Greater Miramichi Service Commission

Commission de services du Grand Miramichi

Meeting Agenda 2025-11
October 29th, 2025, at 5pm
GMSC Boardroom, 1773 Water Street (lower level, accessible from Loggie Drive), Miramichi

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 212 816 231 498 3
Passcode: bf93wb7T

Ordre du jour de la réunion 2025-11
29 october 2025 à 17 h
Salle du conseil de la CSGM, 1773, rue Water (niveau inférieur, accessible par la promenade Loggie), Miramichi

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 212 816 231 498 3
Passcode: bf93wb7T

1. **RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE**
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
3. **DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES SEPTEMBER 24th, 2025**
5. **GMSC BUDGET FOR FINAL APPROVAL**

   (See Memo 2025-11-05)
6. **3rd QUARTER BUDGET UPDATE**

   (See Memo 2025-11-06)
7. **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONAL REVIEW REPORT**

   (See Memo 2025-11-07)
8. **TRANSPORTATION REVIEW REPORT**

   (See Memo 2025-11-08)
9. **CEO UPDATE**

   (See Memo 2025-11-09)
10. **IN-CAMERA (LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT)**

    (See Memo 2025-11-10)

1. **ENREGISTREMENT DE PRÉSENCES**
2. **APPROBATION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR**
3. **DÉCLARATION DE CONFLITS D'INTÉRÊTS**
4. **APPROBATION DU PROCÈS-VERBAL DU 24 SEPTEMBRE, 2025**
5. **BUDJET CSGM POUR APPROBATION FINALE**

   (voir attaché 2025-11-05)
6. **MISE-A-JOUR DU BUDJET 3e TRIMESTRE**

   (voir attaché 2025-11-06)
7. **RAPPORT SUR LA REVUE OPÉRATIONELLE DU DÉPARTEMENT DE PLANIFICATION ET D'AMÉNAGEMENT**

   (voir attaché 2025-11-07)
8. **RAPPORT DE REVUE DU SERVICE DE TRANSPORT**

   (voir attaché 2025-11-08)
9. **MISE-A-JOUR DU PDG**

11. IN CAMERA (LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT) (See Memo 2025-11-11) **12. NEXT BOARD MEETING** (NOVEMBER 26, 2025)	(voir attaché 2025-11-09) **10. HUIS-CLOS (TRAVAIL ET EMPLOI)** (voir attaché 2025-11-10) **11. HUIS-CLOS (TRAVAIL ET EMPLOI)** (voir attaché 2025-11-11) **12. PROCHAINE RÉUNION DU CONSEIL** (26 NOVEMBRE, 2025)

Greater Miramichi Service Commission

Commission de services du Grand Miramichi

Meeting Minutes 2025-10
September 24th, 2025, at 5pm
GMSC Boardroom, 1773 Water Street (lower level, accessible from Loggie Drive), Miramichi

Procès-Verbal de la réunion 2025-10
Le 24 septembre 2025 à 17 h
Salle du conseil de la CSGM, 1773, rue Water (niveau inférieur, accessible par la promenade Loggie), Miramichi

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Art O'Donnell at 5:03pm.

Item 2025-10-01 Record of Attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Mayor Art O'Donnell
Lynn Gregan, Rural District Rep
Deputy Mayor Amanda Brennan
Mayor Adam Lordon
Mayor Ernest Robichaud

MEMBERS ABSENT :
Mayor Doug Munn

ALSO PRESENT:
Roberta McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer
Melanie Albert, Recording Secretary
Sylvie Rousselle, Community Development Director
Melanie Rousselle, EcoDiversion manager
Carrie Price, RDMO Discover Miramichi
Matricia Hutchinson, RDMO Discover Miramichi
Ron Gaudet, Rural District Manager
Larry Allain
Nathan DeLong, Media

La réunion a été appelée à l'ordre a 17h03 par Art O'Donnell, Président du Comité.

Article 2025-10-01 Registre de Présences

MEMBRES PRÉSENTS:
Maire Art O'Donnell
Lynn Gregan, représentant du district rural
Député-Maire Amanda Brennan
Maire Adam Lordon
Maire Ernest Robichaud

MEMBRES ABSENTS :
Maire Doug Munn

AUSSI PRÉSENTS:
Roberta McIntyre, Première dirigeante
Mélanie Albert, secrétaire d'enregistrement
Sylvie Rousselle, gérante de développement communautaire
Melanie Rousselle, gérante d'ÉcoDiversion
Carrie Price, RDMO Découvrez Miramichi
Matricia Hutchinson, RDMO Découvrez Miramichi
Ron Gaudet, gérant du district rural
Larry Allain
Nathan DeLong, presse

Item 2025-10-02: Approval of the Agenda

Moved: Ernest Robichaud
Seconded: Lynn Gregan

Resolved, *"to accept the agenda as amended".*

Adopted

Item 2025-10-03: Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Item 2025-10-04: Approval of Minutes of August 27 and September 8th, 2025, Board Meeting

Moved: Lynn Gregan
Seconded: Adam Lordon

Resolved, *"that the minutes of August 27th and September 8th be approved as presented."*

Adopted

Item 2025-10-05: Service Delivery Reports

Roberta introduced the Service Delivery reports, informing the board that some of the department heads were unable to attend tonight.

Questions were answered by the department heads present, and Roberta answered for the absent managers when possible.

MOTION: *"to accept Service Reports as presented."*

Moved: Ernest Robichaud
Seconded: Lynn Gregan

Article 2025-10-02: Approbation de l'ordre du jour

Porté: Ernest Robichaud
Secondé: Lynn Gregan

Résolution, *« d'accepter l'ordre du jour tel qu'il est présenté ».*

Adopté

Article 2025-10-03: Déclaration de conflit d'intérêts

Aucune déclaration.

Article 2025-10-04: Approbation du procès-verbal de la réunion du conseil d'administration du 27 août et du 8 septembre 2025

Porté: Lynn Gregan
Secondé: Adam Lordon

Résolution, *« que le procès-verbal du 27 août et du 8 septembre 2025 soit approuvé tel qu'il a été présenté. »*

Adopté

Article 2025-10-05: Rapports de prestation de services

Roberta a présenté les rapports de prestation de services, informant le conseil que certains chefs de département ne pouvaient pas assister ce soir.

Les questions étaient répondues par les chefs de département présents, et Roberta répondait pour les gestionnaires absents où possible.

Resolved, *"that the service reports be approved as presented."*

Adopted

Following this, Melanie Rousselle and Sylvie Rousselle left the meeting.

Item 2025-10-06: RDMO Services Agreement

Presented by Carrie Price.

A proposed motion was suggested:

MOTION: *"Be it resolved, the Greater Miramichi Service Commission Board approve an amendment to the Services Agreement with the RDMO Discover Miramichi, changing the requirement for submission of the RDMO's previous year audited financial statements to submission of a Notice to Reader."*

Mayor Adam Lordon made the motion with an added amendment, reflected in the resolution below.

Moved: Adam Lordon
Seconded: Amanda Brennan

Resolved, *"Be it resolved, the Greater Miramichi Service Commission Board approve an amendment to the Services Agreement with the RDMO Discover Miramichi, changing the requirement for submission of the RDMO's previous year audited financial statements to submission of a Notice to Reader, and also changing the requirement for [an operating budget for the upcoming year] to [a work plan and operating budget for the upcoming year]."*

Adopted

MOTION: *« d'accepter les rapports de service tels qu'ils sont présentés. »*

Porté: Ernest Robichaud
Secondé: Lynn Gregan

Résolu, *« que les rapports de service soient approuvés tels qu'ils sont présentés. »*

Adopté

Par la suite, Mélanie Rousselle et Sylvie Rousselle ont quitté la réunion.

Article 2025-10-06: Entente de services RDMO

Présenté par Carrie Price.

Une motion a été proposée :

MOTION: *« Qu'il soit résolu, le Conseil de la Commission des services du Grand Miramichi approuve un amendement à l'Entente de services avec le RDMO Découvrez Miramichi, modifiant l'exigence de soumission des états financiers audités de l'année précédente du RDMO à la soumission d'un avis au lecteur. »*

Le maire Adam Lordon a présenté la motion avec un amendement ajouté, reflété dans la résolution ci-dessous.

Porté: Adam Lordon
Secondé: Amanda Brennan

Résolu, *« Il est réglé que le conseil d'administration de la Commission des services du Grand Miramichi approuve un amendement à l'entente de services avec le RDMO Découvrez Miramichi, modifiant l'exigence de soumission des états financiers audités de l'année précédente du RDMO à la soumission d'un avis au lecteur, et modifiant également l'exigence de [un budget de fonctionnement pour l'année à venir] à [un*

Item 2025-10-07: RDMO Agency on Retainer

Presented by Carrie Price.

A proposed motion was suggested:

MOTION: *"Be it resolved that the Greater Miramichi Service Commission Board approve the contracting of Peach Marketing Agency on retainer from September 8th to December 31rst 2025 at a cost of $35,000.00 plus HST to support early stages of Discover Miramichi's Year One strategic marketing plan and prepare for full implementation."*

Moved: Lynn Gregan
Seconded: Ernest Robichaud

Questions and discussion followed.

The Chair reminded members of the motion currently on the floor, acknowledged discussion elements, then asked for the vote.

Resolved, 4 ayes, 1 nay.

Adopted (1 Nay: Adam Lordon)

Item 2025-10-08: RDMO Quarterly Report

Presented by Carrie Price.

There is no motion here, it is simply a service delivery report comparable to the earlier reports from GMSC departments.

MOTION: *"That the RDMO Quarterly Report be accepted as presented."*

Moved: Ernest Robichaud
Second: Adam Lordon

plan de travail et un budget de fonctionnement pour l'année à venir]. »

Adopté

Article 2025-10-07 : RDMO Agence sur retention

Présenté par Carrie Price.

Une motion a été proposée :

MOTION: *« Il est résolu que le conseil d'administration de la Commission des services du Grand Miramichi Commission approuve la contractualisation de Peach Marketing Agency en retenue du 8 septembre au 31 décembre 2025, au coût de 35 000,00 $ plus la TVH, afin de soutenir les premières étapes du plan stratégique de marketing de Découvrez Miramichi Première Année et de préparer la mise en œuvre complète. »*

Porté: Lynn Gregan
Secondé: Ernest Robichaud

Questions et discussions ont suivi.

Le président a rappelé aux membres la motion actuellement en séance plénière, a reconnu la discussion eue, puis a demandé le vote.

Résolu, 4 pour, 1 contre.

Adopté (1 contre: Adam Lordon)

Article 2025-10-08: RDMO Rapport trimestriel

Présenté par Carrie Price.

Il n'y a pas de motion ici, c'est simplement un rapport de prestation de services comparable

Adopted

Item 2025-10-08: RDMO 2026 Budget Review

Presented by Carrie Price.

Discussion and questions followed presentation.

MOTION: *"to table and integrate final approval of the RDMO budget with the rest of the Service Commission budget."*

Moved: Adam Lordon
Second: Ernest Robichaud

Adopted

Item 2025-10-09: CEO update

Presented by Roberta McIntyre, GMSC CEO.

Questions and discussion followed presentation.

MOTION: *"to accept the CEO's report."*

Moved: Ernest Robichaud
Second: Lynn Gregan

Adopted

Item 2025-10-10: IN-CAMERA (Labor and Employment)

Chair requested a motion to move to in-camera.

MOTION: *"to move the meeting to an in-camera session."*

Moved: Adam Lordon

aux rapports antérieurs des départements GMSC.

MOTION: *« Que le rapport trimestriel du RDMO soit accepté tel qu'il est présenté. »*

Porté: Ernest Robichaud
Secondé: Adam Lordon

Adopté

Article 2025-10-08: Révision du budget RDMO 2026

Présenté par Carrie Price.

Questions et discussion ont suivi.

MOTION: *« de déposer et d'intégrer l'approbation finale du budget du RDMO avec le reste du budget de la Commission des services. »*

Porté: Adam Lordon
Secondé: Ernest Robichaud

Adopté

Article 2025-10-09: Mise à jour du PDG

Présenté par Roberta McIntyre, PDG du CSGM.

Questions et discussion ont suivi.

MOTION: *« d'accepter le rapport du PDG. »*

Porté: Ernest Robichaud
Secondé: Lynn Gregan

Adopté

Article 2025-10-10: HUIS-CLOS (Travail et emploi)

Second: Ernest Robichaud

Adopted

[in-camera session conducted in private]

MOTION: *"to return to regular meeting."*

Moved: Ernest Robichaud
Second: Lynn Gregan

Adopted

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Adam Lordon to adjourn the meeting.
There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting adjourned at 6:53pm.

Le président a demandé une motion pour passer à huis clos.

MOTION: *« De déplacer la réunion à une séance à huis clos. »*

Porté: Adam Lordon
Secondé: Ernest Robichaud

Adopté

[Séance à huis clos tenue en privé]

MOTION: *« pour reprendre les réunions régulières. »*

Porté: Ernest Robichaud
Secondé: Lynn Gregan

Adopté

CLÔTURE DE LA RÉUNION

Adam Lordon propose d'ajourner la séance. Comme il n'y avait pas d'autres questions, le président déclare la séance levée à 18 h 53.

Respectfully Submitted,

_____

Roberta McIntyre, CEO

_____

Melanie Albert, Recording Secretary

Respectueusement soumis,

_____

Roberta McIntyre, Première dirigeante

_____

Melanie Albert, Secrétaire D'enregistrement

Greater Miramichi Service Commission
Commission de services du Grand Miramichi

Agenda Item 2025-11-5

MEMO

TO: Chairman and Members of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission

FROM: Roberta McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer
Shawn Cripps, CPA, CGA, Chief Financial Officer
Justin Forbes, RPP, MCIP, Planning Director / Director of Operations

SUBJECT: GMSC 2026 Operating and Capital Budget

DATE: October 23, 2025

BACKGROUND:

The following contains an overview of the proposed 2026 budget. It is based on assumptions, decisions, and issues to form the 2026 Operating and Capital Budget for the GMSC. A presentation of the proposed 2026 GMRSC Budget will be presented at the Board meeting on October 29th, 2025.

The Finance Committee met on October 23rd to review the proposed budget. No changes have been made to the budget since that meeting.

CONSULTATIONS:

The proposed budget had been circulated to the member communities shortly after the September 8th board meeting. Presentations were provided to the Councils and Staff of: Miramichi River Valley, Upper Miramichi, Doaktown & the Greater Miramichi Rural District (October 22nd, 2025), Alnwick (October 1st, 2025) and Miramichi (October 14th, 2025).

VOTING REQUIREMENT:

As per the Regional Services Delivery Act, Section 27 (2): A motion made at a meeting of a Board to approve a budget shall not pass unless at least two-thirds of the voting members present, who represent at least 51% of the total population represented by all the voting members present, vote in favour.

Miramichi has 4 votes, MRV has 2 votes, all other entities have 1 vote each.

GENERAL:

- Total Operating Budget for 2026 is **$6,205,964 (2025--$5,928,309)**; an increase of **$277,655 or 4.68%** from 2025.
- No Capital Budget for 2025
- 2026 Total Service Cost **$2,860,709** (to be paid by member communities), resulting in an overall increase of **$455,877**. In 2025, the Total Service Cost was **$2,404,832**; **(increase of 18.96%).**

- Staffing complement-
  - Currently 24 staff positions – proposed to add three Full Time Employees (FTEs)
  - Compliance and Enforcement Coordinator
  - Zonal Immigration Partnership (ZIP) Coordinator
  - Sport & Rec Workforce Coordinator
- The Regional Services Support Fund (RSSF) is a multi-year (2024 – 2028) funding program available to the Service Commission.
- The GMSC will submit an application to the Regional Services Support Fund for a total of **$1,092,065**. The application we made in 2025 was for **$1,365,252**, an overall reduction of **$273,187**
- The following Table 1 provides a breakdown of Members Costs for all services provided by the GMSC.

Table 1: Total Members Cost for all Services 2025 - 2026:

Community	2025	2026	Variance	% Variance
Miramichi	$1,263,275	$1,563,204	$299,929	23.74%
Miramichi River Valley	$463,732	$538,988	$75,256	16.23%
Doaktown	$90,446	$99,974	$9,528	10.53%
Upper Miramichi	$76,787	$85,269	$8,482	11.05%
Alnwick	$179,617	$207,059	$27,442	15.28%
Greater Miramichi Rural District	$330,975	$366,215	$35,240	10.65%
Totals	**$2,404,832**	**$2,860,709**	**$455,877**	**18.96%**

- The following Appendix is included:
    - Appendix A – GMSC 2026 Proposed Member Cost by Service Division

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the proposed (October 23rd, 2025 version) of the GMRSC 2026 Operating and Capital Budget, be approved.

POSSIBLE MOTION:

That, the total operating budget for the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission for the 2026 calendar year consist of total revenues of $6,205,964 and total expenditures of $6,205,964; as detailed in the budget information circulated previously and presented to the GMSC Board on October 29th, 2025, be approved.

APPENDIX A

Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission - 2026 Proposed Member Costs

Corporate Services	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget	678,484	1,056,347	377,863
Net Budget to be allocated:			
Cooperative & Regional Planning	46	0	-46
Local Planning Services	215,588	407,603	192,015
Solid Waste Services	99,441	171,081	71,640
Tourism Promotion Services	79,706	0	-79,706
Economic Development Services	101,784	215,214	113,430
Community Development Services	66,206	209,181	142,975
Regional Transportation Services	25,953	50,446	24,493
Public Safety Committee	9,134	2,737	-6,397
Regional Sport, Recreation & Cultural Services	3,216	86	-3,130
Other Shared Services	77,410	0	-77,410
	678,484	1,056,347	377,863

Co-Operative & Regional Planning Services			
	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	58,517	0	-58,517
Less: Revenues incl. Surplus (2nd Year)	58,517	473	-58,044
Budget to be allocated	-	(473)	(473)
Miramichi	-	(252)	(252)
Miramichi River Valley	-	(89)	(89)
Doaktown	-	(15)	(15)
Upper Miramichi	-	(23)	(23)
Alnwick	-	(37)	(37)
Greater Miramichi Rural District	-	(57)	(57)
	-	(473)	(473)

Local Planning Services (Development Services)			
	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	1,099,933	1,466,998	367,065
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	112,348	222,075	109,727
Budget to be allocated	987,585	1,244,924	257,339
Miramichi	593,797	749,860	156,063
Miramichi River Valley	185,303	233,738	48,435
Doaktown	30,096	37,753	7,657
Upper Miramichi	-	-	-
Alnwick	63,351	78,858	15,507
Greater Miramichi Rural District	115,039	144,714	29,675
	987,586	1,244,924	257,338

Solid Waste Services (EcoDiversion)			
	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	2,173,072	2,302,251	129,179
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	1,109,545	1,221,341	111,796
Budget to be allocated	1,063,527	1,080,910	17,383
Miramichi	517,618	518,701	1,083
Miramichi River Valley	189,728	206,562	16,834
Doaktown	46,524	45,906	-618
Upper Miramichi	61,876	60,880	-996
Alnwick	82,881	89,893	7,012
Greater Miramichi Rural District	164,900	158,969	-5,931
	1,063,527	1,080,910	17,383

APPENDIX A

Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission - 2026 Proposed Member Costs

Regional Tourism Promotion Services (Discover Miramichi)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	594,698	504,845	-89,853
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	430,184	416,631	-13,553
Budget to be allocated	164,514	88,214	-76,300
Miramichi	94,961	51,017	-43,944
Miramichi River Valley	29,634	15,902	-13,732
Doaktown	4,813	2,569	-2,244
Upper Miramichi	6,578	3,516	-3,062
Alnwick	10,131	5,365	-4,766
Greater Miramichi Rural District	18,397	9,846	-8,551
	164,514	88,214	-76,300

Regional Economic Development Services (Growing Greater Miramichi)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	683,571	885,124	201,553
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	683,571	764,285	80,714
Budget to be allocated	-	120,839	120,839
Miramichi	-	69,884	69,884
Miramichi River Valley	-	21,784	21,784
Doaktown	-	3,518	3,518
Upper Miramichi	-	4,816	4,816
Alnwick	-	7,349	7,349
Greater Miramichi Rural District	-	13,487	13,487
	-	120,839	120,839

Community Development Services

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	317,308	740,919	423,611
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	289,095	525,366	236,271
Budget to be allocated	28,213	215,552	187,339
Miramichi	15,029	114,941	99,912
Miramichi River Valley	5,280	40,357	35,077
Doaktown	888	6,766	5,878
Upper Miramichi	1,392	10,623	9,231
Alnwick	2,227	16,932	14,705
Greater Miramichi Rural District	3,397	25,933	22,536
	28,213	215,552	187,339

Regional Transportation Services

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	185,341	286,505	101,164
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	185,341	180,014	-5,327
Budget to be allocated	-	106,491	106,491
Miramichi	-	56,785	56,785
Miramichi River Valley	-	19,938	19,938
Doaktown	-	3,343	3,343
Upper Miramichi	-	5,248	5,248
Alnwick	-	8,365	8,365
Greater Miramichi Rural District	-	12,812	12,812
	-	106,491	106,491

APPENDIX A

Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission - 2026 Proposed Member Costs

Regional Public Safety Committee Services

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	107,134	18,737	-88,397
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	102,751	12,439	(90,312)
Budget to be allocated	4,383	6,298	1,915
Miramichi	2,335	3,359	1,024
Miramichi River Valley	820	1,179	359
Doaktown	138	198	60
Upper Miramichi	216	310	94
Alnwick	346	495	149
Greater Miramichi Rural District	528	758	230
	4,383	6,298	1,915

Regional Sport, Recreation & Infrastructure Services

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	37,716	586	-37,130
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	31,337	2,631	(28,706)
Budget to be allocated	6,379	-2,045	-8,424
Miramichi	3,398	(1,091)	-4,489
Miramichi River Valley	1,194	(383)	-1,577
Doaktown	201	(64)	-265
Upper Miramichi	315	(101)	-416
Alnwick	503	(161)	-664
Greater Miramichi Rural District	768	(246)	-1,014
	6,379	(2,045)	-8,424

Other Shared Services (Miramichi Housing Authority)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	332,024	-	(332,024)
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	332,024	-	(332,024)
Budget to be allocated	-	-	-
Miramichi	-	-	-
Miramichi River Valley	-	-	-
Doaktown	-	-	-
Upper Miramichi	-	-	-
Alnwick	-	-	-
Greater Miramichi Rural District	-	-	-
	-	-	-

Other Shared Services (Rural Plans)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	122,450	-	(122,450)
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	77,793	-	(77,793)
Budget to be allocated	44,657	-	(44,657)
Miramichi	-	-	-
Miramichi River Valley	21,014	-	(21,014)
Doaktown	3,413	-	(3,413)
Upper Miramichi	-	-	-
Alnwick	7,184	-	(7,184)
Greater Miramichi Rural District	13,046	-	(13,046)
	44,657	-	(44,657)

APPENDIX A

Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission - 2026 Proposed Member Costs

Other Shared Services (By-Law Enforcement)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	113,297	-	(113,297)
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	59,346	-	(59,346)
Budget to be allocated	53,951	-	(53,951)
Miramichi	-	-	-
Miramichi River Valley	21,664	-	(21,664)
Doaktown	3,636	-	(3,636)
Upper Miramichi	5,673	-	(5,673)
Alnwick	9,061	-	(9,061)
Greater Miramichi Rural District	13,917	-	(13,917)
	53,951	-	(53,951)

Other Shared Services (Miramichi Housing Solutions)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	103,245	-	(103,245)
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	51,623	-	(51,623)
Budget to be allocated	51,622	-	(154,868)
Miramichi	36,137	-	(36,137)
Miramichi River Valley	9,095	-	(9,095)
Doaktown	737	-	(737)
Upper Miramichi	737	-	(737)
Alnwick	3,933	-	(3,933)
Greater Miramichi Rural District	983	-	(983)
	51,622	-	(51,622)

Other Shared Services (Graphic Designer - City of Miramichi)

	2025	2026	Variance
Total Budget (incl. Corp Services)	-	-	-
Less: Surplus (2nd Year) / Revenues	-	-	-
Budget to be allocated	-	-	-
Miramichi	-	-	-
Miramichi River Valley	-	-	-
Doaktown	-	-	-
Upper Miramichi	-	-	-
Alnwick	-	-	-
Greater Miramichi Rural District	-	-	-
	-	-	-

	2025	2026	Variance
City of Miramichi	$1,263,275	$1,563,204	$299,929
Miramichi River Valley	$463,732	$538,988	$75,256
Doaktown	$90,446	$99,974	$9,528
Upper Miramichi	$76,787	$85,269	$8,482
Alnwick	$179,617	$207,059	$27,442
Greater Miramichi Rural District	$330,975	$366,215	$35,240
	$2,404,832	**$2,860,709**	**$455,877**

Greater Miramichi Service Commission
Commission de services du Grand Miramichi

Agenda item: 2025-11-6

MEMO

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Greater Miramichi RSC

FROM: Shawn Cripps, CPA, CGA, Chief Financial Officer
Roberta McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: 3rd Quarter Financial Update (July to September 2025)

DATE: October 23, 2025

Overview

This report provides an update on the GMSC's financial performance for the first half of the 2025 fiscal year, covering the period from January 1 to September 30, 2025.

As of September 30, 2025, the organization is reporting an overall surplus of **$408,989.59.** This result reflects continued attention to budget management, cost control, and revenue performance across all departments. All municipal contributions have been collected up to date.

The following pages detail the overall financial results and provide department-level analysis to give a full picture of the organization's financial health at this point.

Memo Prepared On: Thursday, October 23, 2025

Memo Prepared by:
Shawn Cripps, CPA, CGA
Chief Financial Officer

Greater Miramichi Service Commission
Financial Update
For the 9 months ended, September 30, 2025

Service	Budgeted	Actual	Surplus/Deficit	% Diff
Corporate Services				
Revenues	$ 108,673.47	$ 128,806.00	$ 20,132.53	18.53%
Expenditures	$ 632,982.27	$ 751,431.00	$ (118,448.73)	-18.71%
Overall Deficit			**$ (98,316.20)**	
Co-Operative & Regional Planning				
Revenues	$ 43,887.69	$ -	$ (43,887.69)	-100.00%
Expenditures	$ 43,853.22	$ -	$ 43,853.22	100.00%
Overall Deficit			**$ (34.47)**	
Development Services				
Revenues	$ 824,949.27	$ 1,057,896.00	$ 232,946.73	28.24%
Expenditures	$ 663,258.06	$ 647,032.00	$ 16,226.06	2.45%
Overall Surplus			**$ 249,172.79**	
EcoDiversion				
Revenues	$ 1,629,803.79	$ 1,714,822.00	$ 85,018.21	5.22%
Expenditures	$ 1,555,222.41	$ 1,709,808.00	$ (154,585.59)	-9.94%
Overall Deficit			**$ (69,567.38)**	
Regional Tourism Promotion				
Revenues	$ 446,023.17	$ 374,578.13	$ (71,445.04)	-16.02%
Expenditures	$ 386,244.27	$ 415,421.50	$ (29,177.23)	-7.55%
Overall Deficit			**$ (100,622.27)**	
Regional Economic Development				
Revenues	$ 512,678.07	$ 538,531.00	$ 25,852.93	5.04%
Expenditures	$ 436,338.99	$ 302,522.00	$ 133,816.99	30.67%
Overall Surplus			**$ 159,669.92**	
Regional Housing Authority				
Revenues	$ 249,018.00	$ 323,210.00	$ 74,192.00	29.79%
Expenditures	$ 215,066.79	$ 88,348.00	$ 126,718.79	58.92%
Overall Surplus			**$ 200,910.79**	

Service	Budgeted	Actual	Surplus/Deficit	% Diff
Community Development				
Revenues	$ 237,980.79	$ 294,969.00	$ 56,988.21	23.95%
Expenditures	$ 188,326.35	$ 164,423.00	$ 23,903.35	12.69%
Overall Surplus			**$ 80,891.56**	
Regional Transportation				
Revenues	$ 139,005.63	$ 97,172.00	$ (41,833.63)	-30.09%
Expenditures	$ 119,540.79	$ 152,507.00	$ (32,966.21)	-27.58%
Overall Deficit			**$ (74,799.84)**	
Regional Public Safety Committee				
Revenues	$ 80,350.29	$ 38,001.00	$ (42,349.29)	-52.71%
Expenditures	$ 73,499.94	$ -	$ 73,499.94	100.00%
Overall Surplus			**$ 31,150.65**	
Reg Sport, Rec & Cultural Infrastructure				
Revenues	$ 28,286.82	$ 26,264.50	$ (2,022.32)	-7.15%
Expenditures	$ 25,874.91	$ -	$ 25,874.91	100.00%
Overall Surplus			**$ 23,852.59**	
By-Law Enforcement				
Revenues	$ 84,972.69	$ 77,156.94	$ (7,815.75)	-9.20%
Expenditures	$ 73,387.44	$ 81,635.08	$ (8,247.64)	-11.24%
Overall Deficit			**$ (16,063.39)**	
Miramichi Housing Solutions				
Revenues	$ 77,432.73	$ 90,338.25	$ 12,905.52	16.67%
Expenditures	$ 77,433.75	$ 68,830.00	$ 8,603.75	11.11%
Overall Surplus			**$ 21,509.27**	
Rural Plans Project				
Revenues	$ 91,838.25	$ 84,251.37	$ (7,586.88)	-8.26%
Expenditures	$ 52,877.94	$ 44,055.49	$ 8,822.45	16.68%
Overall Surplus			**$ 1,235.57**	

Total Surplus **$ 408,989.59**

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
CORPORATE SERVICES				
Chief Executive Officer's Office - Salaries				
Sub total	272,997	213,641	59,356	2.6 EFTs for CEO Office
Benefits				
Sub total	47,586	42,057	5,529	
Administrative Services				
Administrative Services - Sub total	327,772	337,051	(9,279)	
Financial Management Services - Salaries				
Sub total	95,296	64,638	30,658	CFO (100% of time/salary)
Benefits				
Sub total	16,903	14,981	1,922	CFO (1 FTE for Fin Mgmt Office)
Financial Management				
Financial Management - Sub total	142,599	139,111	3,488	
Governance				
Governance Expenses Sub total	32,430	19,571	12,859	
TOTAL CORPORATE EXPENSES	823,384	751,431	71,953	91.26% spent of the corporate services budget ($751,431/$823,384)
Revenues				
RSSF	144,898	108,674	(36,224)	received three quarters of RSSF from DELG
Other Income Sources	0	20,132	20,132	funding from DELG for accounting services review + interest income
Sub total	144,898	128,806	(16,092)	
BUDGET TO ACTUAL (EXPENSES - REVENUES)	678,486	**622,625**	55,861	Allocated to the other service divisions (91.77% spent)

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
Local Planning Services (DEVELOPMENT SERVICES)				
Salaries				
Sub total	604,734	428,313	176,421	8.4 FTEs in Development Services (4.4 FTEs in Planning, 4 FTEs in Building Inspection)
Benefits				
Sub total	132,350	79,928	52,422	
Travel				
Travel - Sub total	14,000	10,878	3,122	
General Expenses				
Sub total	117,600	114,686	2,914	
PRAC				
Planning Advisory Committee Sub total	4,000	4,481	(481)	
Local Planning Operating Deficit	11,661	8,746	2,915	as per 2023 Financial Statements
Planning Budget Before Corp. Services	884,345	647,032	237,312	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	215,588	198,122	17,466	
TOTAL LOCAL PLANNING SUB TOTAL	1,099,933	845,154	254,779	
All Other Funding Sources	112,349	70,310	(42,039)	
Member Municipalities Contributions	987,584	987,586	2	Municipalities pay this amount quarterly (we've received the full 4 quarters)
Sub total	1,099,933	1,057,896	(42,037)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(0)	**212,741**	212,742	

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual				
Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
SOLID WASTE SERVICES (ECODIVERSION)				
RSC Chaleur Red Pine Landfill (Garbage Tip Fees)	1,448,950	1,153,636	295,314	January to September tipping fees
General Administration				
Salaries & Benefits				
Salaries & Benefits Sub total	138,238	101,728	36,510	EcoDiversion Manager + Admin Assistant (1.6 FTEs)
Office Expenses				
Administration Expense Sub total	16,000	163,683	(147,683)	ETF application to be done before the end of the year
Operations				
Public Education				
Public Education Sub total	87,000	61,726	25,274	
Buildings				
Operations Sub total	2,500	1,240	1,260	
Waste Diversion				
Salaries & Benefits Sub total	55,082	28,674	26,409	0.75 FTE for new EcoDiversion Coordinator
Waste Diversion Subtotal	58,582	31,509	27,073	
Composting				
Composting Sub total	17,000	14,586	2,414	
Hazardous Household Materials				
Salaries & Benefits Sub total	18,361	9,558	8,803	0.25 FTE for new EcoDiversion Coordinator
HHW Sub total	138,361	46,891	91,469	
Solid Waste Services Operating Deficit	167,000	125,251	41,749	as per 2023 Financial Statements
Solid Waste Budget Before Corporate Services	2,073,631	1,709,808	363,823	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	99,441	91,385	8,056	
Total Solid Waste Services Including Tipping Fee- Sub Total	2,173,072	1,801,192	371,880	
Revenues				
Sub total	2,173,072	1,714,822	(458,250)	January to September Invoicing
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(0)	**(86,371)**	(86,370)	

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
Regional Economic Development Services (GROWING GREATER MIRAMICHI)				
Salaries				
Sub total	229,519	157,792	71,727	3 FTEs in Ec Dev for 2025 budget (2 FTEs currently)
Benefits				
Sub total	47,268	32,429	14,839	
General Expenses				
Population Growth				
Sub total	108,500	48,742	59,758	
Workforce Development				
Sub total	80,000	19,013	60,987	
Healthcare Worker Recruitment Initiatives (Direct Programming & Marketing)				
Sub total	50,000	30,697	19,303	
Economic Development				
Sub total	58,000	3,589	54,411	
Other Expenses				
Sub total	8,500	10,259	(1,759)	
Total General Expenses	305,000	112,301	192,699	
Total Regional Economic Development Services	581,787	302,522	279,265	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	101,784	93,538	8,246	
TOTAL REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SUB TOTAL	683,571	396,060	287,511	
Revenues				
Sub total	683,571	538,531	(145,040)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	**142,471**	142,471	No contributions from the municipalities for 2025

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
Regional Housing Authority (under Other Shared Services)				
Salaries				
Sub total	73,500	56,546	16,954	1 FTE in the Housing Authority
Benefits				
Sub total	15,756	10,355	5,400	
General Expenses				
Total General Expenses	197,500	21,447	176,053	
Total Regional Housing Authority Expenses	286,756	88,348	198,408	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	45,268	41,601	3,667	
TOTAL REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY SUB TOTAL	332,024	129,949	202,075	
Revenues				
Sub total	332,024	323,210	(8,814)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	**193,262**	193,261	No contributions from member municipalities

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
Community Development Services				
Salaries				
Sub total	176,562	107,842	68,720	1.7 FTEs for Community Development (2.7 w/ Grant Writer position)
Benefits				
Sub total	42,541	19,313	23,228	
General Expenses				
Total General Expenses	32,000	37,268	(5,268)	
Total Community Development Services	251,102	164,423	86,679	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	66,206	60,842	5,364	
TOTAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES SUB TOTAL	317,309	225,266	92,043	
Revenues				
Sub total	317,309	294,969	(22,340)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	**69,703**	69,703	

Greater Miramichi Service Commission - 2025 Budget to Actual

Expense	Full Year 2025 Budget	Jan-Sep 2025 Actual	Amount Remaining 3 months	Notes
Regional Transportation Services				
Salaries				
Sub total	44,360	35,078	9,282	0.7 FTEs for Regional Transportation
Benefits				
Sub total	11,029	6,920	4,109	
General Expenses				
Total General Expenses	104,000	110,509	(6,509)	
Total Regional Transportation Services	159,389	152,507	6,882	
SHARE OF CORPORATE SERVICES	25,952	23,850	2,102	
TOTAL REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES SUB TOTAL	185,341	176,357	8,984	
Revenues				
Sub total	185,341	97,172	(88,169)	
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	**(79,186)**	(79,186)	No cost to the member municipalities budgeted for 2025

Greater Miramichi Service Commission
Commission de services du Grand Miramichi

Agenda item: 2025-11-7

MEMO

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Greater Miramichi RSC

FROM: Justin Forbes, Director of Operations and Planning Director
Roberta McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Operational Review of GMSC Development Services

DATE: October 21, 2025

Background
In September 2024, the GMSC initiated an Operational Review of its Development Services Division to identify opportunities for improving efficiency, customer experience, and alignment with best practices across comparable jurisdictions.

