

town of
BRIDGEWATER
Community Prospectus





Connect with us

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Mayor's Message

Almost 20 years ago, my family moved from Toronto to Bridgewater because of what we saw in this amazing town. Warm and welcoming, it was the perfect place to establish our young family and to grow with the community.

In the 21st Century, Bridgewater has become one of the fastest-growing, most sustainable, forward-thinking, and inclusive towns in Canada – and that's not an exaggeration.

Our population has grown in each of the last five census periods. Small and medium-sized business is flourishing in our community, with new investment coming each and every year. Town Council has also invested in "building up" our community, through initiatives like the creation of the Bridgewater Transit service in 2017. We're also proud of our work with developers, which has seen private investment of tens of millions of dollars in residential, commercial, and industrial development over the past decade.

Most recently, our community committed to investing more than \$8 million in the future of the Bridgewater Business Park. Working with our federal and provincial partners, we are positioned to open up more than 125 acres of land in our business park to future growth and investment, ensuring we are future-proofed and ready to offer opportunity to those who are excited to grow with us.

Bridgewater is poised for its next great boom and we'd love for you to be a part of it!



David Mitchell
MAYOR, TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

NOVA SCOTIA



NOVA SCOTIA

SYDNEY

HALIFAX

YARMOUTH

Bridgewater

CONNECTING YOU



Bridgewater is well-positioned geographically to offer advantages for businesses looking to export nationally within Canada and internationally.

Locally, Bridgewater has a primary trading market with a population of about 60,000 residents within a 30-minute drive in Lunenburg and Queens Counties. If you expand that radius even slightly to within about 100 kilometers, you draw in much of Halifax and the Annapolis Valley and can tap into a market of more than 150,000 people.

For those with broader aspirations, our community is connected over land to Halifax and the rest of the continent by Highway 103, a provincial arterial highway. Via Highway 103, you can send or receive goods through the Port of Halifax and Halifax Stanfield International Airport, each located just over 100 kilometers away. The Province of Nova Scotia also has recently announced it will twin Highway 103 most of the way to Bridgewater, making the corridor even more appealing for shipping goods.

Those who are thinking about doing business internationally will appreciate the benefits of the Atlantic Time Zone (EST + 1 hour). Situated halfway between the western United States and Europe, our location allows you to conduct business on two continents in the same day. From Nova Scotia, you can fly to Boston in 90 minutes, New York in two hours, and London in five hours.





ABOUT BRIDGEWATER

The Town of Bridgewater is located on the LaHave River in the heart of Nova Scotia's South Shore, about 25 kilometers inland from the Atlantic Ocean.

Situated in Lunenburg County, Bridgewater is the largest town in southwestern Nova Scotia and is known as "The Main Street of the South Shore."

The community is strategically located within about an hour's commute of Halifax, the provincial capital, and Halifax Stanfield International Airport.



Bridgewater at a Glance

HISTORY

Founded in 1812, incorporated as a town in 1899

2021 POPULATION / GROWTH RATE

8,790 / +3% increase over 2016*

TRAFFIC

Vehicle counts of an average of 26,000+ cars daily travelling in Bridgewater

POPULATION DENSITY / AREA

645 per square km / 13.6 square km area

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Male Identifying - 3,950 (46%)

Female Identifying - 4,650 (54%)

AGE GROUPS BY POPULATION

Under 15 - 1,040

15 to 24 - 850

25 to 44 - 1,850

45 to 64 - 2,415

65 and over - 2,625

*Demographic figures from 2021 Canadian Census.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bridgewater has a large service area, capturing populations in Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne and parts of Halifax counties.

There are approximately 53,000 people living within a 50 kilometer radius of Bridgewater.

Bridgewater's population has increased by 10.6% between 2006 and 2021.



OUR COMMUNITY

For more than a century, Bridgewater has been built on business.

Since the early days of area settlement, our community has evolved as a regional service hub and centre for commerce.

Today, Bridgewater remains the beating heart of the South Shore, with new businesses and residents drawn each year by its strategic advantages.

