

Project Overview:
***The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)
and Planning Documents (MPS/LUB/SB) Review***

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For Public Distribution

Introduction

The Planning Department has been given the task of designing and implementing the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) for the Town of Bridgewater. This document outlines the Planning Department's process and timeline for completing the ICSP and Planning Documents Review. This document includes:

- Background on Sustainability
- Background on the ICSP
- Proposal for the ICSP process in Bridgewater
 - ICSP Components
 - Concurrent review of MPS / LUB / SB
 - Management Process
 - Organizational Sustainability
- Conclusions
- Timeline Chart

Background on Sustainability¹

sustain – ability: the ability to sustain our planet, our society, and our community (Bridgewater) into the long-term future. And, hopefully, not just to sustain existence at a bare functioning minimum, but to make it possible to enjoy good health and quality of life for as many people as possible, both locally and globally, now and for future generations.

What is Sustainability?:

The idea of sustainability is rooted in concern for the state of our degrading global environment, and concern over the tremendous difficulty in meeting basic human needs in many parts of the world.

¹ Adapted from " *Helping Communities Move Toward Sustainable Development: The Natural Step - A Primer for Atlantic Canada* " by Janet M. Eaton and Peter B. Eaton, edited by Clare Levin, a report produced for Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Atlantic, May 2007

Sustainability acknowledges the very real threat that our planet's eroding ecosystems and dwindling natural resources, compounded by complex social problems, are undermining our ability to meet our own basic needs and those of future generations. "Sustainability" is a goal, a future condition in which our society is no longer systematically injuring its ability to provide people with their basic needs. "Sustainable development" is the science and management practice of planning for the future in a way that tries to balance human needs with environmental needs. The idea of meeting today's needs without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is a relatively basic concept. Few people would disagree that they want a world for their children that is just as good, if not better, than the one that exists today. That may sound simple, but in practice, sustainable development deals with a range of multifaceted issues. These include:

- **environmental** concerns such as climate change, the destruction of wildlife habitat, and the pollution of air and water
- **social** concerns such as access to basic services such as health care, food, shelter, and education
- **cultural** concerns such as a maintaining community bonds, fostering a sense of community identity, celebrating culture & diversity, and protecting our heritage
- **economic** concerns such as ensuring decent living standards for all, high levels of good employment, and encouraging research and innovation

Global Context:

Over the years, a multitude of reports assessing the state of the world's ecosystems and human development have chronicled numerous challenges. For example, a joint report published in 2000 by the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Wildlife Fund International, and the Centre for Sustainability Studies in Mexico, reported that over the last 30 years the state of the Earth's natural ecosystems had declined by about 33% while the ecological pressure of humanity on the Earth increased by about 50% over the same period. Other studies provide abundant evidence of the depletion and degradation of vitally important ecological resources in North America, including pollution of marine and fresh water ecosystems, loss of old growth forests, and loss and alteration of habitat that has become the primary threat to biodiversity.

As well, social and income inequality, which has grown sharply in North America since the early 1990s, combined with environmental and other pressures, have undermined the sustainability of key social structures. Those on the lowest social and economic levels also tend to be disproportionately affected by environmental problems.

Regional Context (Atlantic Canada):

Atlantic Canadians have experienced locally some of the serious environmental threats facing the planet at a global level – including perhaps most dramatically, the 1992 collapse of the Atlantic groundfish stocks. It is this kind of personal experience of the negative effects of unsustainable activities that has encouraged Atlantic Canadians to be particularly concerned about sustainable development.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) Sustainable Development Strategy is particularly relevant to the Atlantic region. ACOA's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy states:

...[M]any areas of Atlantic Canada face social challenges in enabling communities to simultaneously enhance or maintain the well-being of their people, with due regard for ecosystem, health and employment objectives. Confronting these challenges must occur in ways that do not place unbearable environmental, economic or social burdens on this and future generations. Atlantic Canada's communities, therefore, require innovative thinking to develop the approaches, partnerships and tools that can effectively address their social issues, while respecting the need to assure clean air and water, energy, employment opportunities, adequate health care, affordable transportation and housing....At ACOA, we believe that a healthy environment is essential to the development of a strong, growing and sustainable economy.

Maintaining and enhancing social structures and services is another key aspect of sustainability. Issues such as accessible and affordable transportation, education, and housing are relevant across the region. Atlantic Canadians, on average, have poorer health status than other Canadians. In part because of the rural nature of the region, Atlantic Canadians also experience particular challenges, such as high unemployment in some areas, and the out-migration of youth from rural communities.