Following a competitive RFP process, Stantec Consulting Ltd. was retained to complete the review. Work commenced in late 2024 and continued through 2025, overlapping with the onboarding of the Commission's new CEO and the retirement of former CEO and Planning Director, Wilson Bell. Progress during the summer months was deliberately paced to allow for additional engagement sessions, staff workshops, and refinement of recommendations in real time as organizational changes were occurring.

A presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations was provided to the Board on September 5, 2025, and the final report, attached to this memo, is now complete.

At the October 29, 2025, Board meeting, Jamie Burke, RPP, MCIP, Planner and Project Manager with Stantec Consulting Ltd., will present the final report and its key findings for the Board's consideration.

Upon Board approval, staff intend to share the report's conclusions and implementation plan with member communities, developers, and other stakeholders through a series of engagement sessions across the region.

Summary of Findings

The Stantec report provides a detailed assessment of GMSC's planning and building inspection operations. The review highlights the Division's professionalism and commitment to public service, while identifying opportunities for improvement in several key areas:

- Evaluating Current Practices – Assessing the existing planning and building inspection processes to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.
- Enhancing Customer Service – Improving communication, responsiveness, and overall customer service to better meet the needs of the public and stakeholders.
- Optimizing Resources – Addressing challenges related to staffing, physical space, and technological tools to ensure that the department is well-equipped to handle its workload efficiently.
- Improving Public Perception – Implementing strategies to enhance the department's image and public relations, and fostering a positive relationship with the community.
- Ensuring Regulatory Compliance - Communicating regulatory requirements clearly and effectively to the public and ensuring that all building and development activities comply with relevant codes and standards.

The report concludes that a cultural shift within the Development Services Division is essential. By implementing the proposed recommendations, GMSC can strengthen its operational capacity, improve stakeholder relationships, and support sustainable regional development.

Financial Considerations

Financial implications associated with implementing the review's recommendations have been incorporated into the proposed 2026 Operating Budget for the Development Services Department. These include:

- Two new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions:
    - Development Concierge – to guide applicants through the permitting and planning process and improve client communication.
    - Compliance and Enforcement Coordinator – to strengthen by-law and building code follow-up, and improve consistency and accountability.
- Public education and advertising – for a "development services awareness campaign" to help residents and builders better understand GMSC's role, responsibilities, and limitations.
- Customer service training – for Division staff to enhance professionalism and communication in client interactions.

- Commission-branded decals and apparel – to improve visibility, professionalism, and public recognition of Commission staff in the field.

These costs are expected to be phased, with staffing investments initiated in early 2026 and communication and training initiatives later in the year. While certain items are one-time investments, new staff positions represent an ongoing annual commitment. Some costs may be offset by increased permit activity, operational efficiencies, or external funding opportunities to be explored.

Recommendation and Proposed Motion

That the Board endorse the Operational Review of the Development Services Division prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. and authorize staff to begin phased implementation of the recommendations as outlined in the report and the proposed 2026 Departmental Budget.

Attachments

1. Operational Review – Greater Miramichi Service Commission – Development Services Division – Final Report

Attachment 1

Operational Review – Greater Miramichi Service Commission – Development Services Division – Final Report

Operational Review

GREATER MIRAMICHI SERVICE COMMISSION - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISON

Final Report

PROJECT NUMBER: 160402082

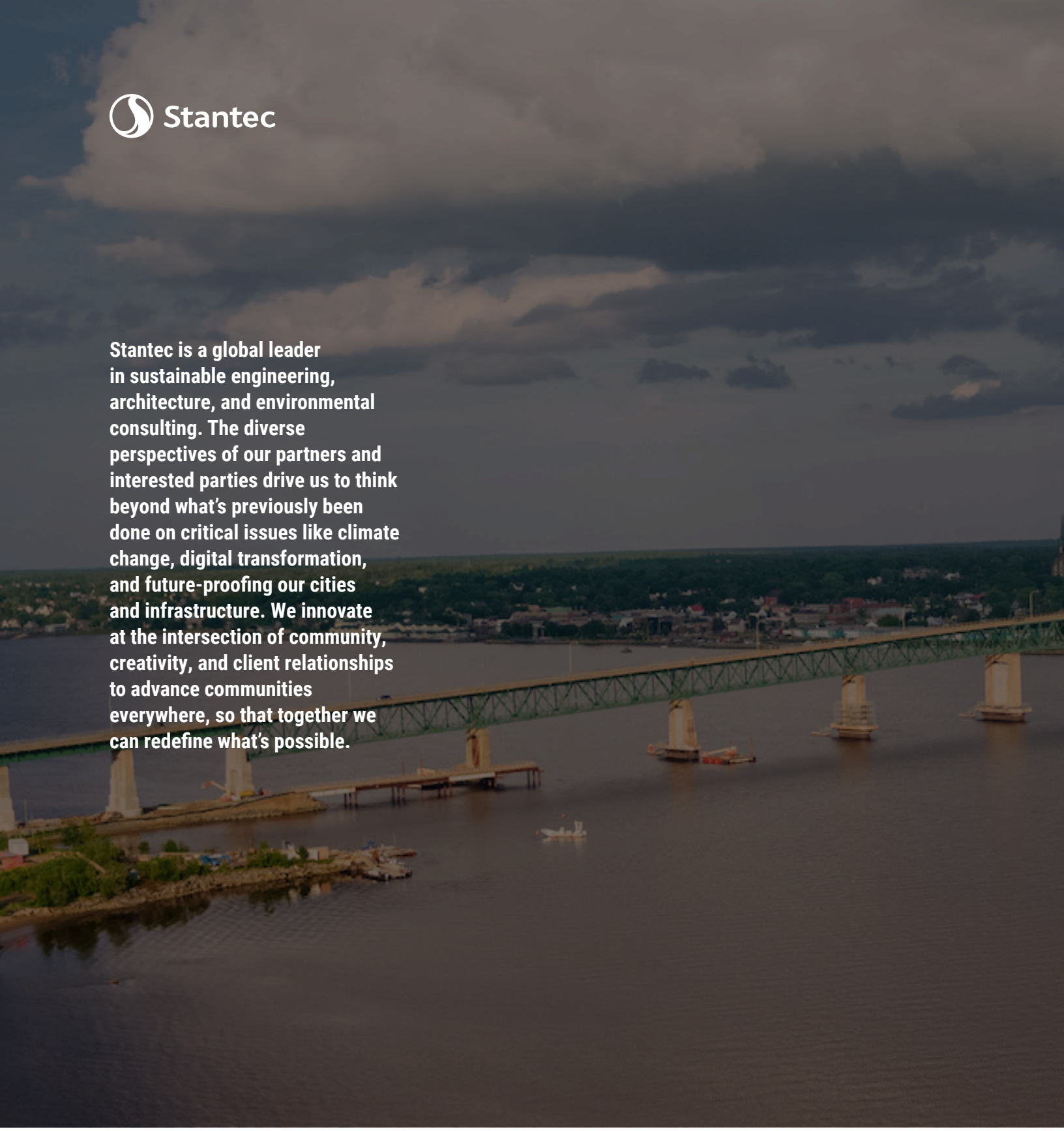
17 OCTOBER 2025

PREPARED FOR : Greater Miramichi Service Commission

PREPARED BY : Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Stantec

Greater Miramichi Service Commission | Commission de services du Grand Miramichi



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Stantec Consulting Ltd.

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Moncton, New Brunswick E1E 4E1
stantec.com

The conclusions in the report titled *Greater Miramichi Service Commission - Development Services Division* are Stantec's professional opinion concerning the scope described in the report as of the time of the report. This report pertains solely to the specific project for which Stantec was engaged and the stated purpose for which it was prepared. It must not be used or relied upon for any other purpose, project, or modification, and any unauthorized use is at the recipient's own risk.

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Prepared By: **Deepali Dang, BArch, MPlan**
Urban Planner

Quality Review: **Jamie Burke, RPP, MCIP**
Atlantic Lead – Urban Planning
Community Development

Independent Review: **John Heseltine, MPA, LPP, MCIP**
Senior Planner, Community Development

CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	**5**
1. INTRODUCTION	**6**
2. BACKGROUND REVIEW	**9**
• Historical Overview	10
• GMSC Overview	14
3. ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK	**16**
• Consultation Methodology	17
• Feedback from Engagement Sessions	18
• Key Themes and Concerns	23
4. COMPARATIVE AND OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS	**28**
• Comparative Analysis	29
• Technology Review	39
• Key Themes and Observations	48
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	**50**

Executive Summary

The Greater Miramichi Service Commission (GMSC) engaged Stantec Consulting Ltd. to conduct an **operational review of its Development Services Division**, which oversees planning and building inspection services across the region. This initiative was driven by a desire to improve service delivery, enhance customer experience, and ensure alignment with best practices observed in comparable jurisdictions. The review was structured around **four key phases**:

- Project initiation;
- Data collection and stakeholder engagement;
- Comparative and operational analysis; and
- Solution development

Through interviews, focus groups, and consultations with internal staff, elected officials, developers, and community members, the review identified several operational challenges and opportunities for improvement. Key findings included the need for more dialogue during the building permit evaluation process, limited public understanding of planning regulations, and gaps in the CloudPermit system. Staffing constraints, overlapping roles, and the absence of succession planning were also noted as critical issues. Stakeholders expressed a need for clearer communication to improve public perception of the Development Services Division and implement a development services mandate that is focused on providing high quality customer service.

The comparative analysis with other Regional Service Commissions in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia showed that while GMSC's staffing levels and development activity are proportionate, strategic adjustments are necessary to meet evolving demands. The report emphasizes the importance of modernizing internal processes, improving customer service, and fostering a culture of collaboration and accountability.

To address these challenges, the report outlines a series of recommendations categorized into **five strategic areas** which include:

- **Evaluating Current Practices -** Assessing the existing planning and building inspection processes to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Enhancing Customer Service -** Improving communication, responsiveness, and overall customer service to better meet the needs of the public and stakeholders.
- **Optimizing Resources -** Addressing challenges related to staffing, physical space, and technological tools to ensure that the department is well-equipped to handle its workload efficiently.
- **Improving Public Perception -** Implementing strategies to enhance the department's image and public relations, and fostering a positive relationship with the community.
- **Ensuring Regulatory Compliance -** Communicating regulatory requirements clearly and effectively to the public and ensuring that all building and development activities comply with relevant codes and standards.

The report concludes that a **cultural shift within the Development Services Division is essential.** By implementing the proposed recommendations, GMSC can strengthen its operational capacity, improve stakeholder relationships, and support sustainable regional development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Project Introduction

The Greater Miramichi Service Commission (GMSC) initiated a comprehensive operational review of its planning and building inspection services to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and overall service delivery of the Development Services Division. This initiative reflects GMSC's commitment to continuous improvement and its strategic goal of fostering a responsive, streamlined, and development-friendly environment across the region.

To support this effort, Stantec Consulting Ltd. was retained by GMSC in November 2024 to conduct this review. The scope of work included a detailed evaluation of existing policies, procedures, and regulatory frameworks, stakeholder engagement, and comparative analysis with similar jurisdictions. The objective was to identify areas for improvement and provide actionable recommendations that align with best practices and the evolving needs of the region.

The review was structured around the following key objectives:

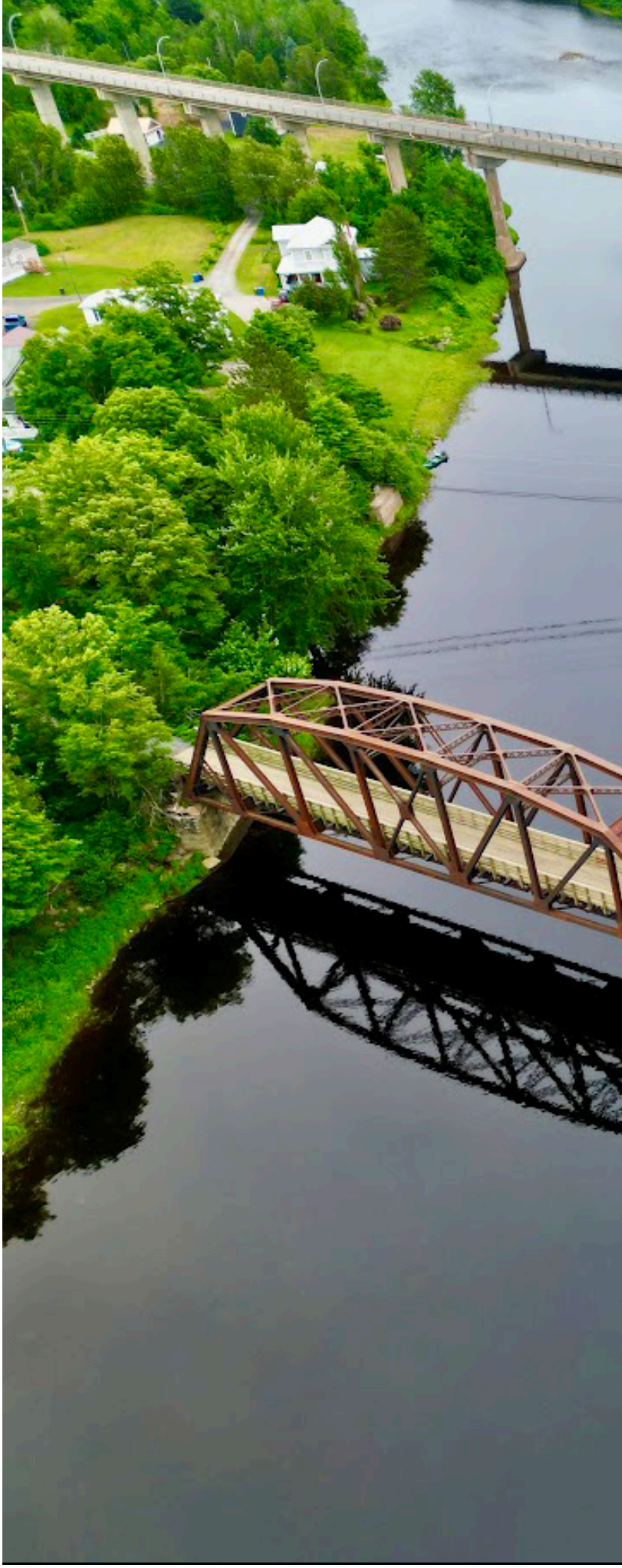
1. **Evaluate Existing Policy and Practices:** Assess planning policies and building inspection processes to identify strengths, inefficiencies, and opportunities for improvement.
2. **Enhance Customer Service and Engagement:** Improve communication, responsiveness, and transparency to better serve residents, developers, and stakeholders while fostering trust and collaboration.
3. **Optimize Organizational Resources:** Review staffing levels, roles, physical space, and technology to address challenges and ensure the department is equipped to manage workloads effectively.
4. **Improve Public Perception and Departmental Identity:** Develop strategies to strengthen the department's image, and promote its role in development, fostering a positive relationship with the community.

5. **Strengthen Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure alignment with provincial codes and standards while improving communication of regulatory requirements to the public.
6. **Benchmark Against Best Practices:** Compare GMSC's operations with similar municipalities to identify successful standards and innovative approaches that can inform local improvements.

As part of the work plan, a comprehensive methodology was developed that included four distinct phases:

- **Project Startup:** Establishing the scope, schedule, and engagement strategy.
- **Data Collection and Stakeholder Engagement:** Gathering qualitative and quantitative insights from staff, clients, and community stakeholders.
- **Comparative and Operational Analysis:** Benchmarking GMSC's operations and technologies against other Regional Service Commissions in New Brunswick and select municipalities in Nova Scotia.
- **Solution Development and Finalization:** Synthesizing findings into practical recommendations to improve service delivery and support regional growth.

This final report presents the outcomes of the review, offering a roadmap for operational enhancements that will help GMSC better serve its communities and support sustainable development across the Miramichi region.



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BACKGROUND REVIEW

Historical Overview

New Brunswick has recently experienced large-scale reform of its municipal governance. Through its April 2021 Green Paper *Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities* and the White Paper that followed in November 2021, the Province of New Brunswick made multiple changes to its municipal framework.[1] The Province reduced the number of municipal entities from 328, including 236 Local Service Districts (LSDs),[2] to 77 through consolidation and re-designation of existing municipalities and dissolution of the LSDs. The new municipalities, furthermore, were organized within 12 regions within which they were expected to collaborate to deliver several regional services mandated by the Province as well as to make other collaborative arrangements to deliver local services advantageously.

The restructuring culminated 50 years of reconsideration and adjustment to New Brunswick's municipal system that followed the dramatic changes that followed changes made following the Byrne Commission in 1968. At the time, the Province chose to abolish its system of county-based local governments. While the counties are still familiar to New Brunswickers as geographic identifiers, they ceased to exist as providers of local governance and services. Instead, cities, towns, and villages, which existed before 1968 continued to provide local services and the remaining areas of small settlements and rural land received the services they needed through LSDs formed for the purpose or directly from the Province.

The reorganization undertaken in 2022 involved two processes: municipalization and regionalization.[3] Municipalization involved the consolidation of LSDs and other rural lands in incorporated municipal governments by combining them with one or more existing municipalities or bringing two or more together in a new municipal structure with the overall goal of ensuring all areas of the province were subject to municipal government as they were under the county system. Regionalization organized the resulting municipal entities (i.e., existing, reformed, and newly created) into the 12 aforementioned regional service districts.

According to New Brunswick-born political scientists Zack and Jon Taylor, the regional service districts "are similar to municipalities in that they have the power to buy and sell property, enter into contracts, hire and fire staff, and so on." On their establishment, they state the regions were "mandated to 'provide or facilitate the provision' of regional planning and solid waste services to their constituent entities and manage land-use planning within unincorporated areas."[4]

While the transformation initiated in 2021 did not change the number of regions, the Province stated in the White Paper that it intended to "introduce changes to stabilize and increase [the] capacity

1 Government of New Brunswick, Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities A Green Paper, April 2021 and New Brunswick Environment and Local Government, Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities White Paper, November 2021.

2 Taylor, Zack and Taylor, Jon, "Representative Regionalization: Toward More Equitable, Democratic, Responsive, and Efficient Local Government in New Brunswick" (2021). Centre for Urban Policy and Local Governance – Publications. 5,.https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/urbancentre-reports/5, p. 10.

3 Ibid., pp. 20-22.

4 Ibid., p. 9.

[of the commissions] and build on their strengths." The paper proposed "interdependent changes and actions that include:

- Expanding the role and mandate of the regional service commissions.
- Strengthening the governance structure to allow for improved coordination including adjusted representation and voting processes.
- Realigning commission boundaries.
- Enhancing leadership and capacity by expanding the executive team.
- Requiring the development of a comprehensive regional strategy aimed at identifying the strengths and gaps in the region and establishing priorities and actions.
- Establishing standards and performance measures." [5]

The formulation of New Brunswick's new system of municipal governance is largely attributable to the Finn Commission, although some credit can also be given to the earlier Commission on Land Use and the Rural Environment (CLURE). The model for the regional districts now in place, furthermore, is similar to the system of regional districts created in BC in the 1960s.

Like New Brunswick from 1968 to 2022, BC in the early 1960s had no form of rural local government. The new fabric of regions has additional antecedents in New Brunswick. The province had a network of district planning commissions that date from the 1970s. The roots of the Greater Miramichi Regional Commission lie in that structure. Staff in the current commission and many of its responsibilities are traceable to the Miramichi District Planning Commission. The province also had solid waste commissions and a variety of inter-municipal arrangements for service delivery that are now organized within the new regional framework.

The 12 regions now in place are the direct descendants of 12 regions created by the Province in 2012 to replace 12 solid waste commissions and 12 land use planning commissions that served the province at the time and whose boundaries were moderately adjusted to conform to the new municipal entities.

New Brunswick's new system positions regional government as a framework within which communities organized as municipalities can receive services such as planning and solid waste management that benefit from economies of scale that are available within a larger regional structure as well as a broader view of the issues that must be addressed. The implementation of districts in New Brunswick differs significantly from BC insofar as the BC system originally avoided assigning any specific responsibilities to its regions and allowed them to essentially grow to address local needs.[6]

Whereas BC's regions began with a blank page, New Brunswick's regions were already served by organizations delivering planning and solid waste management service, both of which have a critical regional dimension. Planning, notably, must be addressed on both the regional and local levels. Issues like transportation and housing benefit from a regional perspective. The central issue of transportation, for example, is the management of commuting patterns, which create the maximum pressure on transportation infrastructure.

Commuting issues involve interaction between communities and modes that require a regional

5 New Brunswick Environment and Local Government, op cit., p. 18.

6 Walisser, Brian, G Paget and M Dann, 'New Pathways to Effective Regional Governance: Canadian Reflections' in Sansom, G and P McKinley (eds), New Century Local Government: Commonwealth Perspectives, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013, Chapter 9, p. 146.

perspective. There are also, of course, local issues such as neighbourhood traffic management and the application of traffic controls (e.g., intersection signalization) that have a local dimension.

Housing is another example. The housing market is invariably regional. Residents choose their housing location within their region based on the location of their work, schools, or other considerations. The overall demand for housing, therefore, is determined at the regional level, although housing units themselves are clearly delivered at the neighbourhood level. A central concern of planning is the reconciliation of regional needs for housing and non-residential development.

Solid waste has similar local and regional considerations but is also influenced by the extreme economies of scale that affect the development and operation of landfills. Contemporary landfills almost always serve a region and are often shared by more than one region. Collection services, on the other hand, are clearly delivered on the local level to individual properties.

The Province of New Brunswick added several more services to the mandate of regional commissions on the implementation of its reform program in 2022. Additions recommended in the White Paper were economic development, community development, regional tourism promotions, regional transportation (including transit), and cost-sharing on regional recreation infrastructure. The Province's stated intention was to "strengthen" the commissions.[7]

Land use planning, in any case, was identified as one of four pillars of the reform process in the Green Paper, along with the structure of local governance, regional collaboration, and finances.

7 New Brunswick Environment and Local Government, op cit., p. 18.

The paper expressed concern with "varying levels of planning" noting fundamental issues such as "urban sprawl, linear development, the need to protect natural resources and emerging issues related to climate change" that had largely been identified by the CLURE Commission in 1993 remained a serious concern.[8] While the RSCs had made progress in preparing and coordinating land use plans, the paper noted "about 50 per cent of LSDs have no land use plan" making them "more vulnerable to unwelcome development with attendant negative impact on property values and on the quality of life."[9]

Notwithstanding the clear benefits, implementing planning regulations in communities that are unfamiliar with them is challenging. A regional organization with centrally located offices such as the GMSC may be perceived as remote by residents in rural communities who may have to travel for more than an hour to meet with staff in person. Planning requirements such as separation distances and buffering requirements, furthermore, are often perceived as superfluous by rural residents, who often live on larger landholdings at considerable distances from neighbours and/or are simply accustomed to varied land uses in their vicinity.

All residents are adjusting as well to changes in their communities, some of which have reconfigured and re-named. For LSD residents, who were previously represented by appointed boards, changes include a shift to elected representatives serving on a local council, which is presumably viewed positively. Such changes, however, take time for residents to accept and understand, a transition that is now underway in Greater Miramichi as well as in other regional districts across the province.

The BC system that has influenced New Brunswick's new arrangement is well regarded. It has been in place in BC with minimal modification since its adoption and nearly all municipalities in the province are federated in a regional district. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador appears to be moving, albeit gradually, to the development of a similar framework to address issues in its municipal system, which is characterized by many small towns and extensive unorganized areas.

The districts in BC went through an initial period in which district leaders have said it had to prove its worth. Rural residents in unorganized areas were particularly resistant when the Province created the regional district system and have continued to be more skeptical than residents of urban communities. Presentations by leading administrators who experienced the districts' first 40 years emphasized that public outreach and education were critical to bringing the public inside. They also agreed that the flexibility of the regional district concept was vital to adapting to varied needs across the province, but communication and education have continued to be important. Some also noted the importance of managing relationships between municipal partners to encourage collaboration.[10]

While New Brunswick's regional districts have only recently been formed, they are not new. They have developed from previous regional commissions and the planning and solid waste organizations that preceded them. They are, however, a key feature of the province's new municipal structure and are facing the challenges of any organization dealing with a new context in which the roles and responsibilities of key players have been significantly changed.

8 Government of New Brunswick, op ci., p. 20.
9 Loc cit.

10 See: Local Government Knowledge Partnership, 40 Years: A Regional District Retrospective, Summary of Proceedings, 2009, pp. 1-11.

GMSC Overview

The GMSC oversees planning and building inspection services across a vast geographic area of 12,853 square kilometres in northeastern New Brunswick. Following the Province's 2023 local governance reform, GMSC's jurisdiction expanded to include the Rural Communities of Alnwick and Miramichi River Valley, the Village of Doaktown, the enlarged City of Miramichi, and the Greater Miramichi Rural District.

The GMSC currently operates out of 1773 Water Street, Miramichi, occupying the second floor of the building and using additional space, accessible via Loggie Drive, for Board of Director meetings, PRAC meetings, and other Commission-related business.

The department operates with a dedicated team of eight staff members, led by a Planning Director. The current Director of Planning splits their time between Planning and Operations, with roughly 40% dedicated to the Operations role and the remaining 60% applied to Planning. The remaining team includes a Building Inspection Services Manager/Development Officer, two

Building Inspectors, a Planning Services Manager, a Planner, a GIS Technician/Development Officer, an Approvals Coordinator/Development Officer, and an Office Administrator. Additionally, GMSC has recently transitioned from its contract with Maritime Enforcement Services and will now provide enforcement services directly under the GMSC umbrella.

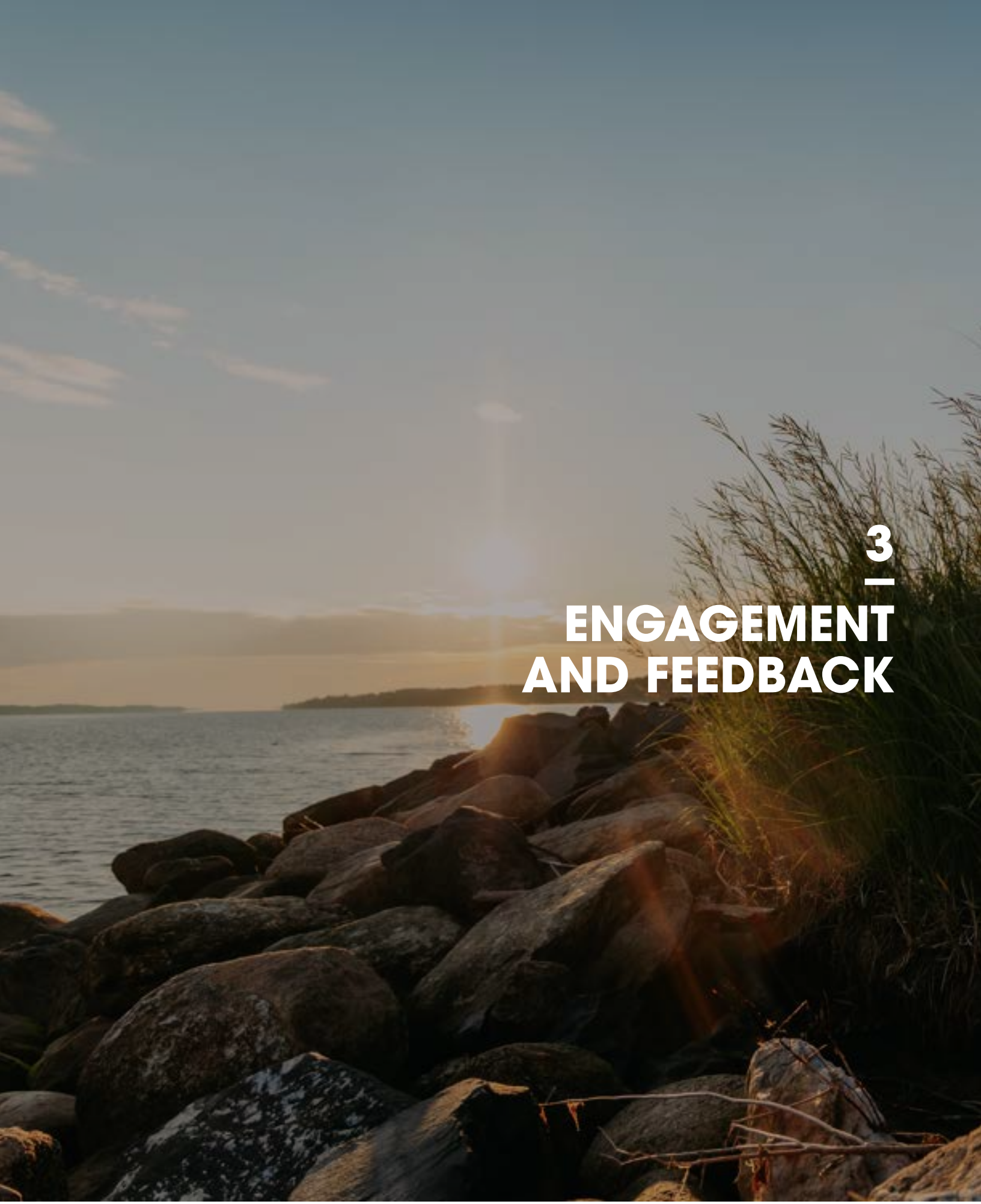
GMSC utilizes CloudPermit as its primary online platform for managing both permit and planning applications, streamlining service delivery across its communities.

According to the 2024 Annual Report, the following highlights in planning activity and permits were experienced at GMSC over the past year:

- Total construction value decreased from $30.3 million in 2023 to $136.8 million in 2024.
- Development activity remained concentrated in the City of Miramichi, which accounted for 89% of the region's total construction value. In addition, 56% of the building permits issued and 38% of the subdivision applications were in the City of Miramichi.
- 34.7% of permits issued were for residential buildings, accounting for 452 new dwelling units.
- The region saw 121 subdivision applications, resulting in 221 new lots.
- The regional PRAC met 10 times and considered a total of 29 applications.

Despite previous efforts to address service delivery issues through initiatives such as *Working Together: A Plan to Better Assist and Support Our Clients (2016 – 17),* followed by an Agenda Item *2020-3-7a Working Together Plan Update, and Greater Miramichi Regional Services Commission – Planning Services Communications Strategy (February 2021),* some client requirements remained unmet. These documents outlined strategies and plans to support and assist stakeholders, but service gaps have persisted.

In pursuit of continuous improvement, GMSC is undertaking a comprehensive operational review of its planning and building inspection services. This initiative aims to enhance the responsiveness and effectiveness of service delivery of its Development Services Division, building on previous efforts to address service gaps and longstanding challenges.



3
ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Consultation Methodology

The consultation sessions were conducted through a combination of online interviews, in-person sessions, and focus groups. The sessions were held on various dates and at different venues to ensure broad participation and representation.

In addition to the online interviews, the following meetings were held with stakeholders to gather further insights:

- Greater Miramichi Chamber of Commerce: February 25, 2025
- Development Community Drop-in Session #1: February 26, 2025
- Miramichi River Valley Rural Community: March 5, 2025
- Alnwick Rural Community: March 5, 2025
- City of Miramichi: March 11, 2025
- Village of Doaktown: March 11, 2025
- Development Community Drop-in Session # 2: March 12, 2025
- Greater Miramichi Rural District: March 21 and March 31, 2025
- GRSC Development Services Division Staff: July 17, 2025

The consultation sessions aimed to gather feedback from various stakeholders involved in the development and building process, including developers, builders, municipal council members, and other interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce. The analysis of data and documentation related to planning and building inspection processes was also conducted.

Interviews and consultations with key planning and building inspection personnel, including senior planning and development officer staff, application intake and processing staff, administrative staff, senior building inspectors, the Director of Operations and Planning, and the CEO, were carried out through a combination of virtual and in-person meetings.

The stakeholder consultations consisted of structured focus group sessions with the following participants:

- Building/Developer Sit-Down
- Miramichi Chamber of Commerce

The outcomes of the sessions were summarized in a short report that reflects the feedback and perspectives shared by participants. While some comments identified areas for improvement, others acknowledged the technical expertise and professionalism of Commission staff. The feedback presented in this section captures what was heard from the various stakeholders. Not all points shared were fact checked or further evaluated for justification given that the sessions were intended to be a listening exercise, aimed at capturing anecdotal insights and constructive criticism.

Feedback from Engagement Sessions

INTERVIEWS WITH GMSC SENIOR STAFF

The interviews with senior staff revealed several key insights and observations regarding the operational and strategic aspects of the organization. The following points summarize the main themes and feedback provided during these interviews:

Operational Challenges and Recommendations

- There is a need for a more standardized process to handle inquiries and regulatory laws. The current system lacks consistency and clarity, leading to confusion among staff and clients.
- The implementation of a Development Services Coordinator was suggested to improve customer service and public perception. It was suggested that the position be focused on assisting applicants with inquiries, permits, and funding opportunities, as well as confirming that submitted applications are completing and specifying the additional information required when they are not. It was also noted that this position could rotate throughout the various partner communities to provide specific guidance and in-person support with inquiries and applications.
- The suggested Development Services Coordinator position could bean elaboration of current responsibilities of the Approvals Coordinator, with appropriate training, but it is unlikely that the existing position could have capacity to visit partner communities and not leave the current office unstaffed.
- It was noted that staff need to understand their accountability to the public and the importance of customer service. Customer service training was identified as an initiative that should be embedded in the onboarding and continuing workplace education program.
- General inquiries are handled through the email address info@gmsc.ca, or they are directed to the appropriate staff member. The Approvals Coordinator, often the first point of contact and therefore there is an expectation among clients

that they will be efficiently directed to the next person.

- A client referral guide and specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are necessary, although current SOPs are very specific and lack standardization.
- The Cloudpermit system has been beneficial in tracking permit applications, but there are still misconceptions among developers about the process. Better communication and education about requirements and procedures are needed.

Staff and Budget Considerations

- The organization is facing staffing challenges, particularly in the development services area. There is a consensus that additional staff, such as building inspectors and development services coordinators, are needed to handle the increasing workload and ensure efficient operations.
- The budget for 2025 includes provisions for additional positions, but there is a need for careful planning and review to ensure these resources are effectively utilized. Since the consultation were carried out, a new building inspector has been hired. This is expected to assist with keeping pace with the current level of development activity, but there is still a need to evaluate the backlog and adequately prepare for succession planning.
- Cloudpermit system has made the job easier by providing accurate reports and bank statements. However, the software package is expensive.

