



2023 - 2026 Valley Waters Community Strategic Plan



Photo credit: Mike Sherwood

Adopted October 2023



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Council and staff, I am pleased to present the 2023-2026 Valley Waters Community Strategic plan.

The strategic plan is built upon a foundation of 5 key strategic themes that have been identified from feedback from residents through several public consultation sessions held throughout Valley Waters, along with consultation sessions at Belleisle Regional High School and other community groups. We will be building upon the 5 Key foundational strategic themes over the next three years, with your help, as we set up committees to work on putting our strategic plan into action.

I would like to thank Council, staff, and our community for the work that has been put into the development of our strategic plan. Throughout our consultation sessions, the passion for our community and the compassion that our residents have for each other were demonstrated clearly. We are truly blessed to live in Valley Waters, our natural surroundings, and the support for each other are second to none.

Let's Move Valley Waters Forward Together!

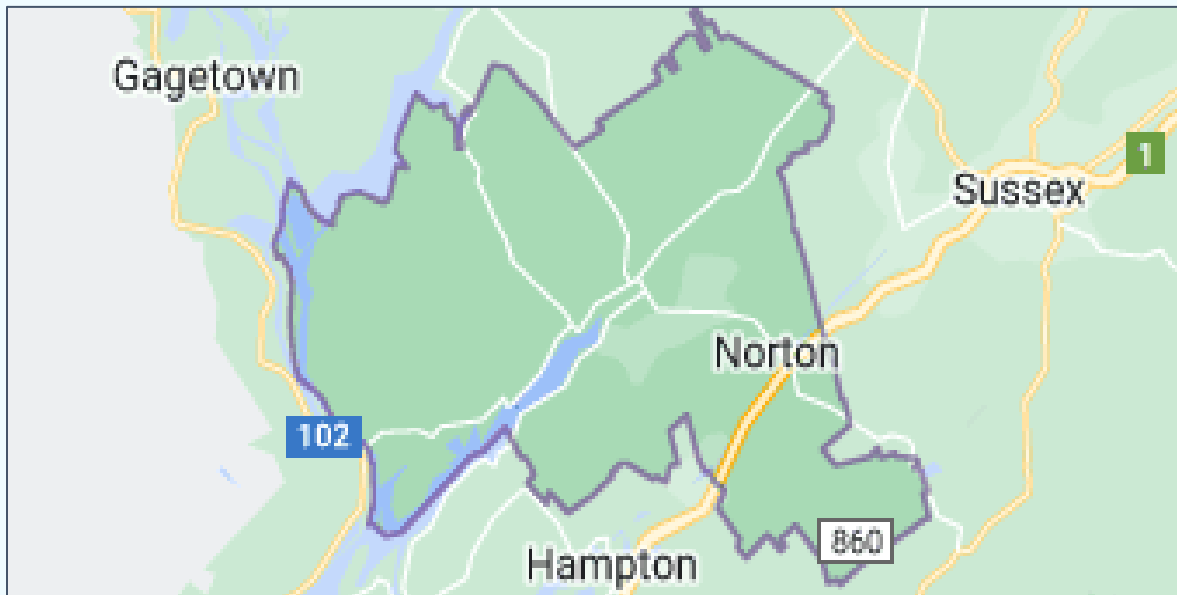
Randy McKnight
Mayor of Valley Waters



Photo credit: Mike Sherwood



VALLEY WATERS COMMUNITY PROFILE



Valley Waters covers a geographic area of 726 sq. kms in the southern area of New Brunswick. It is a new Village, legally incorporated on January 1st, 2023, as a result of the province-wide Local Government Reform process, and merging the communities of Springfield, Kars, Wickham, part of Norton LSD, part of Upham LSD and the former village of Norton.