Local Context (Town of Bridgewater):

On the local level, what sustainability concerns do we have in Bridgewater? Every community is unique, and faces its own challenges. Reflecting back to the global and regional contexts, Bridgewater is affected by many of the same issues that we see in other places, since environmental and social problems are not contained within jurisdictional boundaries. Climate change, for example, has arisen quickly as one the greatest environmental challenges faced on the municipal level. Reducing our community's emissions of greenhouse gases is just as critical as adapting to the changing weather patterns, increased storm risks, rising sea levels, and disruptions to food and transportation systems predicted by current climate change science.

The broad scope of the sustainability planning process allows us to examine local issues across a wide spectrum of topics. For example, the Planning Department will be examining the following questions, in addition to many others:

Environmental	Social	Cultural	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can we adapt to the effects of climate change? ➤ How can we protect and conserve our natural heritage: the river, our soils and wildlife? ➤ What are the most effective ways to reduce pollution? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can more people in the community meet their basic needs? ➤ How will we meet food, housing, and transportation needs in a sustainable future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What cultural opportunities are untapped? ➤ How can we revitalize the social fabric and identity of our community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can we continue to attract sustainable investment into the community and keep it here? ➤ How can we ensure good local employment into the future? ➤ Is there a role for "green business" development and innovation in Bridgewater?

Planning for a Sustainable Future:

Addressing and effectively managing these diverse and complex issues in a coherent and integrated way is essential to the long-term social and economic wellbeing of Bridgewater. **Piecemeal actions in which cultural, social, economic, and environmental objectives are not systematically integrated run the very real risk that actions in one area (like enhancing employment or protecting the environment) may undermine actions in other areas. A framework is required that ensures that social, economic, and environmental interventions strengthen, support, and enhance one another rather than work at cross-purposes.**

The ICSP process will provide Bridgewater with a framework for sustainability based on the best scientific knowledge, and an understanding of how the ethics, values, and dreams of the community of Bridgewater can help to shape a sustainable future. This overarching framework will make it possible for the community to move towards sustainability one concrete step at a time.

Background on the ICSP²

The federal government has committed to transfer funds equivalent to a portion of the federal tax on gasoline to municipalities. In September 2005, the federal government and Nova Scotia entered into an agreement which set out the terms and conditions of the program. In turn, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations signed Municipal Funding Agreements (MFA) with individual municipalities that define the terms and conditions under which the federal funding flows to municipalities. As a requirement for funding, municipalities are expected to prepare and submit Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs) by 2010.

Eligible MFA Project Categories

Environmentally Sustainable Municipal Infrastructure:

- Rapid Transit
- Transit Buses
- Capital Investments
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Technologies
- Water
- Wastewater
- Solid Waste
- Community Energy Systems
- District Heating and Cooling Projects
- Active Transportation Infrastructure

Capacity Building:

- Long-term thinking
- Collaboration
- Public engagement and education
- Staff Training
- Implementation
- Research
- Monitoring and evaluation

The Integrated Community Sustainability Plan recognizes the interconnected dimensions of **environmental, social, cultural, and economic** development within a community and/or at the regional level and focuses on integrating these considerations to achieve a 20 to 30-year (and beyond) vision for the community. ICSPs aim to empower communities to address their current and future needs, embedding their infrastructure requirements within these broader strategies.

Given the broad nature of ICSPs, they will have applicability well beyond infrastructure, with the potential of assisting communities to determine if investments, programs, and services will be strategic, sustainable, and in accordance with the

² Adapted from "Integrated Community Sustainability Plans: Municipal Funding Agreements for Nova Scotia". Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, September 2007.

stated vision and direction of the ICSP. Integrated planning for sustainability is holistic, planning focused, and inherently strategic, and considers the implications of all forms of planning (including land-use) on environmental and social sustainability.

The concept is for the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan to be a forward-looking planning document for a community or municipality. An important element of each ICSP will be a public participation component, which will guide municipalities in the development of their strategic goals for sustainability. Linked to the ICSP is a Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Concepts outlined in the ICSP should be supported by the investments identified in the CIP and vice versa. It is also important to understand that the ICSP is not intended to be an accountability document for current and future infrastructure investments; rather, the intention is to make the ICSP a long-term strategic planning document. In order for municipalities to use their allocated gas tax funding, ICSPs should be completed by March of 2010.

