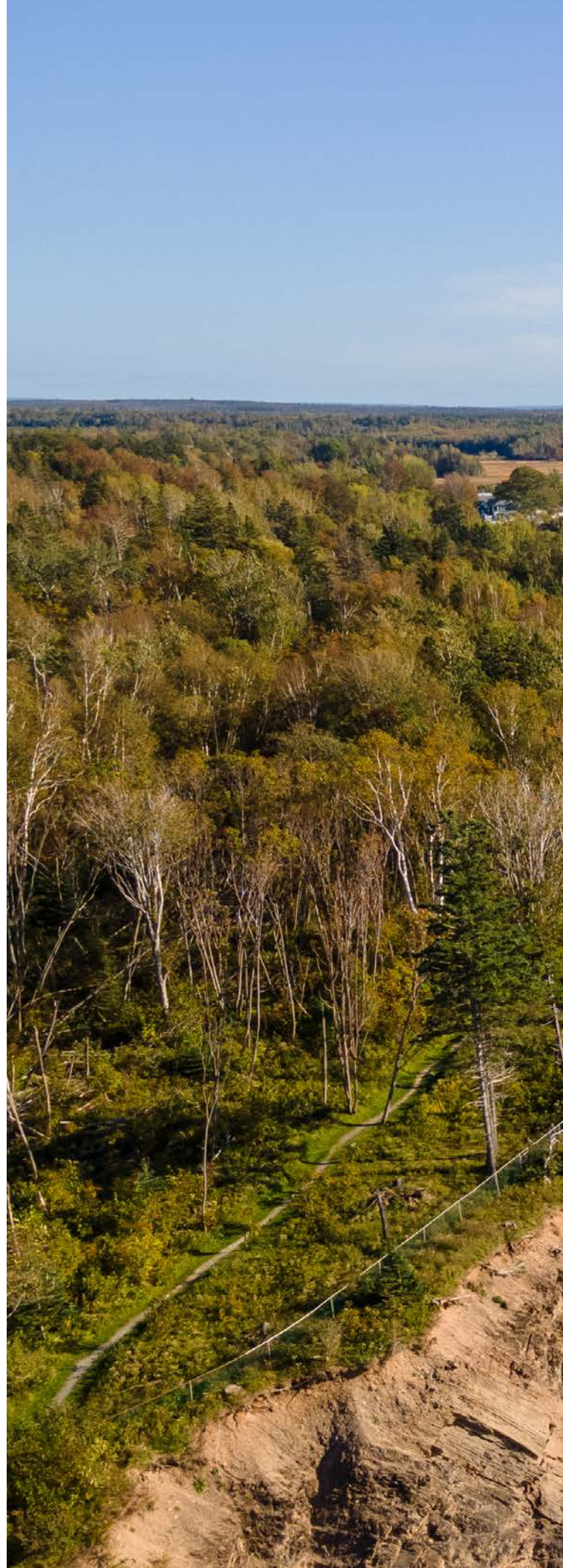
Aligned with this are the many public safety presentations, workshops and programs RCMP employees either deliver or help to deliver across the province for youth, seniors and ages in between. Initiatives for youth are primarily in the areas of cyber safety, anti-bullying, sextortion/intimate images, human trafficking, and impaired driving. For older adults, we focus on frauds, scams and senior's safety.

On a personal note, I want to thank the community for welcoming me as the District Commander for East Hants. I took on this role early in September of 2023, and have had the privilege of connecting with many community members at various events throughout the district thus far. As I noted above, I firmly believe that building strong relationships with our community is fundamental to effective policing and I look forward to continuing to foster a grassroots policing model in the District. This is the foundation upon which we establish intelligence-led crime prevention and public safety initiatives that help to make East Hants a strong, safe community.

Staff Sergeant Mike Balmaceda  
East Hants District RCMP Commander







Cover Photo: Walton  
Photos above, top to bottom:  
Shubenacadie, Burntcoat Head and Enfield