As the name suggests, its majestic hills and valleys are surrounded by water (the Saint John River, the Belleisle Bay, the Kennebecasis River and Washademoak Lake). Valley Waters is now one of 21 villages in New Brunswick. Approximately 4950 people (2021 census) live in 2940 residences and are served by 3 fire departments, 3 schools, 583 kms. of roads, 2 ferries, 5 public wharves, and several bridges (including two covered bridges).



OUR VALLEY WATERS COUNCIL TEAM



Left to right: Councillor Harold Keith, Councillor Stephen Muir, Councillor Carey Beth Gillis, Mayor Randy McKnight, Councillor Lindsey Ganong, Councillor Charity McDonald, Deputy Mayor Ann-Marie Snyder

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Forward-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimism, big-picture thinking, with a view to the future	Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard work, giving back	Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teamwork, unity, bridge-building, trust and respect	Our Legacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respecting our rural lifestyle and history	Stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible fiscal management to protect and build on our assets	Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Honesty, accountability and transparency
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MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

The Mission Statement for an organization is its reason for being. It answers the following questions: What do we do? For whom? Why and how do we do it?

VALLEY WATERS MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life within Valley Waters through compassionate and responsible leadership, and by balancing a future-thinking approach with our rural lifestyle.



Photo credit: Mike Sherwood

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Vision Statement for an organization is an aspirational description of what the community would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-to-long term future. It provides a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action.

VALLEY WATERS VISION STATEMENT

A proud rural municipality, creating identity and opportunities through our natural and historical assets.



METHODOLOGY

The Council for the new village of Valley Waters recognized early on that a cohesive strategy would be essential for bringing the communities together in a fair, organized, and thoughtful way.

Following the by-election to elect the final two members of Council, the team was led through an initial planning session by CAO, Angela McLean, where they identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the new entity (See SWOC Analysis in Appendix A).

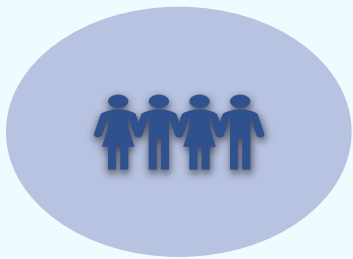
Council also realized that feedback from the constituents would be vital if the strategic plan was going to be meaningful. Between April and June of 2023, eight community engagement sessions were conducted throughout Valley Waters: Springfield, Wickham, Norton, Belleisle Regional High School, Upham, Kars, Norton Fire Dept., and Belleisle Valley Fire Dept. (See summary of feedback in Appendix A).

After formalizing the Mission, Vision, and Values statements, Council reviewed the feedback from the community meetings in order to determine the priorities and objectives for the final Strategic Plan.

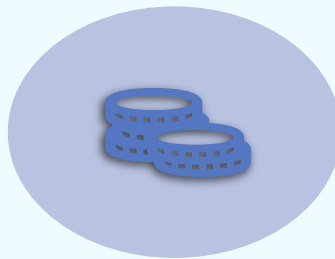


STRATEGIC THEMES

This set of 5 key strategic themes became obvious as feedback from the community and Council was being compiled. These themes will help Council stay focussed on our priorities as we move into the future. Please see the following pages which summarize the key objectives for each of the themes.