Technology and Process Improvements

- The customization of the Cloudpermit system has taken longer than expected, but it has improved accuracy and efficiency in tracking applications and fees. There is a need to explore other technologies that may better fit the organization's needs.
- The Commission has a variety of resources to assist clients, but contacts noted a lack of digital material, such as checklists and pamphlets, was noted, along with the need to modernize existing material so that it provides clearer and more accessible information to clients, especially the older population.

Communication and Public Relations

- The potential for the organization to focus and improve communication with the public was mentioned repeatedly. The Commission needs to demystify existing stereotypes about planning and development services, including translating technical jargon into simpler language and using social media and other platforms to engage with the community.
- Some comments characterized staff as abrasive and derided the red tape associated with development processes. The regulatory environment, admittedly, is complex with many procedural requirements that can create barriers for applicants and contribute to delays in service delivery. A related gap is the absence of a clear, guiding document to help clients understand where they are in the process and what the next steps may be. Filling this gap was seen as an essential tool for improving transparency and reducing confusion throughout the development process.
- The need to communicate the benefits and value of obtaining Building and Development Permits was identified, including the legal requirements, safety, insurance coverage benefits, peace of mind, and other considerations. Permits not only address legal requirements, they also play a critical role in ensuring safety, structural integrity, and compliance with building codes.

While some stakeholders recognize this value, others do not. Some residents and builders are frustrated with the permit process and as a result, choose not to obtain a permit prior to construction. The complexity and time associated with the process were the main reasons identified.

- Similarly, the Commission needs to work cooperatively with the development community so that they understand Building and Development Permit requirements, including modernizing submission requirements with more professional documentation that was not required in the past.

Staff Planning and Policy

- Given the housing crisis, interviewees noted the need to work cooperatively with the development community, along with communicating the benefits of obtaining permits to the public. It was suggested that the organization could benchmark against other areas to ensure they are not asking for too much information from applicants.

INTERVIEWS WITH GMSC STAFF

The interviews, conducted individually through Microsoft Teams, spanned one hour to one hour and 45 minutes. The same set of questions, detailed in Appendix A, was used to ensure consistency in the replies. This approach helped effectively identify key themes and concerns including:

Customer Service and Internal Communication:

- **Strengths:** The department is recognized internally for its strong customer service, knowledgeable staff, and supportive work environment. Staff members are willing to learn and take on additional roles to assist clients. Internal communication is generally strong, with open doors and easy access to colleagues and supervisors.
- **Weaknesses:** Challenges include dealing with public misconceptions about the department's role, enforcing rules, and the need for better dissemination of information to the public. Internal communication has been affected by leadership changes and the retirement of long-serving staff, leading to challenges in adjusting to new leadership and rebuilding team cohesion.

Public Interaction and Misconceptions:

- **Challenges:** The public often misunderstands the department's role as consultants and regulators, expecting design solutions outside the department's scope. Recent changes to Provincial regulations have created confusion and dissatisfaction among clients. Better public education and resources are needed to address these issues. Complaints often stem from a lack of public knowledge about regulations and procedures, leading to frustration and, sometimes, aggressive behavior towards staff.

Space and Resources:

- **Challenges:** The department faces challenges related to physical space and resource allocation, that impact efficiency and staff morale. More physical space is needed to accommodate the growing team and keep Development Services staff in one building to continue to improve efficiency and collaboration. The departments are currently under-resourced and struggle to meet minimum requirements.

Technological Tools:

- **Challenges:** The effectiveness of the current online platform (Cloudpermit) was questioned. Better training and information sharing are

needed to improve understanding of the application. Staff have suggested exploring alternative platforms to enhance the review and approval process. Cloudpermit does not start tracking time until the application is complete, which can lead to delays. The platform has a checklist and can track the number of days to get a permit, but its functionality can be improved.

- There is also a disconnect between CloudPermit and the inspection process. Since the department operates on a request-based system, many files remain open indefinitely, frequently resurfacing as issues when flagged in the Gazette. At that stage, property owners must often hire engineers to verify completed work, since no inspections were conducted and the construction is no longer visible.

Staff Roles and Workload:

- **Challenges:** Staff expressed concern with the distribution of workload among staff and the need for additional resources to manage the increasing volume of applications. Staff feel their department is under-resourced. Most feel a Development Services Coordinator is needed to guide applicants through the process. The need could be addressed by shifting of responsibilities of the Approvals Coordinator.
- Many also suggested staff workloads should be reviewed. For example, one employee is serving as both the Planning Director and Director of Operations, while both of these roles have significant responsibilities and workloads. Similarly, another employee is splitting time between being the Commission's GIS Specialist and sole Subdivision Development Officer.

Communication and Training:

- **Opportunities:** Communication needs to be improved within the department and with the public, with a leading need to provide sensitivity training to help staff deal more effectively with diverse members of the community. Enhanced training for staff, particularly in using new technologies like Cloudpermit, is also needed. Staff have suggested hiring IT and social media/communications personnel in addition to the existing IT contracts and in-house Communications and Marketing staff to improve efficiency and public engagement. Better documentation and communication of regulatory changes to the public are needed.

Public Relations:

- **Opportunities:** Improving the department's image and public relations through proactive communication and engagement can help address reputational issues. Better public relations strategies will improve the department's reputation and make it more approachable and flexible. The department has done some work in this area but needs to continue educating one-time developers and the development community. It was noted that the new website will be a big improvement.

Policy and Regulatory Challenges:

- **Challenges:** Communicating Building Code requirements, such as the need for a registered professional engineer's stamp, is often misunderstood by the public. The department faces issues with buildings being constructed without permits, which has been addressed by engaging Maritime Enforcement Services. There have been concerning examples of houses being constructed without permits, impacting tax revenue. One of the other key challenges is the limited budget that restricts their ability to pursue legal action. As a result, regulations are not consistently enforced, leading to an increase in illegal development, as individuals recognize

that there are few consequences. To address these barriers, the department needs to better communicate the regulatory requirements and the benefits of the process to the public.

Development Prioritization:

- **Prioritization:** It was suggested that housing developments should be prioritized over other types of development given the current housing crisis. The department triages applications, processing complete applications first, similar to a passport application process. The average time to get a permit was recently estimated to be 12.5 workdays. The department also noted that it needs to ensure that plans stamped by an engineer or architect are still reviewed.

Leadership and Accessibility:

- **Leadership:** Strong leadership and clear communication are critical to the success of the department. Some staff suggested performance management is often used by employers to help employees and teams to improve work performance and implement the Commissions's strategic objectives.
- **Accessibility:** Some members of the public have complained about the difficulty of reaching some staff members. This has led to frustration among the public and a perception that the Commission is not accessible. The compressed work week was seen as compounding this issue, but there are identified ways to manage the issue.

Customer Service Accountability:

- **Accountability:** Staff must understand that they are accountable to the public and are in the customer service business. Some members of the public believe GMRSC staff are not responsive and are not willing to engage with an applicant to discuss options or head differing opinions on how a particular requirement may be interpreted, which can lead to negative public perceptions.
- **Development Services Coordinator:** Implementing a Development Services Coordinator or concierge-type service could be beneficial in improving customer service and public perception. This service could be both in and out of the office and specifically mandated to help guide applicants through the process and provide a more personalized experience. As noted previously, this could be integrated into the existing Approvals Coordinator position or piloted as a new position depending on the availability of financial resource.

Action Plan Implementation:

- **Time and Effort:** Implementing an action plan across the region will require time and effort. It is important to communicate this to the public and manage their expectations.

Key Themes and Concerns

The key themes and concerns noted in this section reflect the feedback and perspectives shared by participants. The feedback presented in this section is not entirely factual or comprehensive, but it offers a representation of what was heard.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETINGS

Communication and Consistency:

- **Red Tape**: Chamber members are concerned about excessive red tape and building permit requirements as well as inconsistent messaging, particularly among inspectors. There is a need for a comprehensive list of requirements, as engineers are sometimes overruled by building inspectors. Some of these concerns could be attributed to a developer's or resident's building experience.
- **Consistency:** Consistency in enforcement and communication is crucial. While the planning side is generally clear, there are more issues on the inspection side. The lack of consistency creates challenges, especially when inspectors go on vacation, putting pressure on other inspectors and that backfilling open permits is not able to take place because of the number of employees. The lack of consistency creates challenges, particularly when inspectors are on vacation, as it puts additional pressure on others and prevents backfilling of open permits due to limited staffing.

Dispute Resolution:

- **Lack of Dispute Process:** There is no local avenue to dispute the interpretation of the Building Code, which is a significant issue. A dispute process or some form of flexible negotiation is needed, particularly with architectural aspects. Fire, safety, and accessibility are major stumbling blocks.

Permit Process:

- **Permit Issuance and Closure:** When a permit is issued and the assigned inspector leaves, it must be closed by a new inspector, often leading to confusion and delays due to differing interpretations. These delays may also be attributed to applicants failing to request final inspections.
- **Enforcement vs. Facilitation:** Some residents see inspectors more as enforcers than facilitators. They do not necessarily provide feedback with customer service in mind and sometimes are seen as not being solution oriented.

Developer Experience:

- **Overwhelmed Developers:** Developers, especially inexperienced ones, often feel overwhelmed by the requirements. They sometimes inquire about starting projects too late and do not want to accept "no" for an answer.
- **Communication Plan:** A communication plan would improve the interface with developers. The front desk experience needs to be more welcoming, and there should be a better understanding of the communication role.

Public Perception and Education:

- **Permit Process Perception:** People feel that

getting a permit is a frustrating process and an expense, leading them to avoid it. There is a stereotype that permits are a nuisance, and there is still sticker shock on the price of plans.

- **Education:** There is an opportunity to partner with insurance companies and financial institutions to educate people on the importance of the permit process for safety. This could help change the negative perception of the permit process.

Online Permitting Process:

- **Pros and Cons:** The online permitting process has its advantages and disadvantages. Someone needs to be in the office at all times to answer questions and help people navigate the process.
- **Facilitator Role:** If hiring another Development Coordinator or concierge position is not possible, having a facilitator to help people through the process would be beneficial. As noted above, this could be shifting of responsibilities of the Approval Coordinator or piloting a new position.

Inspector Training and Liability:

- **Training:** Specific training was identified as a gap. Inspectors as well as other staff could be provided with a better understanding where their liability starts and stops. This could help with their approach and comfort in their role, particularly with respect to interpreting the Code and Act requirements. Specific legal training should be identified to help overcome this issue.

Communication Methods:

- **Email Communication:** Email sometimes works, but people do not always read them. A more effective way is needed to communicate with developers and the public. While phone calls also have shortcomings, multiple

communication techniques, including SMS should be explored.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The council sessions were held on various dates and times to gather feedback from elected officials and senior staff members on the development services provided by the GMSC. These sessions aimed to collect valuable insights and perspectives from different communities to identify key themes and concerns related to the development services. As noted above, the Council sessions were held as follows:

- Miramichi River Valley Rural Community: March 5, 2025
- Alnwick Rural Community: March 5, 2025
- City of Miramichi: March 11, 2025
- Village of Doaktown: March 11, 2025
- Greater Miramichi Rural District: March 21 and March 31, 2025.

The Council sessions highlighted several themes, including:

Public Education and By-Law Enforcement

- The need for public education and pop-up events to bring the development community together and for the GMSC to be more visible in their communities was emphasized.
- Concerns were raised about by-law enforcement officers being regarded as police officers, which may send the wrong impression and lead to compliance out of fear rather than understanding.
- The importance of customer service and the well-being of the community was discussed, along with suggestions for improving online permitting and considering a satellite presence in rural communities.

Communication and Staffing

- Better communication and a checklist for applicants to understand the approval process were suggested.
- Interest in having a seasoned building enforcement officer and reevaluating staffing needs around enforcement was expressed.
- Suggestions for a Development Services Coordinator position and proactive communication about permit revenues were made.

National Building Code and Consistency

- The rigidity of the National Building Code and the need for more subjective, but justifiable interpretations were discussed.
- Communication issues were noted and, particularly, the need for a transition from technical language to layman's terms were highlighted.
- Concerns about preferential treatment were expressed (mainly based on the experiences of developers), and the need for consistency between inspectors was raised, along with suggestions for rebranding and improving the Cloudpermit system.

Internet Challenges and Customer Service Policies

- Internet challenges in rural areas and the lengthy permit process for routine, rural-based permits, such as decks, and accessory buildings were highlighted.
- The need for customer service-focused policies and clear communication was emphasized.
- Concerns about favoritism being shown to some developers and the importance of timely permit reviews were discussed, along with suggestions

for a development or housing concierge position to guide people through the permitting process, preferably in-person.

Training and Succession Planning

- The need for customer service and clarity in the permit process was emphasized.
- Concerns about inconsistencies from one employee to another (mainly with respect to interpretation) and the need for customer service training were raised.
- Suggestions for performance evaluations and succession planning, including resources and cross-training, were made, along with the importance of visibility in the community and addressing the housing crisis.

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

The developer focus group sessions were held on various dates and times to gather feedback from developers on the development services. While only one session was originally planned, a second event was added to help increase participation. These sessions were informal drop-in style events and were aimed at collecting valuable and frank insights and perspectives from the developer community to identify key themes and concerns related to the development services. Both sessions were held at the Travelodge by Wyndham Miramichi with the first session held on February 26 and the second on March 12. Both sessions were held from 10 am - noon.

Information Requirements and Inspection Issues

- Developers expressed concerns about the amount of information required, including engineering drawings for air exchangers and fire caulking.
- Issues were raised about inspectors missing items during initial inspections and bringing them up at the final inspection, leading to additional costs.
- Developers felt that inspectors were trying to override engineers, and some felt uneasy about speaking-up without retaliation.
- There appears to be a desire for someone, such as an ombudsperson (or an organization) to adjudicate differing opinions on the National Building Code. Often, builders share as much or more experience with the Code than the inspectors do, but there does not appear to be an interest in listening to another interpretation.
- Concerns were raised about the public not knowing the permit process.
- Developers emphasized the importance of consistency between inspectors and the need for more staff.

Communication and Customer Service

- Developers highlighted the rigidity of the National Building Code and the need for more subjective interpretations but stressed that safety is key.
- Communication issues and the need for a transition from technical language to layman's terms were discussed.
- It was suggested that the senior leadership of the Commission needs to be more engaged in the inspection process and that performance management needs to be implemented so that the culture within the organization changes.
- There was a need for better communication and a checklist for applicants to understand the approval process at the start of the process.

- Developers felt that inspectors were treating them as if they were trying to get around the rules and were identifying issues at the end that cost thousands of dollars to fix.
- There were concerns about the enforcement being overboard, mainly in their interpersonal approaches and the need for inspectors to realize the mandate of the Commission is to serve the public.
- Developers stressed the importance of a heads-up approach and the need for a conversation about issues, so that major changes are not identified at the final inspection.

CloudPermit System and Training

- Developers raised issues with the CloudPermit system, including the need for more personal communication and the problematic remarks section.
- There was a need for someone in the office to answer questions and help people navigate the process.
- Developers suggested partnering with insurance companies and financial institutions to educate people on the importance of the permit process for safety.
- The online permitting process can be overwhelming and has pros and cons, and there was a need for someone in the office to answer questions.
- Developers emphasized the importance of understanding the benefits of a permit and the need for a reset given the change in senior leadership.

The developer focus group sessions collectively emphasized the need for improved communication, consistency, and customer service in the permit process. Developers suggested proactive measures such as public education, standardizing the review checklist, and partnering with other organizations to enhance community engagement and trust.

A key theme from these sessions was the need for a more constructive approach to the Building Permit process. Developers repeatedly noted that inspectors are reluctant to listen to alternative interpretations and work with them to find proactive solutions.

4
COMPARATIVE AND OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

Comparative Analysis

Stantec conducted a comparative analysis of similar jurisdictions to better understand the operational realities and challenges faced by similar development approval organizations. The analysis included an assessment of online platforms — their strengths and weaknesses — as well as staff training and administrative time, development service tools, and customer service strategies. Staffing considerations in this review were limited to planning, development, inspection, and supporting personnel. In addition to reviewing publicly available information, planning directors from the reviewed agencies were contacted to gain deeper insights into their development services and operational challenges.

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

Southeast Regional Service Commission (SERSC) serves the Cites of Moncton and Dieppe; Towns of Cap-Acadie, Riverview, Salisbury, Shediac, and Tantramar; Villages of Fundy Albert, Memramcook, and Three Rivers; and Maple Hills and Strait Shores Rural Communities. The region is located in Southeast New Brunswick where it abuts the Province of Nova Scotia. It is centred on Moncton and includes suburban and rural communities surrounding the city. The SERC delivers community and social development, economic development, infrastructure cost-sharing, land planning, tourism, transportation, and waste management. Some municipalities pay the Commission for mosquito management services.

Development Activity:

- According to the SERSC's 2023 Annual Report, the total value of new development and construction in the Southeast Region hit a record high of $800 million, a 14.6% increase from the year before.
- As the major hub of New Brunswick, the SERSC is experiencing its fastest growth in years. The core is becoming increasingly dense, and apartments are being introduced in areas where that used to almost exclusively single-detached homes.

Staffing Considerations:

- The SERSC consists of 28 staff members, including 10 Planners, 6 Building Inspectors, 7 Development Officers, 4 GIS Technicians, and supporting staff.
- Additional staff are needed to deal with increased demand and workload; however, finding the right candidates is challenging.

Planning Services:

- The SERSC provides services to 12 municipalities and a rural district (Cap-Acadie, Dieppe, Fundy Albert, Maple Hills, Memramcook, Moncton, Riverview, Salisbury, Shediac, Strait Shores, Tantramar, Three Rivers, Southeast Rural District).
- Generally, each partner municipality seeks more efficient service, less complicated plans, and fewer restrictions.
- The municipalities that once competed for development are now working collaboratively on regional growth and development.

Operational Challenges:

- One of the ongoing challenges is tracking and maintaining the information received in the digital database. The SERSC is currently working on providing more feedback to the software developer to help automate additional functions and improve overall efficiency.

Dispute Resolution:

- Complaints received by the SERSC are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Most are due to a lack of understanding of the processes, highlighting the need for greater public education about the profession and its procedures.
- Complaints are submitted through an official form. Once processed, they are addressed if an infraction is identified. However, due to the high volume of applications and complaints, combined with fast-paced growth in the region, the Commission does not have the capacity to handle complaints through one-on-one calls.

Technology Use:

- The SERSC collaborated with an external software developer to use a customized version of Modified FileMaker as their comprehensive digital database. The transition to this system was implemented five years ago and included customizations to meet the specific needs of the SERSC. While there are plans to enhance certain features for improved efficiency, the Commission has no intention to switch to a different program or software.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

Southwest Regional Service Commission (SWRSC) serves the Town of Saint Andrews; the Villages of McAdam and Grand Manan; the Municipal District of St. Stephen; the Rural Communities of Campobello Island, Fundy Shores, and Eastern Charlotte; and the Southwest Rural District. The region covers the southwest corner of New Brunswick and is on the border with the United States. The Commission provides solid waste management, land use planning, development and building inspection, regional economic development, regional tourism promotion, recreation cost-sharing services, and community development services including public transportation planning.

Development Activity:

- The SWRSC's 2023 Annual Report observed a decrease in development activity compared to previous years.
- The total estimated construction value decreased from $59.16 million in 2021 but increased from $44.95 million in 2022, reaching $48.71 million in 2023.
- The year 2021 marked a peak in development activity, and levels have remained relatively consistent or lower.

Staffing Considerations:

- The SWRSC consists of 10 development staff members, including a Planning Director, a Senior Planner, a Planner, a Senior Development Officer, a Development Officer, a GIS Technician / Junior Development Officer, an Administrative Officer / Enforcement Officer, and four Building Inspectors including two full-time, one half-time, and one contract-based building inspector.
- The team size currently seems adequate,

provided the work is streamlined and permit files are delegated to junior staff in a timely manner to prevent bottlenecks.

- Some roles are shared between two areas – for example, the GIS Technician also performs the tasks of a Development Officer as needed. Similarly, one individual provides both administrative support and serves as an enforcement officer when needed. Contract positions are intended to offer the same flexibility as required.

Planning Services:

- The SWRSC provides planning services to seven local governments and 1 rural community (Fundy Shores, Eastern Charlotte, Saint Andrews, Southwest Rural District, McAdam, Grand Manan, Municipal District of St. Stephen, Rural Community of Campobello Island).
- There is ongoing pressure for local control, driven by concerns that the matters referred to the regional level are likely to result in decisions driven by legal principles rather than local sentiment.
- A few local governments are seeking a more hands-on role in planning by establishing their own advisory committees; however, if this happens, a strong contract may be necessary to ensure the local municipalities are solely accountable for their decisions, as these may get influenced by political preferences.
- Although the term for receiving planning services from the SWRSC is renewable, local governments are required to actively opt out. At present, no local governments have expressed a desire to do so.

Operational Challenges:

- Rapid changes in provincial legislation often add steps, requiring constant efforts to keep up with evolving requirements.
- The planning appeal process can be initiated at no cost, which demands a significant amount of dedicated staff time to manage. While the intent was to create a more accessible and inclusive system, it is often misused, with many appeals submitted for frivolous reasons. A legal threshold or standing may be required to ensure the validity of the appeals.

Dispute Resolution:

- Several complaints have been raised regarding the Building Code and red tape. However, the

SWRSC is simply enforcing codes created by the the Federal Government or the Province through legislation or by local governments through plans and bylaws and has little to no control over these regulations.

- Customer service involves documenting all interactions and providing the public with specific details, code references, and photographs to assist in correcting identified issues.
- A cultural shift is required, as planning and building inspection are relatively new for individuals who have historically built homes without the need for permits or oversight. While the red tape complaints relate to fairly standard practices in larger communities, they require some learning and a shift in mindset for similar local governments and their constituents.
- The SWRSC has an HR system in place to receive and investigate formal written complaints. This process includes a preliminary investigation to gather details and ensure a fair and transparent system for assessing the legitimacy of each complaint.
- Employees receive customer service training on effectively engaging with members of the public. One of the key challenges is overcoming the common stereotypes associated with going to government offices, such as a perceived lack of enthusiasm, which may stem from burnout caused by frequent or negative public interactions. The training aims to shift the mindset that the public is the problem. Instead of reacting defensively and contributing to a negative experience, staff are encouraged to communicate with openness and compassion, creating a more positive and constructive environment overall.

Technology Use:

- In early 2023, the SWRSC rolled out a comprehensive digital permit platform developed by planning staff called MachForm.
- This user-friendly and cost-effective software allows applicants to complete forms online, while officers can review submissions, conduct inspections, and upload photos, all within a single platform. A key advantage is that the information can be accessed on mobile devices, and annual updates to the platform can be performed internally as needed. Previously, the process relied on PDF forms requiring manual data entry; the new digital system streamlines this by limiting it to a single file, improving overall efficiency.

FUNDY REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

Fundy Regional Service Commission (FRSC) serves the City of Saint John; the Towns of Grand Bay-Westfield, Hampton, Quispamsis, and Rothesay; the Village of Fundy St. Martins; and Fundy Rural District. The region is centred by the City of Saint John and incorporates surrounding suburban towns and rural areas. The Commission is responsible for solid waste management, community planning and building inspection services, regional public safety, regional transportation, community development, regional facilities, and economic development and tourism promotion.

Development Activity:

- According to the FRSC's 2023 Annual Report, the total estimated cost of construction in their jurisdiction was $17.15 million. Development in 2024 and over the past couple of years in

general has remained fairly consistent. While the number of permits has decreased, the estimated value has remained nearly the same, as costs have increased.

- While recent development has focused on single-detached homes, some potentially exciting projects are underway this year, including a provincial park welcome center and some small prefab apartment buildings.

Staffing Considerations:

- The FRSC consists of three development staff members, including a Planning Director, a Building Inspector, and a Development Officer.
- Since they provide services to one rural district and one local municipality, the work is manageable and additional staff are not required.
- More training for development officers is needed.

Planning Services:

- While planning services are available to all entities within the region, currently only used by Fundy Rural District (FRD) and Fundy-St. Martins (FSM).
- Local planning services are voluntary and only members using the service pay for the cost. However, under the *Community Planning Act*, rural districts are required to take planning services from the RSC.
- Due to the voluntary nature of planning services offered by the RSC and its previous inability to provide comprehensive planning support, other communities have not considered engaging its services. However, the recent addition of a local planner has fully equipped the organization to deliver complete planning services. The current challenge is to effectively demonstrate their capability.

Operational Challenges:

- One of the biggest challenges is the lack of communication and the spread of misinformation. While Fundy St. Martins recognizes the value in the services provided by the RSC, the Fundy Rural District has been challenging due to inaccurate information being shared with the public through the Rural District Advisory Committee. This misinformation often relates to building permits and development permits.
- The spread of misinformation is exacerbated by limited public understanding of planning matters.

Dispute Resolution:

- Complaints are received by the RSC a few times a week, with an increase in volume during the spring.
- The current process for resolving complaints is largely manual and informal, typically starting with emails followed by phone calls. Previously, a contracted company handled enforcement, supported by an online submission system. However, that system is no longer in place.
- Most complaints involve civil matters, such as whether a development complies with the plan or whether a neighbour is permitted to conduct a certain activity.

Technology Use:

- Currently, the conduct of planning processes is entirely manual, but there is hope to incorporate a digital system into the upcoming year's workflow, given its benefits such as reduced risk and increased efficiency.

KENT REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

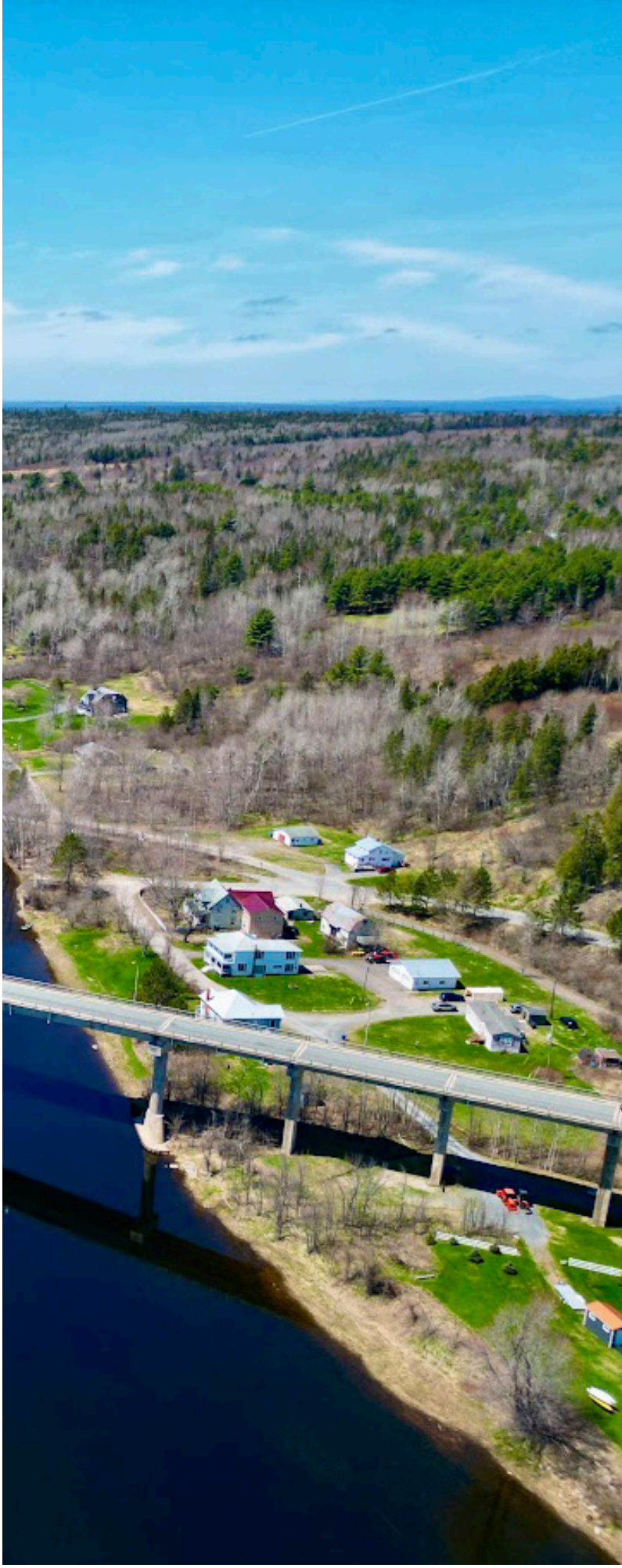
The Kent Regional Service Commission (KRSC) includes the Towns of Beaurivage, Champdoré, and Grand Bouctouche; the Villages of Five Rivers and Nouvelle-Arcadie; the Rural Community of Beausoleil; and Kent Rural District. The region borders the eastern limits of Greater Miramichi. The largest communities in the region are Bouctouche and Richibucto, which is now part of Beaurivage. The Commission offers planning; solid waste management; public safety; recreation, sports and culture; and community development services.

Development Activity:

- According to the Commission's 2024 Annual Report the RSC issued 503 building permits during the year with a total value just over $100 million. While the total number of permits is a slight decrease from 2023 when 513 were approved, permit value was up almost 58.7% from $63 million. Over the past four years, the RSC has consistently surpassed its previous records in terms of construction value. While the number of permits has remained steady, there has been an increase in multi-residential units compared to previous years.
- The RSC is working to amend local bylaws to permit more units, particularly for affordable housing, in order to address the region's housing shortage and support growth and employment.

Staffing Considerations:

- The KRSC consists of 9 development staff members, including a Planning Director, a Senior Planner, a Development Officer / GIS Technician, 3 Building Inspectors, 1 Admin Assistant, 1 Geomatic Analyst, and 1 Development Officer / Junior Planner.
- The RSC serves as a training ground for



inspectors, but inspectors often move to larger communities, leaving the RSC in a constant process of teaching staff.

- All staff are cross-trained in development activities to work at different levels, although planners are sometimes more hesitant to undergo cross-training.
- The region consists of local districts that did not previously have planning services, so a significant effort to develop new procedures and educate the public concerning these processes.
- With some staff retiring, succession planning is an important challenge.

Planning Services:

- The KRSC provides planning services to the Towns of Bouctouche and Richibucto; the Villages of Saint-Antoine, Rexton, Saint-Louis-de-Kent and Rogersville; and the Rural Community of Cocagne. Building and subdivision services are provided to unincorporated areas.
- The communities pay for planning services and repeatedly turn to the RSC, as they lack their own planning departments and necessary staff. Collectively, they can afford regional services, but they often demand immediate results, not realizing that these are shared services with many other partners.
- Some communities have considered funding their own services, but when they reach the budget stage and attempt to find the right bilingual staff, they have stalled.
- The goal is to establish a planning framework that can be applied consistently across regions, ensuring uniformity.
- Post-COVID, the RSC has have received several unusual requests, such as grotto houses, tree houses, and domes. While engineers are brought on board to approve the structures, they often turn vacant after a few years.
- Another challenge for KRSC is the addition of dwelling units in backyards. While this has become common in larger communities, their bylaws do not yet accommodate additional dwelling units. This has led to unpleasant public meetings and NIMBYism, making it difficult to address.

Operational Challenges:

- Re-doing seven plans in three years is challenging, especially in rural areas where many residents may not fully understand the planning process. Clear examples of potential outcomes are required to encourage participation.
- The RSCs play a key educational role. About 50% of their mandate involves explaining the process to residents and gaining their voluntary involvement. The goal is to ensure that people are informed and protected from potential unfavourable decisions that could be made by developers or Council.
- The political cycle influences outcomes, with Councillors often inclined to make popular decisions as local elections approach. Additionally, each election brings a new onboarding process for Councillors, leading to challenges in public awareness and a loss of institutional knowledge and time.

Dispute Resolution:

- Many people do not contact the RSC for required and timely inspections, and when they do, often after selling their property, it is too late for an RSC-led inspection, requiring them to hire a private inspector instead. Since last year, the RSC has implemented a system to red flag properties that have not completed the five

mandatory inspections. Once all inspections are completed, the flag is removed. However, less than half of the flagged properties have had their issues resolved, resulting in a large number of open-ended files.

- All formal complaints are documented. However, in terms of information retention, it is mandatory to destroy files every seven years, and staff have received workshops on how to properly do so.
- A small percentage of people are reluctant to engage with the RSC on planning matters. When a project is started without a permit, the RSC encourages individuals to reach out to staff rather than immediately issuing a stop-work order. This softer approach has significantly reduced the number of complaints. If the individual refuses to comply, a formal registered letter is sent to stop the project.
- Most complaints are received at the beginning of new projects, often driven by curiosity and a lack of understanding. The RSC aims to be as transparent as possible, but there are questions they either cannot answer due to privacy concerns. This sometimes leads the same individuals to escalate their complaints to higher authorities.

Technology Use:

- During the past five years, the RSC has made significant progress in adopting and implementing new technology. They have been using CloudPermit and plan to buy other modules to service other departments.
- Despite having a system in place, some members of the public are hesitant to use the website to create an application. This is typically the case for individuals submitting a one-time application for a single property, requiring staff to complete data entry on their behalf. The platform is more effectively used by repeat applicants, who are comfortable filling out applications and submitting their documents online.

EASTERN DISTRICT PLANNING COMMISSION

The Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC) is the last organization remaining from a network of regional planning commissions that at one time covered most of Nova Scotia. Whereas several other commissions broke apart over the years as municipalities withdrew, the EDPC expanded from its base in Port Hawkesbury and Richmond County to take in additional municipalities in Cape Breton and the northeast Nova Scotia mainland. The Commission currently provides planning, subdivision, and building inspection services for the Counties of Antigonish, Inverness, Richmond, and Victoria; and the Towns of Port Hawkesbury and Antigonish.

Development Activity:

- According to the EDPC's 2023 Annual Report, a total of 816 permits were issued during the year, with a total value of $188.6 million. The number of permits issued decreased compared to the previous year (1,029 to 816); however, the average value of construction per building permit increased by 8.6%.
- Generally, a market response to the need for housing and a shift in the type of housing has been observed.

Staffing Considerations:

- The EDPC consists of 14 staff members, including 12 development staff members comprised of a Planning Director, a Senior Development Officer, 2 Senior Planners, a Planner, a Planning Technician, a Manager of

Inspection Services, 3 Senior Building and Fire Inspectors, and 2 Building and Fire Inspectors.

- Staffing appears sufficient on the building inspection side, but planning staff and development officers are needed.
- Some cross-training has occurred out of necessity, equipping some employees with basic skills for tasks that overlap with other roles.
- Overall, staff learn constantly on the job.
- Finding qualified professional staff in rural Nova Scotia remains a challenge.

Planning Services:

- The EDPC provides services to four Counties (Antigonish, Inverness, Richmond, Victoria) and two Towns (Port Hawkesbury, Antigonish).
- Some entities view EDPC planning services as an extension of municipal planning, a line department, and treat it as such, which is a positive approach. Others, however, see it as a separate entity and mistakenly regard municipal documents, such as zoning by-laws, as district planning documents. These documents are simply administered by the EDPC, but this misunderstanding often results in municipal issues being misinterpreted as EDPC planning problems. Nonetheless, from the public's point of view, there is little distinction between the two.
- There is some coordination across municipalities, but this tends to result more from the structure and function of the Commission rather than intentional collaboration. As a commission, they are in a position to identify successful practices in one county that they can apply to others.
- Some member municipalities have discussed withdrawing from the Commission, but the legislation makes the process difficult, requiring a year's notice. For instance, Richmond County gave notice but later decided to remain, which misuses the intent of the process. When a county submits notice, it is expected to use that time to prepare for transition, rather than deciding whether to leave or stay. Ideally, a municipality should assess its capacity, possibly with support from a consultant, to determine whether it can provide the necessary services independently before submitting a withdrawal request.