Bridgewater’s Funding through the MFA:

Fiscal Year	Income	Expenditure
2005-06	\$184,496 (received)	\$0
2006-07	\$186,570 (received)	\$83,839
2007-08	\$245,991 (projected)	\$146,211 (to-date) / \$258,000 (budgeted)
2008-09	\$307,496 (projected)	
2009-10	\$614,992 (projected)	
TOTAL	\$1,537,470 (projected)	
2010 and beyond	The Gas Tax has been made permanent, and future funding will be announced soon.	

Proposal for the ICSP Process in Bridgewater

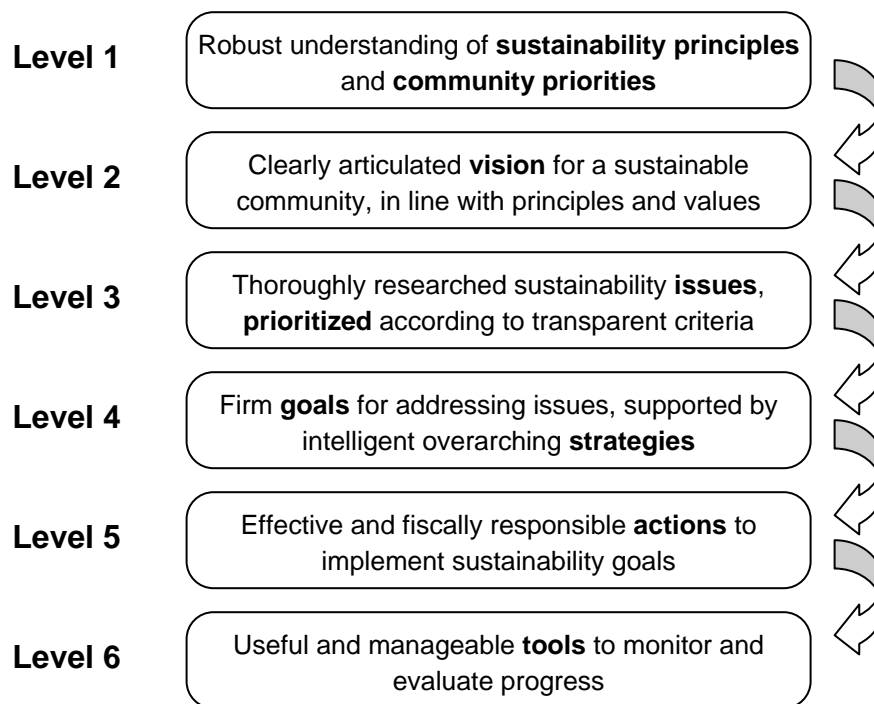
Process Overview:

The planning process will establish a thorough approach to sustainability and create a solid foundation for future sustainability plans and initiatives, in line with Council’s Strategic Plan and the public input from “Imagine Bridgewater”. Public consultation during the process will be given a high priority, and partnerships & support from the community will be essential to its success. The ICSP will be created over the next two years, as shown in detail by the timeline in the Appendix. The outcomes of the process will be:

- an integrated set of **planning documents** (ICSP, MPS, LUB, SB) which will influence all future planning strategies as well as town operations
- a **Capital Investment Plan** (CIP) identifying infrastructure improvements which will enhance the sustainability of the town
- a sustainability **management process** and reporting system
- a network of sustainability **partnerships** with local and regional people and organizations

Basic Elements of the ICSP:

The ICSP will create a systemic framework for sustainability based on tightly interlocking strategic components:



Level 1 **Sustainability Definition / Framework** – a framework will be selected that creates a **common language** for sustainability at the highest strategic level, and forms the foundation for the entire process. Broad education will be provided to ensure that all people taking part in sustainability discussions understand this common language and can articulate themselves in themes relating to sustainability. The definition of success from a sustainability perspective will be complemented by a definition of success from a community perspective (community priorities), as informed through the Strategic Plan and Imagine Bridgewater.

Level 2 **Vision** – the Town’s vision statement for sustainability will articulate the future desired sustainable state of this community, and may draw on other elements such as core community values, community identity, principles for collaboration, etc. The vision will be created based on a long-term understanding of community sustainability – on the order of 30-100 years into the future.

Level 3 **Issues** – the community will be evaluated through the lens of our sustainability principles and vision, and areas in need of improvement will be identified. The public will be consulted on sustainability issues, and the feedback from Imagine Bridgewater will be fed into the process as well.