Our community is one of just a handful of locations in Nova Scotia that has enjoyed consistent population growth over the past two decades.

Here, business opportunities and lifestyle options combine to present a compelling story – one that continues to attract new investments and nurtures partnerships.

All this growth didn't just happen by accident.

Bridgewater Town Council has consistently shown strong leadership, adopting and implementing guiding documents, including the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan, the Community Energy Investment Plan, our Smart Cities Challenge Proposal known as Energize Bridgewater, and our Inclusive Economic Growth Plan.

The Town has also committed to making significant investments in upgrading its infrastructure to meet the demands of development in the 21st Century and to ensure our community remains vibrant and economically attractive.

Bridgewater makes no apologies for its pro-business heritage and has endeavoured to nurture a culture that supports and fosters success.





DOING BUSINESS HERE

Bridgewater Business Park

In today's world, you can do business pretty much anywhere. Our interconnected, digital age has broken down walls, perceived and real, that have stymied creative thinking and outside-of-the-box solutions in the past. So, why Bridgewater? The reasons are both fundamental and philosophical.

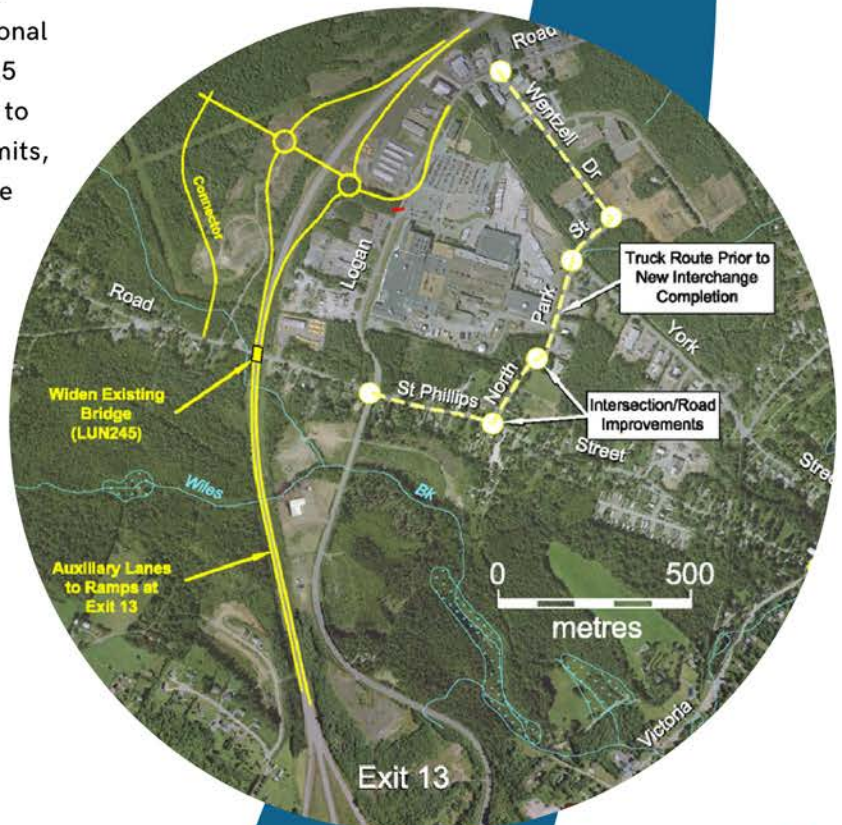
Every business needs dependable and affordable infrastructure, the ability to access markets and to draw upon resources, professional services, and a skilled labour force.

The Bridgewater Business Park currently has over 50 industrial, light industrial, and retail businesses with approximately 1,350 full-time employees - and we're positioned to grow.

In 2020, we announced, with our federal and provincial partners, a \$48 million investment in the future of the Bridgewater Business Park. That investment includes the construction of a new interchange on Highway 103 that provides direct access from our business park to a National Trade Corridor. It also means opening up more than 125 acres of new business park lands north of Highway 103 to development. These lands, located within the town's limits, will allow for a range of future growth, providing a home for significant new retail, commercial, and industrial investment in our community.