Operational Challenges:

- No additional significant challenges were identified.

Dispute Resolution:

- The EDPC recognizes two types of complaint processes. The first relates to staff complaints and personnel conduct, which are investigated by the Director. The second involves complaints about violations of the Building Code, subdivision regulations, or land use bylaws, including complaints such as neighbours building without permits. In most cases, complaints are unfounded, but the processes are followed regardless.
- Liability insurance premiums for errors and omissions has been increased signficantly, as lawsuits against the RSC can result in substantial payouts.
- When decisions are not favourable to members of the public, or when a stop work order is issued, they are sometimes perceived as stemming from personal bias or being pro-development.
- In terms of customer service, a stop work order is issued immediately when a process is not followed correctly. Afterward, the RSC seeks voluntary compliance, and if that fails, tickets may be issued.
- While misinformation may occasionally lead to complaints, applicants are generally well-informed about the processes. Most complaints arise simply because individuals are told they cannot proceed with something they want to do.

Technology Use:

- The need for permit tracking software is being reviewed, especially since receiving monies from the Housing Accelerator Fund, which is expected to increase application volume and require faster turnaround time. At present, there is no online portal for the public to submit documents electronically, and all correspondence is conducted via email.
- While a digital system should improve efficiency, the Director expressed some doubts about the benefits for a few reasons. Current turnaround time for permits is already minimal, sometimes as quick as the same day, and the process involves very little red tape. Additionally, since digital portals often require step-by-step compliance (e.g., one attachment must be uploaded to proceed to the next step and so on). The Commission is concerned that applicants may upload irrelevant information simply to complete an application.

Technology Review

Stantec identified four leading building permitting software providers — Computronix, Amanda, CityView, and Accela — and conducted a review of these platforms, along with CloudPermit, the software currently used by the GMSC. The review aimed to understand differences in features, costs, and customizability to determine which solution may best meet the needs of the GMSC. The analysis included an assessment of planning, permitting, and inspection functionalities, as well as general add-ons that support integration with existing processes. In addition to reviewing publicly available information, staff from the respective companies were contacted to gain insights into the features and pricing of each platform.

COMPUTRONIX

Founded in 1979, Computronix is an award-winning Canadian-based provider of fully integrated software solutions for state and local government agencies across North America. Its platform is currently used by several major municipalities, including the City of Pittsburgh (PA), City of Calgary (AB), City of Edmonton (AB), Halifax Regional Municipality (NS), and Clark County (WA). Designed to automate workflows across building, planning, engineering, permitting, inspections, code enforcement, and other land management activities, Computronix offers a browser-based solution that streamlines processes for internal staff, external agencies, contractors, and citizens alike. The system uses a single-tenant environment, which means each customer gets their own private environment. This separation helps provide enhanced data security compared to shared platforms. Costs are generally at the higher end of the market, with a one-time implementation fee typically ranging from $1.5 to $2 million—or more, depending on the scope of services. Annual Software as a Service (SaaS) fees for licensing and hosting range from $350,000 to $500,000, with additional support services offered at bronze, silver, and gold levels, scaled to the implementation cost. The licensing model is layered, including module-based licensing, named user access for municipal staff, and mobile licensing for inspectors. The average implementation timeline is approximately 18 months.

Planning

- Information Organization – Links all facets of planning engagement so planners can assess, evaluate, record, and retrieve all related information effectively.
- Integrated Conditions Management – Manages conditions that arise during planning reviews, so applicants can be made aware of each condition that needs to be met before moving to the next phase in the application. This also allows staff to easily record new conditions, identify outstanding conditions, and track when conditions are met.
- Comprehensive Public Portal – Allows staff and public to work together in a fully integrated system to track planning, public hearings and outcomes, and decision-making activities.
- Community Notifications – Notifies surrounding property owners of any relevant activity. The "buffered notification" process uses GIS to automatically identify surrounding parcels within a user-defined range and create automated mail-

outs for all property owners.

- Approval Times and Stakeholder Input – The eReferral functionality allows the agency to streamline the referral process by engaging with other departments and external agencies electronically. This allows users to view, modify, or comment on the referral packet, with all changes instantly captured in the system, shortening overall approval times. It also helps expedite the referral process and instantly captures and manages input from all stakeholders.

Permitting & Inspections

- Tracks all permitting and building inspection activity, from initial application to completion, renewal, or expiration.
- Provides a vast library of preconfigured workflows and permit times, based on International Code Council (ICC) best practices, and full compatibility with our existing permitted structure and metadata.
- Links all aspects of the data allowing easy navigation between any related data elements. For example, permits are associated with parcels or street segments, and they can be grouped together into projects.
- PLS Workflow syncs the list of inspections on the inspectors to do lists for them to be up to date. Mobile integration allows inspectors to take pictures, attach documents, insert free-form comments, or pick from a pre-defined list of standard clauses and Code references.
- The public portal guides individuals and organizations through all steps of the permit application process, including application details, required documents, and permit application fees. It also allows permits to be created electronically and printed directly by applicants.
- Remote mobile access also provides customer self-service for expedited permit application, inspection requests, and scheduling and review of inspection results.

EPlans

- Complete electronic review processes that integrate land management permitting workflows, online plan submission, review, and markup tools.
- Transparent and open collaboration amongst all plan contributors with comparative plan

overlays for easy and immediate analysis of plan changes, notes, and current status (es).

- Multiple parallel plan review workflows, unlimited document change history, easy access to document lists, and auto-categorization of plans supporting a quicker plan review process.
- Pre-configured workflows tailored to stakeholder needs, email invitations for intra-agency collaboration, and a powerful public portal allows everyone to view the same information without requiring network drives/remote servers, leading to increased efficiencies and reduced planning delays/costs.
- The GIS location information is mapped directly to project files.

AMANDA

AMANDA (Permitting, Compliance & Licensing), supplied by Granicus, is an enterprise case-management system that has been evolving for decades. It digitizes complex regulatory workflows—including permitting, licensing, land/construction management, compliance, inspections, and Freedom of Information (FOI) processes—helping government agencies reduce costs, improve operations, and modernize citizen services. It enables agencies to design customizable online forms and workflows, supports mobile (including offline) inspection capabilities, and automates compliance processes to mitigate human error and enhance efficiency. The platform is actively in use by municipalities such as Coquitlam (BC), Seattle (WA), Aurora (IL), Gainesville (FL), and the Province of Nova Scotia. While exact pricing can vary, the average cost is around USD 18,000 per year, with adjustments depending on the required scope of services.

- Digitized workflows and interactions to simplify daily operations, improve customer service, and modernize Permitting Compliance and Licensing (PCL) and Freedom of Information (FOI) processes, including land and construction management and professional and business regulation.
- Flexible and scalable features that allow organizations to reduce costs, increase revenue, improve operations, and stay in compliance.
- Improve operations to enable employees to complete inspections in the field with mobile devices, whether online or off, and handle permit and licensing applications with ease.
- Enhance workflows across departments and enable disparate systems to converge or be replaced.
- Secure, enterprise platform that can be deployed in the cloud or on-site.
- Improve efficiency of permitting, inspections, and code enforcement and automate programs for any type of license or registration.
- Digitize inspections and compliance for government agencies, including law and code enforcement, fire prevention and safety, building code, food safety, environmental protection, audit and investigation.
- Transform permitting, licensing, and development to enable staff to create easy-to-use forms and workflows to handle the permitting, licensing, and development process online. It also helps simplify licenses and registrations for businesses, residents, vehicles, and animals.
- Reduce risk with automated processes and workflows to systematically manage the forms, processes, and workflows critical to government agencies, helping mitigate risks linked to human

error, misplaced paper forms etc.

- Digitize Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) and FOI requests end-to-end to improve compliance, including request intake and management, correspondence, document management, consultations, review and redaction, and fee calculations and payment.
- Optimize and integrate case management and redaction online using one solution while also collaborating with external agencies to quickly handle requests.
- Gain insights and efficiencies while reporting by generating legislated reports and leverage advanced analytics for compliance completion, including deadlines.
- Some of the additional solutions offered by Granicus that can work with Amanda:
    - OneView – A centralized, resident-focused solution for reporting and tracking service requests. As each request is received, it is routed to appropriate local government stakeholders to be fulfilled, with automated updates keeping residents informed.
    - OpenForms - Organizations can build online forms and digitize workflows to modernize outdated processes and rapidly respond to resident requests. Staff can translate complex business logic into simple "wayfinding" or digital tools to help residents ensure they are eligible for services. Plus, teams are empowered with tools for creating custom solutions without tech skills or time-consuming customizations.
    - EngagementHQ – A centralized community insight interface, allowing residents to participate from anywhere while meeting varying sensitivity needs (open / mixed / closed environment). It gives teams the ability to engage across he entire IAP2 public participation spectrum, keep conversations connected, no matter which format they are in and where they take place. It also offers hundreds of ways to customize metrics, filters, and dashboards to analyze engagement performance.

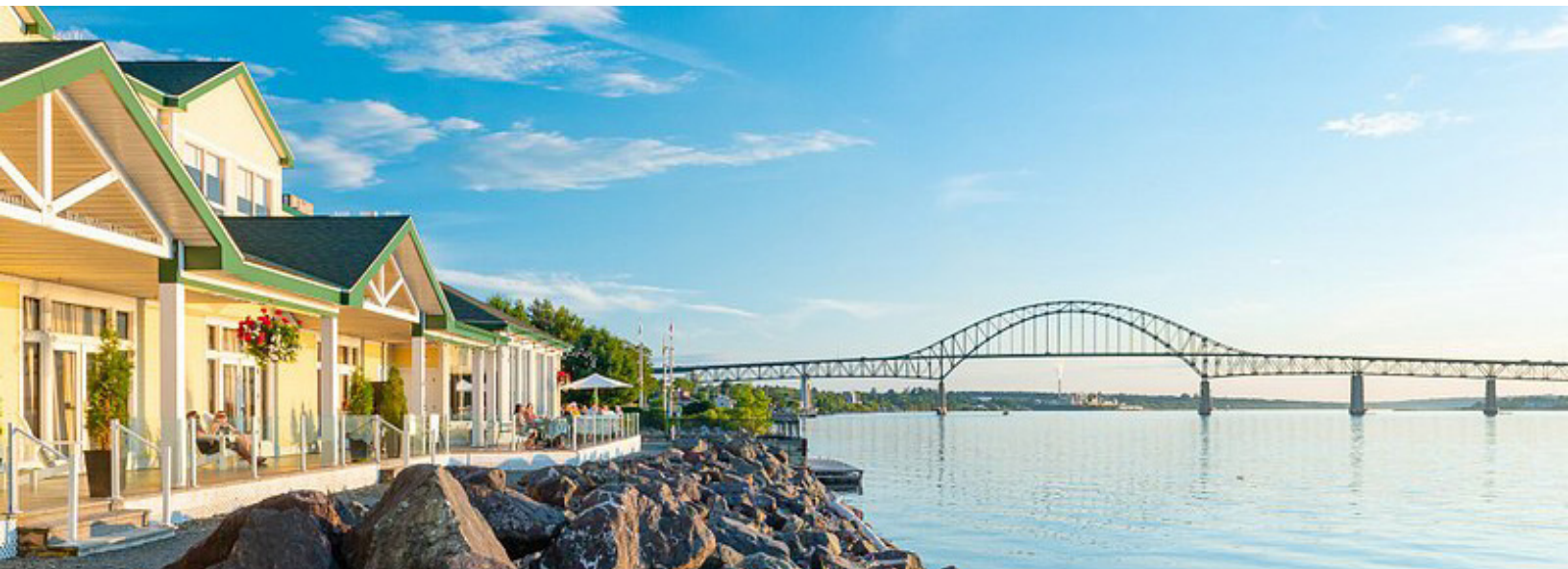
CITYVIEW

CityView, developed by Harris Computer Systems, is a comprehensive community development and permitting software platform that has supported municipalities across North America since its launch in 1982. With over four decades of proven performance, CityView is a solution for streamlining planning, permitting, inspections, licensing, and code enforcement processes. Its value lies in enabling fully paperless workflows, reducing permit turnaround times, eliminating redundant tasks, and supporting data-driven decision-making through integrated reporting and analytics tools. Municipalities such as the City of Airdrie (AB), City of Grand Prairie (AB), Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (ON), Chatham-Kent (ON), and the City of Langford (BC) have adopted CityView to enhance operational efficiency and improve service delivery. Although no response was received from the supplier regarding current pricing or cost structures, CityView's long-standing reputation and flexible, scalable architecture make it a compelling choice for municipalities seeking to modernize their planning and permitting systems.

- CityView Permits and Inspections – Streamlines and automates the permit approval and inspections process. The digitization of the entire permitting process from initial application to approval, inspection process, and certificate

of occupancy or use ensures accuracy, consistency, and citizen satisfaction.

- CityView Property Information – Keep track of planning applications and milestones and adhere to your comprehensive development plan. Provides a powerful inventory of the property based to quickly view all location-based land use, zoning, and community development activities related to parcels, addresses, structures, parks, trails, roads and more. Based on the latest Esri ArcGIS Server technology, maps are embedded directly into CityView and allow for easy-to-use mapping tools to locate properties, measure distances, boundaries and areas, and create mailing labels from buffer selections.
- CityView Planning &and Zoning – Keep track of planning applications and milestones and adhere to your comprehensive development plan.
- CityView Citizen Engagement – Uhold community standards by providing easily accessible mechanisms for constituents to make requests, complaints, and inquiries.
- CityView Extensions
- Mobile provides field access to the team for real time inspection results.
- Portal allows citizens to self-serve with online application and status updates, and inspections scheduling.
- Electronic Plans Review digitizes the entire process, shortens review time, and eliminates the use of paper.
- Virtual Inspections Save fuel and increase efficiency with remote inspections.
- GIS Integration – Integration with Esri's ArcGIS Server or ArcGIS Online assimilates mapping and spatial analysis into the everyday business activities. The deeply integrated GIS capabilities allow all staff to quickly locate a job location on a map; measure distance, boundaries, and areas, create buffer selections for mailing lists, kick-off permit and other processes from the map and spatially analyze the surroundings of subject properties.
- Productivity Extensions – Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Exchange can be integrated, saving time and hassle of having to track down information.



ACCELA

Accela is a cloud-based government technology platform developed by Accela, Inc., a company founded in 1999. For over 25 years, it has been a leader in delivering software solutions that help communities thrive by enhancing government efficiency and increasing resident engagement. Accela's unified, ready-to-deploy solutions—spanning permitting, licensing, and code enforcement—offer flexible deployment for municipalities of all sizes, equipping agencies to meet both current demands and future challenges. The platform delivers significant value for planning and permitting by streamlining workflows, accelerating reviews and approvals, improving transparency, and reducing administrative overhead—ultimately enabling municipalities to provide faster, more citizen-friendly services. Accela is trusted by several jurisdictions, including the City of High Point (NC), Charlotte County (FL), Shelby County (TN), Pima County (AZ), and Deschutes County (OR). While an attempt was made to contact the company regarding current pricing, no response has been received to date.

- Modern and intuitive user interface with HTML5 and responsive design providing a seamless experience for both agency staff and citizens on any device, anywhere.
- Online citizen portal provides a one-stop-shop to submit proposals, conduct zoning research, verify status updates, pay outstanding fees, reducing in-person visits, emails, and phone inquiries, and improves the citizen experience.
- Built-in reporting to give administrators, managers and planning commissions or boards the critical insight they need to manage agency productivity, uncover bottlenecks, and highlight areas for process improvement.
- Automated push notifications to easily notify project owners, city council members, the general public, and press for public hearings, reviews, and feedback.
- Online payments system with credit card, ACH, and trust account capability to increase convenience for citizens and remove the manual payment processing work from agency employees.
- Platform-wide integration capabilities with APIs, SDKs, and open data, allowing developers to integrate with existing software solutions to meet the unique needs of any community.
- GIS mapping to easily produce interactive maps and visualizations, making planning and code enforcement data easy to leverage and understand.
- Electronic Document Review and Management to ensure all relevant documents are searchable, secure, and that employees are always working with the correct versions. It allows to mark-up, comment, review, and approve plans simultaneously leveraging systems like ePermitHub, Adobe, e-PlanSoft, ProjectDox, OnBase, DigEplan, and Bluebeam, and more to perform parallel plan reviews with version control.
- Full-featured mobile platform with role-based apps to allow inspectors and code enforcement personnel to efficiently manage their inspection routing, access all needed documents and information in the field, and increase efficiencies.
- Workflow management system to automate the tasks and functions needed for planning processes. The system can assign tasks, track reviews, associate documents, and information to tasks, and keep the most complex processes running smoothly.

- Code enforcement to ensure public compliance with city code and regulation by managing complaints and violations to achieve resolution quickly and efficiently.

CLOUDPERMIT

Cloudpermit is a cloud-based e-permitting and community development platform developed by Cloudpermit Inc., a company founded in 2011, and acquired by The Riverside Company in 2024. It has rapidly expanded its presence across North America, serving over 850 public agencies. The platform offers comprehensive tools for planning, permitting, licensing, inspections, and code enforcement, all accessible through a user-friendly, mobile-enabled interface. Cloudpermit delivers significant value to municipalities by streamlining workflows, enabling 24/7 online application management, automating circulation and approvals, and enhancing transparency. Municipalities such as the City of Brantford (ON), Town of Kingsville (ON), District of Sparwood (BC), Village of Pemberton (BC), Red River Planning District (MB), and Kent RSC (NB) have adopted Cloudpermit to modernize their development services. The estimated cost for implementing Cloudpermit's Planning and Building Enforcement services is approximately $35,000.

Planning and Development Services

- Planning Applications: Accept, review, and approve complete applications with mandatory fields, attachments, and paid fees; manage all documentation in one workspace and track status updates in real time.
- Meetings: Schedule and track pre-consultations and planning meetings; create agendas with templates and generate downloadable meeting packages for commissions, boards, or councils.
- Public Notice: Keep the public informed with status updates, auto-notifications, and public notice documents; gather public feedback and generate automated lists of affected property owners.
- Circulation: Circulate applications to internal and external reviewers simultaneously, control comment visibility, set response deadlines, and track all feedback in one place.
- Timelines: Set and monitor legislative processing timelines, track due dates automatically, and maintain visibility into upcoming deadlines and decision periods to ensure compliance.
- Conditions: Access all open conditions by property, set default conditions for application types, and ensure no condition is missed throughout the approval process.
- Two-Tier Approvals: Enable seamless collaboration between upper and lower-tier governments by configuring real-time digital workflows, adjusting user permissions, and streamlining the escalation of applications to upper-tier decision-making.
- Configuration: Tailor CloudPermit to specific planning needs with configurable workflows, templates, and application types. Share applications with external stakeholders and allow organizations to manage their own reviewers and assignments.

Building Permitting Services

- Building Permits: Accept complete building permit applications with mandatory fields; track processing times, filter and organize applications, issue permits promptly upon payment and send automatic status updates to all relevant parties.

- Building Inspections: Conduct inspections in the field using mobile devices; manage follow-ups, deficiencies, and multi-permit sites; and keep applicants informed with real-time updates. Dispatch multiple inspectors and manage re-inspections remotely.
- Configuration: Configure workflows, application requirements, forms, and stakeholder roles to meet specific needs. Manage requirements and use templates to generate permits, reports, and certificates.

Inspection Services

- Inspections: Conduct inspections in the field using any mobile device; input notes, add photos, and manage both initial and follow-up inspections remotely.
- Scheduling: Enable citizens to schedule, confirm, or reschedule inspections online; manage multiple inspectors and require additional inspections as needed.
- Automated Communication: Automatically notify citizens about inspection status changes through emails and time-stamped messages without requiring login.
- Management: Track deficiencies, orders, and inspection history; view the status of inspections across multiple permits or violation sites in real time.

By Law Enforcement Services

- Complaints: Accept and organize complaints with customizable contact requirements; filter entries, document violations using standard templates, and view all complaints in one centralized dashboard.
- Cases: Create and manage cases in the field; add multiple violations per case, track resolutions, access full property histories, and

upload or store supporting documents such as photos.

- Inspections: Conduct inspections in the field using any mobile device; input notes, add photos, and manage both initial and follow-up inspections remotely.
- Configuration: Tailor the system without coding to suit organizational needs, manage by-law enforcement types, inspection types, templates, and standard document wording, as well as daily inspection scheduling.

Additional Features (as part of all services)

- GIS-Integrated Maps: Use interactive maps integrated with your GIS to find inspection sites, plan efficient routes, and access layered data such as flood zones and heritage areas.
- Online Access: Access CloudPermit anytime via the internet; securely store, auto-save, and protect inspection data on any mobile device.
- Application Programming Interface (API) Integration: Seamlessly integrate third-party data and services; manage workspaces, update metadata, access GIS attributes, and retrieve inspection and billing data.
- Reporting: Generate accurate reports with filtered data, export in Excel or CSV formats, save report presets for recurring reporting needs, and automate submissions to external agencies such as StatCan.
- Payment: Handle fines, fees, and citations with secure online or in-person payments; integrate third-party payment gateways, notify owners, and manage overdue or escrowed payments.

Key Themes and Observations

The following key themes were identified with regards to development services, operational challenges, and best practices.

- **Importance of public education**

  Educating the public, especially in rural areas, about planning processes, building inspection, and permitting is essential to improving overall operational efficiency. This will also help address related issues such as complaints, customer service, staffing needs, and productivity across departments.

- **Need for customer service training**

  Customer service training is essential to encourage positive interactions between staff and members of the public. At SWRSC, employees receive training focused on engaging the public with openness and compassion, aiming to shift the mindset that public is a problem.

- **Formalized complaints process**

  Each RSC has its own process for handling and addressing complaints, which is important to ensure that all concerns are properly documented and resolved. Flexibility can be beneficial, however. The KRSC has chosen not to issue stop-work orders immediately and, instead, reaches out to resolve issues before a registered letter is sent. This method has helped reduce the overall number of complaints.

- **Need for staff succession planning**

  Finding the right staff is a challenge for many agencies serving smaller communities and rural areas. RSCs often employ younger staff who require training but tend to leave for larger organizations when they have acquired experience. There is a clear need for long-term planning and constant evaluation to assess future staffing requirements and proactively identify potential candidates. Strategies such as cross training and the use of contract positions,

as implemented by the SWRSC, may help ensure adequate staffing, particularly during peak periods. These approaches can also provide flexibility, allowing staff to take on different roles as needed throughout the year.

- **Equating staff and development activity**

  In general, the number of staff members, the level of development activity, and the number of local governments served by each RSC are closely related. The SERSC is a large region with the highest development activity ($800 million), serving 13 member municipalities with 28 staff members. This is followed by the EDPC ($188.6 million), which has 14 staff members but serving six member municipalities. The FRSC has the lowest development activity ($17.15 million), serving just two member municipalities with three staff members. While the Southwest and Kent RSCs have a similar number of employees (9-10), KRSC serves two additional municipalities and experienced approximately $14 million more development activity over the past year than SWRSC. In comparison, Miramichi serves six municipalities with eight staff members, and has reported around $30.3 million in development activity over the past year.

- **Digitization of information**

  Several digital platforms are available to improve efficiency and accuracy. Most RSCs currently use some form of online application system, except for the FRSC and EDPC. Given the significant expense involved, platforms such as Amanda, and CityView may be worth considering based on the services provided. The GMSC could begin by developing a wish list of desired functions based on specific needs and requirements. This list can then be used to engage with service providers to determine how well the service packages align with those needs. Furthermore, the operational inefficiencies identified through this project can help pinpoint which customizable features could address specific gaps in the current process.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

This project has identified a variety of improvements that should be considered by the GMSC. Generally, the recommendations are grouped according to the original intent and mandate of the project, which was based on the following five key areas:

- **Evaluating Current Practices -** Assessing the existing planning and building inspection processes to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Enhancing Customer Service -** Improving communication, responsiveness, and overall customer service to better meet the needs of the public and stakeholders.
- **Optimizing Resources -** Addressing challenges related to staffing, physical space, and technological tools to ensure that the department is well-equipped to handle its workload efficiently.
- **Improving Public Perception -** Implementing strategies to enhance the department's image and public relations, and fostering a positive relationship with the community.
- **Ensuring Regulatory Compliance -** Communicating regulatory requirements clearly and effectively to the public and ensuring that all building and development activities comply with relevant codes and standards.

Since the commencement of this project, the Commission has implemented four key initiatives that are aligned with the results of this report:

1. The Commission has successfully hired a third building inspector. This was noted throughout the consultation process as a key need for the Commission to assist with cross training, succession planning, and the volume of development activity during the construction season.
2. The Commission is overhauling its current website. The new site is modernized, clean, and informative, and will be launched in the coming weeks. The need for new communication material, including the website, was noted during the consultation process.
3. The Commission has assembled helpful "how to" instructions that are aimed at assisting clients with navigating the CloudPermit e-permitting software. While face-to-face instructions and assistance is still needed, the lack of online resources to assist with the preparation of online applications was noted during the consultation process, particularly within rural areas.
4. The Commission leadership has recently changed, and the operational review process has remained a very high priority with the above actions taken within a short period of time and changing the corporate culture within the organization has been communicated as a high priority.

Ultimately, this project has determined that a cultural change within the Development Services Division is needed. This change should be focused on customer service delivery and working proactively with municipal partners and the public, including the development community, to implement a culture that is based

on collaboration and problem resolution. This was evident from the employee interviews, as well the various focus group sessions with stakeholders. The recommendations below are aligned with this change in corporate culture. They are categorized based on short- (1-2 years), medium- (3 – 5 years), and ong- (5+ years) term priorities.

#	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY
1	**Evaluating Current Practices**	
1.1	The building permit evaluation process needs to include more dialogue; particularly when multiple options or alternatives are presented for Code-related matters that require interpretation. This creates uncertainty, as the legal authority to interpret and apply the Building Code rests with the appointed inspectors. While the Director of Planning oversees governance, consistency, and facilitation of the service, they are not authorized to substitute their judgement for that of an inspector of Code-related matters. To address this gap, it is recommended that the Commission enhance collaboration between planning staff and the building inspection team during the permit evaluation process. Establishing clearer protocols for engaging inspectors when Code interpretation is required can help improve transparency, reduce delays, and support a more integrated permitting process.	SHORT
1.2	It is a provincial responsibility to introduce and implement an appeal process or any type of adjudicative committee to oversee Building Code disputes. However, until the province establishes an adjudicative committee of some sorts, consider a supervisor or some authoritative position to hear views and help arrive at a consensus. This process could simply include regular discussions of problematic	SHORT

	processes among the three inspectors under the supervision of their director. Alternatively, the Commission could develop a roster of outside technical experts to be available on an on-call basis to assist staff with technical matters in the review of alternative solutions.	
1.3	The Commission's current e-permitting software has clear strengths and weaknesses based on Stantec's review. Regardless of the software chosen by the GMSC, the costs of implementing a new or significantly altered system are high. Nonetheless, CloudPermit, Amanda, and CityView are all worth considering. Given the Commission's experience with e-permitting, it is recommended that the Commission develop a preferred list of desired functions based on specific needs and requirements and then engage with service providers to find a suitable service package before the existing contract is set to expire.	SHORT
1.4	Under existing legislation, site inspections for issued permits are the responsibility of the property owner and are only conducted upon request by the applicant. This approach leads to instances where construction proceeds, or even completed, without the required inspections being scheduled. Consequently, property owners face project delays and incur additional costs to engage qualified professionals to verify compliance after the fact. Additionally, permits remain open in the CloudPermit system, leading to administrative inefficiencies. It is recommended that the Commission adopt a more proactive approach to the inspections process. By utilizing CloudPermit as a monitoring and communication tool, staff can ensure timely responses to inspection requests and proactively follow up with applicants. This would help ensure inspections are conducted at appropriate stages, minimizing delays and additional costs, and allowing permit files to be closed upon completion. The planned provision of inhouse enforcement services by the GMSC next year will further enhance this approach, enabling more coordinated and responsive oversight throughout the permitted and inspection process.	MEDIUM
2	**Enhancing Customer Service**	
2.1	The existing training budgets should be re-evaluated to ensure adequate funds are available for customer service training and other, more specialized learning, to assist with understanding the level of liability associated with positions and those of other professionals who stamp building related plans and materials.	SHORT
2.2	While there were suggestions throughout this project for the Development Services Division to explore, via a pilot project, the creation of a Development Concierge position, it would be most prudent to first review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Approvals Coordinator position. This evaluation should	SHORT

	establish a level of service threshold that the Approvals Coordinator could focus on and report on, as they work with stakeholders to guide them through the Development Permit and Building Permit Process. A focus of this position should be to identify and assist with stalled applications, including assisting clients with missing information, questions, and other considerations.	
2.3	In addition to the preceding recommendation, the Commission could consider piloting and promoting an appointment booking platform to help determine if a dedicated concierge position is needed should the Approvals Coordinator resources be stretched too thin. This initiative could include regular check-ins with municipal partners via internet to keep them informed but manage costs.	LONG
2.4	To help ensure that customer service continues to be a priority, some metrics should be maintained and shared with the department to illustrate the success or improvements needed in key areas, such as response times, development application timelines, and complaints. These metrics can then be integrated into annual, public facing reporting templates.	SHORT
2.5	The Development Services Division should prioritize regularly scheduled site visits to their rural partners. This may include offering regularly scheduled dates/ times where a GMSC employee will be physically present in the rural community to meet with stakeholders and residents to communicate, educate, and facilitate the development process. This could be a specific responsibility of the revamped Approvals Coordinator position, or a future Development Concierge position.	SHORT
2.6	To assist with visibility throughout the region and for the public to appropriately identify a Commission building inspector, public-facing employees be provided with magnetic Commission branded decals for their private automobiles, as well as Commission branded clothing, hard hats, and identification for use when working in the field. It is essential that building inspectors be seen as approachable and not be regarded as enforcement officers.	MEDIUM
2.7	The Commission should explore the options available within the CloudPermit technology to customize messages to applicants so that they are consistent with best practices in customer service delivery. Should the Commission opt to pursue other technologies, the ability to customize messaging should be a criterion for evaluation.	SHORT
2.8	The Commission needs to work with CloudPermit resources to determine if the application intake process can be tailored to not only help clients understand the next steps of their application but also flag material that may be missing from the application so that clients do not get a false expectation that their application is complete on submission. An incomplete application should not be capable of	SHORT

	being submitted without an error message, or as an alternative, a notice should be evident to the applicant that the submission will be evaluated for accuracy and completeness and that subsequent communication may be forthcoming. While the Commission has communicated with CloudPermit about this issue, finding a solution should be prioritized.	
2.9	The Commission used to provide an opportunity for clients to provide feedback via a short survey that was promoted on the corporate website and embedded on e-mail signatures. This engagement should be reintroduced with an annual summary report card or infographic provided as part of the overall communications plan.	SHORT
2.10	The Greater Miramichi region is fortunate to be represented with an active Chamber of Commerce. There are opportunities to collaborate with the Chamber on educational initiatives, such as lunch and learns, awards, or events. Regardless of the initiative, it would be advantageous for the Commission to meet regularly with the Chamber, including a standalone monthly or quarterly meeting, presenting annually to the Chamber on development activity, or joining the Chamber as an ex officio member of the board. These options should be explored with the Chamber of Commerce to identify ways to connect directly with the business community.	SHORT
3	**Optimizing Resources**	
3.1	The roles and responsibilities of the Director of Planning position have evolved quickly and demand more time and attention. There are new and emerging issues that involve planning expertise, such as the allocation of Housing Accelerator Funds, climate change initiatives, and the general trend to liaise with other internal and external departments and stakeholders, including municipal partners, on the	SHORT

	new mandated service delivery responsibilities such as economic development initiatives, rural transportation and recreation initiatives. These responsibilities are in addition to managing the increased development activity and pressures, along with mentoring and supporting staff in their day-to-day actions. It is therefore strongly recommended that the Director of Operations and Director of Planning positions be restructured into separate	
3.2	The GMSC office located on Water Street should always be staffed during open hours. There are understandable reasons for a complete office closure such as staff training or during an emergency water shut off or power outage, but it is critical that the office be open for business at all other times.	SHORT
3.3	positions. This will ensure adequate time is available to adequately manage the growing responsibilities noted above, as well as helping the CEO to implement the recommendations of this report.	SHORT
3.4	As part of the Commission's long-term succession planning, the existing office space should be evaluated to ensure that it is capable of accommodating the long-term growth of the organization. The mandate of the Commission is growing and will continue to evolve, so it is inevitable – regardless of additional resources noted in this report – that space may have to be increased or re-organized.	LONG
4	**Improving Public Perception**	
4.1	The GMSC should evaluate and, if necessary, reallocate a portion of the communications budget to ensure dedicated financial resources are available for the Development Services Division to implement a communications plan. This plan should aim at strategic advertising focused on the changing corporate culture to remove negative stereotypes of the Division and the development approval process, as well as educating stakeholders, including residents, the development community, and municipal partners about the benefits of the Development Permit and Building Permit processes. The communications plan should include scheduled reporting that shows the level of activity and inquiries fielded by the Division. Several municipalities have dashboards that are good protypes for providing a quarterly update.	MEDIUM
4.2	The Commission should evaluate their onboarding procedures to ensure that municipal partners are aware of new and departing employees. The Commission's exiting procedures should also be reviewed to ensure that partners remain informed of the current staffing. This initiative could be integrated with the recommendation above, where quarterly reporting not only documents permit handled and lists current processes and their status, but could also report	MEDIUM

	changes in the Commission such as hiring and retiring, along with other information, including funerals, weddings, and births, to create a more personal connection between the Commission and its municipal partners.	
4.3	To help promote the Commission's Development Services Division, a part of the overall communications plan should focus on timely, regular permit applications, particularly around construction season. For example, the neighbouring KRSC has used social media to educate clients about requirements related to pools and the need for associated permits. The Commission could create a regular calendar of scheduled Public Service Announcements on topics of general education, even if the same material is repeated each year.	SHORT
4.4	The communications plan noted above should focus on public awareness on the importance of building permits to help mitigate the popular perception these permits are simply a bureaucratic nuisance. Emphasis should be placed on the value of permitting and the application of the National Building Code to ensure the value and safety of construction works. This initiative could include partners, such as the insurance industry, and emergency responders to help deliver appropriate messaging.	SHORT
5	**Ensuring Regulatory Compliance**	
5.1	While the Commission has established checklists and other guides to help clients understand required processes, modernized communication materials are needed to help educate and guide clients through the development and building permit processes. New materials should be graphic and interactive and should use plain language to ensure they are easy to read and understand. Video should be considered to replace or supplement written materials.	SHORT

Conclusion

The operational review of GMSC's Development Services Division represents a significant step toward modernizing and strengthening the region's planning and building inspection services. Through a structured and collaborative process, this review has provided a clear understanding of current operations, identified key challenges, and outlined practical solutions to enhance service delivery. The findings of this review highlight the need for a cultural shift within the Development Services Division — one that prioritizes customer service, proactive collaboration, and transparent communication. This shift is essential to building trust with municipal partners, developers, and the broader community, and to positioning GMSC as a leader in regional development facilitation.

It was essential that the recommendations be clear and achievable for the GMSC. The recommendations presented will help GMSC streamline its operations, improve stakeholder satisfaction, and support sustainable growth across the Miramichi region. By implementing these recommendations, GMSC will be better equipped to meet the evolving needs of its communities and ensure that its Development Services Division continues to deliver high-quality services effectively.