Priorities – a system for prioritizing sustainability issues will be developed and used to identify the most pressing concerns and opportunities for improvement. Prioritization will be a transparent process.

Level 4 **Goals** – prioritized issues will be described from the perspective of principles of “success” in terms of sustainability (ie. “in a sustainable future, our water supply will be completely sustainable” or “in a sustainable future, we will not be reliant on energy sources that damage our environment and our health”). From there, a technique called **back-casting** will be used to formulate goals and strategies to bring the current situation to that desired future state.

Strategies – strategies are the overarching “pathways” that will bring us from our current reality to future sustainability as articulated through our goals. Each issue area will have a set of strategies (short, medium, and long-term) developed for it to maximize the potential for reaching the desired future state of sustainability.

Level 5 **Actions** – having selected goals, and the strategies necessary to meet those goals, individual action items will be planned to start implementing the necessary changes. Action items will be prioritized according to transparent criteria. Action items that relate directly to the ICSP may be eligible to receive funding through the MFA, and will be described in the Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Since sustainability planning is a collaborative process that is not controlled solely by the Town of Bridgewater, community partners will be encouraged step in to take leadership for addressing issues in the community by creating their own actions in line with the town’s vision, goals, and strategies for sustainability.

Level 6 **Tools** – monitoring progress and reporting on sustainability initiatives will be made possible through the selection of a number of tools. Tools will include **success indicators**, which evaluate progress towards sustainability, **management protocols** for reviewing and updating policies, and **organizational structures** for maintaining the process. Since tools are relevant on all levels of the planning process, they will be addressed during each part.

Public Consultations - At several points during the ICSP process, public consultations will be held to ensure public input and endorsement of the various elements of the sustainability plan. Public input will be secured through several means (drawing on the successes of the Imaging Bridgewater project), which may include public forums, focus group studies, mailouts, events, and/or a website to collect public comments during all parts of the process. After the planning documents have been written and reviewed, a series of Public Participation Meetings (PPMs) will be held to ensure that the final documents reflect community values and interests.

ICSP & CIP Writing and Provincial Review – Having identified all components of the ICSP, the ICSP writing process will begin. At the same time, the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) will be designed. The CIP contains a timeline of infrastructure improvements that are eligible for Gas Tax funding under the MFA. Final approval of these documents by the public and by Council will result in the documents being delivered to the Province for official review. To ensure that there are no surprises, the Planning Department will work closely with the Province during the writing process to ensure that provincial interests are met.

Concurrent Review of Planning Documents:

Integration with Land-Use Planning Documents – The sustainability planning process designed for the ICSP will also feed in to the review process for the land-use planning documents: the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land-Use By-laws (LUB), and Subdivision By-laws (SB). The goal is to integrate sustainability principles and strategies into the Town’s planning and land-use documents to ensure that sustainable development goes hand-in-hand with quality long-term land-use planning.

From a policy perspective, the ICSP will be written into the revised MPS, to ensure that sustainability remains a primary focus for Town's land-use practices.

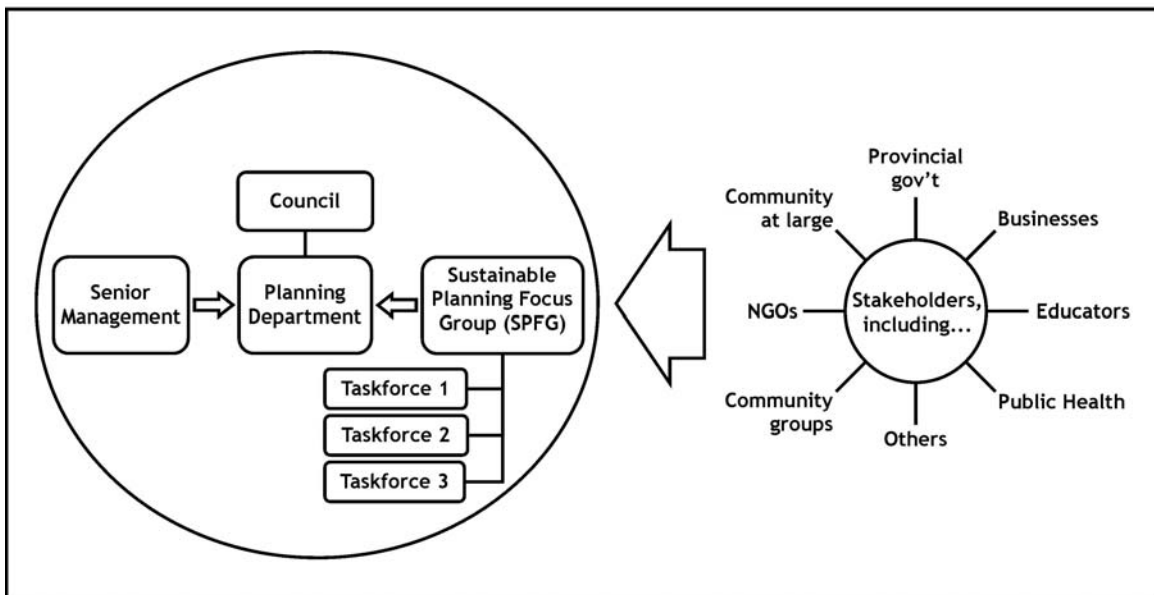
Re-Evaluating Land Use Policies – A review of the MPS, LUB, and SB is long overdue. These documents need to be thoroughly re-evaluated to bring them up to current best-practice standards. Not only do these documents need to be reviewed for their sustainability content (by removing barriers to sustainability objectives, and adding strategies that enhance community sustainability), but they need to be developed into long-term future policy and land-use guides.