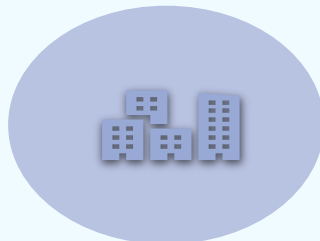
**STRONG AND
VIBRANT
COMMUNITIES**



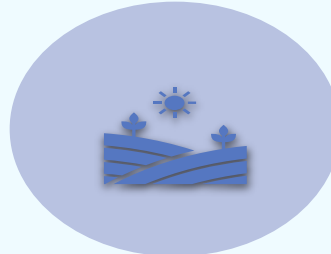
**ECONOMIC
PROSPERITY**



**RESPONSIBLE
GOVERNMENT**



**SUSTAINABLE
INFRASTRUCTURE**



OUR WAY OF LIFE



STRONG AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES - Objectives

Improved access to Health Care	Work with Sussex Area Health Group to explore different service delivery models: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Nurse practitioners * Virtual healthcare (need better internet) * Mobile clinics / extra-mural * A hub for outreach / part-time service delivery 	2024-2026
	Continue to work with Sussex Area Health Group to on Physician Recruitment	2023-2026
Housing	Gather needs assessment information to understand affordable and appropriate housing needs: (families, seniors, low-income, newcomers)	2024
	Proper land use planning and zoning to encourage / support appropriate development	2024-2026
	Investigate funding programs available to municipalities for housing	2024
	Maintain a reasonable tax rate	2023-2026
Seniors' Services	Hold a focus group meeting to bring all Valley Waters seniors' groups together (Get input from seniors before we decide on priorities for them).	2023-2024
Daycare	Encourage registration on the Province's daycare portal	ongoing
	Survey residents in order to understand the need (#'s, locations, ages) Speak to existing Norton facility about their waitlist	2024
Food security	Support the school programs	2024
	Identify possible community garden interest and locations	2024
Safety and Emergency Response	Explore options for police services	2024-2025
	Get a better understanding of ambulance contract and response times and lobby for improved service.	2024



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY - Objectives

Tourism Development	Determine which tourism assets to promote & develop (focus on our rural nature and natural assets)	2024
	Seek grant opportunities to develop our tourism assets	ongoing
	Have a physical space for tourism info., as well as on-line information	2024-2026
	Ensure regional promotion is aligned with our efforts	2024-2026
Designated Industrial Park area	Explore land development opportunities across from highway to leverage accessibility	2024
Support small business development	Encourage name change for Sussex Chamber of Commerce and promote memberships and involvement	2023
	Maintain small business development information on website	ongoing
	Promote local businesses	ongoing
	Encourage DTI use of Evandale Ferry Shed to keep local jobs	ongoing
Focus on retaining youth	Align scholarships with local employment needs (agriculture, trades)	2024-2026
	Cultivate relationship with BRHS for student focus group	2024-2026
Retention of existing services and jobs	Lobby Province to promote use of expanded Evandale Ferry maintenance facility	2023-2026



RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT - Objectives

Deal with dangerous (and unsightly?) premises	Identify priority properties	2024
	Budget for enforcement and legal costs	2024-2026
Council and Staff Visibility in the Community	Host special events	
Appropriate by-laws, including Land Use / Rural Plan	Council Committee to identify by-law priorities	2023
	Set target date to finish the By-Law Review Process	2024
	Initiate the Rural Plan with the Kings RSC	2024
Communication with Residents	Develop a Communication Strategy, including brand and communication tools	2024
	Include marketing \$\$ in the budget for pamphlets	2023-2026
Build a solid municipal administration foundation	Assess service delivery gaps - ongoing	2023-2026
	Include training and development in budget - Council & Staff	2024-2026
Cost of Living / Affordability	Find new revenue sources to offset tax increases: (eg. investigate Carbon Credit Program as a revenue source)	2024-2026
	Attract new residents to increase the assessment base - balance growth with rural lifestyle (promotion package / newcomer welcome package)	2024-2026
Be well-represented on the RSC Committees	Ongoing, as Committees are developed	2023-2026



SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE - Objectives

Roads are a priority	Build the relationship with DTI - provincially and locally	2023--2026
	Lobby, through UMNB, for enhanced communication process between DTI and municipalities	2023-2026
	Lobby for ongoing CCBF funding for Norton streets	2023-2026
Ensure responsible infrastructure development	Update and expand the Norton Asset Management Plan for Valley Waters	2024-2025
	Develop a long-term capital plan for Valley Waters, including climate-related risks	2024
	Be ready with list of projects for infrastructure funding announcements	2024-2026
Reliable, Affordable Internet and Cell Service	Lobby government for better service	2023-2026
	Share \$\$ program information with residents	2024
Well-equipped fire departments	Plan for life-cycle replacement of equipment in our budgets and capital plans	