Stantec

AGENDA ITEM: 2025-10-8

MEMO

TO: Board of Directors, Greater Miramichi Service Commission

FROM: Sylvie Rouselle, Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: The GMSC Regional transportation Plan

DATE: Tabled August 27, 2025
October 29, 2025

Introduction

The GMSC Regional Transportation Plan – August 2025 is a comprehensive document that outlines the Greater Miramichi Service Commission's strategy to improve mobility across the region. Here's a concise summary of its key components:

1. Purpose and Context

- Developed in response to the Regional Transportation Mandate (RTM) from the Province of New Brunswick.
- Aims to provide affordable, accessible, and inclusive transportation options across the Greater Miramichi region.
- Covers five local governments, one rural district and three First Nation communities.

2. Regional Profile

- Population: ~39,295 (2021), with 46% in the City of Miramichi.
- High percentage of seniors and low-income households.
- 85% of trips are made by personal vehicle; public transit use is under 1%.

3. Current Services

- **Miramichi Transit**: Fixed-route service in the urban core.
- **Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus**): Paratransit for seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Volunteer Driver Program:** Door-to-door service for low-income and mobility-challenged residents.

4. Community Engagement

- Included surveys, pop-up consultations, and stakeholder workshops.
- Key findings:
  I. Lack of awareness of existing services.
  II. Desire for expanded service hours and regional connectivity.
  III. Need for accessible and affordable options.

5. Identified Priorities

1. Promotion and Education of transportation options.
2. Accessibility improvements.
3. Regional Connectivity.
4. Ongoing Public Engagement.
5. Interregional Connections (e.g., to Fredericton, Moncton).

6. Proposed Solutions

Organized into three streams:

1. **Regional Planning**
   Expand Volunteer Driver Program.
   Launch a **Carpooling Pilot** (2026).
   Introduce a **Peer-to-Peer Carshare Platform** (late 2026).

2. **Public Relations**
   Quarterly **Education Campaigns**.
   Monthly **Transportation Newsletter**.
   Employer Partnerships to support workforce mobility.

3. **Resources & Oversight**
   Hire a Transportation Coordinator (TBD).
   Establish a Community Forum and Transit Agency Working Group.
   Pursue funding opportunities (e.g., ESIC, RSSF, CPTF, RDC).

7. Implementation Timeline

- 2025: Establish a Regional Transit Agency Working Group
- 2026: Launch carpooling and carshare pilots and expand Volunteer Driver Program.
- Ongoing: Public engagement, funding applications, and stakeholder collaboration.

Recommended motion

Be it resolved that the Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission:

1. Establish a Regional Transit Agency Working Group in 2025 to coordinate implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan.
2. Launch a regional carpooling pilot and peer-to-peer carshare platform in 2026 to expand mobility options across the region.
3. Expand the Volunteer Driver Program in 2026 to serve a broader range of residents, including those with accessibility needs.
4. Continue ongoing public engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and pursuit of funding opportunities to support the phased implementation of transportation solutions.

Attachments

1. Left Turn Right Turn Regional Transportation plan
2. Regional Transportation Framework
3. Regional Transportation map

Memo updated on: Friday, October-24-25

Regional Transportation Plan

Greater Miramichi Service Commission

August 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction 1

2 Profile of the Greater Miramichi Region 5
2.1 Regional Transportation Plan Study Area 5
2.2 Demographics 6
2.3 Community Travel and Transportation Metrics 7
2.4 Planning and Policy Context 8
2.5 Transportation Services within the Region 9

3 Current Services 12
3.1 Profile of Public Transit and Community Transportation Needs 12
3.2 Existing and proposed services 15

4 Community and Stakeholder Engagement 19
4.1 Methodology 19
4.2 Activities Summary 19
4.3 Engagement Results and Analysis 21

5 Assessing Needs 32
5.1 Discussion on Existing Services Limited that of Prospective Services 34

6 Transportation Solutions 35
6.1 Regional Planning Stream 36
6.2 Public Relations Stream 39
6.3 Resources and Oversight Stream 41

7 Implementation Planning 41
7.1 Solutions Staging 42
7.2 Implementation Considerations 43

8 Financial Management 45
8.1 Capital Budget and Requirements 45
8.2 Current 2024-25 Operating Budget and Expenditures 45
8.3 2025-26 and 2026-27 Budgetary Forecasts 47
8.4 Funding Glossary 49

9 Additional Considerations 52
9.1 Regional Fixed-Route Transit Service 52
9.2 Subsidized Rideshare Service 53

Appendices 55

Cover Photo credit: Dennis Jarvis

1 Introduction

The Greater Miramichi region is located in northeastern New Brunswick, Canada, covering most of Northumberland County with a total land area of 12,950 square kilometers. Situated at the mouth of the Miramichi River where it enters Miramichi Bay, the region features the second longest valley in New Brunswick after the Saint John River Valley. The area is home to multiple Indigenous communities and represents a diverse multicultural population with distinct cultures and linguistic communities.

The region has a total population of 39,295 (2021). The Greater Miramichi Service Commission (GMSC) area encompasses six local governments:

- City of Miramichi (largest city in northern New Brunswick with 17,692 residents),
- Rural Community of Upper Miramichi,
- Village of Doaktown,
- Rural Community of Miramichi River Valley,
- Rural Community of Alnwick, and
- Greater Miramichi Rural District.

Additionally, three First Nation communities are geographically within the region but not members of the GMSC Board: Esgenoopetitj (Burnt Church), Natoaganeg (Eel Ground), and Metepenagiag (Red Bank).

The Greater Miramichi Service Commission, through the Regional Strategy and Population Growth Strategy and other policies, recognize the role of expanded transportation and mobility options in meeting the needs of the region in key priority service areas of economic development and workforce attraction, regional tourism, regional community development, regional planning and cost sharing, regional public safety, regional housing, and interregional public transportation. GMSC's community transportation priorities ensuring access and participation of all citizens within the regional community by providing reliable, safe, affordable & inclusive transportation in all parts of the region. This Regional Transportation Plan strives to identify and recommend transportation and mobility options to further support these priorities and goals and respond to the Regional Transportation Mandate required by the province of New Brunswick.

1.1 Project Background

In 2009, the Province of New Brunswick launched and funded various community transportation programs aimed at providing on-demand, door-to-door volunteer driver services. The *Transport Communautaire Northumberland Community Transit* program provided affordable door-to-door ride-home service by volunteer drivers with their own vehicles. It served all of Northumberland County residents Monday – Friday who were in need of transportation and did not have other

transportation or mobility options available. In the fall of 2022, GMSC integrated the Northumberland Community Inclusion Network (CIN) into their operations, with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) for funding community development and transportation services. Under GMSC, the Northumberland Community Transit program became the Greater Miramichi Community Transportation Volunteer Driver Program. Therefore, community transportation services in the Greater Miramichi region has had a longstanding presence and reliability in the area.

In 2023, the provincial government released a new Regional Transportation Mandate (RTM), that integrated the responsibilities of regional transportation management into local government reforms and transferred these responsibilities to the Regional Service Commissions (RSCs). Upon receiving these responsibilities, RSCs were granted the flexibility to manage services directly, through third parties, or via hybrid approaches. The RTM has been provided in Appendix A.

The new RTM further tasks the Regional Service Commissions to develop Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) that identify immediate priorities and long-term strategies to help achieve, launch, or otherwise deliver affordable transportation and mobility options across their respective regions.

1.1.1 Regional Transportation Mandate

Currently, transportation options in the region include the Greater Miramichi Community Transportation Volunteer Driver Program, which provides door-to-door service primarily for low-income individuals and people with limited transit means. This service operates during regular business hours based on volunteer availability. The existing geographic extent of the Service Commission's boundary presents challenges for transportation infrastructure and service delivery, particularly in rural areas where transit options are limited or difficult to access.

1.1.2 Minimum Requirements of the Mandate

The RTM outlines the responsibilities and minimum requirements of Service Commissions:

- Develop a regional transportation plan that set out immediate priorities and long-term strategies that help achieve the delivery of *passenger transport services*.[1]
- Work toward achieving *passenger transport services* that are available, affordable, and accessible for residents and ultimately can become highly integrated on a provincial scale.
- Effectively oversee and organize transportation services by either operating services themselves (internal model), contracting a third-party (external delivery), or a combination thereof. In any case, regional integration is to be explored where possible.

[1] Passenger Transport Services are defined in section 1.1 of the Mandate and identified as Urban Public Transit, Regional Public Transit, Community Transit, and Intercity Transit.

Essentially, the RTM requires service commissions to develop or contract *public transit* or *community transportation systems* to provide mobility options to residents. The mandate does *not* require this to happen all at once, but the plan would need to include incremental increases to the service(s) through advancing the following action items.

RTM Action Items

Required action items of the RTM to be undertaken by the RSC are categorized into four streams:

- **Regional Planning Stream Actions**:
  - Develop a regional transportation service.
  - Develop regional transportation plans that identify immediate priorities and long-term strategies based on a three-year timeline.
  - Consider current services and areas of improvement to achieve a sustainable, integrated transportation system.
  - Outline strategies and tools for service delivery, key partnerships, cost implications, funding needs, next steps.
- **Financial Management Stream Actions**:
  - Develop annual financial plans to support the transportation strategy.
  - Determine level of investment to be eligible to receive provincial funding support.
- **Program/Service Delivery Oversight Stream Actions**:
  - Determine level of administration to execute the transportation plan.
  - Establish a community forum to consultation purposes to promote the objectives of regional transportation services
- **Public Relations**
  - Ensure the public are kept informed
  - Promotional activities are undertaken.

1.1.3 Plan Requirements

As per the RTM, the Greater Miramichi Service Commission (GMSC) has developed this Regional Transportation Plan. The plan identifies strategies to deliver cost-effective mobility options that will meet the requirements of the RTM as well as champion their current strategic vision of operating a reliable, safe, affordable, and inclusive system that meets the needs of the Greater Miramichi Region. It also identifies additional transit opportunities that are operationally contingent on provincial (or other) funding to reflect viable and effective options that are reliable, safe, inclusive, and regionally-focused but are cost-prohibitive at this time.

To fulfill the requirements of the mandate, the Regional Transportation Plan makes recommendations on current transportation services in their region, gauges community needs and priorities, establishes short- and long-term priorities, produces financial projections, and maps implementation timelines.

Regional transportation, particularly in rural settings, can be challenging to implement economically and sustainably. Therefore, the project established four prominent goals to develop a Regional Transportation Plan that is achievable, implementable, and cost-effective as well as reflective of resident needs and the unique priorities of communities in the Greater Miramichi Region. These project goals were:

1. To identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities that exist within transportation services currently offered across the region. This included understanding how these services interact and overlap.
2. To explore the capacity of existing transportation services and how they may be leveraged or enhanced to further support residents within the Greater Miramichi region. This included examining partnership opportunities, assessing operational data, and understanding the strategic objectives of these existing systems.
3. To engage broadly with the public and with stakeholders to supplement the current state inventory with resident needs, leading to more impactful and achievable priorities.
4. To estimate financial projections for new or expanded transportation services to have a baseline understanding of costs moving forward. This included identifying funding streams available to the Regional Service Commission that will aid in off-setting capital and operating costs.

1.1.4 What is "Regional Transportation"?

Section 1.1 of the RTM[2] illustrates that New Brunswickers rely on personal vehicles, cycling, walking, and public services (public transit, community transportation programs, etc.). The intent of the RTM is explore "integrated regional transportation systems with mobility options that are available, affordable, and accessible for residents and ultimately can become highly integrated on a provincial scale." Table 2 of the mandate implies that mobility options considered through RTPs are to be focused on four identified types of *passenger transport services*:

1. Urban Public Transit,
2. Regional Public Transit,
3. Community Transit, and
4. Intercity Transit.

Therefore, this Regional Transportation Plan will focus recommendations and priorities on these outlined *passenger transport services* and explore transportation solutions that support providing mobility options that are available, affordable, and accessible – as appropriate.

[2] Link to the Regional Transportation Mandate: https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/rdc-sdr/pdf/regional-transportation-mandate.pdf

2 Profile of the Greater Miramichi Region

This section establishes the context for this Regional Transportation Plan by defining the Greater Miramichi region's geographic footprint, population profile, and guiding policy frameworks. It then maps the full suite of existing travel options, from fixed-route and specialized transit to volunteer-driver and community programs, intercity rail and bus, taxi services, and local air operations, setting out the baseline of assets, gaps, and partnership opportunities.

2.1 Regional Transportation Plan Study Area

The Regional Transportation Plan scope will encompass the entirety of the land area that the Greater Miramichi Service Commission currently services, as depicted in Figure 1, below. To fulfill the intent of the mandate, the Regional Transportation Plan will look to deliver affordable mobility options across the region, including the rural areas.

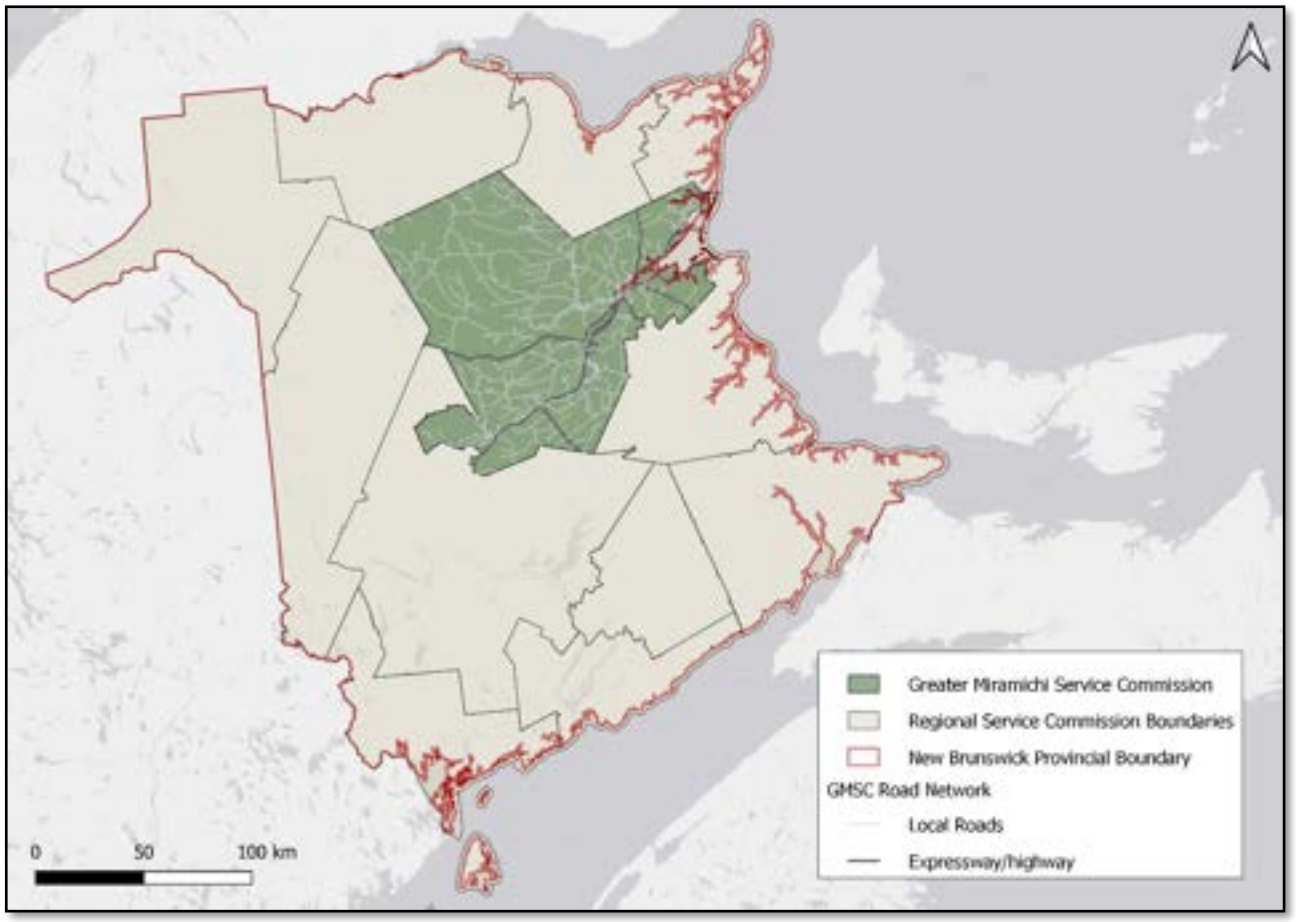


Figure 1: Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission Service Area

As shown in Figure 1, the Greater Miramichi region is located in northeastern New Brunswick and covers most of Northumberland County. The territory has a total land area of 12,950 km^2 and a population of approximately 37,500 (as per the 2021 Statistics Canada Census, further broken down in 1.3.1).

2.2 Demographics

As of 2024, the Greater Miramichi region had a total population of 39,295 residents. Approximately half of these residents (46%) reside within the City of Miramichi, while the remainder are dispersed geographically. Similarly, there is a wide demographic variety amongst the population. The following information outlines various demographic metrics across Greater Miramichi as a whole and further delineated between the City of Miramichi, Rural Community of Upper Miramichi, Village of Doaktown, Rural Community of Alnwick, Miramichi River Valley, and Greater Miramichi Rural District. Regional transportation, mobility options, cost-effectiveness, and service efficiency are all impacted by relevant demographic information, particularly % of seniors, average age, and income.

Table 1. Demographics within the Greater Miramichi region

Geographic Area	Demographics[0]				
	Population	% of Seniors[2]	Dwellings	Income[3]	% of Low-income households[4]
Greater Miramichi region	39,295[1]	26.2%	16,485	$66,000	15%
City of Miramichi	18,125	27.6%	8,155	$67,000	15%
Upper Miramichi	2,175	30.8%	955	$58,000	19%
Doaktown	1,250	33.2%	605	$57,200	19%
Alnwick	3,580	28.6%	1,590	$59,600	14%
River Valley	7,205	25.7%	3,090	$69,500	16%
Greater Miramichi Rural District	4,790	24.3%	2,090	$70,000	21%

[0]Data based on the 2021 Statistics Canada Census data and Housing Supply & Forecast Study

[1]Greater Miramichi population is net of First Nation communities in the area.

[2]Includes individuals aged 65+.

[3]Total median household income is presented.

[4]Defined as being 50% Area Median Household Income (AMHI) or below, the higher end being generally to one full-time minimum wage job.

Based on the Housing Supply & Forecast Study for the Greater Miramichi Region, population growth is expected to increase by 8% between 2021-2031, with an increase in the senior population and 25-44 age range. Likewise, there is an increase in senior-led households indicating a potential, correlated increase in demand for the community transportation program that prioritizes medical-based appointments.

2.3 Community Travel and Transportation Metrics

This section overviews travel demand and behaviour within the Greater Miramichi region, demonstrating mode share, commuting metrics, and travel times. Data is based on Statistics Canada Census information in 2021.

2.3.1 Mode Share

The Greater Miramichi region's most used form of transportation is single passenger vehicles at 84.8%, as shown in Figure 2, below. Public transit accounts for 0.5% of the mode share. However, this is due to the availability of service. There are three options for public transit in the Greater Miramichi area – Miramichi Transit, which only serves the City's urban core; Miramichi Accessible Transit, serving as specialized transit for residents with accessibility or mobility requirements; and the Community Transportation program provided by the GMSC, whose targeted clientele are residents not physically and/or financially able to use other modes.

Further, the pandemic has impact travel behaviour across the country, with increasing levels of demand in rural and regional areas. Therefore, data based in 2021 is not necessarily conducive to current mode shares. Finally, the public and stakeholder engagement conducted as part of this project indicates that public transit services are desired within the region.

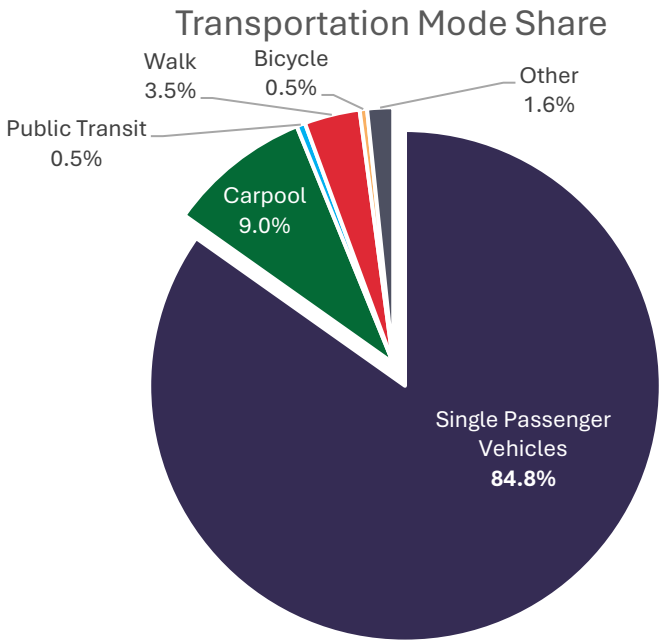


Figure 2. Transportation Mode Share

2.3.2 Commuting Trends and Travel Times

92% of residents work and commute within the Greater Miramichi area. The majority of that 92% are residents working locally within their community (83%) as well as residents working outside their respective community but still within the Greater Miramichi region (9%). Public transit is predominantly used for work and/or school trips and supports this type of highly focused local commuting.

The duration of resident commutes supports this localized trend. 88% of residents have a commute under 30 minutes (with 60% of that being under 15 minutes). 9.5% of trips are between 30 and 60 minutes, while only 2% of residents commute over an hour. As public transit may add travel time compared to a single-occupancy vehicle, it is particularly suited for commuters with lower travel times.

Finally, departure time aligns with standard peak hour travel in the morning between 7am-9am (53%). With the 6am-7am timeband being the next most-popular (which are typically healthcare and other shift workers) at 18%. Transit services that align with peak time trips can mitigate traffic congestion and improve employee well-being.

2.4 Planning and Policy Context

Within the Greater Miramichi region—and New Brunswick—goals and responsibilities of transportation service delivery and mobility options are outlined in various policies, strategic plans, and government-issued frameworks. The following table is an inventory of internal and external planning and policy documents that have transportation-related content and may have an impact on the Regional Transportation Plan.

Table 2: Relevant Policies

Document	Description
GMRSC Regional Strategy 2023-2028	A comprehensive plan to support sustainable growth across the region through collaboration between varying levels of government and stakeholders. Transportation is featured as an emphasized area, focusing on commitments to reliable, safe, affordable, and inclusive transportation services across the region.
Greater Miramichi Population Growth Action Plan 2025-2028	This plan outlines the GMSC's expanded role in strengthening the regional economy through strategic growth initiatives while also gauging economic growth and population retention barriers. Transportation is one of the main priorities identified.
Regional Transportation	A framework for Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) in New Brunswick to develop integrated public transport systems, part of a

Mandate (Framework) **June 2023**	broader government reform aimed at addressing the growing need for accessible and affordable public transportation. The framework outlines responsibilities and expectations related to the role of the province and RSCs, operations management, and service delivery, as well as providing guiding principles and financial support streams.
Regional Transportation Work Plan	Developed in response to the Mandate, this is an implementation and action plan focused on increasing service efficiency, regional collaboration, partnerships, infrastructure investment, and regional services in the short-term (2024-2026).
Climate Change Action Plan 2022-2027	GHG emission reduction are of increasing focus in New Brunswick. The CCAP outlines mitigating actions, including the recommendation that RSCs develop and implement regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of community and public transportation services.

2.5 Transportation Services within the Region

Central to the development of the Regional Transportation Plan is understanding what transportation services are currently available for residents of the region. While the RTM specifies that *passenger transport services* are the key considerations for implementation, this section outlines all transportation service types available in the Greater Miramichi region. Knowing all options and modes may present opportunities for interregional or interprovincial partnerships in the future. The following sections provide a high-level description and overview of *type*. See Section 3: Current Services for details on specific *passenger transport services* providers.

2.5.1 Passenger Transport Services

Public transport refers to passenger transportation services for use by the general public, typically managed on a schedule and charge a posted fare for each trip. Many public transport services operate on a fixed-schedule, while others may operate on an as-needed/as-scheduled basis. Common modes of transportation associated with public transport are buses, trams, rail transit, ferries, and metro/subways. The following services are offered in the Greater Miramichi Region.

Fixed-route Transit

Traditional, fixed-route transit is offered within the City of Miramichi via Miramichi Transit. Miramichi Transit operates three fixed routes within the City, serving the urban communities of Newcastle, Douglastown, and Chatham. Miramichi Transit will explore the addition of on-demand services in 2025.

Specialized Transit

Also referred to as paratransit, specialized transit is a service for people with accessibility needs who cannot use regular public transit services. Specialized transit is often provided on a temporary, conditional, or permanent basis and can include an eligibility review based on a functionality assessment. In Miramichi, specialized transit is offered by a non-profit entity, Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus), offering door-to-door transit service for individuals with accessibility needs and seniors (aged 50+). This service provides clients with inter-regional and inter-provincial services as required.

Community Transportation

These refer to specific transportation programs that are devised in response to community needs. In 2009, the provincial government launched a series of door-to-door volunteer driver services funded through the Economic and Social Development Corporation. Operations of this service have been transferred to the GMSC, and they currently coordinate the Community Transportation Program, a door-to-door volunteer driver service focused on providing services to seniors, low-income families, newcomers, and others without access to alternative transportation. This service provides clients with inter-regional and inter-provincial services as required.

2.5.2 Taxi Services

For-hire automobile travel supplied by private companies that provide point-to-point passenger transportation, with fares typically determined by distance travelled. Several taxi companies operate within the Greater Miramichi region, with most based in the City of Miramichi.

2.5.3 Inter-Regional Travel

There are options available in the Greater Miramichi region that provide residents the opportunity to travel between regions in New Brunswick and beyond. Except for the modes noted in 1.4.1 (Specialized Transit and Community Programs), inter-regional travel modes are often more costly, have lengthier travel times, and have limited services, times, and destinations making them infeasible for daily commuting.

Passenger Trains

A single passenger rail line exists through Miramichi. VIA Rail Canada's *Ocean* service (Trains 15/16) has a station stop in Newcastle and travels southeastwards through Moncton with an end destination of Halifax, or westwards through Bathurst, Campbellton, Riviere-du-Loup, and other communities before arriving in Montreal (from where additional trains and lines may be accessed). Service is limited to three trips per week in each direction.

Motorcoaches

There is currently one private company, Maritime Bus, that provides motorcoach transport within the Maritime provinces, connecting hub communities on a fixed-route and schedule. New Brunswick is served by two routes that split at Moncton—the first traveling north to Miramichi and continuing to Campbellton, the second travelling southwestwards to Saint John before moving north through to Edmunston. No route crosses central New Brunswick, nor is there a direct connection between Edmunston and Campbellton. Beyond passenger services, Maritime Bus also provides package delivery services.

Airlines

Miramichi has a local airport but has not provided commercial flights since the pandemic, before which it used to provide chartered flights to popular work locations for commuters, including Western Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Canadian Arctic. Currently, it is used for government departments, firefighting services, and as an engine testing facility.

3 Current Services

This section explores the existing public transport services in the Greater Miramichi region and how their services are meeting community needs. This includes stakeholder feedback on service gaps and opportunities, details regarding how the services interact, as well as case studies on the existing service providers outlining their operations, ridership, fleet, and other available information.

3.1 Profile of Public Transit and Community Transportation Needs

Understanding how the communities and residents within the Greater Miramichi region could be better served by public transit and community transportation is crucial in ensuring an achievable, relevant, and responsible Regional Transportation Plan. The goal of this needs profile is to understand perceptions around existing strengths and learn where transportation services can improve—whether through changes to the network(s), operations, or simply expanding services.

3.1.1 Methodology

To develop a robust and resonant profile, the project team used industry best practices, as well as current data and documents provided by the Service Commission. However, noting the importance of community context, the profile is predominantly derived from community and stakeholder feedback. Throughout the Current State phase of the project, meetings were held with the Service Commission's Resiliency Working Group (with representatives from 20+ organizations), existing service providers within the region (Community Transportation Program, Miramichi Transit, and Miramichi Accessible Transit), and the Service Commission's Board of Directors.

The profile is built upon two themes: the state of existing services and future modifications. The state of existing services explored strengths, gaps, opportunities, and barriers that pose challenges to residents today. Future modifications sought feedback on short-term and long-term changes and priorities for the system.

3.1.2 State of Existing Services

To more effectively structure feedback, questions and engagement were framed through a SWOC lens—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges. For clarity, strengths and weaknesses represent the positives and negatives, respectively, internal to existing services. Within transportation, this includes operations, management, fleet, peer collaboration, use of technology, etc. In contrast, opportunities and challenges represent the positives and negatives, respectively, external to the services—how residents use the service, politics, funding, education/trip planning, fare, etc.

Figure 2, below, summarizes the extent of what was heard via stakeholder conversations as they relate to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

INTERNAL

POSITIVE

Strengths

- Miramichi Transit is reliable
- Easy access to transportation
- Steady annual increase of ridership
- Low-cost rides for RSC service
- Curren transit options (Miramichi Transit, Miramichi Accessible Transit, Volunteer Driver Program) is providing essential services

Weaknesses

- Longer wait and travel times discourages use
- Service hours do not support all employment opportunities
- Coordination between existing transportation services
- GMSC internal capacity is limited

Opportunities

- Public transit funding streams are increasingly available
- Promoting the services
- Large potential source of untapped riders in the rural districts
- Increasing social and health benefits as well as community cohesion and equity
- Increasing connectivity opportunities along active transportation network
- Recruitment campaign for Volunteer drivers have doubled driver pool

Challenges

- Service Commission's capacity for growth (staffing, buses, etc.)
- Large geography, low population density
- Inclement weather affecting services
- Poor rural internet
- Balancing investment across various communities
- Government emissions targets
- Potential for duplication of service
- Stall in the closure of the Centennial Bridge

NEGATIVE

EXTERNAL

Figure 3: SWOC Analysis[3]

[3] All bulleted items included in the SWOC table is based on commentary from stakeholders during the workshop. References to reliability, ease of access, or any other aspects are subjective and not necessarily the experience of all users or Greater Miramichi residents.

Key Passenger Issues and Challenges

The following statements were provided by stakeholders with specific reference to how the current system continues to cause issues and challenges as it relates to passengers and potential riders:

- Long distances/non-centralized areas of interest (e.g., grocery stores, hospitals, etc.),
- Social stigma of relying on community transportation services rather than a personal vehicle,
- Service scope for community transportation options are limited (seniors, medical, accessibility, low-income, etc.) leading to potential riders being turned away,
- Not being able to book trips as/when needed, and
- Limited service area.

Transit Service Provider Issues and Challenges

Key stakeholder groups engaged through this process were the three existing transportation service providers: Miramichi Transit, Miramichi Accessible Transit, and the Volunteer Driver Program. They provided insights into the key issues and challenges that their organizations are facing in the Greater Miramichi region related to their operational health, sustainability, and longevity. Discussions were left open-ended. Key issues identified by these stakeholders included:

- Availability, recruitment, and retention of volunteer/paid drivers,
- Marketing of various services (many residents still do not know of available services),
- Funding options,
- Vehicle maintenance is outsourced, and
- Sourcing accessible vehicles.

3.1.3 Future Modifications

Discussions on “future modifications” were focused by short- (1-2 years) and long-term (3-5+ years) changes and implementation, as well as aspects/features of passenger transportation systems that should be prioritized by regional systems to more effectively serve residents.

Table 3, on the following page, outlines the summation of feedback from the stakeholders on future modifications. Section 4 outlines additional community and stakeholder feedback and input.

Table 3. Future Modifications

Short-term Changes	Long-term Changes	Aspects/features to be prioritized
• Increase volunteer driver ratio • Explore on-demand transit • Seek additional funding • Increase service hours • Form a transportation advisory committee • Equitable service delivery • Increase fleet/drivers • Explore partnerships	• Carpooling infrastructure • Paid driver positions • Employer partnerships • Weekly fixed route from rural communities • Expand routes • Invest in increased education/promotional activities • Leverage data insights • Build/implement transit app	• Park and rides to increase bus catchment area • Increase collaboration across systems • Coordinate interprovincial transportation • Accessibility • Align transportation planning with development planning

3.2 Existing and proposed services

This section outlines details on the existing transportation services within the Greater Miramichi region that provide relevant *passenger transport services* aligned with the provincial government's definition of "regional transportation" in the context of the RTM.

In this context, the Greater Miramichi region has three distinct services that fall into two of the four passenger transport services types outlined in the RTM. These are:

- Miramichi Transit, falling into the RTM's "Intercity Transit" type,
- GMSC's Volunteer Driver Program, falling into the RTM's "Community Transit" type, and
- Miramichi Accessible Transit, also falling into the RTM's "Community Transit" type.

To further detail each of the existing services, the following one-page cutsheets have been developed that include service descriptions, clientele base, area served, operations overview, fare structure, and how to ride or make a reservation information.

MIRAMICHI TRANSIT

YEAR LAUNCHED 2009

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE TYPE Intercity Transit

OPERATING ORGANIZATION Miramichi Transit

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Miramichi Transit is the fixed-route public transit agency, providing service in the urban core of the City of Miramichi. The service has three routes that connect residents in and around Chatham, Newcastle, and Douglastown. It is a scheduled service operating 6 days/week, funded via fare revenue and municipal subsidy. Miramichi Transit is exploring the feasibility of on-demand transit to expand their service area to encompass the entirety of the City of Miramichi.

CLIENTELE

The service focuses on:

- Residents of urban Miramichi
- Able-bodied individuals*

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

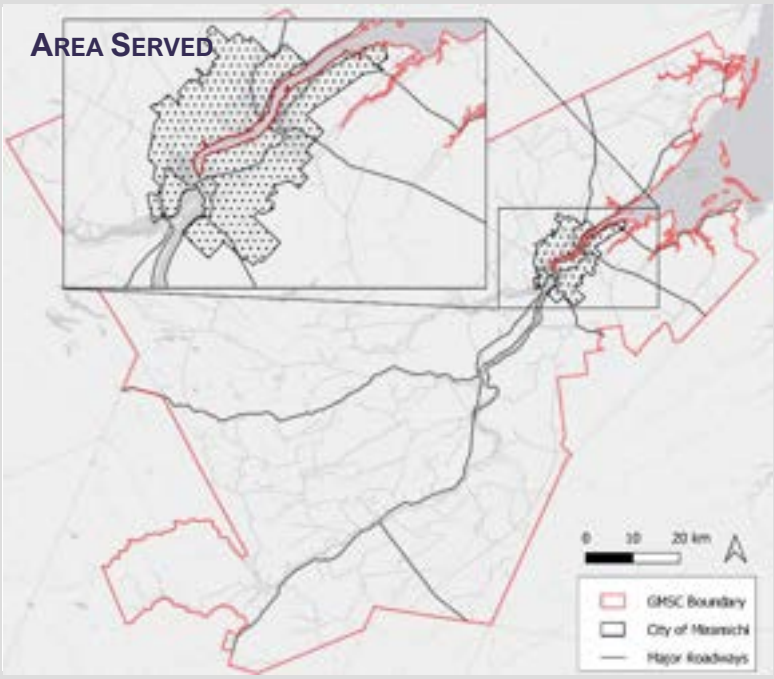
Annual Ridership: **115,000**

# of Drivers: **10**

# of Vehicles: **8**

Vehicle Type: **24 seat minibuses**

AREA SERVED



FARE

$3 cash fare. However, discounts are available via bulk fare media such as tickets and passes.

FUNDING SOURCES

Miramichi Transit's operating funding is derived through fare revenue and municipal subsidy. Capital funding is provided by the City of Miramichi as well as through provincial and federal grants.

*Miramichi Transit buses are not accessible.