Statutory Review - The MPS, LUB, and SB will undergo a statutory review process, involving a first reading, following by public participation meetings, a second reading and a public hearing, after which final approval may be given by Council. Following that, the documents will be submitted to the Province for official review. The process takes 1-2 months. As with the review of the ICSP and CIP, the Planning Department will work closely with the Province during the writing process to ensure that provincial interests are met.

Management Processes:

Management Structure –The Planning Department will be the lead body in planning and executing the sustainability planning process, and reports to Council, which will ultimately be responsible for the outcomes of the process. Within the Planning Department, Eric Shaw, Director of Planning, will be responsible for the process, and he will work closely with Leon de Vreede, Sustainability Planner, to implement it.

In order to engage as many stakeholders as possible, and to maintain a high degree of public representation and accountability to the process, the Planning Department will establish a new body, the Sustainable Planning Focus Group (SPFG). This multi-stakeholder group acts as an advisory body to the planning department, and a high-level sounding board for the whole process. The SPFG will oversee the formation of Taskforces, which will work on specific issue areas as determined by the sustainability planning process. The SPFG and Taskforces are described in greater detail later on in this report. An organizational chart of this new management structure is presented below:



The SPFG and the Town's Senior Management team advise the Planning Department, which reports directly to Bridgewater Town Council. Community stakeholders are brought into the process not only through the SPFG, but also through all other levels.

The Planning Department expects that this management structure will be sufficient to manage the 2 year sustainability planning process, though some degree of flexibility may be required to deal with unforeseen issues as they arise. After this 2 year period, a new, long-term management structure will be developed, based on the recommendations of the process.

Sustainable Planning Focus Group - The SPFG will assist the Planning Department in general, and the Sustainability Planner in specific, primarily in the development of the ICSP and secondarily in reviewing the other planning documents (MPS/LUB/SB) as they relate to sustainability. The SPFG functions as an independent, volunteer advisory group for Planning Department staff and is charged with:

- Providing advice and feedback on the sustainability planning process
- Representing diverse stakeholder interests in the process
- Championing the cause of the planning process (sustainability) in the general community. SPFG members commit to educating themselves and others about sustainability.

SPFG members are selected by the Planning Department, and represent **environmental, social, cultural,** and **economic** interests in the community. SPFG members commit to maintaining a 2-way dialogue with the people and organizations they represent by:

- Getting information **from** the community: actively representing the opinions and needs expressed by the community they represent as they relate to sustainability;
- Getting information **to** the community: promoting the sustainable community planning process, educating about sustainability, and engaging people and organizations in similar initiatives.

Taskforces - In order to perform more focused work on particular sustainability issues, issue-specific task forces will be formed (ie. a "sustainable energy taskforce", or a "green buildings taskforce" or a "social equity" taskforce). The taskforces will co-author sustainability goals & strategies, and work toward designing and implementing actions to address their specified issues. The Sustainability Planner and the SPFG will provide oversight over the taskforces and ensure that the goals, strategies and actions put forth by the taskforces are compatible with each other and with the overall objectives of the exercise, and that they leverage each other as much as possible. The compositions and mandates for taskforces will be determined by the SPFG.

