



**Subject:** *Request from The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to be a Municipal Partner for a Feasibility Study Application to the Green Municipal Fund*

**To:** Corporate & Residential Services Committee

**Date Prepared:** June 5, 2026

**Related Motions:** N/A

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**Approved by:** Kim Ramsay, CAO

### Summary

The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) are looking to apply to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation, Green Municipal Fund's (GMF) Adaptation in Action program for a Feasibility Study. To qualify for the GMF funding, CMM is required to partner with at least one Municipality. Participation as a project partner in this application would not impact the Municipality's eligibility to submit its own future funding application under this GMF funding stream as a lead applicant.

The CMM is inviting the Municipalities of East Hants and Colchester to each offer up to 11 hours of staff time in an advisory capacity for a project aiming to determine if terrestrial wetlands on agricultural lands within the respective municipalities are a feasible means of improving water quality and retention. Additionally, as a municipal partner, it is anticipated that East Hants would be open to sharing existing information/data that may be relevant to the project. Final reports and data generated by CMM will be shared with partnering municipalities.

### Financial Impact Statement

The Municipality's commitment would be in-kind services of staff time.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Council authorize the Municipality of East Hants to be a municipal partner, and provide a letter of support for the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq's application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation, Adaptation in Action funding for the project titled, *Feasibility Study for Terrestrial Wetland Creation on Agricultural Lands in the Municipalities of Colchester and East Hants*.

### Recommended Motion

*Move that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend that Council authorize the Municipality of East Hants to be listed as a municipal partner for The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq's application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding initiative for the project titled Feasibility Study for Terrestrial Wetland Creation on Agricultural Lands in the Municipalities of Colchester and East Hants; and*

*Move that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend that Council authorize the CAO to provide a letter of support, as required, as part of The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq's application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding initiative for the project titled Feasibility Study for Terrestrial Wetland Creation on Agricultural Lands in the Municipalities of Colchester and East Hants.*

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## Background

In April 2026, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) reached out to municipal staff seeking a partner to help carry out a wetland creation project to help improve the quality and quantity of water for the agricultural community as part of Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change's (NSECC) climate adaptation strategy for the water sector. Discussions on a potential project have carried through to June.

### The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

The CMM is a Tribal Council incorporated as a not-for-profit organization with the mission to “proactively promote and assist Mi'kmaw communities' initiatives toward self determination and enhancement of community.” The CMM delivers a variety of community programs and services. The governing body of the CMM is made up of the Chiefs of the eight member communities, which includes Sipekne'katik First Nation.

### Green Municipal Fund - Feasibly Study: Adaptation in Action

The Green Municipal Fund (GMF), through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)'s Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding program, has an active fund open for feasibility studies to create action-ready projects.

The current funding window is open until July 14, 2026, with applications received on a rolling basis.

To be eligible for GMF's funding, *nonmunicipal* applications “must be delivered in partnership with one,” and provide “a municipal council resolution stating municipal partnership before funding approval.” A lead municipality is “the primary municipal partner to a nonmunicipal lead applicant” (CMM) and is “usually the municipality where the initiative is taking place.” Note that the term “municipal partner” is the language used for GMF funding. In action, the Municipality is being asked to provide a Letter of Support and staff time.

Participation as a municipal partner in this application would not impact the Municipality's eligibility to submit its own future funding application under this GMF funding stream as a lead applicant. Per FCM and the fund's application guide, “if an Indigenous community is applying for funding in partnership with a lead municipality, the project limit will apply to the Indigenous community. The municipality does not forego their project allowance by enabling a partnered project in these circumstances.”

The recommended motion associated with this report is drafted in alignment with the fund application guide.

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## Discussion

### Proposed Feasibility Study

CMM is seeking federal funding to examine the feasibility of integrating terrestrial wetlands into active farming operations to act as natural retention basins. If financially and ecologically viable, on-farm wetland creation could improve localized water quality (mitigating agricultural nutrient runoff, pesticide residues, and sedimentation) and manage water quantity (buffering intense precipitation events and encouraging local aquifer recharge).

The geographic scope of CMM's study will be the Shubenacadie/Stewiacke primary watershed. Because of this scope, as well as a requirement by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to have a municipal partner(s), CMM has asked the Municipalities of East Hast and Colchester to provide Letters of Support and serve in an advisory capacity (in-kind staff time).