MIRAMICHI ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT (MATBUS)

YEAR LAUNCHED --

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE TYPE Community Transit

OPERATING ORGANIZATION Miramichi Accessible Transit

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Miramichi Accessible Transit, also known as the MATbus, is a non-profit organization providing door-to-door transportation and paratransit services across the Greater Miramichi region.

The service operates 7 days/week, and is almost entirely funded through fundraising activities and a contractual agreement with the school district.

CLIENTELE

The service focuses on:

- Individuals with accessibility needs
- Seniors (aged 50+)

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

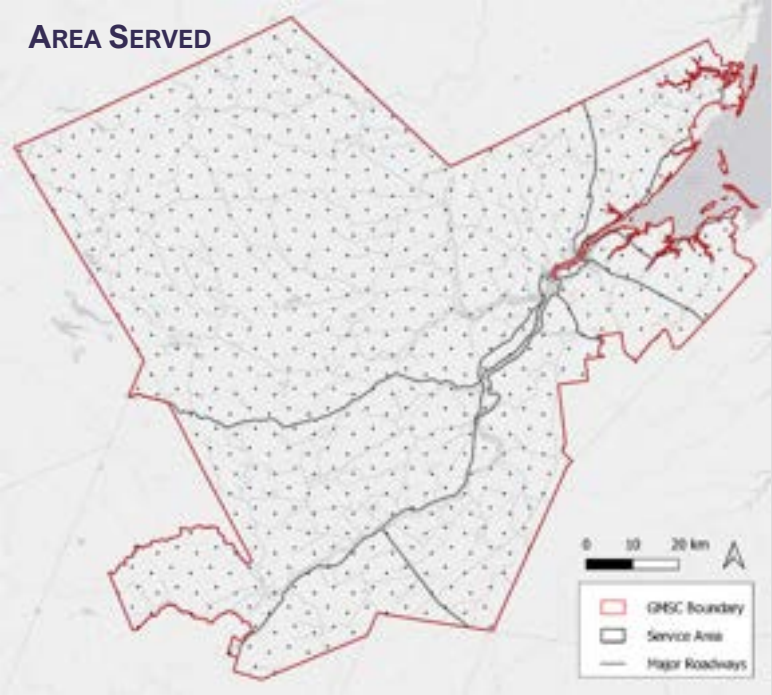
Annual Ridership: **40,000**[1]

# of Drivers: **5 Full-time, 2 Part-time**

# of Vehicles: **4 vans + 1 bus**

Vehicle Type: **Mix of accessible features**

AREA SERVED



FARE

$10 per roundtrip fare, however there are discounted rates available to low-income riders and families.

HOW TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Clients can schedule rides via email, text, or by phone call. Rides must be scheduled with advanced notice.

[1]Unconfirmed. Estimate based on anecdotal ridership data of "100-200 passengers per day" provided by the organization.

VOLUNTEER DRIVER PROGRAM

Year Launched 2020

Passenger Transport Service Type Community Transit

Operating Organization GMSC (since 2023)

Service Description

The Volunteer Driver Program is community transportation program that provides door-to-door ride-home service via volunteers using their own vehicles. The service runs on a non-profit model.

The Program is an integrated service of Northumberland Community Inclusion Network and the GMSC and subsidized in part by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC).

Clientele

The service focuses on:

- Low-income individuals
- People with limited transit means

Operations Overview

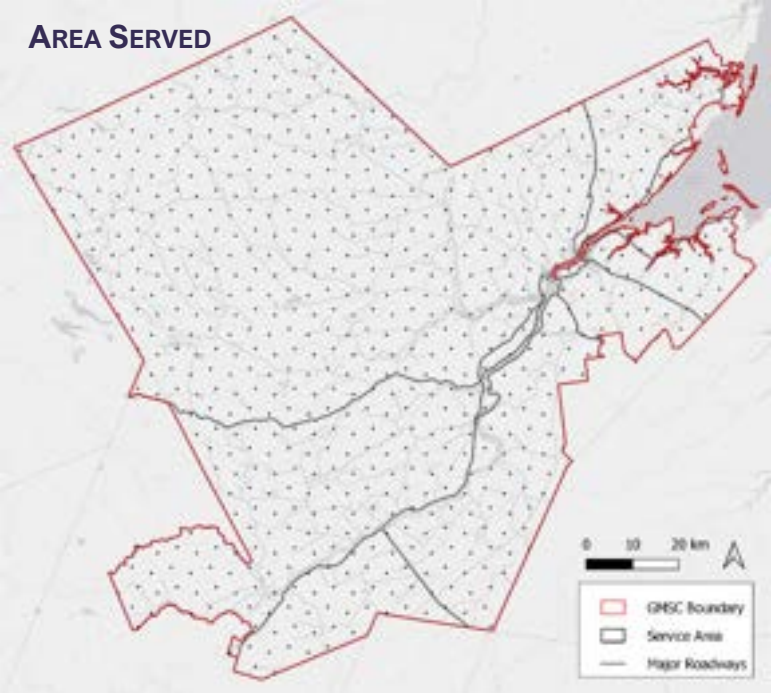
Annual Ridership: **2,800**[1]

# of Drivers: **16**

# of Vehicles: **16**

Vehicle Type: **Driver-owned vans**

Area Served



Fare

Distance-based fare that is heavily subsidized by the GMSC or Social Development, as appropriate, on a per-ride basis.

How to Make a Reservation

Clients can reserve rides via phone. Rides must be scheduled with advanced notice.

Dispatch services are provided by Urban / Rural Rides.

[1]Estimated for 2024, based on average ridership July – Sept inclusive.

4 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

To supplement the current state findings, community and stakeholder engagement was undertaken to identify and assess the needs and priorities of riders, residents, and stakeholders. These needs and priorities can help identify the transportation solutions that would be appropriate for implementation within the Greater Miramichi region.

4.1 Methodology

To ensure the success of the community engagement activities, consultation opportunities were designed to be flexible and geographically dispersed:

1. **Flexibility**: Residents and stakeholders have lives, hobbies, work, time restraints, childcare responsibility, and other obligations that often prevent them from filling out surveys let alone spend hours attending in-person engagement activities in the middle of the workday or evening. The project activities were held at various times and locations across the region to mitigate the burden of access. Similarly, various ways of engaging were offered to residents via an online survey (with physical copies available) and in-person sessions.
2. **Geographically Dispersed***:* In-person engagement activities were held in various locations across the service commission's boundary to make the sessions easily accessible to the public.

4.2 Activities Summary

Three engagement activities were undertaken to solicit input and feedback from members of the public and stakeholder groups. The following describes each of the activities and the dates they were held (if applicable).

4.2.1 Pop-up Consultation Sessions

Three 2-hour in-person pop-up consultation sessions were held over two days, in various areas of the Greater Miramichi region. The timing of these sessions was scheduled in collaboration with GMSC staff and the respective venues. They included a combination of morning and afternoon sessions. The locations were determined in collaboration with GMSC staff to ensure that the venues were in higher pedestrian traffic areas and were strategically located across the GMSC boundary to accommodate a wide and representative range of residents. The timing and location of the three[4] sessions were as follows:

[4] A fourth session was planned to be held in the Alnwick community. However, the planned venue was unable to accommodate staff on the date. In lieu, staff traveled through the community leaving project materials and handouts (with project descriptions and survey links) in various locations (Alnwick municipal office and other destinations, where available).

- Session 1: Thursday, January 23, 10am – 12pm in Boiestown, Upper Miramichi Rural Community Office,
- Session 2: Thursday, January 23, 1pm – 3pm in Village of Doaktown Community School Library, and
- Session 3: Friday, January 24, 10am – 12pm in City of Miramichi Newcastle Public Library.

At these sessions, two members of the project team were on-site with engagement materials and interactive posterboards on display. Residents were encouraged to interact with the materials (including posting stick-notes, talking to staff, providing recommendations, etc.) on topics relating to current or future transportation services, service delivery, areas of desired connections, accessibility of service, challenges/barriers, and any other topics they desired. On-site staff were able to answer project questions as well as receive anecdotal information on the transit service that residents shared.

The pop-up nature of the activities was implemented so that residents could provide as much input as they wanted on their schedule, outside of the bounds of rigid start and end times like formal public meetings or virtual engagement sessions. Residents were welcome to drop by at any point within the session's timeframe and stay for as long – or as short – as they were comfortable.

4.2.2 Public Survey

A survey was created by the LTRT project team. The survey was available virtually, with a physical copy being available upon request at the discretion of commission staff since not all residents may have had access to online services or had limited broadband connectivity.

The survey was launched on December 18, 2024, being released in advance of consultation sessions. The survey was open for response until February 2, 2025, closing at midnight. Commission staff advertised the survey on social media.

The survey was divided into four sections: demographics, transit experience, transportation and travel needs, and the Regional Transportation Plan (focusing on transportation values). It incorporated mapping and graphics to supplement the understanding of questions. Individual questions asked about age, residence (community), transportation barriers, connectivity, transit perceptions, current transit usage, and more. The complete survey is provided in Appendix B.

The survey had the highest participation rate of engagement activities, and offered residents a platform to provide multiple, detailed answers, suggestions, and comments.

4.2.3 Community Partner Workshops

Diving deeper into the community needs and priorities that should be explored through the Regional Transportation Plan, two 60-minute virtual workshops were held with key community partner organizations that are representative of larger groups of people and who are likely to be involved in and impacted by the RTP.

Both workshops received an overview of the project and objectives of the RTP, with the majority of the sessions being dedicated to discussion activities centered on existing transportation services and future priorities. The workshops were intended to ensure a collaborative approach to defining needs and priorities for transportation, as well as the goals for the RTP that is informed by the community.

4.3 Engagement Results and Analysis

The following subsections outline the feedback received during each of the previously mentioned engagement activities. Input received has been grouped and consolidated for clarity.

4.3.1 Pop-up Consultation Session Results

The pop-up consultation sessions were in venues with higher-foot traffic and received feedback, input, and anecdotes from residents. The engagement materials provided relayed information on the project, including a project description and key objectives, as well as providing QR codes to English and French versions of the public transportation survey. Additional posterboards asked:

- How would you describe transportation in your community?
- What do you think transportation should look like in your community?
- What are your travelling/transportation priorities in your community?

Unfortunately, participation in the in-person sessions was not high. This outcome may be attributed to several primary factors: a general lack of public engagement with transit-related matters and insufficient promotional efforts regarding the events. Despite the limited attendance, the in-person sessions yielded valuable and insightful feedback from participants and was complemented by other activities described in subsequent sections.

“How would you describe transportation in your community?”

The table below provides question responses, consolidated into themes. While some answers may be more relevant to other questions, the exercise respects where respondents decided to place their input. Overarching themes involved community, infrastructure, and connectivity. Table 4 summarizes the responses received on this topic.

Table 4: Summary of feedback received on current transportation options.

Themes	Response Summary [Number of responses]
Community	• Not everyone has access to a car/mobility option [3] • Good for people in urban areas [2] • Additional insurance needed for transporting people [1] • Residents with mobility challenges rely on taxis with a ramp [1]
Infrastructure	• Roads are in poor condition and need to be fixed [3]
Connectivity	• Areas are difficult to access [2] • Used to be a community connector bus – was not well used [2]

"What do you think transportation should look like in your community?"

The table below provides question responses, consolidated into themes. As above, answers were placed by residents and remain in their selected locations. Responses were focused on new services and community connections. Table 5 summarizes the responses received on this topic.

Table 5: Summary of feedback received on the future of transportation.

Themes	Response Summary [Number of responses]
New Services	• Vehicle that operates 1/week that travels to destinations (e.g., Miramichi, Fredericton) [4] • Vehicle that operates 1/week that travels to appointments (e.g., banks, barbers, pharmacies, medical appointments) [3] • Bus route from Boiestown to Fredericton [1]
Community Connections	• Medical appointments should be a priority [3] • Grocery delivery services [1] • Great for connecting seniors (to community events, benefits) [1]

"What are your travelling/transportation priorities in your community?"

Posterboards were seeded with four priorities: connectivity, sustainability, ease of information, and transportation funding. Residents were able to indicate where on a physical spectrum (shown below) they valued the priority, ranging from 'not important' to 'extremely important.' Residents could also provide their own priorities/inputs, if desired. Unfortunately, no residents engaged with this activity in any of the sessions.

While there was no board interaction, anecdotes suggested that connectivity was top of mind, though it was stressed by residents that there was pride in their community cohesion and ability to care and look out for individuals in need.

4.3.2 Stakeholder Workshops[5]

Two stakeholder workshops were held, with various government, non-profit, and other representatives. The virtual engagement platform Conceptboard was used to conduct both workshops. The workshops were designed as a discussion forum that mirrored the type of questions asked in the public transportation survey, with input into:

- Existing transportation systems or services within the Greater Miramichi region, and
- Future priorities and modifications over the short- and long-term horizons.

The results and input from these groups are consolidated into the tables on the following pages.

A notable discrepancy between the public survey and pop-up consultations to the stakeholder workshop feedback centered on service to the Moncton airport and large employment areas like Renous. Stakeholders made repetitive notes that service to the Moncton airport is non-existent[6]. The survey and pop-ups were more focused on local transportation challenges and barriers.

Discussion Topic 1 – Reflecting on the Existing System

The first topic of discussion centered on community partners reflecting on the current state of the existing transportation systems in and around the Greater Miramichi region. Notably, community partners focused on different aspects of transportation within the Greater Miramichi region—some responses are specific to Miramichi Transit's fixed-route network within the city, the Service Commission's Volunteer Drivers Program, or are just general. Context has been provided where appropriate. Table 6 through Table 8 summarize responses received on this discussion topic.

Table 6: Responses to the question "What are the strengths."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
Miramichi Transit	• Service is reliable [2] • Drivers are dedicated [2] • Fare is reasonable [2] • Increasing attention to Active Transportation (AT) network connectivity [1]
Volunteer Drivers Program	• Program is growing; number of drivers and awareness is increasing [4] • Service/fare is low cost for residents [3] • Drivers are dedicated; go above and beyond [2]

[5] All bulleted items within Tables 6 – 11 are summarized commentary and responses discussed during the stakeholder workshops. References to reliability, ease of access, or any other aspects are subjective and not necessarily the experience of all users or Greater Miramichi residents.
[6] Maritime Bus does provide a daily, roundtrip service from Miramichi to the Moncton Airport. It is only once per day and not necessarily at optimal times, but it does exist as an option.

	• No routing to navigate making it easier to understand [1]
General	• Opportunities to expand transit systems [2]

Table 7: Responses to the question "What are some gaps."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
General Transportation Options	• Lack of awareness of services [8] • Airport Service is non-existent [6] • Lack of coordination between various transit services [4] • Lack of funding [4] • Rural communities are heavily dependent on personal transit options, such as ridesharing, relying on family/friends, using their own vehicles [3] • Fixed route transit is limited to the City [3]
Miramichi Transit	• Accessibility is an issue with Miramichi Transit [2] • Service hours do not support employment opportunities [2] • Insufficient bus stops leave parts of the region underserved [1] • Driver availability [1]
Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus)	• MATbus is not affordable as a primarily accessible service [2]

Table 8: Responses to the question "What are some challenges."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
Growth and Infrastructure	• Physical capacity for growth within government (e.g., staffing) [3] • Poor internet connectivity imposing a barrier to online travel booking and options [2] • Road conditions, winter weather, reliability [2] • Public transit is not profitable – who pays? [1]
Dispersed Geography	• Long travel times in public transportation vehicles [3] • Large geographic area, low population base [2] • Vast areas with no transportation available [2]
Planning and Development	• Housing development with transportation options [1] • Government emission targets and costs [1]

DISCUSSION TOPIC 2 – FUTURE PRIORITIES AND MODIFICATIONS

The second topic of discussion centered on community partners prioritizing future modifications and additions to the various transportation systems in and around the Greater Miramichi region. Discussion questions focused on implementation priorities in the short- and long-term. Context has been provided where appropriate. Table 9 through Table 11 provide a summary of responses received during the workshop on this discussion topic.

Table 9: Responses to the question "what would be some desired short-term changes (0-2 years)."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
General	• More advertisements/marketing/education of available options [7] • Moncton Airport connection [6] • Increased funding [4] • Easily accessible service information (e.g., fare prices, exact change required, how it works, etc.) [2] • Forming a regional transportation advisory committee that has service providers working [2] • Ridesharing services [1] • Taxi services [1] • Equitable service delivery [1] • Establishing consistent levels of service [1] • Availability of car rentals [1] • Leveraging capacity of existing service providers instead of building brand new [1] • Find existing platforms to promote alt. solutions (e.g., poparide, Turo) [1]
Miramichi Transit	• Have an on-demand shuttle service [2] • Increase to fixed-route service hours [2]
Volunteer Driver Program	• Have a comfortable ratio of drivers to clients [3] • Expand the Volunteer Driver Program beyond medical appointments [2]

Table 10: Responses to the question "What would be some desired long-term changes (3-5+ years)."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
General	• Private taxi or ridesharing services with modern services [3] • Cost sharing model review [2] • Ensuring each community has local means of transportation [2] • Explore employer partnerships [2] • Infrastructure for carpooling [2] • Tourism-focused transportation [2] • Integration of real-time information systems [1]
Regional Transportation	• Interprovincial connections (e.g., routes to Acadian Peninsula) [3] • Weekly fixed route from various rural communities into the city [3]
Planning and Development	• Transportation and land use planning and development coordination [2]
Miramichi Transit	• Increase service coverage of Miramichi Transit [1]
Volunteer Driver Program	• Moving from Volunteer to Paid driver positions [1]

Table 11: Responses to the question "are there any transit features that you would like to see as priorities."

Topic	Response Summary [Number of responses]
General	• Accessible mobility options for all residents [7] • Increased promotion and education of available services [6] • A booking system that works for older residents and those with poor internet connectivity [3] • Collaborative work is essential [3] • Increased consultation with First Nation Communities [2] • Coordinating Service Commission delivery with other services [2] • Active Transportation Integration [1] • Park and rides would be feasible in rural communities [1]
Regional Transportation	• Shuttles/connections to the airport [6] • Interregional connections (e.g., routes to Acadian Peninsula) [4] • Shuttles/connections to employment areas (e.g., Renous prison) [3]

4.3.3 Public Survey

This section summarizes findings from the public survey conducted December 2024 – February 2025 for the RTP. The survey addressed the low turnout at the in-person engagement sessions by capturing high-level feedback from a much broader cross-section of the public. Overall, the public survey findings mirror those from the in-person engagement sessions and lay the groundwork for quantitative analysis.

Who we heard from

The community engagement survey received 137 responses, capturing a diverse cross-section of the Greater Miramichi Region.

The age profile of respondents skewed toward older adults, with more than half (52%) aged 60 or above. The remaining respondents were distributed across other age brackets, with notable representation from those aged 50-59 (18%) and 30-39 (14%). In terms of employment status, the survey captured a balanced mix of working and retired residents, with 50% employed full-time and 36% retired.

The geographic distribution showed survey respondent representation from:

- City of Miramichi (64%),
- Alnwick (8%),
- Upper Miramichi (8%),
- Greater Miramichi Rural District (7%),
- Miramichi River Valley (4%),
- Doaktown (4%), and
- Natoaganeg (1%).

A significant finding emerged regarding public transit usage: 65% of respondents indicated they had never used public transit services in the region, with this pattern consistent across both urban and rural areas. Among those with transit experience, Miramichi Transit (18%) and Maritime Bus (11%) emerged as the most frequently utilized services.

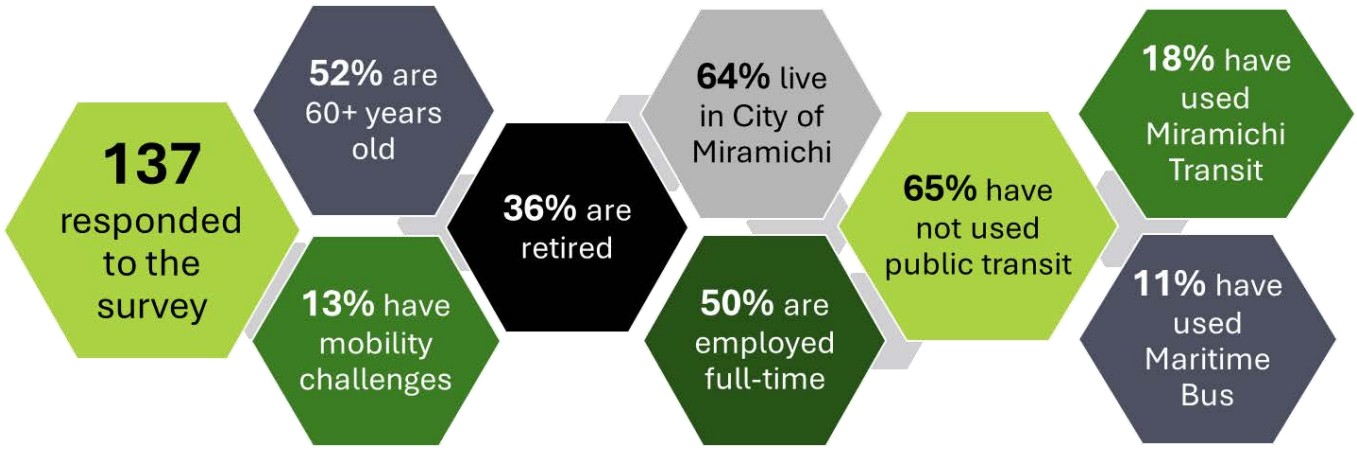


Figure 4: Snapshot of Who We Heard from in the Survey

Transportation needs and travel patterns

The survey findings revealed significant insights into transportation patterns and needs within the Greater Miramichi Region. Personal vehicles dominated as the primary mode of transportation, with 90% of respondents relying on them, while public transit usage remained low at 4%. Notably, when asked about their reasons for using personal vehicles, the most chosen reason is 'there aren't other options', representing 28% of survey responses. The survey identified the top three purposes for frequent trips:

- Shopping (29%),
- Personal business (27%), and
- Work (25%).

This pattern emphasizes the need for a reliable transportation system that can accommodate both essential daily commutes and routine activities. The significant portion of work-related travel indicates the importance of aligning transit schedules with work shifts.

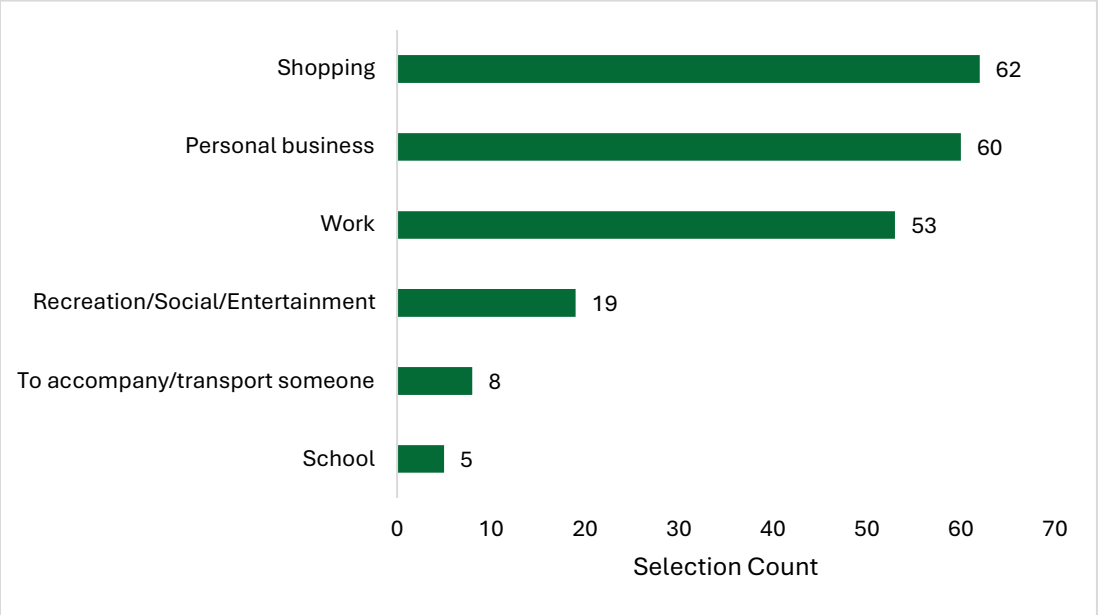


Figure 5: Purpose of Most Frequent Trips[7]

Regarding travel patterns, the survey revealed that most activities remain localized, with 32% of respondents conducting most trips within their local community. Another 29% mix local travel with trips outside their community for services. Equal shares (15% each) frequently travel to other parts of the Greater Miramichi Region and beyond. Among City of Miramichi residents, 43% mostly stay local, while 36% combine local trips with travel for amenities outside their community.

Current Transit Experience

Understanding the current transit user experiences is critical for effective transit system planning and service design. Survey respondents who used public transit services (including Miramichi Transit, Accessible Transit, Community Transportation, and Maritime Bus) reported generally positive experiences: over half agreed the service is reliable, fairly priced, and worth reusing, while also expressing interest in expanded operating hours. However, only 46.6% found the service easy to understand. Among the 12% of all survey respondents who exclusively used Miramichi Transit, 61% agreed the service was fairly priced. However, only 44% agree that the service is reliable, and 50% disagree that it is easy to understand how to use it. Half expressed willingness to reuse it, and 89% would like to use it outside the current hours of operation.

[7] Survey respondents were asked about the purpose of their most frequent trips, with options to choose from. Due to a flaw, 70 responses were limited to one choice, while 67 could select multiple options.

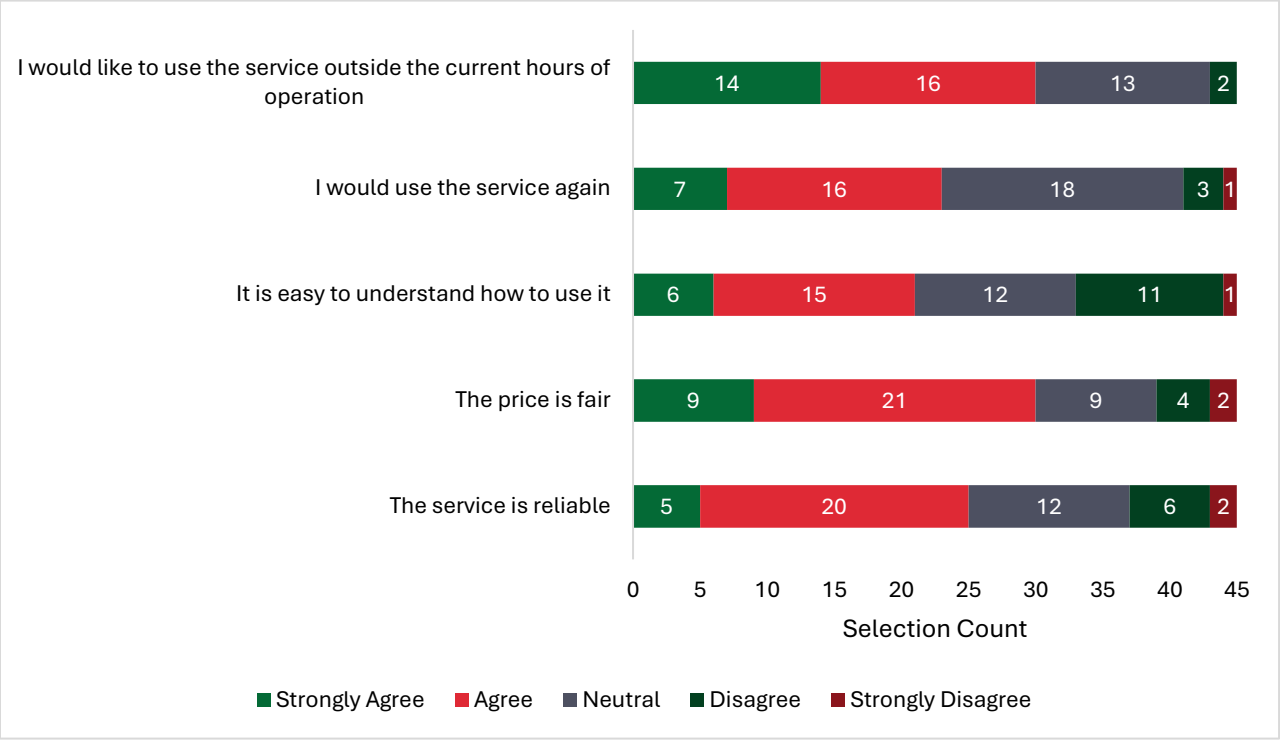


Figure 6: Current Transit Experience

The most cited reason for avoiding transit was a preference for driving (43%), followed by limited operating hours (13%), excessive wait times (9%), 'I did not know it existed' (6%), and 'I don't know how to use the service' (4%). The data underscores the need to address convenience barriers and enhanced transit public education to encourage transit adoption.

Transit Network Design

The survey collected feedback on transit network design priorities, with participants ranking service features. The top priorities were hours of operation, frequency, and affordable service.

When asked about potential transit expansion, 52% of all respondents expressed likelihood to use expanded services. Among those residing outside the City of Miramichi, the likelihood to use expanded services was slightly reduced: 27.5% indicated they would be "very likely" to use expanded options, 20% "somewhat likely," 12.5% neutral, 17.5% "somewhat unlikely", and 22.5% "very unlikely".

In response to the question asking for "additional feedback regarding the Regional Transportation Plan or public transit in the region," survey respondents highlighted expanded regional coverage (15 survey respondents) and improved schedule alignment with work hours and weekend travel (9) as critical transit priorities. Additional feedback included requests for event-specific transportation (3), affordable pricing (2), accessibility improvements (2), user education initiatives (2), network adjustments for potential Centennial Bridge closures (2), and enhanced reliability (2).

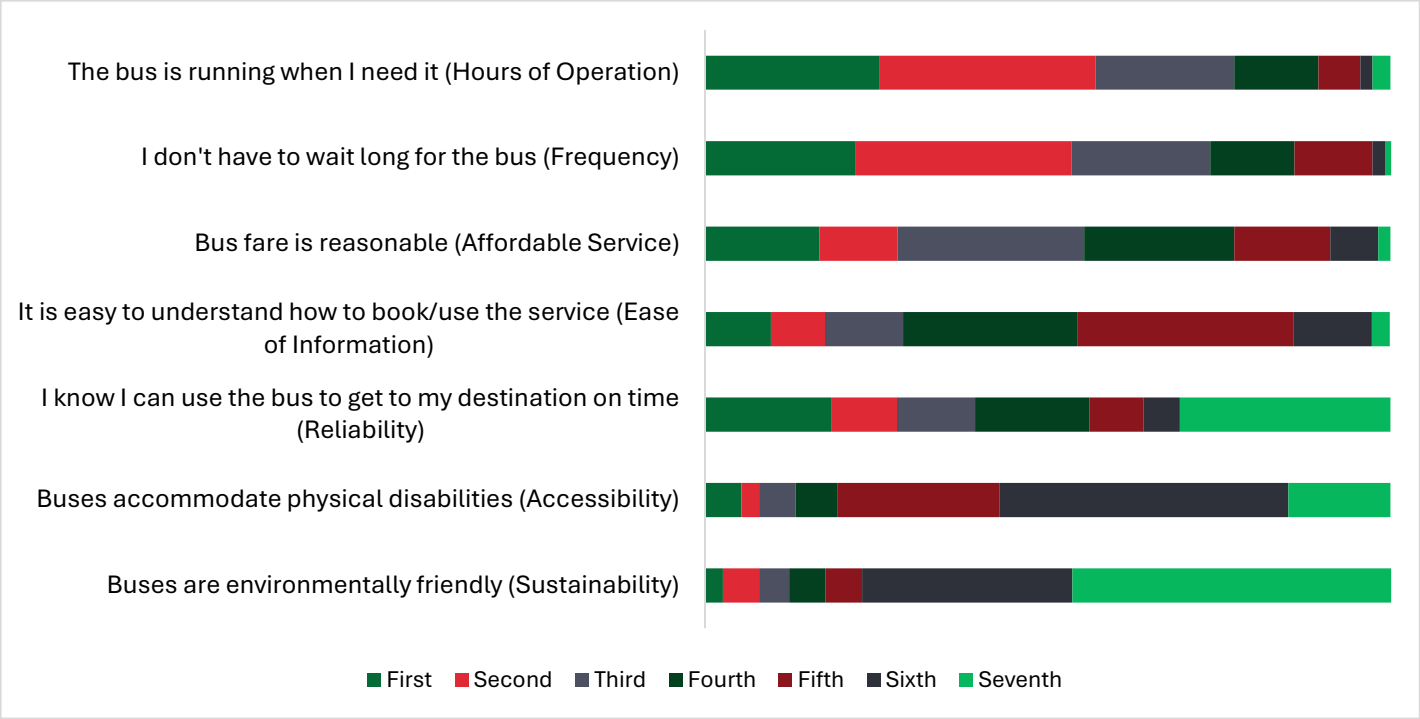


Figure 7: Network Design Priorities[8]

[8] Survey respondents were asked, "Whether or not you use transit, please prioritize the following transit service features based on what is important to you."

5 Assessing Needs

All feedback received from residents, community members, and stakeholders is invaluable to building an understanding of transportation needs from which the Regional Transportation Plan is based. Staff heard feedback on a variety of transportation topics, service types, solutions, and mobility options. It should be noted that participation rates varied across engagement activities, with some pop-up sessions experiencing lower turnout. This introduces potential self-selection bias where findings may not fully represent all demographic groups. Despite these limitations, the data collected remains valuable, especially given the multiple engagement efforts made to reach diverse community segments.

Select themes continued to recur. These recurring inputs, in conjunction with the service findings, establish a series of top-of-mind needs and desires from future transportation systems. These preliminary priorities include:

Priority 1: Promotion and Education of Current and Future Transportation Systems

Educating residents on the services available—and how to use the services—is crucial to drawing people into transit. Simply put, they cannot use it if they do not know about it. Not understanding how to use a system is also a barrier that prevents use.

More than a quarter of survey respondents (28%) reported being unaware of any transportation options beyond private vehicles. Overall, 70% of survey participants have never used public transit, and that share climbs to 81% among those living outside the City of Miramichi. This is consistent with what was heard in the in-person engagement sessions and heavily noted by community partners.

Youth education, in particular, has been researched within the public transit industry. Research shows that early education has a positive impact on ridership over-time as being familiarized with transit in grade school increases the chance that they will use it as adults.

Priority 2: Physical Accessibility of Vehicles

Of the existing mobility options within the region, Miramichi Transit – the public transit system within the City of Miramichi – does not possess accessible vehicles. Instead, those seeking accommodation must use either the Volunteer Drivers Program or book with the more expensive Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus) service. Not only is this not equitable, but it unnecessarily burdens the already limited Volunteer Drivers Program as well as creates an inconsistent experience across modes that undermines perceptions of reliability and consistency.

Priority 3: Regional Connectivity

Mobility options are limited outside of the City of Miramichi. Among City of Miramichi residents, 43% conduct most of their trips within the city and 36% split their travel between local destinations and amenities elsewhere. In contrast, only 20% of residents in other regional communities primarily travel within their own area. While there is tremendous community cooperation and spirit in all areas of the Greater Miramichi region—where residents are able to rely on friends, family, and neighbours for rides and transport to appointments and necessities—this is not something available to all residents. The provision of mobility options across the region would ensure *all* residents have access to essential services. As community members who currently provide transportation begin to need support themselves, it's critical to establish a sustainable continuity of transportation options.

How these mobility options are presented and connect throughout the region has not yet been identified. Options relating to fixed-route transit, subsidized ridesharing or taxis, dedicated on-demand transit, supported carpooling, and other modes of mobility lend themselves to the intent of the Regional Transportation Mandate and subsequent Plan.