New water and wastewater servicing in the area will also ensure that those investing in business in Bridgewater's expanding business park will be able to grow over time to meet the demands of the clients they serve.

Additional new intersection and infrastructure upgrades also took place throughout Bridgewater's existing business park prior to the start of work on the interchange project, ensuring existing businesses have the network connections they need to grow and thrive.



DOING BUSINESS HERE

Historic Downtown

The Historic Downtown is Bridgewater's central shopping district. Over time Bridgewater's bustling King Street core has grown across the river to include LaHave Street - home to South Shore Centre, with its many shops and boutiques, and other retail businesses ranging from clothing to sporting goods to the cinema. The downtown district is compact and walkable; you can park and explore both sides of the river, relax by the water's edge at Pijinuiskaq Park or have a meal at one of the pubs or restaurants.



The Eastside

The Eastside business district is home to many practical and human services, ranging from automobile dealerships and related businesses to professional and health services. Close to the regional hospital, the Eastside has several office facilities with complementary services on Aberdeen Road, Glen Allan Drive and North Street. The Eastside is also close to the growing Glen Allan subdivision.

The Westside

The Westside offers a mix of professional services centered on Dufferin Street. Whether you are looking for legal, financial or medical advice, you'll find several firms offering professional services in this part of Bridgewater. High Street is another important destination on the Westside. Here you'll find the Lunenburg Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College, numerous fast-food restaurants, and the Lunenburg County Justice Centre. The intersection of High Street and Dominion Street is home to a number of retail businesses.



Bridgewater Transit

Each of these areas is accessible to everyone thanks to Bridgewater Transit, which runs a 16-kilometer service loop six days a week within Bridgewater. The municipally run transit system has been a resounding success since its introduction in 2017, with more than 100,000 total rides in that time.

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Bridgewater is home to a dedicated and skilled labour force of approximately 4,000 workers – and that’s only part of the story. Our labour force is drawn from a pool of more than 53,000 individuals who live within 30 minutes of Bridgewater in Lunenburg and Queens counties.

The companies that call our community home are fortunate to draw upon a labour force that is historically hard-working and well-educated, with a sense of workmanship, dependability, and pride that can’t be duplicated. Just as importantly, our local labour force has also shown over generations that we have a culture of adaptability and place a premium on learning new skills, technologies, and trades to meet the needs of changing markets.

According to 2021 statistics, 86% of Bridgewater's residents between the ages of 25 and 64 have a diploma, certificate or degree. Bridgewater is home to the Nova Scotia Community College’s Lunenburg Campus, helping to ensure that continuous upgrading and new learning opportunities are available for our local labour force.

The most common occupations in Bridgewater by sector based on the North American Industry Classification System are:

- Health care and social assistance (18%)
- Retail trade (15.5%)
- Manufacturing (12.1%)
- Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services (8.1%)
- Educational services (6.6%)

The most common occupations by broad category based on the National Occupational Classification are:

- Sales and service occupations (31.1%)
- Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (13.5%)
- Business, finance and administration occupations (12.8%)
- Health occupations (12.4%)
- Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services (12.1%)



OUR KEY SECTORS

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is Bridgewater's largest and most healthy economic sector. Michelin North America's Bridgewater facility dominates the economy and its large workforce creates demand for many of the service-oriented and retail businesses within the community. The company is the largest manufacturing operation in Southwestern Nova Scotia and the largest employer within the well-developed manufacturing sector of Lunenburg County.

Despite workforce related challenges locally, provincially, and nationally, the South Shore manufacturing cluster, of which Bridgewater plays a major part, has created a labour market with a high degree of specialized training and an aptitude for manufacturing processes. It is a human resource factor capable of attracting and supporting even more investment in the sector.