WAY OF LIFE, RECREATION AND CULTURE - Objectives



Develop recreation opportunities for all ages	Develop a Valley Waters Recreation Committee with representation from all communities	2023-2024
	Undertake a public survey to help set recreation priorities	2024
	Get info on local demographics	2024
	Complete a Valley Waters recreation & culture master plan: asset inventory, priorities for development and investment	2023-2024
	Feasibility study for possible rink improvements - cover, paved surface for year-round useability	2024
	Determine if we have any "regional and/or sub-regional" recreation facilities to bring to the RSC	2024
	Promote active living, and participation	
Culture	Develop a Valley Waters Culture and Heritage Plan to find ways to bring our history to life	2024-2025
Sense of Community	Build community knowledge through promotion of recreation and culture assets	2023-2026
	Build community pride and spirit through events and activities, investigate grants for events	2023-2026
	Build community identity - 1. Consistent Branding (incl. signage) 2. Council-led social events	2023-2026
	Continue with Annual Volunteer Recognition	2024-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION





APPENDIX A

SWOC Analysis

STRENGTHS:	WEAKNESSES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The Bay, lots of land and natural beauty▶ Existing recreation and tourism assets▶ Tight-knit communities▶ Laid-back lifestyle, peace and quiet▶ Safe, space, privacy▶ Volunteers, experienced and engaged people▶ History and Pride▶ Location thr to most places▶ Low taxes and real estate prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Aging infrastructure, poor rural road maintenance▶ Poor (and expensive) Internet & Cell Service▶ Lack of services for seniors▶ Lack of affordable housing▶ Accessibility of health care, services, stores▶ Need more daycare▶ Lack of trust in government▶ Cost of transportation▶ Limited staff resources and municipal budget, no appetite to raise taxes
OPPORTUNITIES:	CHALLENGES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Lots of people driving through▶ Opportunities to develop access to the Bay▶ Proximity to Geo Park▶ Location thr to most places▶ Could develop a plan for tourism promotion▶ Could develop a recreation plan▶ Could attract new residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Aging Population,▶ Lack of jobs▶ Risk of losing schools▶ RSC Funding model▶ Road funding- Rural▶ Government downloading, unknown Future Mandates▶ Cost of living



APPENDIX B - SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

STRONG AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Springfield:

More activities for seniors, social / fitness /wellness activities for seniors
Better health care access, family doctor / nurse practitioner, mobile health care services
More daycare – use churches, halls, existing buildings, provide training for daycare staff, possible NBCC satellite training
Better internet and cell service
Sidewalks
Preserve rural nature: country living, slower pace, volunteering
Promote recreational assets: trails, covered bridges, cable ferries, life on the Bay

Wickham:

Better roads
Better internet to allow working from home, better cell service
Doctors, better healthcare access
Community activities, events and functions to bring people together
Better emergency response (police and ambulance)
Better access to services for seniors (meals on wheels, etc.)
Checks on vulnerable seniors
Better communication, monthly newsletter / newspaper
Need more young people, so need work and activities for them
Need a store and gas bar in Wickham/Kars
History preservation
Do we need a foodbank?

Kars:

More housing
Seniors Resource Centre
More community activities and events
Better emergency roads for spring freshet
Plan for seasonal people, traffic & services
Kars should have its own Council member
Need a café / coffee shop to bring in tourists, ice-cream stop, kayaking, public access to the bay
Encourage small businesses, financial support
Public access to the Bay



Better ambulance response times
More visible police presence
Tourism promotion, wharf and ferry beautification, bring back the Hampstead ferry
Deal with slum properties

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Springfield:

Improved access, better signage and promotion of local attractions
Small business support
More access to services (stores, gas bar), esp., gas station in Kars, Wickham
Tourism rest stops
Promotion of our area
Tourist information centre: maps, info on attractions and accommodations, computer access
Carbon credit-capture