Priority 4: Continued and Consistent Public and Stakeholder Outreach

The provision of various mobility options is a public service. As such, it must reflect the needs and desires of residents and users to be successful. Therefore, there should be scheduled engagement activities for transportation options that are focused on the public to ensure regular communications and check-ins. This also includes the inclusion of various stakeholder groups, such as First Nations Communities, to ensure all voice are being heard and considered.

Priority 5: Explore Connections beyond the Greater Miramichi Region

This project is focused on developing a RTP for the Greater Miramichi region. While proposed services are meant to be scalable for eventual interprovincial travel opportunities, the current focus is to provide mobility options for residents within the region so they can access essential services, shopping, appointments, and work. However, there is a significant amount of feedback and input on connections to out-of-region locations, such as the Moncton International Airport.[9]

[9] As previously noted, Maritime Bus provides daily, roundtrip service from Miramichi to the Moncton Airport, albeit at limited times. However, in this context, the airport is an example of an external "out-of-region" location. Fredericton and Bathurst are other notable locations.

5.1 Discussion on Existing Services Limited that of Prospective Services

While community engagement exercises often result in revealed preferences for future services, specifically pertaining to service types, the discussions during this needs assessment as dominated by issues and improvements to existing services. Potential new service model(s) (e.g., fixed-route transit, on-demand service, volunteer drivers or paratransit) were not the focus because respondents and stakeholders were concerned with the types of services that currently exist within the region. Discussion focused on how they are or are not perceived to be functioning, or what they value about transportation, not necessarily on how they would prefer to see these transportation services delivered.

The priorities that have been identified are values such as connectivity, accessibility, and awareness of options –- many of which align with the requirements of the RTM – were used to guide the development of transportation options and solutions within the region in conjunction with industry standards, existing services, the current state assessment, the requirements of the RTM, and the capacity of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission.

6 Transportation Solutions

Through the current state findings, the transportation services that exist within the Greater Miramichi region, the priorities heard through the public engagement, and desired future state of transportation from the service commission's staff and board, transportation solutions have been identified to be pursued by the Service Commission in the near-term. Priorities derived from the needs assessment (see Section 5, previously) include:

- Priority 1: Promotion and Education of Current and Future Transportation Systems
- Priority 2: Physical Accessibility of Vehicles
- Priority 3: Regional Connectivity
- Priority 4: Continued and Consistent Public and Stakeholder Outreach
- Priority 5: Explore Connections beyond the Greater Miramichi Region

These priorities and values are broad. In cross-referencing the Regional Transportation Mandate, it specifies that there are four types of passenger transport services in New Brunswick, identified by the metrics outlined in the following table:

Table 12: Passenger Transport Service Classifications

	Management	Distance of Trips	Service Area Density	Vehicle Size	Route Type	Frequency
Urban Public Transit	Mid-Size to Large Cities	Short to Med	Med to High	Mid to Large	Fixed Route, No reservation	High
Regional Public Transit	RSCs	Short to Med	Low to Med	Small to Mid	Variable	Med
Community Transit	RSCs and Non-profits	Short to Long	Variable	Small	Customized route	On-demand
Intercity Transit	Private Sector	Long	Variable	Very Large	Fixed Route, With or Without Reservation	Low

Of these listed passenger transport service types, 3 are represented within the Greater Miramichi Region: Urban Public Transit via Miramichi Transit, Community Transit via the Volunteer Driver Program and Miramichi Accessible Transit, and Intercity Transit via Maritime Bus. Yet, for the

purposes of this Regional Transportation Plan, in particular the role of the Greater Miramichi Service Commission, there are only two relevant passenger transport service types, as identified by the mandate: Regional Public Transit, and Community Transit. These are either a regionally scaled fixed-route system (Regional Public Transit), or an on-demand/specialized transit system (Community Transit). Both are appropriate for the Greater Miramichi region regardless of rural vs. urban contexts due to the operation of Miramichi Transit in the larger urban centre.

However, in the general broadness of these priorities and values, as well as the general broadness of the mandate's intent to bring "viable travel options to support the efficient movement of people," alternative transportation options beyond traditional transit solutions have been explored in this Regional Transportation Plan.

Building upon the findings to date and these priorities, this section discusses the various transportation solutions that have been developed to meet the required "streams" of the Regional Transportation Mandate. These transportation solutions focus on service models and types recommended for enhancement and implementation across the region, as well as focusing on internal efficiencies and resource management and capacity within the GMSC. The four streams of the RTM and their subsequent solutions are:

- **Regional Planning**
  - Continuing supporting the GMSC's Community Transportation System
  - Carpooling Pilot
  - Carshare Platform
- **Public Relations**
  - Education and Awareness Campaigns
  - Periodic Newsletters
  - Employer Partnerships
- **Resources and Oversight**
  - Transportation Coordinator Position
  - Funding Opportunities
  - Community Forum
  - Transit Agency Working Group

6.1 Regional Planning Stream

Within the Mandate, the regional planning stream is focused on enhancement or introduction of various transportation services and types appropriate for the Greater Miramichi region. Several services were assessed throughout this process that moved toward meeting the intent of the mandate. These included implementing a fixed-route transit service from Alnwick – Upper Miramichi (that could have been expanded beyond service commission boundaries in the future)

but was too costly; Moncton airport shuttle service but was duplicative to service already provided by Maritime Bus; and contracting and subsidizing a ridesharing service but was not an equitable solution.

There are three transit services already operating within the region: Miramichi Transit, Miramichi Accessible Transit, and the GMSC Community Transit Program. Miramichi Transit's coverage is limited to the City and Miramichi Accessible Transit is a private, not-for-profit entity. The prevailing transit solution is continuing to support and facilitate the expansion of the existing GMSC Community Transit Program.

Other regional planning initiatives beyond public transit to be explored includes further supporting mobility modes that are familiar to residents, identified through the public engagement, and the idea of community cooperation that is already apparent within the region. These include a carpooling pilot program and a carshare platform.

6.1.1 Supporting the Expansion of GMSC's Community Transit Program

The GMSC currently operates their Community Transportation Program, a door-to-door volunteer driver service focused on providing services to seniors, low-income families, newcomers, and others without access to means of alternative transportation. This service provides clients with inter-regional and inter-provincial connections as required.

Despite being not well-known amongst community members, those who are aware of the service use it significantly. The service formerly operated using 6 drivers, increasingly to 17 in 2025 to better meet demand.

This increase of drivers and vehicles will allow for immediate growth. Being a 'dial-a-ride' service' that can go anywhere in the region, this service can satisfy mandate requirements for mobility options if it's userbase was expanded. Moving forward, the Community Transportation Program could expand beyond its primarily medical-based appointments, seniors, and low-income families to include accessibility needs in the near-term and simply anyone in the longer-term (with medical trips maintaining booking and scheduling priority).

Opening the user-base of this service will touch on many of the applicable priorities identified, including increased accessibility, regional connectivity, and even exploration of connections beyond the region since the service currently offers that option for medical-based appointments.

Expanding into accessibility in the near-term would provide another option for residents, of which there is currently only the Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus) service. It would also serve to support other modes of transportation like Miramichi Transit, the carpooling pilot solution (see 6.1.2), and the carshare platform (see 6.1.3).

In the medium-term, the service could be used to assist during peak hour traffic, acting as commuter transit vehicles connecting into large areas of employment. During engagement with stakeholders, it was noted that there are large employment areas outside of the City of Miramichi, such as the penitentiary in Renous, that are not served by transit and face limited housing supply in the surrounding communities.

In the future, expanding into providing service to any resident, the service could act as an on-demand service utilizing the province's agreement with Blaise Transit's booking and scheduling system. In an on-demand model, the service would support general mobility as well as Miramichi Transit and any future fixed-route services introduced in the region (see section 9).

6.1.2 Carpooling Pilot

This solution refers to the creation or encouragement of use of a formal carpooling platform to encourage ride/trip sharing to better meet resident transportation needs and provide localized and regional mobility options. Offered initially as a pilot to gauge interest, this would expand mobility options for residents beyond standard transit-centric modes. Public engagement noted the current reliance on neighbours and families for rides in various communities to get to essential services like medical appointments, pharmacies, banks, and grocery stores. This solution formalizes that mentality, providing peace of mind for individuals to know that carpooling options still exist even if neighbours and family happen to be unavailable.

There are software solutions that support and formalize carpooling, such as ridesharing.com and poparide.com. In these account-based applications, users can book specific seats in vehicles, view driver profiles, agree on costs, even know the make and model of the vehicle. It becomes a transactional service which improves upon an informal carpooling structure where, for example, someone who relies on family and friends for rides may avoid asking for rides when needed all the time to avoid being viewed as a burden.

This also helps with regional and interprovincial connectivity as software like ridesharing.com and poparide.com are nation-wide. Users could get or chain trips across the country if they so desired. A large limitation to these services however, particularly in areas of dispersed populations, multiple options can be a barrier to finding rides. Therefore, in this solution, the GMSC would choose and actively promote and educate residents on their preferred software.

Finally, to further promote carpooling during the pilot program, the GMSC could provide an offer a subsidy to drivers to encourage use during the initial launch.

6.1.3 Carshare Platform

Carshare platforms are becoming increasingly popular options as cost of living and cost of vehicle ownership increases. There are two types of carshare models: business-to-consumer and peer-to-peer.

- **Business-to-Consumer Model**
  Carshare service where a company owns a fleet of vehicles that are strategically located throughout urban areas in "zones." Through a subscription-based account system, users can book vehicles for hours or days at a time as available. A notable business-to-consumer carshare company example in Canada is Communauto.
- **Peer-to-Peer Model**
  This model relies on private automobile owners renting out their vehicles. It is not dissimilar to the Airbnb model of renting out your home. Through software platforms and mobile applications, insurance, driver's licenses, and other liabilities are accounted for before prospective owners and users can engage. A notable peer-to-peer carshare company is Turo.com.

For the Greater Miramichi region, a business-to-consumer model is not recommended. It is often more urban-centric and while it may benefit residents within the City of Miramichi, other communities are too dispersed to effectively and equitably deploy and use this system. Further, for companies like Communauto, introducing carshare presents significant upfront costs as they provide the fleet. Therefore, there typically has to be a dependable and consistent user base upon rollout which is not guaranteed.

A peer-to-peer system, however, could excel in the region. Start-up costs and time are minimal, requiring only the identification and recruitment of local vehicle owners willing to list their vehicles for use. Further, it allows vehicle owners the opportunity to realize profit on sitting or seldom used vehicles and provides users the convenience and directness of a single-occupancy vehicle without having to on take the financial burden of vehicle ownership and maintenance.

6.2 Public Relations Stream

Community outreach, meaningful engagement on transportation issues, and pursuing partnerships are the hallmarks of the public relations stream. The mandate outlines action items required to be undertaken by service commissions, which include:

- Ensuring the public are kept informed
- Promotional activities are undertaken

The solutions developed directly address these action items.

6.2.1 Education and Awareness Campaigns

This solution is heavily tied to Priority 1 of the needs assessment: Promotion and Education of Current and Future Transportation Systems. Awareness is a prominent barrier to increasing the use of alternative modes of transportation. Residents will not be able to use modes if they do not know they exist. 28% of survey respondents noted that they were unaware of any transportation options beyond their private vehicles. Similarly, educating residents on the services available – and how to use the services – is critical to resident mobility and independence.

Campaigns can promote new or existing transportation services and should be conducted, at least in the short-term, at a quarterly frequency to ensure resident familiarity. Repeated and periodic campaigns ensure knowledge reaches residents. These campaigns should target all demographics and locations across the region, including youths, seniors, working adults, schools, malls, libraries and other community facilities, post-secondary institutions, markets, and events.

6.2.2 Periodic Newsletter

This is solution is focused on communicating news, mobility options, events, and other information to residents on a monthly basis. This is recommended to be a subscribed-list based e-newsletter. Content should note system changes, innovations, and ways to engage with GMSC staff.

6.2.3 Foster Employer Partnerships/Sponsors

There is merit to exploring local employee/employer transportation needs. By understanding these needs, solutions can be developed that facilitate the movement of employees and provide expanded employment opportunities to those that cannot travel by themselves. This is a beneficial arrangement that benefits employees, employers, and the municipalities, by decreasing unemployment rates and improving access to good-paying jobs.

There are numerous benefits to the implementation of this solution. The following benefits consider both the perspectives of employers and employees. These include:

- Expands employment opportunities for residents and newcomers by providing dependable mobility.
- Seasonal flexibility allows resources to be allocated to other solutions/municipal priorities in off seasons.

6.3 Resources and Oversight Stream

6.3.1 Transportation Coordinator Position

This is crucial to the resources and oversight stream, and successful management and implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan. The GMSC has limited capacity to operate its current Community Transportation Program, let alone develop and manage additional modes, conduct community engagement, liaise with employers and stakeholders, and pursue additional funding opportunities.

6.3.2 Funding Opportunities

Significant streams of funding exist for transit planning, fleet electrification, infrastructure, and capital cost supports (including vehicles), making funding grant applications essential to agencies exploring the introduction of additional service or mobility options. Funding applications can represent significant undertakings and it is recommended that the Transportation Coordinator oversee this responsibility. A list of opportunities is provided in the Funding Glossary, Section 8.4.

6.3.3 Community Forum

Residents and stakeholders need a reliable, constant, accessible way to provide feedback and input on the transportation options that exist within the Greater Miramichi region. It is recommended that the forum be versatile, and consist of a multi-point interface, including: a physical comment box on-board vehicles, a municipal website-based comment portal, a standard 'forum'-style online messaging page where residents can ask questions and staff can respond, and annual in-person sessions held across the region. This forum is a requirement of the mandate, to ensure resident feedback is being received regularly.

6.3.4 Transit Agency Working Group

The 3 existing transportation service providers operate in a silo to each other despite providing complementary services. It is recommended that a transit agency working group be struck to allow members of each agency to come together to share information and ideas, service changes, upcoming events or activities, and identify how the services could integrate or align to improve service delivery and quality for residents.

7 Implementation Planning

Key to the success of this Regional Transportation Plan is sound implementation planning. This section overviews implementation requirements and efforts that will be needed to increase ridership and benefit residents of the Greater Miramichi region over the next three years.

7.1 Solutions Staging

Section 6 outlines 10 transportation solutions that address physical transportation modes, community engagement, and internal capacity and resourcing. To navigate the staging of these solutions, the figure below identifies when it is recommended for staff prepare, promote, work toward, implement, or otherwise proceed with any of the prepared solutions.

Solutions	Year															
	2025				2026				2027				2028			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Regional Planning Stream																
Expand GMSC's Transit Program																
Carpooling Pilot																
Carshare Platform																
Public Relations Stream																
Education and Awareness																
Periodic Newsletter					On-going, every month											
Foster Employer Partnerships				On-going												
Resources and Oversight Stream																
Transportation Coordinator Position																
Funding Opportunities					On-going											
Community Forum				On-going												
Transit Agency Working Group																

Hiring
Implementation/Action by end of quarter
Meeting/Workshops
Active Work/Preparation/Promotion
Lapsed Time

Figure 8: Implementation Staging

7.2 Implementation Considerations

Regional Planning Stream

The key to successful development and delivery of transportation solutions is phased implementation. It is infeasible for staff to deliver on all recommendations simultaneously. For these solutions, there will be a steady stream of development, preparation, promotion, and launchings of various mobility options over the next 3 years.

1. **Carpooling Pilot | Q1 2026**
   Being a community staple already, will move toward fruition first. Background work will begin in 2025, with launch in early 2026. Following the 2026 Q1 launch, it is recommended that staff take time in Q2 to monitor and evaluate resident response and use.

2. **Carsharing | Q4 2026**
   This will follow the carpool pilot, with work being done in the later half of 2026, with launch by the end of the year.

3. **Expand GMSC's Community Transportation Program | Q3 2027**
   After having just tripled its contingent of drivers in Q1 of 2025, other modes will be prioritized first. That tremendous growth, coupled with a focus on introducing new mobility options for residents, has the next expansion planned for mid 2027.

Public Relations Stream

Focused on engaging residents, stakeholders, and employers, as well as spreading knowledge about the mobility options available, the implementation of this stream is straightforward – communication and engagement activities happen regularly if not constantly.

4. **Education and Awareness Campaigns | Quarterly in 2026, bi-annually afterward**
   The priorities outlined in the Needs Assessment identified that awareness was a key issue to be remedied. Therefore, the frequency of these education and awareness campaigns are increased during the first year (2026), moving to a spring and fall activities in 2027 and beyond.

5. **Periodic Newsletter | Monthly**
   This is the only solution that happens at a monthly frequency. The Transportation Coordinator will prepare and mail one-pagers at the beginning of every month, explaining transportation services available and notable transportation events happening.

6. **Foster Employer and Stakeholder Partnerships | On-going**
   This is an on-going activity falling under the responsibility of the Transportation Coordinator. Phone calls, site-visits, and working groups can be scheduled on an ad-hoc basis, as appropriate.

Resources and Oversight Stream

This is the most pivotal stream, with resourcing being essential to unlocking the ability for the GMSC to not only develop new mobility options but also promote them, manage them, and conduct community engagement. This is a versatile stream that has recurring workshops and deadlines rather than hard implementation dates.

1. **Transportation Coordinator Position | Q3 2025**
   It is set as the first activity of this implementation plan, with the implicit understanding that the transportation coordinator position hired would be responsible for carrying out this Regional Transportation Plan.

2. **Funding Opportunities | Ongoing**
   The deadlines of funding opportunities vary, requiring flexibility in this implementation plan. However, the responsible staff should, at a minimum, check in on prospective funding timing and deadlines regularly.

3. **Community Forum | Ongoing**
   The format and timing of the Community Forum is up to the GMSC. However, it is recommended that the forum be constantly available to residents to provide feedback. This feedback can be taken in quarterly or bi-annual reports on how transportation services may be better improved.

4. **Transit Agency Working Group | Ongoing, bi-annual meetings**
   The three services within the region are busy – ridership increases, service changes, new drivers. However, the working group could find time to meet bi-annually either virtually or in-person.

8 Financial Management

For the purposes of this Regional Transportation Plan, only services provided under the GMSC have been assessed as the GMSC has been the entity mandated to provide services. This includes only the community transportation Volunteer Driver Program and does not include Miramichi Transit or MATbus. Insights into the capital and operating budgets of these other systems may be informative if any formal partnerships or integrations are explored in the future.

8.1 Capital Budget and Requirements

Due to the volunteer nature of their community transportation program, the GMSC does not incur capital expenses. They do not own or have a need for procuring infrastructure, technology, vehicles, software, or hardware (e.g., backend systems, fare boxes, etc.). This is not expected to change based on the two new recommended transportation modes of carpooling and carsharing.

8.2 Current 2024-25 Operating Budget and Expenditures

The Volunteer Driver Program does not require capital expenditures but does incur operating costs. Table 13 provides the estimated operating budget and expenditures for the community transportation program for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Note that the estimated expenses are derived from actuals as of December 2024 and are trending to be under budget for the fiscal year.

Table 13: 2024-2025 Volunteer Driver Community Transportation Program Operating Budget

Costs of Service	Budget	Est. Actual*
Operating Expenses	$ **224,500**	$ **$185,500**
Sources of Funding	$ **224,500**	$ **225,500**
ESIC Annual Funding	$ 50,000	$ 50,000
ESIC "Top-up" Funding	$ 25,000	$ 25,000
RSSF 2025	$ 74,000	$ 75,000
GMSC 2025	$ 40,000	$ 40,000
*GMSC Surplus^*	$ 35,500	$ 35,500
Net Cost/(Surplus)	$ -	$ **(39,000)**

*Actuals are estimates only, derived from 2024 Sep – Dec data, and rounded.

^Sources include: GMSC 2024 RecCamp, GMSC 2023 Second Year Surplus, and GMSC 2024 Second Year Surplus.

Funding is received from various sources, as outlined below, each providing $75,000 in addition to the operating allocation from the service commission.

8.2.1 Current Funding Sources

Currently, the GMSC has one dedicated source of transportation service funding — "ESIC funding" – focused on covering annual operational costs of the community transportation Volunteer Driver Program. There is also the Regional Services Support Fund (RSSF), a general fund received by service commissions. These are elaborated below:

- **Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) Funding**, administered by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, provides $50,000 in annual operating funding to GMSC for their community transportation program. The fund covers all costs related to program operations including dispatcher salaries, employee benefits, office rentals, and other back-end expenses. The ESIC funding has provided an additional $25,000 for the 2024-2025 budget cycle.
- **Regional Services Support Fund (RSSF),** a provincial funding mechanism in New Brunswick, used to support regional service commissions. This is not transportation specific but a general funding source for the commissions that funds the delivery of services like waste management, water, and wastewater treatment, economic development and other initiatives. $75,000 of the RSSF was allocated to the Community Transportation Program. RSSF funding amount is based on a matching program with ESIC.
- **GMSC Annual Contribution** is provided by the Greater Miramichi Services Commission to support the community transportation Volunteer Driver Program. This allocation is earmarked during the budgeting process, but it is redirected to other GMSC programs if grant funding is sufficient to support the Volunteer Driver Program.
- **GMSC Surplus** accounts for previous funding received that was unused.

8.3 2025-26 and 2026-27 Budgetary Forecasts

Using the 2024-2025 operating estimated costs as a base, high-level budgetary forecasts have been prepared for the next two fiscal years scaling to inflation and ridership increases. The total number of trips completed is expected to grow from 2,800 to 3,000 (7.1%) over the next two years.

Table 14: Operating budget forecast for Fiscal Years 2025 through 2027

Budget Item	FY24/25*	FY25/26	FY26/27
Operating Statistics			
Number of Operators	**8**	**16**	**16**
Number of Trips Completed	**2,800**	**2,900**	**3,000**
Operating Expenses	**$ 185,500**	**$ 194,500**	**$ 204,500**
Sources of Funding	**$ 224,500**	**$ 224,000**	**$ 214,500**
ESIC Fund Annual Contribution	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000
ESIC Fund "Top-up" funding	$ 25,000	$ 20,000	$ 15,000
RSSF	$ 75,000	$ 70,000	$ 65,000
GMSC 2025	$ 40,000	$ 45,000	$ 50,000
*GMSC Surplus^*	$ 35,500	$ 39,000	$ 34,500
Net Cost/(Surplus)	**$ (39,000)**	**$ (29,500)**	**$ (10,000)**

*Based on estimated actuals, derived 2024 Sep – Dec data.

8.3.1 Forecasting Methodology

Using the 2024-2025 operating estimated costs as a base, high-level budgetary forecasts have been prepared for the next two fiscal years scaling to inflation and ridership increases. Both 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 are derived from observed expenditure per service hour and observed expenditure per ride data, to create banded estimates. The total number of trips completed is expected to grow from 2,800 to 3,000 (7.1%) over the next two years. This outpaces moderate ridership growth estimates for specialized-based services within the transit industry, which projects ~ 3% growth year-over-year. The outpacing is predicated on driver increases as ridership increases with transit supply (to a point). Other local factors influencing ridership include population growth (or decline), fare changes, demographics, local economy, costs of alternatives, technology usage, and public engagement/marketing.

Likewise, the forecasts account for inflation and ridership increases. This impacts all operating expense components, which include:

- Office and communications,
- Travel
- Wages for full-time administrative employees,
- Advertising the service,
- Driver appreciation,
- Insurance/abstracts,
- Recruitment campaigns,
- Driver reimbursements, and
- Assisted rides.

All component costs will raise with inflation, with select component costs rising directly with ridership (driver reimbursements, assisted rides) and other components rising as a result of hiring more drivers (recruitment campaigns, insurance/abstracts, driver appreciation).

Notably, the number of drivers has doubled (increasing from 8 to 16), which has various cost implications. For forecasting, an increase of drivers does *not* correlate to an increase in ridership but rather a reduction of strain on current resources. The doubling of drivers does not have a significant impact on driver reimbursements or assisted rides as these are provided on a per-trip basis and directly dependent on ridership rather than the number of drivers.

Likewise, as a result of the successful 24/25 recruitment campaign, this funding is curtailed in subsequent years as it provides the service with enough resilience to accommodate changes in demand and mitigates restrictions based on driver availability over the forecasted two years. Conversely, recruitment retention and replacement, insurance/abstracts, and driver appreciation increase relative to the number of drivers. Overall, these additional costs negate any cost savings from curtailing recruitment campaign costs. Therefore, the extent of the forecasts are predominantly predicated on ridership growth and inflation.

Using the 2024-2025 operating estimated costs as a base, high-level budgetary forecasts have been prepared for the next two fiscal years scaling to inflation and ridership increases. The total number of trips completed is expected to grow from 2,800 to 3,000 (7.1%) over the next two years.

Table 14Table 14, above, outlines the projected overall expenditure required to operate the Volunteer Driver Program from September 2025 – through August 2027. An annual inflation of 2% assumed on all unit-costs. Table 15, below, forecasts driver reimbursement rates and cumulative driver reimbursement over the same timeline. Three key metrics are considered in the table and described below:

1. Number of trips completed: Total number of trips projected to be completed by the Volunteer Driver Program. Over two years it is anticipated that the total number of trips will grow from 2,800 to 3,000, representing an aggressive growth estimate of 7.1%. The amount of drivers doubled in 25/26 but that does not necessarily correlate to a doubling of ridership. 7.1% over two years is high, particularly for services prioritizing providing medical-based appointments.
2. Per-Trip Driver Reimbursement: Rates are scaled at a 2% rate in accordance with anticipated annual inflation.
3. Estimated Driver Reimbursement: Sums are a result of the number of trips completed and the per-trip driver reimbursement.

Table 15: Driver reimbursement calculation and forecasting

Budget Item	FY24/25*	FY25/26	FY26/27
Number of Trips Completed	2,800	2,900	3,000
Per-Trip Driver Reimbursement	$ 12.50	$ 12.75	$ 13.01
Estimated Driver Reimbursement	$ 35,000	$ 37,000	$ 39,000

8.4 Funding Glossary

In addition to the existing funds that the GMSC accesses to support the Volunteer Driver Program, there are a series of federal and provincial opportunities as well as alternative revenue sources that should be considered.

Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF)

A permanent federal fund providing $3 billion annually beginning in 2026–27 for public transit and active transportation infrastructure across communities of all sizes. It delivers funding via three streams: Metro-Region Agreements for large urban projects, Baseline Funding for routine investments in existing systems, and Targeted Funding for calls addressing priorities such as rural transit and zero-emission solutions.

Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF)

A federal grant program helping rural and remote communities develop or expand transit service models, covering capital costs (including vehicle purchases and zero-emission vehicles) and

planning/design activities (feasibility studies, route assessments, stakeholder engagement). Capital Projects and Planning & Design streams support up to $50,000 per planning grant.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada

These departments provide contributions to Indigenous communities for infrastructure and capacity building. Esgenoopetitj, Natoaganeg, Metepenagiag, and other First Nations communities may partner with GMSC on joint applications to fund mobility solutions, such as culturally appropriate shuttle services, facility upgrades, and governance training, to improve access for First Nations residents. Given the potential benefits of regional services to these communities, this funding may also be used to establish them.

Community Sponsors

Local organizations-such as health authorities, Indigenous bands, non-profits, or employers-that contribute cash or in-kind resources to transit projects, often partnering on pilot services, vehicle acquisitions, or promotional campaigns.

Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program

The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's Public Transit Infrastructure Stream can help fund the GMSC's transit infrastructure projects, covering up to 40 percent of eligible costs for new builds and 50 percent for rehabilitation works, with the remainder provided through provincial cost-sharing. Applicants must satisfy program requirements-such as minimum ridership reporting and adherence to Provincial Gas Tax criteria, but future intakes may be tailored to better support the region's needs.

The Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF)

An indexed federal transfer to municipalities and service commissions for local infrastructure. Eligible categories include transit infrastructure, local roads and bridges, active-transportation corridors, and community facilities. GMSC can allocate CCBF dollars to improve bus shelters, accessibility ramps, and pathway connections across the region.

Regional Services Support Fund (RSSF)

By collaborating with other Service Commissions, GMSC can co-apply for interregional transit funding, share costs for fixed-route or shuttle services to Fredericton and Moncton airports, and coordinate schedules for seamless passenger connections beyond Northumberland County.

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)

A provincial crown corporation that awards annual, non-repayable contributions (up to $50,000) for community transportation serving low-income and vulnerable populations. GMSC's Volunteer Driver Program relies on ESIC funding for dispatcher salaries, office costs, and volunteer reimbursements, with occasional top-up grants to scale operations.

Regional Development Corporation (RDC)

A New Brunswick agency offering grants and matching contributions to diversify rural economies and strengthen community infrastructure. RDC funding can underwrite pilot projects-such as a carpooling platform, peer-to-peer carshare initiatives, or employer-sponsored shuttle services, to drive regional connectivity and economic growth.

9 Additional Considerations

The Regional Transportation Mandate is expansive, with eyes to highly integrated regional and provincial systems. As part of this project, there were additional public transit and internal opportunities identified as being relevant to the Greater Miramichi Service Commission but were not included in Section 8 due to being cost-prohibitive at this time.

These opportunities remain relevant and further address the intent of the Mandate by introducing additional modes of transportation available across the region as well as facilitating interprovincial travel. While they may not be within the 3-year timeline of this current Regional Transportation Plan, they are included as additional considerations if funding support from the province or other bodies is made available or otherwise secured. At a minimum, they should be explored in the next iteration of the Regional Transportation Plan.

9.1 Regional Fixed-Route Transit Service

This traditional fixed-route transit service could connect Upper Miramichi to Alnwick, connecting many of the major communities and employment centres in the region in a single route, as shown in the figure on the right.

This opportunity is of particular importance due to its scalability, interregional connections, increased resident access to employment and healthcare opportunities, innate accessibility, and tourism support. Moreover, it meets all applicable priorities derived from the needs assessment and provides an accessible mobility option to most of Miramichi's residents.

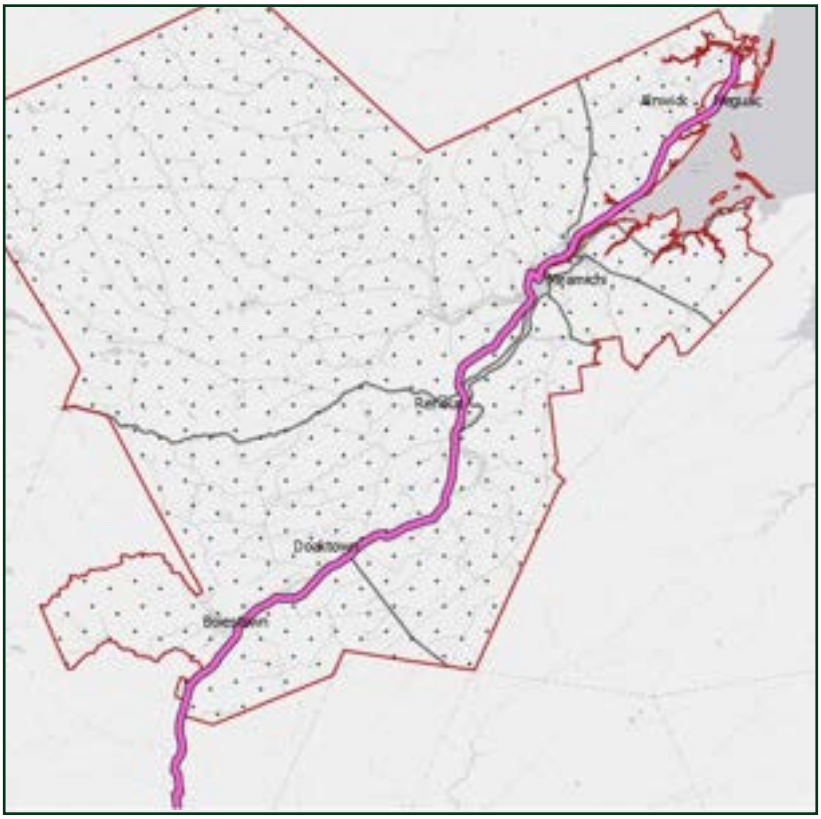


Figure 9: Proposed Regional Transit Service

From a scalability perspective, the route could first be piloted from Doaktown – City of Miramichi, requiring fewer service hours and mitigating cost. Depending on its ridership, this could be expanded to include Upper Miramichi and Alnwick, eventually growing beyond the Service Commission's border to connect to Fredericton and/or Bathurst to access significant healthcare, commercial, and employment locations.

The service design is variable and can be tailored to preferred levels of annual investment/service quality (hours of operation, frequency of service, etc.). Preliminary costing of various service designs is provided in the table below:

Table 16: Potential costs of various service levels and designs of a potential Greater-Miramichi regional fixed route service.

Connections	Annual Cost Estimate*	Service	Vehicles	Daily Trips/ Frequency
Fredericton – Alnwick	$500k - $625k	7 days/week	1	2
Fredericton – Miramichi	$275 - $320k	5 days/week	1	2
Upper Mir. - Alnwick	$900k - $1.15M	5 days/week	3	120-min frequency

*Service hour cost based on industry standard rate for a contracted service provider in 2025.

All cost estimates listed in the above table are assumed to be shared with all applicable governments/communities/agencies enroute. For example, a Fredericton extension would include the GMSC municipalities of Miramichi, Miramichi River Valley, Doaktown, Upper Miramichi, Alnwick, and the Rural District, the City of Fredericton, the Capital Region Service Commission, and the province. Costs would be shared as appropriate.

9.2 Subsidized Rideshare Service

Rideshare services connect ride requesters to local drivers using their own personal vehicles. Currently, rideshare companies do not operate in the Greater Miramichi area. Elsewhere in Canada, however, rural and regional locations have contracted rideshare companies to enter the market. A relevant example is the Town of Innisfil in Ontario, who currently uses a rideshare service in stead of a transit system by subsidizing the passenger trip fare so it is more affordable for users.

In this model, service would be contracted to a rideshare or taxi company who essentially provides a complete ‘turn-key’ service, handling drivers, vehicles, ride requests and dispatch (through mobile apps), and performance metric tracking. As the mandate seeks to make more mobility options available to the residents of Greater Miramichi, introducing a rideshare service would provide complete coverage and a high service quality to all residents, with municipal subsidies helping to mitigate the passenger fare cost.

A potential risk to standard rideshare services is that they are not always equitable – the use of personal vehicles often precludes accessibility needs; youth access can be difficult; and technology-based booking can pose issues to the unbanked, seniors, areas with poor connectivity, and those who may not own smart phones. This type of service excels when paired

with other options like the GMSC's Community Transportation Program that could be used for accessibility trips, youth trips, and has a low-tech/call-in option.

The other factor that precluded this option from being prioritized for the next 3 years is the issue of cost escalation. Other transit-related and mobility options are generally costed by service hour resulting in a consistent cost regardless of ridership. Subsidized rideshare, by contrast, is costed by ridership meaning the higher the ridership, the higher the cost. As the service would be new to the region, costs are difficult to calculate and is dependent on the contracted service provider at this time. However, without provincial or other secured funding, the potential cost of this service is too high to recommend at this time.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Regional Transportation Mandate

Appendix B – GMSC Regional Transportation Plan Survey

Appendix C – Enquête sur le plan régional de transport du GMSC

Appendix A – Regional Transportation Mandate

Appendix B - GMSC Regional Transportation Plan Survey

The Greater Miramichi Regional Service Commission (GMSC) have partnered with a transit consulting firm, Left Turn Right Turn, to develop a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In 2023, the New Brunswick provincial government released a new Regional Transportation Mandate, tasking Regional Service Commissions to develop plans that identify immediate priorities and long-term strategies to help achieve, launch, or otherwise deliver affordable transportation and mobility options across the region.