Public Education & Engagement - Public engagement is critical to the long-term success of the sustainability planning process. In order to effectively engage the public on this challenging and complex issue, a **common language** needs to be created around sustainability. Participants in dialogues also need to be informed of sustainability issues, trends, and potential strategies and solutions. As such, education will form a crucial component of all public consultations. The Sustainability Planner will create ample opportunities for effective sustainability education, including but not limited to: information websites, public seminars & speaking events, forums and discussions, information brochures & posters, education during cultural and social events, school events, one-on-one and small group dialogues with community members, focus groups, etc. Education efforts will

also include issues surrounding land-use challenges, to encourage informed discussions that will lead to new policies for the MPS, LUB, and SB.

Building Partnerships & a Support Network - Identifying and collaborating with supportive people and organizations in the community and beyond will be critical if long-term solutions are to be designed and implemented. “Community Champions” are people who are keen on supporting sustainability issues and are willing to offer their time and energy to support this cause. They will be excellent networkers in the community to promote sustainability events, and to gather public input on sustainability issues. Partner organizations will also be identified early on to build relationships and dialogue around sustainability, and to ensure input and support from diverse stakeholders.

Sustainability Analysis - Over the next year the Planning Department will gather basic information on the sustainability of the community, and of the Town’s operations. The analysis will be shallow but broad, in order to cover as many topics as possible in order to establish a broad scope for identifying local sustainability issues. Where possible, quantitative data will be collected. Where not time-effective, anecdotal and qualitative descriptions will be provided instead. The analysis will be correlated with results from Imagine Bridgewater to show connections to public concerns and ideas for solutions.

Organizational Sustainability:

Walking the Walk - Can the Town of Bridgewater “talk the talk” without “walking the walk”? Success for this broad and very long-term project will require support from town leaders and staff. To initiate a sustainability process within the municipal organization the Planning department will:

- Champion sustainability on a management and policy level, and encourage town leaders and staff to educate themselves on these issues and give sustainability increased attention and concern
- Hold consultations with each town department to learn about the various sustainability issues faced by the town, and to build a dialogue around sustainability
- Hold a series of workshops for town Councillors and staff to learn more about sustainability
- Assist town leaders and staff in developing intra and inter-departmental sustainability goals, strategies and actions.

<p>Examples of Organizational Sustainability Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Paper free Councils➤ Car-pool / ride share programs➤ LEED certified, energy efficient buildings➤ Green purchasing policies➤ Eliminating the use of pesticides in parks➤ Fair trade / buy local promotions➤ Funds to encourage sustainable practices in the community
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Sustainability Workshops – The Planning Department will prepare a series of educational workshops to inform town Councillors and staff of relevant sustainability issues and solutions. The purpose of the workshops is to build familiarity around this complex theme, and to develop a **common language** for talking about sustainability issues. The Planning Department will focus on practical, local case studies in sustainability, and apply our knowledge and skills in addressing those issues from a sustainability perspective. Where possible, Planning will use examples of issues that town departments are currently working on. Workshops will be facilitated by the Sustainability Planner.

Conclusion

The 2-year process outlined in this document will place the Town of Bridgewater on a secure footing to establish long-term sustainability goals and processes, in order to bring the community closer to becoming truly sustainable. Sustainability has risen to become one of the top concerns of the international community, and for all levels of government in Canada. Planning for a sustainable future is imperative if we want to address pressing environmental concerns such as climate change, and social concerns such as being able to meet basic human needs for future generations.

Planning for long-term sustainability using environmental, social, cultural, and economic criteria is quickly becoming the norm for Canadian municipalities. Within a few years, Federal and Provincial measures such as the Gas Tax will require comprehensive sustainability planning for all municipal governments, while at the same time ensuring consistent funding to support these initiatives. The Town of Bridgewater is in a unique opportunity to be a leader among municipalities in Nova Scotia by being one of the first to start down this road.

The sustainability planning process will establish a thorough approach to tackling sustainability for the Town of Bridgewater, and create a solid foundation for future sustainability plans and initiatives. The outcomes of the process will be:

- an integrated set of **planning documents** (ICSP, MPS, LUB, SB) which will influence all future planning strategies as well as town operations
- a **Capital Investment Plan** (CIP) identifying infrastructure improvements which will enhance the sustainability of the town, and opening the door to significant sources of funding for implementing sustainable infrastructure improvements
- a sustainability **management process** and reporting system
- a network of sustainability **partnerships** with local and regional people and organizations

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Town of Bridgewater Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) and MPS / LUB Review - Process & Timeline

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