Wickham:

Signage for picnic , swimming, public access points to the bay
More recreation: Ball diamond, outdoor playground, walking trails, snowshoe trails
ATV connected trails between Lower Kars and Wickham
Local jobs
More services, general store / gas bar in Wickham
Local restaurant and places to gather
Invest in local recreation infrastructure, more things for youth to do
Better emergency response times (RCMP)
AED's in public places
Better cell service, better internet
Capitalize on the traffic coming through
Boat launches
Public beaches with parking and signage

Kars:

Legal ATV connection: Kars to Wickham to Springfield
Employment opportunities
Pontoon boat for tours of the Bay
Additional camping and boat ramp facilities
Good roads for everyone will bring more people and lead to more small businesses
Share fuel rebates
Better internet would allow working from home
Better roads will make access to work easier



Support for recreation development (boating, camping, beaches)
A COSTCO store
Improved access to Pascobac Beach (or other local beaches)
Give the “average Joe” an opportunity to access the Bay: canteen, food truck, change rooms, lifeguard
Tax break for small business
Better use of natural resources (i.e.. wood)

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

Springfield:

Roads: rural roads improved, fix potholes, cut trees along roadside, improved signage
Cut the tax rate

Wickham:

Roads: Complain more!
Cutting tree and bushes along roadside, re-paint yellow lines, use reflective road paint, ditching and tree trimming, pot holes, signage,
Make emergency exit roads passable before freshet season
Government garage should be open year-round
A speed limit sign in Henderson Settlement
Taxes: keep the tax rate low,
Protect our rural way of life with few by-laws, respect for rural values and principle for land use, shores, existing communities
Better ambulance response times
Better policing, lots of issues not being dealt with, lobby for more police
Improved cell service for medical issues
Google maps incorrect

Kars:

Lower taxes
Better response time for ambulance (look at Quebec model)
Better home care and social services
Few by-laws for rural areas
More Council representation for Kars
More police presence
Paint yellow lines every year, use reflective line paint
Environmental concerns (dumping in the bay), blue-green algae remediation
Promote and encourage farms and farmers
Satellite receiver for dispatching trucks
911 Civic addresses posted / mandated, remind people to get blue reflective numbers



SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Springfield:

Better cell service and high speed internet, affordable
Charging stations for electric cars
Better road maintenance
Transportation to Hampton and Sussex and Grand Bay

Kars:

Better cell service and high-speed internet, affordable
Better road maintenance, wider, potholes, re-paving and re-painting, ditching
Widen roads to accommodate bike lanes
Parking for cottages off-road
Improvement to the hall in Kars
Fire hall in Kars
Clear hydro lines of trees
More childcare

WAY OF LIFE, RECREATION & CULTURE

Springfield:

More activities for seniors
More public access to waterways for beach uses incl. swimming, boat launches
Promotion of nature-based recreation
Organize water events including canoeing, ice-fishing
Protect the country views

Wickham:

More community events, gatherings, festivals, outdoor movie nights, bbq's, cribbage, bingo, trivia, etc.
Promote local recreation facilities, incl. trails
Rec activities targeted to various age groups, including seniors
More activities for children / families
Clarification on rec centre property
Better wharf maintenance, boat launching at wharves
Preserve and maintain cemeteries
Fitness centre



Summer activities / camps for kids
Fix the outdoor rink in Wickham

Kars:

Better home care
Seniors' housing and other social services
Community newspaper, possibly electronic
Community events at Kars Community Centre
Dredging at the wharves
Constructive recreation activities for youth
Seniors Special Care Home and Nursing Home
Satellite health clinics, nurse practitioner: flu shots, foot clinics, blood pressure checks, writing prescriptions
Respite for seniors' daycare
Possible foodbank
Less rural regulation
Protect our environment