As per this mandate, the Regional Transportation Plan being developed is exploring current services, community needs and priorities, future short- and long-term recommendations, and subsequent implementation.

The Service Commission does not want the plan created in a silo. It is a Regional Transportation Plan intended to benefit residents. Therefore, to inform the plan, we are hosting public engagement sessions (in the new year) and conducting this survey.

This is an **anonymous survey** that seeks to collect information on resident preferences, travel needs, and opinion on new or expanding transit services. It will take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete.

The survey will close end of day Sunday, February 2, 2025.

If you have any questions about the survey, or would like to provide more information, please contact:

Evan Brown
Transit Innovator
Left Turn Right Turn
evan@ltrt.ca

Tell us about yourself

The following questions help us understand the communities and their specific transportation needs.

1. What is your age group? Please select one response.

   - ☐ 18 and under
   - ☐ 19-29
   - ☐ 30-39
   - ☐ 40-49
   - ☐ 50-59
   - ☐ 60+
   - ☐ Prefer not to answer

2. Where do you live? Please select one of the following areas that you live in or are closest to.

   - ☐ Alnwick
   - ☐ City of Miramichi
   - ☐ Doaktown
   - ☐ Esgenoôpetitj
   - ☐ Greater Miramichi Rural District
   - ☐ Metepenagiag
   - ☐ Miramichi River Valley
   - ☐ Natoganeg
   - ☐ Upper Miramichi
   - ☐ Other

3. What best describes your current employment status? Please select one response.
   Note: Employed includes self-employed.

   ☐ Employed, full-time (30 or more hours per week)
   ☐ Employed, part-time (less than 30 hours per week)
   ☐ Student
   ☐ Not employed
   ☐ Full-time caregiver/stay-at-home parent
   ☐ Retired
   ☐ Prefer not to answer
   ☐ Other

4. Do you identify as someone with a disability that impacts your ability to use transit, or someone who has mobility challenges?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

Your Experience with Transit

The following questions relate to the public transit and services available within the Greater Miramichi Region. Current service providers include:

- *Miramichi Transit* (fixed-route transit within the City of Miramichi),
- *Miramichi Accessible Transit* (also known as MATbus, providing paratransit service to the entire region), and
- *the Community Transportation Program* (door-to-door ride-home service provided by the Service Commission, focused on providing transportation options in rural and otherwise limited areas).

5. Do you currently, or have you in the past, used any available public transit options? Please select all that apply.

   ☐ Yes, Miramichi Transit
   ☐ Yes, Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus)
   ☐ Yes, the Community Transportation Program
   ☐ Yes, Maritime Bus
   ☐ No, I have not used public transit

6. If you answered “yes” to question 5, please tell us your experience with public transit and your feelings on the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The service is reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The price is fair	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easy to use it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would use the service again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like to use the service outside the current hours of operation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. If you answered “no” to question 5, please tell us some reasons you choose to not use transit. Please select all that apply.

☐ I did not know it existed
☐ I do not meet required criteria
☐ The hours of operation are too limited
☐ The service costs too much
☐ I prefer to drive
☐ I don't know how to use the service
☐ Booking in advance is inconvenient
☐ Wait times are too great
☐ I do not feel that the service accommodates my accessibility needs
☐ Other, please specify: _____

Your Travel Needs

We want to better understand where you want to go so that the Regional Transportation Plan is reflective of the travel needs of residents. To do this, we want to learn more about the most frequent trips (transit and non-transit) you make and where you want to travel.

8. What is the purpose of your most frequent trip(s)? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ School
- ☐ Work
- ☐ Recreation/Social/Entertainment
- ☐ To accompany/transport someone
- ☐ Personal business (e.g., appointment, bank, doctor, volunteering, etc.)
- ☐ Shopping, including grocery shopping
- ☐ Other

9. How often do you leave your local community (e.g., Little Bartibog, St. Margarets, Blackville, etc.)? Please select the statement that best suits your travel needs.

- ☐ Most of my trips and errands are done within my local community
- ☐ Many of my trips and errands are done within my local community, but I commute elsewhere for work or school
- ☐ I conduct trips within my local community, but also travel outside to access other amenities/services
- ☐ I frequently travel outside my local community, to other places in the Greater Miramichi Region
- ☐ I frequently travel outside of the Greater Miramichi Region
- ☐ Other

9. What is your primary mode of transportation? Please select one response.

- ☐ Personal Vehicle
- ☐ Public Transit
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Carpooling
- ☐ Other

10. Why do you use a personal vehicle? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ It is affordable
- ☐ It is convenient
- ☐ There aren't other options
- ☐ I prefer to drive
- ☐ It is there when I need it
- ☐ It is reliable
- ☐ My travel time is minimal
- ☐ Other

Regional Transportation Plan

As we develop a Regional Transportation Plan and explore appropriate transportation solutions for the Greater Miramichi area, we want to better understand your priorities and perspectives on what successful and useful transit services look like. The next few questions are about understanding your priorities for transit.

11. Whether or not you use transit, please prioritize the following transit service features based on what is important to you. To prioritize, please use numbers 1 – 7, with 1 being your highest priority and 7 being the least prioritized.

____ I don't have to wait long for the bus (Frequency)

____ The bus is running when I need it (Hours of Operation)

____ Bus fare is reasonable (Affordable Service)

____ It is easy to understand how to book/use the service (Ease of information)

____ Buses accommodate physical disabilities (Accessibility)

____ Buses are environmentally friendly (Sustainability)

____ I know I can use the bus to get to my destination on time (Reliability)

12. If public transit options in the region are expanded, how likely are you to try to use it?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ☐ Somewhat unlikely
- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ I already use public transit

13. Do you have any additional feedback regarding the Regional Transportation Plan or public transit in the region?

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to provide your input and feedback.

Appendix C - Enquête sur le plan régional de transport du GMSC

La Commission de services régionaux du Grand Miramichi (CSGM) a engagé une société de conseil en transport, Left Turn Right Turn, pour élaborer un plan régional de transport (PRT). En 2023, le gouvernement provincial du Nouveau-Brunswick a publié un nouveau mandat de transport régional, chargeant les commissions de services régionaux d'élaborer des plans qui identifient les priorités immédiates et les stratégies à long terme pour aider à réaliser, lancer ou autrement fournir des options de transport et de mobilité abordables dans la région.

Conformément à ce mandat, le plan régional de transport en cours de développement explore les services actuels, les besoins et les priorités de la communauté, les recommandations futures à court et à long terme et la mise en œuvre ultérieure.

La Commission des services ne souhaite pas que ce plan soit élaboré en vase clos. Il s'agit d'un plan régional de transport destiné à bénéficier aux résidents. C'est pourquoi, afin d'éclairer le plan, nous organisons des sessions d'engagement public (au cours de la nouvelle année) et menons cette enquête.

Cette enquête est anonyme, et vise à recueillir des informations sur les préférences des résidents, leurs besoins en matière de déplacements et leur opinion sur la création ou l'extension de services de transport en commun. Il faut compter environ 7 à 10 minutes pour répondre à l'enquête.

L’enquête sera fermée à la fin de la journée du dimanche 2 février 2025.

Si vous avez des questions sur l'enquête, ou si vous souhaitez fournir plus d'informations, veuillez contacter:

Evan Brown
Transit Innovator
Left Turn Right Turn
evan@ltrt.ca

Présentez-vous

Les questions suivantes nous aident à comprendre les communautés et leurs besoins spécifiques en matière de transport.

1. Quel âge avez-vous ? Veuillez sélectionner une réponse.
   - ☐ 18 ans et moins
   - ☐ 19-29
   - ☐ 30-39
   - ☐ 40-49
   - ☐ 50-59
   - ☐ 60+
   - ☐ Préfère ne pas répondre

2. Où habitez-vous ? Veuillez sélectionner une des régions suivantes dans laquelle vous vivez ou dont vous êtes le plus proche.
   - ☐ Alnwick
   - ☐ City of Miramichi
   - ☐ Doaktown
   - ☐ Esgenoôpetitj
   - ☐ District rural du Grand-Miramichi
   - ☐ Metepenagiag
   - ☐ Miramichi River Valley
   - ☐ Natoganeg
   - ☐ Upper Miramichi
   - ☐ Autre

3. Quelle est la meilleure description de votre situation professionnelle actuelle ? Veuillez sélectionner une réponse.

   Note : Le terme « employé » inclut les travailleurs indépendants.

   ☐ Employé à temps plein (30 heures ou plus par semaine)
   ☐ Employé à temps partiel (moins de 30 heures par semaine)
   ☐ Étudiant
   ☐ Sans emploi
   ☐ Aidant familial à temps plein/parent au foyer
   ☐ Retraité
   ☐ Préfère ne pas répondre
   ☐ Autre

4. Identifiez-vous comme une personne en situation de handicap qui influe sur votre capacité à utiliser les transports en commun, ou comme une personne ayant des limitations de mobilité ?

   ☐ Oui
   ☐ Non

Votre expérience des transports en commun

Les questions suivantes portent sur les transports publics et les services disponibles dans la région du Grand Miramichi. Les fournisseurs de services actuels sont les suivants:

- *Miramichi Transit* (service de transport en commun à itinéraire fixe dans la ville de Miramichi),
- *Miramichi Accessible Transit* (aussi connu sous le nom de MATbus, qui fournit un service de transport adapté à la région), et
- *Community Transportation Program* (service de transport porte-à-porte à domicile fourni par la Commission des services, axé sur la fourniture d'options de transport dans les zones rurales et autres zones limitées).

5. Utilisez-vous actuellement, ou avez-vous utilisé par le passé, l'une des options de transport en commun disponibles ? Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

   ☐ Oui, Miramichi Transit
   ☐ Oui, Miramichi Accessible Transit (MATbus)
   ☐ Oui, the Community Transportation Program
   ☐ Oui, Maritime Bus
   ☐ Non, je n'ai pas utilisé les transports en commun

6. Si vous avez répondu « oui » à la question 5, veuillez nous faire part de votre expérience des transports en commun et de votre sentiment sur les affirmations suivantes.

	Tout à fait d'accord	D'accord	Neutre	Pas d'accord	Pas de tout d'accord
Le service est fiable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Le prix est juste	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Il est facile à utiliser	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
J'aimerais utiliser le service encore	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
J'aimerais utiliser le service en dehors des heures d'ouverture actuelles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Si vous avez répondu « non » à la question 5, veuillez nous indiquer les raisons pour lesquelles vous choisissez de ne pas utiliser les transports en commun. Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

- ☐ Je ne savais pas qu'il existait
- ☐ Je ne réponds pas aux critères requis
- ☐ Les heures d'ouverture sont trop limitées
- ☐ Les services sont trop cher
- ☐ Je préfère conduire
- ☐ Je ne sais pas comment utiliser le service
- ☐ Réserver à l'avance n'est pas pratique
- ☐ Les temps d'attente sont trop importants
- ☐ Je n'ai pas l'impression que le service répond à mes besoins en matière d'accessibilité
- ☐ Autre, veuillez spécifier : _____

Vos Besoins de Voyage

Nous voulons mieux comprendre où vous voulez aller afin que le plan régional de transport reflète les besoins de déplacement des résidents. Pour ce faire, nous voulons en savoir plus sur les déplacements les plus fréquents (en transport en commun ou non) que vous effectuez et sur les endroits où vous souhaitez vous rendre.

8. Quel est le but de votre voyage le plus fréquent ? Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

- ☐ L'école
- ☐ Lieu de travail
- ☐ Loisirs/Social/Divertissement
- ☐ Accompagner/transporter quelqu'un
- ☐ Affaires personnelles (par exemple, rendez-vous, banque, médecin, bénévolat, etc.)
- ☐ Faire les courses, y compris les courses alimentaires
- ☐ Autre

À quelle fréquence quittez-vous votre communauté locale (p. ex. Little Bartibog, St. Margarets, Blackville, etc.) Veuillez choisir l'énoncé qui correspond le mieux à vos besoins de déplacement.

- ☐ La plupart de mes déplacements et de mes courses se font au sein de ma communauté locale.
- ☐ Beaucoup de mes déplacements et de mes courses sont effectués au sein de ma communauté locale, mais je me rends ailleurs pour travailler ou aller à l'école.
- ☐ Je me déplace au sein de ma communauté locale, mais je me déplace également à l'extérieur pour accéder à d'autres commodités/services.
- ☐ Je voyage fréquemment à l'extérieur de ma communauté locale, vers d'autres endroits dans la région du Grand Miramichi.
- ☐ Je voyage fréquemment à l'extérieur de la région du Grand Miramichi
- ☐ Autre

9. Quel est votre principal mode de transport ? Veuillez sélectionner une réponse.

- ☐ Véhicule personnel
- ☐ Transport en commun
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Marche à pied
- ☐ Covoiturage
- ☐ Autre

10. Pourquoi utilisez-vous un véhicule personnel ? Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

- ☐ C’est abordable
- ☐ C’est pratique
- ☐ Il n'y a pas d'autres options
- ☐ Je préfère conduire
- ☐ C’est là quand j'en ai besoin
- ☐ C’est fiable
- ☐ Mon temps de trajet est minime
- ☐ Autre

Plan Régional de Transport

Dans le cadre du développement d'un plan régional de transport et de l'examen de solutions de transport appropriées pour la région du Grand Miramichi, nous voulons mieux comprendre vos priorités et vos points de vue sur ce que sont des services de transport en commun efficaces et utiles. Les prochaines questions visent à comprendre vos priorités en matière de transport en commun.

11. Que vous utilisiez ou non les transports en commun, veuillez classer par ordre de priorité les caractéristiques suivantes des services de transport en commun en fonction de ce qui est important pour vous. Pour établir un ordre de priorité, veuillez utiliser les chiffres 1 à 7, 1 étant votre priorité la plus élevée et 7 la moins élevée.

- ____ Je n'attends pas longtemps le bus (Fréquence)
- ____ Le bus circule quand j'en ai besoin (Heures d'ouverture)
- ____ Le prix du bus est raisonnable (Service abordable)
- ____ Il est facile de comprendre comment réserver/utiliser le service (Facilité d'information)
- ____ Les bus s'adaptent aux limitations physiques (Accessibilité)
- ____ Les bus sont respectueux de l'environnement (Durabilité)
- ____ Je sais que je peux utiliser le bus pour arriver à l'heure à ma destination (Fiabilité)

12. Si les options de transport public dans la région sont élargies, quelle est la probabilité que vous essayiez de les utiliser ?

- ☐ Très probable
- ☐ Assez probable
- ☐ Ni probable ni improbable
- ☐ Assez peu probable
- ☐ Très peu probable
- ☐ J'utilise déjà les transports en commun

13. Avez-vous d'autres commentaires à formuler concernant le plan régional de transport ou les transports publics dans la région ?

MERCI!

Nous vous remercions d'avoir pris le temps de nous faire part de vos commentaires.

Regional Transportation Mandate

Implementation Guide

New Nouveau Brunswick

Regional Transportation Mandate
Implementation Guide

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **4**

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION **5**

1.1 WHAT IS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION? **6**

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES **9**

2.1 FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS: **9**

2.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES **9**

2.3 PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (LEVEL 1) **10**

2.4 REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES (LEVEL 2) **12**

2.5 OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (LEVEL 3) **14**

2.6 SERVICE DELIVERY (LEVEL 4) **14**

APPENDIX A: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FORMAT **15**

Executive Summary

The Province of New Brunswick has undertaken a major local governance reform and among the changes adopted is expanded mandates for Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) in key areas including the development and implementation of strategies that will provide regional transportation services to better serve residents.

There are several forms of transportation currently relied upon by New Brunswickers to meet their daily needs. The planning that is to be undertaken by the RSCs will consider all forms, with particular attention to passenger transportation which includes: urban public transit, regional public transit, community transit and intercity transit.

The primary objective of the planning exercise is to design and implement strategies that will lead to the creation of integrated regional transportation systems with mobility options that are available, affordable, and accessible for residents and ultimately can become highly integrated on a provincial scale. This represents a significant undertaking, one which requires a whole of government approach to achieve success.

To help guide the planning process, this implementation guide sets out a framework for specific roles and responsibilities that must be carried out. The details are presented in a conceptual framework that consists of four distinct levels. These levels, along with the specific areas of responsibility are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Levels of Responsibility in Regional Transportation

Provincial	Regional	Operation Management	Day-to-day Operations
Legislative/ regulatory	Regional planning	Regional administration	Delivery of service
Financial assistance	Financial management	Technology support	
Technology support	Program/service delivery oversight	Asset management:	
Strategic coordination and stakeholder relations	Public relations		

Section 1: Background Information

The need for public transportation services is increasing due to a multitude of factors. An ageing population that is less inclined, or capable to drive, increasing rates of disability, and the mounting pressures posed by growing communities on one hand and the low density of rural areas on the other creates the need for a strategy with viable travel options to support the efficient movement of people.

Enhanced transportation options will make it easier for people, especially vulnerable populations to access services, healthcare, education, and cultural activities. Efforts to strengthen planning aimed at better linking New Brunswick communities on a provincial scale will make it easier to match the labour supply with demand, which will support potential business investments and improve financial outcomes for the province.

As part of the local governance reform initiative undertaken by the Province of New Brunswick an expanded mandate has been established for regional service commissions (RSCs) including areas relating to community development, economic development, and regional transportation. This change represents a significant endeavour for RSCs and recognizes that RSCs will now provide regional leadership in each of these areas.

It is also the case that environmental concerns regarding GHG emissions are another factor. New Brunswick has adopted a new Climate Change Action Plan for 2022-2027 climate-change-action-plan.pdf (gnb.ca), which includes an action (#6) which recommends that:

> "regional service commissions receive support in developing and implementing regional transportation plans for each region by 2023 to increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of community and public transportation services and work towards integrating regional transportation services".

To ensure that regional transportation planning is aligned to meet the objectives of the new RSC mandates, as well as key desired outcome of the Climate Change Action Plan, this implementation guide has been prepared to guide RSCs with the development and implementation of strategies that will provide regional transportation services to better serve residents.

1.1 What is Regional Transportation?

There are several modes of transportation relied upon by New Brunswickers, including personal car, cycling, walking, reliance upon others through affinity networks, or public services and infrastructure, such as public transit, intercity transportation, and various forms of subsidized community transportation. Table 2 provides a concise summary of the four types of passenger transportation in New Brunswick.

Table 2. Types of Passenger Transport Service in New Brunswick

	Management	Type of Travel	Density of Area Served	Vehicle Size	Route Type	Frequency of Service
Urban Public Transit	Mid-Size to Large Cities	Short to Medium Distances	Medium to High	Mid to Large	Fixed Route, No Reservation	High
Regional Public Transit	RSCs	Short to Medium Distances	Low to Medium	Small to Mid-Size	Variable	Medium
Community Transit	RSCs and Non-profit	Short to Long Distances	Variable	Small	Customized Route	On Demand
Intercity Transit	Private Sector	Long Distances	Variable	Very Large	Fixed Route, With or Without Reservation	Low

For purposes of this implementation guide, ***Urban Public Transit service*** refers to urban passenger transit systems, such as those that are currently operated in four major urban centres in New Brunswick, including Saint John Transit, Codiac Transpo in Moncton, Fredericton Transit and Miramichi Transit.

Table 3. Financial and Ridership Data for Urban Transit Services

	Saint John Transit	Codiac Transpo	Fredericton Transit	Miramichi Transit
Estimated Ridership (2019)	2.0 M	2.5 M	2.1 M	8,000
Estimated Ridership (2021)	1.2 M	1.0 M	950,000	7,800
Annual Budget (2021)	$8.2 M	$11 M	$5.5 M	$470,000
Annual Budget Per Capita (2021)	$77	$86	$87	$26
Annual Budget Per Trip (2021)	$7	$11	$6	$60

Costs are a major influence on final decisions as public transportation services cannot function without some level of subsidization. Figure 1 shows the relative contributions of various funders to the annual budgets of each urban transit operating authority. Municipal funding accounts for the majority while user contributions are in the range of 14% to 30%.

Figure 1: Funding Contributions to Urban Transit Services

Regional Public Transit provides scheduled routes between communities over short to medium distances, this is an important option to be considered as RSCs develop their plans to include transportation services on a regional scale. To date, only the Acadian Peninsula RSC has moved in this direction and is currently operating a ***regional public transit*** service as a pilot over a 34-week period. This pilot was launched in November 2022 and consists of a bus that includes five round trips per day between Caraquet and Shippagan.

Community Transit services are typically targeted to seniors, residents who are often living with modest income, and/or residents who lack mobility options and as a result struggle to meet the needs of their daily lives, access various services, businesses or health care facilities or take part in community activities events.

Typically, community transit services are based on the following three pillars: a volunteer driver and vehicle, who provides the service and is reimbursed for costs incurred; a user wishing to travel to access a public service, business or health care facility or take part in a community activity or event; and a dispatching service to connect users with drivers who are available to render the transportation service.

Several regions of New Brunswick have taken advantage of the funding that is made available by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) through the Community Inclusion Network (CIN) to establish the dial-a-ride approach to delivering this service.

Intercity Transit refers to fixed routes over long distances connecting multiple municipalities and provinces. The Maritime Provinces benefit from a relatively extensive intercity transit network that is privately operated, currently by the company Maritime Bus. This form of transportation will be a key consideration as RSCs seek to achieve greater integration of their respective approaches.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Framework Components:

To establish this framework a review of the public transportation services provided in other jurisdictions across Canada was undertaken. Input was also solicited from transportation authorities within the Province of New Brunswick through a focused consultations process. The findings of these efforts may be summarized broadly as follows:

1) planning must be undertaken according to specific and measurable objectives or guiding principles; and
2) the success or achievement of objectives relies on the provision of specific authorities, processes, and tools, which are organized in this framework according to areas of responsibility on four distinct levels; Provincial level, Regional Service Commission level, Operational/Management level, and Service Provider.

2.2 Guiding Principles

Previous studies conducted on the subject of regional transportation, including the report "From Surfaces to Services" (FromSurfacesToServices.pdf (gnb.ca)) prepared for the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation recommend that regional transportation planning be guided by specific principles. For purposes of this document, the following six principles have been adopted to establish a clear set of expectations that all plans are to meet.

- Promote integrated transport and land use planning
- Foster social inclusion to overcome isolation and promote active living
- Improve economic inclusion and quality of life

- Increase affordability for individuals and families
- Make the transport system more environmentally sustainable
- Make the transportation system accessible for people with disabilities

2.3 Provincial Responsibilities (Level 1)

The ability of RSCs to develop and implement plans to support their new mandates for regional transportation will require legal and administrative jurisdictions of the province be aligned, including legislative/regulatory, policies, financial assistance, and stakeholder consultation.

1. **Legislative/ regulatory:**

   GNB will create the legislative environment that support the regional transportation mandate of the RSCs and align its legislation, regulations, and policies to support regional transportation initiatives by RSCs.

   The responsibilities of the RSCs are set out in the *Regional Service Delivery Act*. In addition to the development and implementation of a regional strategy to establish priority services and actions with respect to expanded mandates, including regional transportation, the Act specifies that RSCs shall provide or facilitate the provision of a regional transportation service.

2. **Financial assistance:**

   Public transit services are heavily dependent upon funding outside of user fees to sustain operations (ranging from approximately 84% of total operating costs in Moncton to 57% in Miramichi).

   While the provincial government does not provide direct funding for public transit, GNB recognizes that public transportation must receive financial support and therefore the following funding continues to be available:

   - GNB will continue to provide funding through the new Regional Services Support Fund to support areas of regional priority including the development of regional transportation services.
   - GNB, through the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC), will continue to provide base funding of $50K from for community transportation initiatives (with potential to increase).

- GNB, through WorkingNB as part of the Canada-New Brunswick Labour Market Agreements will provide funding to support economic development, labour force development and newcomer retention services.
- GNB, through RDC funding programs will continue to support investments in capital assets and infrastructure, with the ability to leverage eligible federal funding.
- GNB, through RDC funding programs will provide funding to support investments in non-capital related initiatives such as planning, promotions, active transportation, etc.

3. Technology support

Technology solutions are increasingly used by transit service managers because they help optimize services and make them more seamless for users. A shared technology solution for all RSCs is recommended for several reasons:

- It would achieve much better economies of scale than developing separate solutions for each RSC
- It would allow for better integration of services across regions and encourage interregional use
- It would make it easier to incorporate many services into a single RSC
- It would help harmonize rates/fares
- It would help collect standardized data across the province and improve accountability processes

GNB will work with RSCs to secure a technology solution to meet the province's distinct needs and manage public and community transit in a modern, efficient, and integrated way.

4. Strategic Coordination and Stakeholder Relations:

The transportation sector is influenced in some form by 12 provincial departments and agencies. Strategies at the regional level cannot succeed without strong coordinating support to maintain policy alignment within GNB as well as among external stakeholders.

Given its expertise in helping provide community transit services, combined with its direct involvement with local communities and efforts to address social issues, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation is well suited to assume a leadership role.

To ensure that regional transportation planning receives a whole of government focus, GNB commits to do the following:

a) GNB, through the combined leadership of ELG and ESIC, will establish a forum to promote collaboration and consultation among stakeholders to advance the objectives of an integrated regional transportation services at the provincial level.
b) GNB will continue to review and evolve this framework consisting of defined program outcomes and performance measures to monitor progress.

2.4 Regional Service Commission Responsibilities (Level 2)

The RSCs, in collaboration with their member local governments and rural districts will develop regional transportation plans that set out immediate priorities and long-term strategies that help achieve the delivery of a transportation system with mobility options that are available, affordable, and accessible for residents and ultimately can become highly integrated on a provincial scale. Ensuring success for public transit and community transportation will require first and foremost that services are effectively organized and where possible regionally integrated, based on one of the following three options.

1. **Internal model**: The RSC will deliver regional transportation services directly through its organizational structure. In practice this means having a regional transportation department at the RSC, or an individual within the RSC responsible for transportation. The department or person will report to the RSC's chief executive officer.

2. **External model**: the RSC will finance a third party to deliver regional transportation services on its behalf. This could include partnering with a local government or a non-governmental agency, most notably not-for-profit organizations. The partner or local government must have a memorandum of understanding with the RSC and regularly report to the RSC board of directors.

3. **Combined model**: The combination model will allow the RSC to choose a combination of internal and external delivery models or have elements of the service delivered by more than one third party organization. Key to properly implementing this model will be a clearly defined relationship between the RSC and the other organizations.

The decision as to the preferred model will depend on the capacity of each region and the level of service to be provided. It is important to note that the level of service will vary from region to region. Planning by RSCs will need to consider what is the best viable option available that meets baseline needs within the full spectrum of the RSC's mandate and priorities. As a result, there will be custom solutions with no one-size fits all approach.

The specific actions to be undertaken by the RSCs are as follows:

1. **Regional planning:**

    a) RSCs will develop a regional transportation service that aligns with provincial government policy frameworks such as the Climate Change Action Plan, regional economic development/growth, land use planning, transportation planning and fiscal responsibility.

    b) RSCs, in collaboration with their member local governments and rural district will develop regional transportation plans that identify immediate priorities and long-term strategies to guide planning and development of a regional multi-modal transportation system that meets the demands of future growth in population, business and economic development, and is focused on sustainability. It is recommended that these plans be based on a three-year timeline and updated annually. An outline of the specific details that will be required of these plans is attached as **Appendix "A".**

    c) As part of this process, RSCs will consider current service levels, areas of best practice, areas for improvement and potential solutions for achieving a balanced and sustainable integrated transportation system within each region.

    d) RSCs will collaborate with all government stakeholders to establish key actions with outcome measures that can be reported on annually.

    e) RSCs will outline the strategies and tools required (such as technology, software, physical assets) to implement recommended actions including the model of service delivery, the roles of local governments and rural districts, any key partnerships, assessment of timing, as well as broad cost implications, funding needs and next steps.

2. **Financial management:**

    a) RSCs will be responsible to develop annual financial plans that support their regional transportation strategies. Recognizing that public transportation is not financially self-sustaining, the RSCs will need to determine their level of investment and will be eligible to receive provincial funding support (noted above) to off-set costs.

3. **Program/service delivery oversight:**

    a) RSCs will determine the level of administration required to support the tasks/functions required to execute the transportation plan. Depending on the service delivery model selected, these tasks may include direct involvement in the coordination of day to-day

operations, monitoring performance, fulfilling reporting requirements and liaison with provincial authorities (regulatory, funding, etc.).

b) RSCs will establish a forum to promote collaboration and consultation at the regional level among local stakeholders, citizens, and First Nations to monitor community needs, solicit input and promote the objectives of regional transportation services.

4. **Public relations:**

a) RSCs will dedicate the resources to ensuring that the public is kept informed, complaints are addressed, and promotional activities and campaigns are undertaken.

2.5 Operations Management (Level 3)

The delivery of a regional transportation service will require that the operator has the proper tools to perform the day-to-day operations. These details will be identified as part of the planning process and will primarily involve the following key elements:

1. **Regional administration**: the necessary arrangements are formalized and maintained to carry out the day-to-day operations, which may include contract negotiation and management in the case of third-party contractors/volunteers, or daily resource/asset management in the case of in-house service delivery.
2. **Technology support**: the necessary software is in place to provide tools that streamline critical functions and financial transactions within an integrated IT solution (scheduling, dispatching, collecting fares, etc.)
3. **Asset management**: the tangible assets required to convey residents and provide service are procured and maintained.

2.6 Service delivery (Level 4)

This level represents the foundation of the framework and is where the day-to-day operations occur. At this stage, the necessary planning is completed, and all the regulatory and operational requirements have been finalized, including the acquisition of necessary permits, the procurement of assets (both tangible and digital), the recruitment of personnel (employees/volunteers and contractors), and marketing and outreach initiatives are in place to promote the service to residents.

Appendix A: Regional Transportation Plan Format

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FORMAT

The regional transportation plan will contain the following:

- A profile of public transit and community transportation needs (in conjunction with the work of the regional roundtable)
- A description of other existing passenger transport services (intercity transport, taxi, etc.)
- Key passenger transport issues and challenges
- Goals of the proposed service offering
- Existing and proposed services
    - Community transit services:
        - Eligible clients and reasons
        - Service area
        - Fares and how to make a reservation
    - Public transit services (urban and regional)
        - Schedules, routes and stops
        - Fares and how to make a reservation
- Current and projected ridership
- Financial statement for the service (previous year)
- Budget estimate for current year
- Fiscal forecasts for another two years
- Plan for meeting capital and vehicle requirements

Greater Miramichi
Transportation Options

Alnwick
- MirConnex (1 Driver)
- Poparide, Kangaride

Esgenoôpetitj First Nation
- Poparide, Kangaride

City of Miramichi
- Miramichi Transit
- Gorman's, Miramichi, Leo
- Via Rail
- Maritime Bus
- MirConnex (8 Drivers)
- Poparide, Kangaride
- Enterprise Truro
- MAT Bus

Natoaganeg First Nation
- Poparide, Kangaride

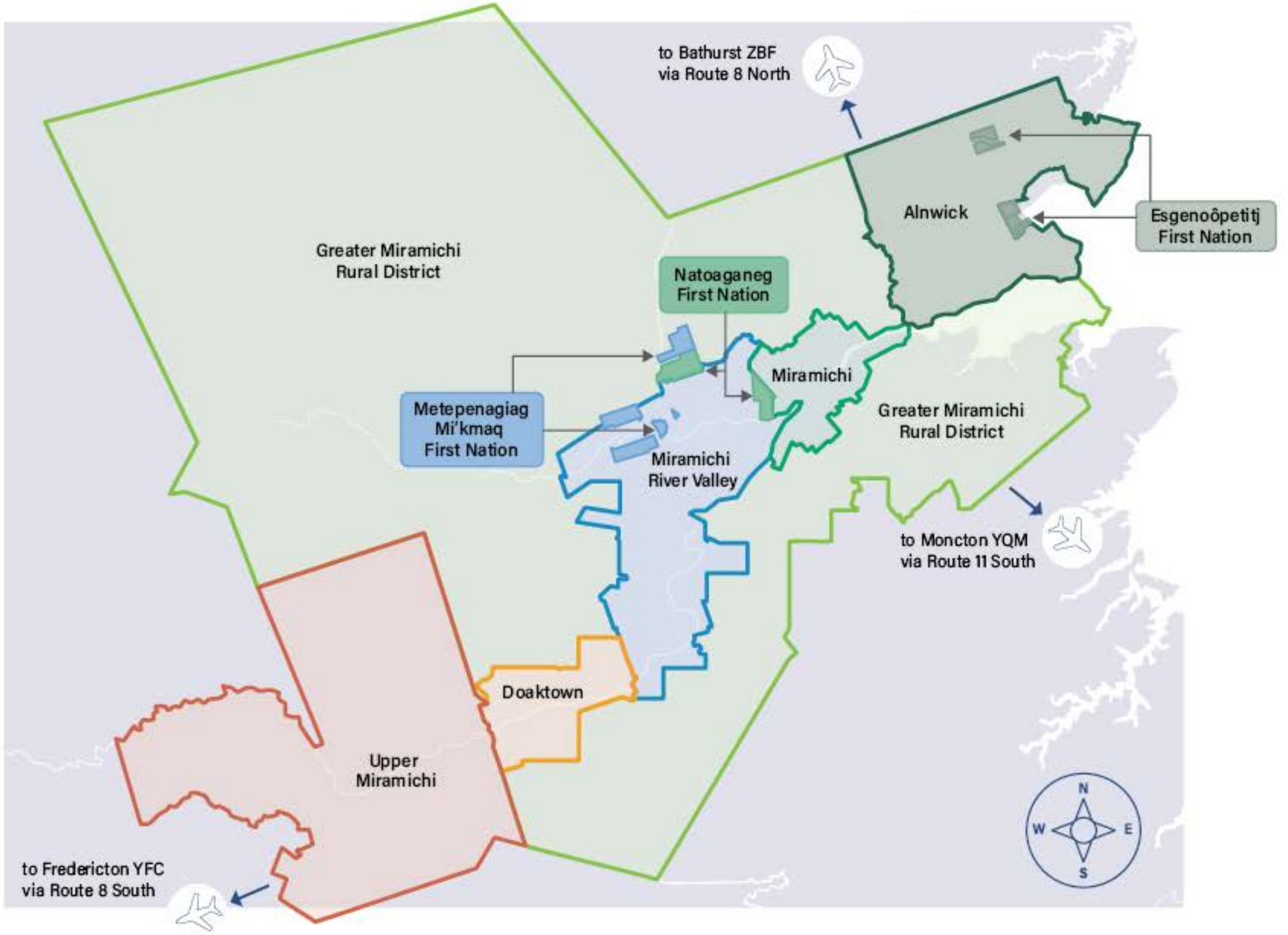
Miramichi River Valley
- MirConnex (1 Driver)
- Poparide, Kangaride

Metepenagiag Mi'kmaq Nation
- Poparide, Kangaride

Doaktown
- MirConnex (1 Driver)
- Poparide, Kangaride

Greater Miramichi Rural District
- Poparide, Kangaride

Upper Miramichi
- MirConnex (3 Drivers)
- Poparide, Kangaride



Legend

- Local Transit
- Carpool/ Rideshare
- Intercity Train
- Volunteer Drivers
- Taxis
- Car Rentals
- Intercity Bus
- Paratransit (Accessible)

Disclaimer

Data compiled by the Greater Miramichi Service Commission (GMSC). GMSC does not provide these services. Contact providers directly to confirm availability, schedules, fares, accessibility, and eligibility. The information is illustrative and not exhaustive and may change without notice. Icons indicate service types, not specific businesses or marketing features. For emergencies call 911. GMSC and partners accept no liability. Corrections/updates: community@gmsc.ca. (Last updated: September 2025)