Business and professional services

Bridgewater has a vibrant service sector with the largest concentration of business, professional, and related services in Southwestern Nova Scotia. The Town's role as a regional service center for the South Shore is demonstrated in the breadth of service offerings available to service business. Accounting, finance, insurance, and legal services are well represented with advertising, marketing, and IT services being less prevalent. Educational services represent a significant level of employment and is considered a mature cluster within the economy.

The sector has potential to attract more growth, particularly in technical fields, and serves as a strong community asset in attracting other investment when considering the cost of doing business and the availability of service suppliers within the local economy.





pepsi



**TIMBER
MART**



AIR CANADA



ASSURANCE
ACCOUNTING
TAX
ADVISORY

SPORTCHEK



OUR KEY SECTORS

Retail, food, and accommodations

Bridgewater truly lives its brand of being "Main Street of the South Shore" – nowhere is this more evident than in its retail sector. Bridgewater is where most South Shore residents, across two counties, come to do the bulk of their shopping. The sector is well-diversified with concentration across most sub-categories such as automotive, clothing, consumer goods, and more.

Both retail trade as well as food and accommodations sectors boast an above average concentration in the local economy compared to national levels.

The catchment area for Bridgewater-based retail exceeds 60,000 people and is potentially larger for big ticket items, such as automobiles where the market area extends to Yarmouth and the Annapolis Valley.

Clean technology, renewable energy

Our Inclusive Economic Growth Plan identified the Green Economy as a new strategic direction for Bridgewater and our Energize Bridgewater initiative is driving local focus on reducing energy costs for those least able to afford it.

Investing effort in developing this sector is strategic for Bridgewater and aligns community effort with provincial-level priorities in growing the clean tech sector with its focus on renewable energy, battery storage, and related research and the bioeconomy.

Connectivity

We have fiberoptic highspeed internet, with gigabit service, available throughout Bridgewater.





ENERGIZE BRIDGEWATER

It's our mission to help lower energy costs for Bridgewater's homeowners, tenants, landlords, and businesses. Many Bridgewater households struggle to afford their home energy costs and are experiencing energy poverty.

Energize Bridgewater is a community-wide initiative led by the Town of Bridgewater and its many partners and supporters. Our goal is to reduce energy poverty in Bridgewater by 20% by 2026.

The Town of Bridgewater's plan to reduce energy costs for our residents won a national \$5 million Smart Cities Canada Challenge grant in 2019, beating out 49 other communities from across Canada. Since then, we've been laying the groundwork for new programs and funding that build a path out of energy poverty for our residents.

We're providing a range of solutions for energy and housing in Bridgewater through the Energize Bridgewater project. To learn more and get connected to any of the programs listed below, contact our Energize Navigator at (902) 530-3621 or info@energizebridgewater.ca.

Energize Bridgewater Home Upgrades Program

We know budgets are tight and we want to help you save money and live more comfortably. Energize Bridgewater Home Upgrades is here to help income-qualified homeowners in Bridgewater who are struggling to afford their home energy bills.

We'll guide you through the energy upgrade process from start to finish, supporting you every step of the way.





QUALITY OF LIFE

Around town

Bridgewater's reputation as the "Main Street of the South Shore" is well-deserved.

On the west side of the LaHave River, the traditional King Street historic downtown district is home to many locally owned shops, restaurants, craft breweries, and services that are dedicated to quality and charm.

Live music and public performances make this area the heart of Bridgewater's night life throughout the year. The vibe on the street has been enhanced in recent years with increasing residential infill taking place in our downtown, with apartment units above ground-floor commercial becoming increasingly commonplace.

On the east side of the LaHave River, you'll find the South Shore Centre, Eastside Plaza, and a number of modern retailers, all ready to meet your everyday needs.

Annual events, including the Music on the Riverbank summer concert series, the South Shore Exhibition, Canada Day on the LaHave, and Bridgewater Shines and Christmas on the LaHave, as well as our Winterlude events in February, provide spectacle, fun, and a taste of Lunenburg County for all to enjoy.

Beyond the downtown, Bridgewater boasts sprawling parks and green spaces, offering a true connection to nature within a bustling and vibrant community.