The CMM anticipates two key deliverables from the feasibility study:

1. GIS Suitability Map - a data-driven map identifying priority zones for terrestrial wetland creation and confirmation that there are voluntary, willing agricultural participants who would be interested in incorporating a terrestrial wetland into their operations as a part of their Environmental Farm Plan.
2. Final Feasibility Report & Actionable Implementation Plan - a document aligned with Provincial regulations to move candidate farms into the design, permitting, and construction phases.

As a Municipal partner, East Hants will be invited to attend monthly project meetings, and would be welcomed to attend an engagement session with local farmers, agricultural associations, watershed groups, and Mi'kmaw communities. The meetings and attendance at an engagement session is expected to require up to 11 hours of in-kind time. The Municipality will not be expected to host, facilitate, or take the lead in any way, given that CMM is the project lead. As well, should the Municipality have any public information that would be helpful to the project, it is anticipated that the Municipality would share it. All reports and data generated by CMM during the project will be shared with the Municipality when the project is complete.

### Why Should the Municipality Support?

Staff recommends partnering with CMM for this feasibility study for the following reasons:

1. **East Hants residents have identified water quantity as a key climate concern** in community engagement conducted to-date in support of updating the Municipality's Climate Action Plan.
2. On-farm terrestrial wetlands, if successful, would filter and absorb excess nutrients and non-organic chemicals resulting from agricultural operations, potentially **benefiting the quality of ground water**. Depending on location of priority zones for wetland creation identified in the study, it is possible these wetlands would contribute to the recharge of the Shubenacadie River Watershed (or Shubenacadie-Stewiacke River basin) from which the Shubenacadie Water Treatment Plant draws its supply.
3. Created terrestrial wetlands are an example of a nature-based solution for addressing negative impacts of changing climate conditions (annual water deficits and increasing intensity of short-duration rainfall). Participation in this project could provide the Municipality with important **organizational learning and improved internal capacity** to evaluate nature-based solutions as potential climate adaptation strategies elsewhere in the Municipality.
4. Natural-based solutions are a focus area of Provincial and Federal climate-related funding for the public and private sectors. Experience with this project may help the Municipality be better **positioned for future funding opportunities**.
5. The Municipality would not have a leadership role within this project, and staff time (in-kind) is minimal. Thus, there is a **negligible impact to Municipal finances or to existing work plan priorities**.
6. The watershed-scale, collaborative approach proposed by CMM presents an **opportunity for relationship building**, bringing together local farmers, agricultural associations, watershed groups, and Mi'kmaw communities.

Planning has reviewed the request and there are no regulatory impacts to this request.

### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Supporting the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq in their application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation, Green Municipal Fund's (GMF) Adaptation in Action program, and serving on their advisory committee if they are successful, aligns with the Municipality's key strategies:

- Corporate Excellence—with the goal to provide value to the community by continuously improving our governance, the way we do business, honouring our values and supporting one another.
- Strong Community—with the goal to provide services, programs and facilities, through direct service delivery and collaboration with others, that allow people and businesses to thrive.

Partnering in CMM's proposed project also indirectly supports the Municipality's objective to update its Municipal Climate Action Plan, aiming to strengthen municipal and community climate resilience.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Financial impact of this partnership will be negligible. Up to 11 hours of staff time (in-kind) is being requested. It is possible this is a conservative estimate from CMM; however, staff do not expect staff time spent on this project to exceed 20 hours.

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## Alternatives

There are two alternatives to CMM's invitation to be a Municipal partner for the *Feasibility Study for Terrestrial Wetland Creation on Agricultural Lands in the Municipalities of Colchester and East Hants*.

### Decline Partnership Request

Should the Municipality decline the invitation to partner in this project, CMM will likely continue to pursue a partnership with the Municipality of Colchester and narrow their evaluation of priority zones for wetland creation to within the Municipality of Colchester's jurisdiction. The Municipality of Colchester is bringing a similar request forward through their Council process.

### Accept Partnership Request with Modifications

The Municipality could accept the invitation to partner but request a modification to the amount of staff time allocated to the project, or activities staff can partake in.