



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES



New Report Drives Home the Importance of Nova Scotia's Main Streets

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HALIFAX - The Main Streets of Nova Scotia play dual roles in their communities and must be cultivated so they continue to thrive, outlines a new report released today by the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities and FBM.

“Main Streets are the backbone and lifeblood of small communities throughout the province, and they also bring social and cultural value along with the economic and quality of life attributes,” says Kieron Hunt, Planning Studio Lead at FBM Architecture, Interior Design and Planning.

The report, **Nova Scotia Main Street Initiative Community Workbook**, is the result of months of research and hands-on study, including workshops in three Nova Scotia small communities: St. Peters, Westville and Elmsdale.

Mainstreeting supports walkability, connectivity, and economic activity in small and rural municipalities with secondary highways as their main street. When a highway intersects a community, it often limits the municipality's potential for placemaking and active transportation initiatives.

Over the winter, the FBM team – including Hunt and urban planner and designer David Paterson -- met with close to 100 community members to discuss the goals and challenges of their Main Streets.

The resulting 72-page Community Workbook provides principles, approaches and policy considerations to foster vibrant Main Streets throughout Nova Scotia, with a focus on community-based initiatives and considerations for government strategies and programs.

All small and rural towns rely on Main Street traffic to keep the economic engines running. Adapting them to accommodate active transportation routes, accessibility features and placemaking efforts will take some effort but is worth undertaking, Hunt says.

“A Main Street is first and foremost a part of the transportation spine to the community and the province, so we want to make sure that we balance that with supporting priorities for pedestrians and businesses who support their local Main Street.”

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a strain on local businesses on Main Street and forced communities to recognize the great value of walking, cycling, and public spaces.

“We believe that this kind of community-based work to improve Main Streets from an economic and social perspective is even more critical today than ever before,” says Hunt.

The funding for the project is from The Department of Energy and Mines *Connect2 Program*. NSF's Active Transportation Committee made the application for the project, and secured matching and in-kind funding for a total of \$38,000.

“Everything good about our communities can be wrapped up in the concept of Main Streets – how friends and families share experiences; how we move about safely and joyfully; and where we engage in commerce and make a living,” says NSFM President Pam Mood.

“Main Streets also reflect the character of a community. As municipalities, large and small, across Nova Scotia look to our future; now, perhaps more than ever, we need to reconsider how our Main Streets meet the needs of our citizens and our economy, while creating a stronger sense of place.”

To read the report, go to: <https://www.nsfm.ca/main-streets.html>.

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