The 8-kilometer Centennial Trail, Shipyards Landing, King Street Court, Mariners Landing, and Pijinuiskaq Park are five of our parks that stand out as true gems, providing breathtaking views of the LaHave River and a respite from the pace of modern life.

Visit www.explorebridgewater.ca to learn more!



QUALITY OF LIFE

Education

Young families are understandably interested in the education system available in the area in which they choose to invest or work and live.

Bridgewater has an excellent public education system that includes Bridgewater Elementary School, Bridgewater Junior High School, and Park View Education Centre, a high school that offers International Baccalaureate curriculum as an option for advanced students. In addition, there are French Immersion programs in these schools and a French first-language school located within five minutes of Bridgewater (Centre Scolaire de la Rive-Sud).

Beyond the public school system, Nova Scotia has a greater number of post-secondary educational institutions per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Bridgewater is within about one hour's commuting distance to the following universities: Dalhousie University, University of King's College, Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Vincent University, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the Atlantic School of Theology (all located in Halifax), and Acadia University in Wolfville.

The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Lunenburg Campus is located in Bridgewater and awards certificate, diploma, and advanced diploma programs in applied arts and new media, trades and technologies, business, and health and human services.



QUALITY OF LIFE

Healthcare

Bridgewater is the regional healthcare centre for the South Shore, the hub for which is the South Shore Regional Hospital (SSRH).

A \$115 million capital renovation project for this facility began in 2022, which will expand the footprint of the existing hospital by almost 30%, and will provide modern, functional new spaces that include a new Emergency Department, renewed and enlarged Endoscopy and Day Surgery Units, a new Dialysis Unit, and an MRI.

On the recruitment side, the Town of Bridgewater works closely with the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Health Services Foundation of the South Shore to attract and settle doctors and their families in our area.

Bridgewater has also added a Community Navigator to its staffing complement. Part of that role involves actively participating in the recruitment process by not only providing information about our community to candidate recruits, but also providing personalized tours to visiting physicians and their families to ensure they understand all that the Bridgewater area has to offer.

Beyond the local area, for those with more intensive medical needs, the provincial capital city of Halifax, one hour away, is the provincial centre for healthcare with specialty and tertiary care services for the province and other areas within Atlantic Canada.

A wide range of complementary medical services and supporting institutions contribute to Bridgewater's healthcare offerings.





QUALITY OF LIFE

Leisure

The Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC) is home to Clearwater Seafoods Arena, the Margaret Hennigar Public Library, and the BMO Financial Group Aquatic Centre and is the jewel of recreation amenities in Bridgewater. The LCLC is a modern, efficient facility that provides exceptional recreation and culture services to patrons of all ages, from across Lunenburg County and beyond. The LCLC has been host to several high-profile hockey events, including the Esso Cup, and the international Para Hockey Cup in both 2016 and 2022.

Adjacent to the LCLC and connected via a trail system is the Bridgewater Skate Park, the perfect place to hop on a board and grind out some fun times for the young and young-at-heart.

Culturally, Bridgewater is home to two important museums. DesBrisay Museum is situated on 24 acres of parkland at Woodland Gardens in the town's south end. Wile Carding Mill Museum is a provincial museum that is operated seasonally by the Town of Bridgewater. Both centres provide glimpses into our region's past and preserve that history, but also offer so much more. DesBrisay Museum has grown from the traditional static museum to become a hub of art, culture, and community driven programming and activities year-round in Bridgewater. As an added bonus, the museum is located right next door to Bridgewater's seasonal outdoor swimming pool.

For those looking to get out and about in nature, there's plenty to love about Bridgewater. The South Shore Vet Dog Zone is our modern leash-free dog park on Glen Allan Drive. Nearby, HB Studios Sports Centre offers an indoor turf suited for year-round soccer, a walking track, sensory-friendly room, and additional meeting space.

There are a number of local sports fields, suited for everything from soccer to football, baseball, softball, and tennis. Finally, if you have a love for the water, you'll want to visit the riverfront Bridgewater Marina on LaHave Street.



